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From the Gothic Castle to the Romantic Haunted House: Disbelief, Conversion, Aporia, Abjection

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Once Gothic fiction fully entered the Victorian period in novels, plays, and short stories, the haunted house – from Thornfield Hall in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) to the sacriston's parish-house in M.R. James' "Canon Alberic's Scrap-book" (1895) – often displaced the haunted castle as the central setting. From the 1830s on, the upper-to-middle-class *domus* in literature could therefore oscillate, as it has ever since, between sheltering otherworldly spirits of the dead still tied to the place, manifesting the psychological projections of its inhabitants, and harboring the sounds of live beings hidden in the house's depths. Before this shift, though, the turreted fortress, usually inseparable from an abbey and a sepulcher and shades of the medieval supernatural, had been the pervasive *locus* in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story* (1764-65) and the proliferation of Gothic fictions in its wake, most famously Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796). But what of the intervening decades (some of the 1790s through much of the 1820s-30s) in that transition from castle to house? What do we find in major writers of what we still call the Romantic era in English writing? The answer, which I fill out in what follows, is that there are only a few shifts to a private house from the Walpolean standard setting during those years and that these turn out to be complex and revealing because of the conflicts within them that help make them rare. Even in what seem to be their departures from Walpole, Romantic haunted houses, as I show

below, keep being lured back towards the systems of belief once connected to castles. I propose to examine key examples of these fits and starts and account for why they are as divided against themselves as they are and what that unresolved tension says about the vexed relationship of Gothic and Romantic writing to each other in the final ten years of the eighteenth and the early decades of the nineteenth century.

Tension is apparent right at the start of this timespan. Radcliffe, it can be argued, helps launch the transfer from the ghostly citadel to the possibly haunted mansion in *The Mysteries* by making what seems a supernatural "rising" in a bedroom at the Chateau Le Blanc just as explicable by natural causes (631-35) as the ominous apparitions that Emily St. Aubert thinks she has seen at Castle Udolpho. But even Le Blanc is still a *chateau* "situated near the monastery of St. Claire" (464), and the primary mansion in *The Monk* is the "castle of Lindenberg" (Lewis 133). Here Don Raymond tries to elope with Agnes de Medina disguised as the Ghost of the "Bleeding Nun" depicted in a drawing (140) – recalling the specter walking out of a portrait in *The Castle of Otranto* (Walpole 26) – only to find that he is faced with the actual Ghost herself (Lewis 155). This shock looks back to the "castle" built "upon the ruins of a convent" from which a "Spectre Nun" arises in J.K.A. Musäus's tale "The Elopement" (1782-86), which haunts *The Monk* from earlier (and quite supernatural) German Gothic just as thoroughly as the Bleeding Nun haunts Raymond (see Lewis 369-79). The ghost-laden castle and its accompaniments prove hard to shake as the Romantic era unfolds, so much so that a persistent strand in Romantic Gothic fiction turns out to be a series of antiquarian romances, only some with truly supernatural ghosts but all with intimations of them, from Elizabeth Bonhôte's *Bungay Castle* (1796) to Jane Harvey's *Brougham Castle* (1816; see Townshend 272-78). One convincing explanation is Tom Duggett's: some Romantic-era writers, including Wordsworth

and Coleridge, who both disparaged the Walpolean Gothic, attempted to produce a "purified Gothic style" of high-culture medieval nostalgia that cast off the excesses of the Gothic from Walpole to Lewis and in the 1790s novels and plays reminiscent of German *sturm und drang* (see Duggett 6-22). Yet what of the several Romantic texts, some by these very writers, who, as Michael Gamer has shown, still imported the Walpole brand of the Gothic into their haunted spaces? How is it that they and several contemporaries employ this "terrorist" mode despite their own prefaces and reviews in which they see it as epitomizing the *low*-culture "text-as-commodity" generated by the "changes in literary production and consumption" just before and after the French Revolution (Gamer 67)? What is going on in the tentative Romantic haunted houses that Duggett's "higher Gothic" Romanticism cannot explain? What do those figurations have to do with what is manifestly a conflict between the Gothic and the Romantic when it is played out by writers who employed both?

My explanation starts with the genesis of the "Gothic Story" itself. When Coleridge in his *Biographia Literaria* (1817) recalls how he and Wordsworth in their *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798 interwove the "modifying colours of imagination" with "adherence to the truth of nature" (206), he is echoing, among other pre-texts, the 1765 Preface to the Second Edition of *Otranto*. There Walpole theorizes that his new "species" of fiction combines the "powers of fancy" in "ancient" (meaning Greek-to-medieval-to-Spenserian) "romance" with "the rules of probability" in the "modern" romances of his contemporaries where the "rule" is empirically observable "nature," as in the novels of Samuel Richardson and Tobias Smollett (Walpole 9-10). One of the defining statements of Romantic theory, then, is rooted in the Walpolean Gothic, and that root brings with it further contradictions that, for Walpole and his Gothic successors, accompany their Janus-faced combining of medieval, often supernatural, aristocratic narratives (looking backwards)

with the middle-class novel of the Protestant Enlightenment (looking forwards) (10). As Walpole suggests in his *first* Preface to *Otranto*, where he poses as the translator of a 1529 text supposedly written to continue "the darkest ages of Christianity," his readers are "not bound to believe" in the marvelous and highly Catholic "prodig[ies]" that haunt the castle in the story, though his audience *should* accept the tale's "actors as believing them," enough to feel the characters' "terror, the author's principal engine" (Walpole 5-6). Before readers even behold the ghosts that arise at Otranto, in other words, they should see them as based on "exploded" superstitions (6), with the grounds of belief in them largely, if not entirely, removed, leaving them hollowed out and broken from their foundations; hence the specters in Walpole's castle, while they recall the Ghost in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (cited on Walpole 11), are more signs of older signs than effigies of bodies: an image walking silently out of a picture *and* gigantic, looming, dark fragments that are referred by onlookers to the statue "in black marble" of the castle's dead founder on his tomb in the sepulcher beneath the castle (20-21). Like the label "Gothic" in the 1760s, which had become uprooted from its reference to old Germanic tribes to drift between promoting "fantasies of chivalry [and past] heroism" and condemning a "nightmarish" time of "barbaric" and Popish tyranny (Townshend 33-34), the haunting ghosts in *The Castle of Otranto* are images of now un-grounded images. They are floating signifiers without one definite anchor, repurposed in both their spectrality and their "new species" of romance to function for readers as sites that symbolize *and* disguise ideological conflict. Such figurations are caught, after all, like the "Gothic Story" in general, between the rejection of medieval Catholic belief-systems for the sake of a more "enlightened" and Protestant empirical realism, on the one hand, and the attraction of those antiquated figures as prompters of still-great emotional power, on the other, of the "terror" based on fears of the destructive and preternatural

forces that audiences now think such figures may no longer -- yet may somehow still – carry with them.

The aim of arousing terror, of course, derives from its being the basis of the "sublime" in Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). For Burke "the strongest emotion" arousable by art-forms comes from artist and audience "apprehensions" of possible "pain or death" when faced with immensity, "obscurity," ghosts, towering or ruined old structures, or intimations of God-like "power exceeding the bounds of our comprehension" (36, 53-55, 113, 62). For that affect to be pleasurable, not revolting, however, the artwork must render its fearsome objects as aestheticized and thus placed "at certain distances" from their physical realities (36-37). To that end, the most sublime medium of art is "words," signifiers always at some remove from their points of reference, because they can arouse "affections in the soul" without a firm "representation in the mind of the things for which they stand" (150-52). Walpole's haunting ghosts are sublime and terrifying precisely in this fashion; they carry and arouse associations of, for example, supernatural powers without necessarily containing or affirming them. Such hauntings offer no more than suggestions which *Otranto* characters may refer to Catholic groundings but which readers may see, like words for Burke, as signs freed from most of their former contents, save for obscure recollections of them. Ghostly signifiers so understood can now be connected to, and re-filled with, more recent assumptions at a time (the later eighteenth century) of Janus-faced and unresolved conflicts in Western culture between "ancient" and more "modern" beliefs – indeed, they can become specters of those very conflicts -- albeit while raising still-lingering fears about what is held over from the past. All this is why Leslie Fiedler has seen the incipiently Romantic Gothic of Walpole and his progeny as symbolizing the "guilt of [the Enlightenment-era]

revolutionary" who does see older "communal systems" now "turned into meaningless clichés" but also fears that, "in destroying the old ego-deals of Church and State, the West has opened a way for the inruption of darkness" (129-31). What is left may be an emptiness of "spiritual isolation" that accompanies the fading of older certainties into mere signs that may not be replaced by anything firmly grounded; at the same time, those signs seem haunted by a "dread of [some] super-ego" left over from a dying world still half-desired "whose splendid battlements have been battered but not quite cast down" (132). Here are the beginnings of answers to my initial questions. If Coleridge's definition of his and Wordsworth's Romanticism is rooted in how Walpole defines the Gothic tale, Romanticism is haunted, I would argue, by the Walpolean Gothic and its specters as sites of unresolved, Janus-faced, ideological *and* emotional conflict. Romantic constructs of nature reimagined, by downgrading the Walpolean Gothic, may want to rise above such dis-unities of unsettled differences. But Coleridge's aspiration for poetic "reconciliations" that feel organically formed out of contradictions (as in *Biographia* 213-14) has to confront, quite often, the underlying contest among opposed belief-systems in returns of the repressed, resurgences of "the Gothic Story," rising from deep in its literary and cultural foundations.

It is this uneasy nexus, I now want to show, that accounts for and appears in the hesitations within the infrequent conversions of the Gothic haunted castle into the ghostly Romantic residence from the 1790s to the 1820s. That anomalous combination is clearly apparent, pre-*Udolpho*, in Charlotte Smith's less Gothic novel *The Old Manor House* (1793). This book's Rayland Hall in 1770s England, antiquated yet not a castle, is feared by Smith's young heroine Monimia as haunted by a "ghost" who "walks around the house" (72), the likeliest cause of "very odd noises" in the Hall's lower depths and galleries (50). But these suggestions

are quickly and ultimately dispelled. Early on, they are exposed as legends promoted by the very royalist Raylands to scare their civil-war enemies of the previous century away from "sums of money and valuable jewels [hidden] in this house" (50). Later, the young hero, Orlando, striving to dissipate Monimia's belief in "hobgoblins" that has kept her subjugated to the widowed Mrs. Rayland (75), discovers that the noises stem from a butler joining with "an out-lawed smuggler" to move mercantile goods in and out of "Madam's cellars" (152), anticipating the smuggling by pirates behind the Chateau Le Blanc apparition in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (Radcliffe 632-35). Such a new kind of commerce, albeit hidden, shores up the Manor's (and the butler's) shaky finances with the sort of capitalist trade favored by the middle and working classes, concealed from the widow determined to accept only aristocratic foundations for Rayland Hall, and extolled during the time of this novel's events in Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). This whole layering of hauntings reveals *The Old Manor House* to be founded on the still-percolating conflict between ideologies and economic "personalities" that E.J. Clery has exposed as the cultural quandary underlying Walpole's mix of the ancient and the modern: a "contradiction between the traditional [aristocratic] claims of landed property and the new claims of the [more bourgeois] private family" financed increasingly by mercantile enterprise (Clery 77), itself frequently concealed from immediate sight even in middle-class homes.

While this undercurrent does help Smith critique the "inequalities" in "an outdated system" (Townshend 216-18), an ideological retrogression also pulls against such a progressive drive the more Orlando probes down through Rayland Hall's layers of haunting. There, in an especially "hollow place," he is led to find the "tin box" that conceals the now-deceased Mrs. Ryland's will, which leaves the bulk of the estate, including funds to "purchase the title of a baronet," to Orlando himself (519). Curiously, he is not a direct Rayland descendant but the son

(not even the eldest) of an ancillary family branch who is favored by the widow because his "figure and face" incarnate, even in his name, her and others' preferred image of "good breeding" promulgated by older aristocratic romances (303) – hence this book's status as a Romantic, if not fully Gothic, novel (Townshend 218). The "hollow place" as the location of the words about "true" inheritance is unusually apt, because this whole resolution, despite *and because of* the increasing mercantile underpinnings of the Hall once taken as ghosts, makes Orlando, as Dale Townshend says, a "spectre" of aristocratic ideology without most of the substance of aristocrats (219). He becomes very like the hollowed-out ghosts of Walpole and is finally turned into a Janus-like "revenant from the future"; he looks ahead to the new, non-aristocratic *purchase* of old aristocratic inheritance, yet he "returns to haunt the crumbling remains of the past," looking backward like Monimia does in her antiquated fears, so that the "worrying democratization – and bastardization – of the hallowed Gothic past" is partially prevented, though it is also halfway achieved (217-19).

As it happens, I would further argue, this kind of progression in a Romantic/Gothic text of the 1790s moves through a series of steps that become recurrent, even with different conflicting ideologies, in the sporadic haunted houses throughout the Romantic era. The first step is the invocation of old superstitions about ghosts that are soon dis-believed, just as they are in Walpole's first *Otranto* preface. The second step is the conversion of the apparent apparitions, now floating signifiers, into indicators of more modern, yet also secreted, belief-systems and economies, sometimes quite new methods of exchange (the butler's in Smith's novel) forcibly overlaid on top of older ones (here from the civil war of the 1640s-50s). But the third step is a pullback from any modernity entirely divorced from past groundings, which then leaves nearly all subjects and settings suspended, at least momentarily, in a Janus-faced aporia.

In this middle ground, regressive and progressive ways of thinking tug with and against each other because at least *signs* of the past, such as old documents, retain enough longed-for authority to provide deceptive, as well as conflicted, points of reference for mixed transfigurations of old-time inheritance *and* hints of modern mercantilism. This aporia, though, is soon obscured by the fourth step that has been the goal all along. That step becomes complete when Orlando forgets, leaving far behind, his pieced-together and ghostly baronial status. He casts all of it away from his, Monimia's, and even the reader's immediate awareness while he adds furnishings of "modern life" to the Hall "without spoiling [its] look of venerable antiquity" (Smith 521). He and Charlotte Smith thereby end up with an imposing oxymoron, the new yet old haunted house, which symbolizes, while it also hides and throws off, the very conflicts out of which its revised version, its Romantic reunification from contradictions, seems to emerge.

Julia Kristeva, soon assisted by Slavoj Žižek, has provided us with a term that describes this last step and, indeed, the process leading to it: *abjection,* the throwing-off and casting out-and-down of all that "disturbs identity, system, order," the expulsion of all blurrings-together of what we believe to be opposites (life/death, new/old, the child/the adult, etc.) that actually intermingle at the primal, pre-conscious levels of our existence (Kristeva 4). This process creates illusions of an "other," down-cast location or entity (the "abject") where such anomalous conditions appear entirely outside – and can, from that otherness, haunt -- their projectors (us). Through this self-obscuring process, we construct a sense of wholeness in ourselves by contrast to that spectral morass, which then seems no longer *in* ourselves. Kristeva as a psychoanalyst sees such abjected indistinctions as akin to the dimly recalled, but also feared and deeply repressed, "violence" of our being half-inside/half-outside the mother's body at the moment of birth (Kristeva 10). This is what Orlando throws off, while he also dimly recalls it, by seeking a

merely symbolic substitute for his real mother in Mrs. Rayland and hoping to find his true inheritance in the depths of her Hall rather than the site where he was born. But Žižek has added compatibly to Kristevan abjection by expanding it to our fabrications of a "self" in our social world. For him we carve out identities for ourselves and our immediate group by abjecting the "traumatic social division" of class-and-race-based conflicts and interactions, the *cultural* blurrings of boundaries (like Orlando's several) in which we are actually immersed even before our birthday. We throw off in thought, self-expression, and behavior that "insupportable, real, impossible kernel" and let it be covered over (hence "abjected") by the "fantasy-construction" that is our dominant ideology, the illusion that provides the "social reality" we believe to be truth so that we seem to have a self that fits as a unity into it (Žižek 45). It is this journey, we can now see, that Smith's Orlando is on. The "ghosts" in his chosen house come to suggest the contradictions and changes that underlie it over time, yet his and his author's embrace of only the images of vague ancestors colored by old romance – only *those* specters, hollow as they are -- tries to keep the rest of it out of sight, leaving the old manor house as both an abjecter of what it buries from view and an abject site that obscurely embodies the contradictions at the dark core of itself.

It is the four steps approaching and achieving abjection, then, I now want to demonstrate, that keep appearing, if haltingly, in the few literary haunted houses of English Romanticism that succeed the ones in *The Old Manor House* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. A vivid instance, ironically, appears in a poem by Coleridge, even though he did keep trying to raise up a "higher" Gothic while he cast off the Walpolean version, making it a site for Romantic abjection. In "Frost at Midnight" (1798), turning away from his other Gothic specters in seascapes or castles, he visualizes a house like his own Nether Stowey cottage as haunted by the "unquiet thing" that

takes the form of a "film" fluttering on the fireplace "grate," a mobile counterpart to the motionless "silent icicles" formed outside by the "secret ministry of cold" (ll. 15-16, 77-78 in the original version [Mellor and Matlak 697-98]). At line 15, Coleridge attaches a footnote to the "film": "In all parts of the kingdom these films are called *strangers*, and supposed to portend the arrival of some absent friend." He thereby alludes, as first noted by Humphry House (79), to Book IV ("The Winter Evening") in William Cowper's *The Task* (1785), where the "I" observes "The sooty films that play upon the bars" that make him recall the "superstition prophesying still," quite ominously, "some stranger's near approach" (Cowper 194, ll. 291-95). That footnote, though, veers away from Cowper by calling the "stranger" an "absent friend," and Coleridge's poem soon makes the "film," already the signifier of a previous signifier (Cowper's), even less apparently supernatural by regarding the "unquiet thing" as a "companiable form" that calls forth "the living spirit" in the speaker "that loves not to behold a lifeless thing" and instead "Transfuses into all it's own delights/Its own volition" (ll. 19-24). The old, already fading "superstition" of a quasi-divine prophecy in Cowper now becomes a more modern filling of what is possibly "lifeless" (an emptied-out specter) by a transfusion from the speaker's own "living spirit" into the "film" that then enables the latter to mirror back the thoughts of the former.

The haunting flutter thus becomes an instance of the Walpolean first step of divorcing the antiquated specter from its grounding mythology, here already half-emptied by *The Task*, and pouring into the remaining vestige (the "film") newer, post-Enlightenment beliefs about the power of the individual imagination, not some external force, to give life to what it perceives. Given that set of shifts, the "film" takes the second step of conversion into a widely floating signifier, able to refer to memories of multiple times and places, that touches down at different reimagined moments recalled from the speaker's life, all seen as building towards the modern

awareness of the poem. The first of these is his "early school-boy days" in which he remembers gazing on the same kind of film in a different fireplace with some "believing superstitious wish" still attached to it in his remembrance (ll. 28-29). But then that memory, leaving behind both the superstition and any explicit connection to the "film," harkens further back to recollections of "my sweet birthplace." There the speaker feels "haunted" by "old church-tower . . . bells" remembered primarily as sounds alone (ll. 33-34) and by his childhood hopes that seeing "the *stranger's* face" would mean his attachment of that old image to "Townsman, or aunt, or sister" or "play-mate" (ll. 45-48) with most of these regarded, as he thinks of the ringing bells, "like articulate sounds of things to come" (l. 37). Such signifiers defer to the present and the future, the forward face of Janus, rather than haunting the speaker and his current house too much with the actual state – death – into which the referents of these memory-traces have been withdrawn.

Even so, the backward-looking face still surfaces alongside these pulls towards the modern reorientation of old specters from their past contexts. For all its drift away from its echo of *The Task*, Coleridge's haunting "film" remains a "lifeless thing," a sign of impending death even as it is made a site for projecting memories from the past. It is thus connected still, via its echoes of Burke's sublime, to the terror of some possible destruction posed, vaguely, by the coming of a ghost-like "stranger." Indeed, when the long-past hope of meeting now-dead friends in a recollected childhood is mentioned later, the possibility of "the *stranger's* face" being fearsome still hovers there in the spectral italicizing of that word. It is also followed by a "dead calm" (ll. 46-50), which manifests the third step now being taken, this poem's aporia suspended between the "modern" and the "ancient." This hesitation is really between the newer ideology of human beings breathing life into the world from their internal imaginations and the older ideology of life coming to the imagination, the house, and the film from a divinity external to

them all able to send avengers of, as well as salvation from, sin. If the fireplace film, in its soundlessness, is paralleled to the "silent icicles" outside, it must be harkening towards something like the "ministry of cold," an intermediary with God, that has the power to "hang [eave-drops] up" *as* icicles "Quietly shining to the quiet moon" (ll. 78-79). It is no surprise, given this poem and his later revisions of it, that Coleridge in his famous Chapter XIII of the *Biographia* extends the continuum of imagination to encompass a "finite" version of "the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM" *and* a ghostly "echo" of it in the individual mind (Coleridge 203-06). After all, in "Frost as Midnight" he fears too much floating of the spectral Gothic signifier, although he employs it, away from a foundational reference-point in the distant past that is somehow eternally present too (see Hogle "The Gothic Ghost" 287-90). He finally has to force the old implications of "the *stranger*" to be denied and have its past point of reference replaced by fairly clear memories of former playmates and teachers that briefly seem to come to life as though they remain now as they were then. When we look back at the "film" in this poem, it turns out, we realize the paradoxical meaning of Coleridge's early description of it as "companionable . . . sometimes with deep faith,/And sometimes with [a] fantastic playfulness" peculiar to the speaker (ll. 23-24). The haunting "film" and the house around it have become sites of abjection, the fourth Walpolean step. The aporia and interplay between opposed impulses and beliefs (reliance on a higher power vs. self-reliance) are fitfully suggested and then thrown off – as is the birth-mother completely effaced from both the current house and the old "birthplace" -- for the sake of an attempted union between the speaker's present and his multiple remembered pasts. The *Biographia* may work to resolve the conflicts between beliefs in this poem, but in "Frost at Midnight" Coleridge redefines the haunted residence as a place for half-revealing and half-concealing, hence abjecting, what remains *un*resolved: his 1798 hesitation

between "ancient," albeit Christian, beliefs still beckoning his "faith" and the Gothically-tormented condition of the modern mind feeling uprooted even as it searches for its ground.

Such a vaguely haunted house did not inspire many immediate imitators. Such an extensive user of Gothic as Sir Walter Scott locates his suggested ghosts almost entirely in castles, monasteries, fountains, landscapes, or the tales of Highlanders, where each shade is usually "an avatar of folk superstition" (Gottlieb 83). In his own favorite novel, *The Antiquary* (1816)*,* however, he includes a definite haunted-*house* episode, one inspired, he tells us in an 1828 letter, by nights he spent at two castles (see Parsons 103-05). Intrigued by the young William Lovel, whom he has met on the coach from Edinburgh to Fairport, the "subacid" title character, Jonathan Oldbuck (Scott xi), invites his new friend to the antiquary's old estate-house, Monkbarns, and urges him to spend the night in the storied "Green Room" over the objections of Oldbuck's more "superstitious" sister. She recounts her memory of a "town-clerk," in search of a document verifying the family's claim to Monkbarns, who once slept in the Green Room and there encountered an "auld" figure "in a queer- fashioned dress" who eerily led the clerk to a hidden chest that contained the deed he sought (97-98). To Oldbuck this memory *might* confirm the "idle story" that the Green Room is "haunted by the spirit of Aldobrand Oldenbuck, my great-great-great-grandfather," who founded the estate after fleeing Catholic Scandinavia because he was the printer of the "Augsberg Confession" (100), the Lutheran "foundation . . . of the Reformation" issued in 1530 (116). With this "legend" arousing his "fearful expectation" (106), Lovel drifts off in the fabled chamber beneath an Arras "tapestry" of the sixteenth century, where the color green "predominates" and helps depict a "hunting" scene teeming with numerous men "in old Flemish dress" as though the "rich invention of old Chaucer had animated the Flemish artist" (103). Soon these "dusky forms" become *truly* "animated" to the dosing

Lovel, whereupon an "individual figure [emerges] among the tissued huntsmen," like the specter walking forth from the picture in *Otranto*, and meta-morphs into "a state of awful . . . composure, as might best portray the first proprietor of Monkbarns" already described to the dreamer by his host (107). This "awful figure" then opens "a venerable volume" and points to a phrase in the German text, "the words of which appeared to blaze with a super-natural light, and remained riveted upon his memory" as Lovel now awakens (107).

While this scene is certainly characteristic of Scott's own antiquarianism, it still plays out the four steps of Gothic abjection initiated by Walpole, about whose work Scott wrote extensively (Robertson 63-64). The ghost of Aldobrand, first of all, can be dis-believed readily as a signifier floating far from solid substance. It appears in a dream manifestly prompted by Oldbuck's description of his ancestor overlaid upon his sister's account of the earlier dream of the clerk, itself retold secondhand (499). Both of these are referred back to a "superstitious old writer" and then to a remembered "print of [Aldobrand] . . . pulling the press with his own hand" to publish "the Augsburg Confession" (98-100). The tapestry from which the ghost arises also has no exact source, since it is made analogous to the "profusion" of Chaucer "as if" the latter could have inspired a "Flemish artist" far removed from Chaucer's own time and place (103). Even the metamorphosis of the ghost from a vague tapestry figure explicitly separates itself from its Arras background (which "disappear[s]") and becomes nearly, but not completely, the image of a "burgo-master" out of "Rembrandt" (107). Such a palimpsest of signifiers of signifiers with so much disconnection between them empowers the second step: a drift from older towards newer ideologies, albeit new ones disguised as supposedly old. In its being both tied to and removed from Flemish origins, the Green Room ghost becomes a validator of Oldbuck's relentless scheme to find historical roots behind his support for the "Hanoverian dynasty and the

Protestant succession," descents that were more recent imports into Britain and Scotland than organic outgrowths of their older history (Leask 193). The figure of Aldobrand, as Oldbuck has filled it out, suggests that these "destinies" are fictively planted in, then only seemingly authenticated by, Lutheran Scandinavia just after the Reformation, as though that culture and time were the mother of modern Scotland as it is being fashioned by Oldbuck in his highly ideological reconstruction of history. The premises of antiquarianism, of finding solid old evidence for modern outgrowths of it, are put in question and even satirized, as Scott famously is himself by *The Antiquary* (as in Malley 244), especially in this haunted-house moment. Here we see how much Scott's renowned "double psychology" pulled between the extremes of documented history and speculative romance (Robertson 12) has been deeply influenced and exacerbated by Walpole's ancient-modern Gothic. Because of that, *The Antiquary* prefigures *both* sides of the present-day debate between "processual" archaeology, where human activity is seen as rooted in recovered natural processes, and "post-processualist" archeology, where the "textuality of archaeological discourse itself" (as in Oldbuck's tale of Aldobrand) is admitted as "*producing*" the developments it projects into the past (Malley 236).

The "Gothic Story" haunts Scott so much in his Green-Room ghost, in fact, that the pull of the grounded artifact there turns out to be just as strong as the pull of the signifier floating away from its background, thereby producing the third step, an irresolvable aporia. While most of what Lovel dreams is anticipated by the accounts he has heard, one of the specter's gestures is *not*: it points to a "passage" in the "venerable volume" whose words become as emblazoned "supernaturally" on Lovel's memory as the words of his Father's Ghost are said by the Prince of Denmark to be stamped into the "book" of his "brain" in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (I.v.102-04; Shakespeare 1150). Lovel cannot have known about that reference-point for Aldobrand prior to

his dream; he finds it out only the next morning, when Oldbuck shows him the embossed "motto" of his ancestor's "printing-house," which was and is "KUNST MACHT GUNST," "skill . . . compel[s] favour and patronage" (117). Behind this motto, Oldbuck goes on to say, is a history, this time less speculative, of his ancestor being apprenticed to an apprentice of "Faustus" and then winning his bride and business by displaying supreme skill at typesetting in a demonstration with many witnesses. The real Aldobrand, towards which his ghost has gestured by pointing at his principal emblem (the sort of originating signifier vital to Scottish guilds and clans), thereby manifests the "independence and self-reliance" characteristic of all Flemish Protestants. These qualities appear in the hunting-battles on the Green-Room tapestry and at the origins of printing in the West as it arose next to a "doughty chivalry" in decline, thereby encouraging "the diffusion of knowledge" more than "the effusion of blood" (117-18). Now the ghost haunting Monkbarns seems both more "supernatural," not just psychological, *and* more grounded in an historical actuality, even if it is in the origins of printing (an impressing of signifiers) alongside the dawn of Protestantism and the initial emergence of the early-modern from the medieval. The reader is left hovering between such old anchors for signs and the many signs themselves, including print, that can and do float free from genuine historical foundations, much as Walpole's first Preface to *Otranto* calls on its readers not to see the story's "preternatural" specters as believable while still asking for belief that "the scene is undoubtedly laid in some real castle" (6-8).

The impressed figure that the Green-Room ghost points to, meanwhile, presages two impressed images that finally begin resolving the main mystery for Lovel later in *The Antiquary*. First, there is the signet ring sent by Elspeth Mucklebackit to the psychologically haunted Lord Glenallen to coax him into hearing her refutation of accounts that falsely accused his son of

incest many years ago (Scott 309). Second, there is the emblem of "the Glenallen arms" on some silver ingots that, after they have been "melted down" (496), are buried at Lovel's behest to seem to be a much older treasure hidden beneath the ruins of St. Ruth's Priory so that it can be dug up by the heavily indebted father of Lovel's beloved, Sir Arthur Wardour (480-81). Both these emblem-moments point, repeating the gesture of the Green-Room ghost, directly at Lovel, also known as Captain Neville, as really being Lord Geraldin at bottom, the legitimate heir of Lord Glenallen (496-97), with his mother dimly recalled, then quickly re-buried, in the flashback provided by Elspeth. That grounding in such layers of deceptive signifiers, which replays the naming of the concealed true heir at the end of *Otranto*, allows Oldbuck to bring the Monkbarns haunting back at the novel's end. There he has impressed on the "wedding ring" of Geraldin's bride "the motto of Aldobrand Oldenbuck, *Kunst macht Gunst*" (497), as though Lovel and his wife have enacted those words and the new couple are figuratively Oldbuck's heirs while they are literally Lord Glenallen's. In *The Antiquary*, then, Scott grounds his dubious household specter in a combination of supposed old "truths" verifiable by way of artifacts and a ghost linked to retied lines of descent. Yet he just as forcefully positions these references, linked as they are to a Walpolean dream-figure, within layers of false tales, fake names, uprooted fragments, misidentified antiquities, and "salted" treasure hunts, leaving many Gothic signifiers as ungrounded as the *Otranto* ghosts, even when Scott refers the effect of Aldobrand's ghost on Lovel to an echo of *Hamlet*, a major pre-text (as we have seen) for Walpole's "Gothic Story." That final wedding ring haunted by the Green Room specter, it turns out, which places its inscription within a "massy circle of antique chasing" or engraving (497), is, like Scott's novel and much of his writing, a site of abjection. Into this new emblem that *seems* age-old is thrown, as only obscurely visible, the deep-seated tug-of war between floating and anchored signs

underlying folklore, antiquities, history-writing, Gothic/historical Romanticism, the fixity yet fluidity of classes, and regressive-progressive thinking as Scott saw them all. This complex is simultaneously symbolized as quite Gothically "antique," thrown back far into the past like Lovel's mother, and encircled, then concealed in a coagulating "mass", within a forced compromise between the old and the new that is actually still "chasing," since its hidden contents still threaten, the ideological unity to which *The Antiquary* aspires.

It is thus not surprising that George Gordon, Lord Byron, was an avid reader of Scott, as well as Coleridge, Walpole, Radcliffe, and Lewis, so much so that he quote*s The Antiquary* more than once, most pointedly in Canto XI of his mock-epic poem *Don Juan* (Ragaz 32-34) published in segments from 1819 through 1824. In Canto XVI (Byron 656-79), left unfinished in 1823, having channeled Walpolean fiction in previous works off and on (see Cochran 1-110), Byron waxes more Gothic than ever, without quoting *The Antiquary* directly, as he fashions *the* haunted house of his career in a manner that unabashedly foregrounds that novel's, as well as Walpole's, false antiquities, hollowed-out specters, and deeply conflicted longings for the lost foundations behind them. Although Juan has been a guest since Canto XIII at Norman Abbey, a play on Byron's own family mansion (Newstead Abbey), it is only in XVI that our hero and his narrator concentrate on its halls as filled with "Gothic ornament" and Walpolean "portraits of the dead," already half in motion, from which "their eyes glance like dreams" (ll. 126, 135, 148). These descriptions, as deliberately theatrical as *The Castle of Otranto*'s*,* set the stage for Juan's first nighttime sighting of what seems the specter of "a monk, array'd/In cowl and beads" that "moved as shadowy as the sisters weird" while casting its own "bright eye" on its observer (ll. 161-62, 166, 168). The reader of 1824 and today cannot help but see this whole scheme as enacting Walpole's first step of foregrounding the sheerly "textual inheritance" of the "Gothic

Story's" preternatural elements (Macovski 38). Alongside the narrator's allusion to Shakespeare's *Macbeth,* there is the blatant echo of Lewis' *The Monk*, not just in the priest-figure floating like a "shadow," but in its appearance within a mansion that used to be a Catholic abbey (like Byron's Newstead) before Henry VIII ordered such monasteries despoiled in the 1530s-'40s. This haunting is a recollection, yes, of medieval institutions emptied out, but also of the "Spectre Nun" from convent ruins beneath a castle invading *The Monk* from Musäus's German Gothic "Elopement." Such a text of a text of a text makes Juan half-believe "there was nothing in't/Beyond the rumour," the story about the "Black Friar" long recounted at Norman Abbey (ll. 321-68) that has possibly been "Coin'd from surviving superstition's mint,/Which passes ghosts in currency like gold" (ll. 171-74). Indeed, this early sense of the monk-figure as a sign uprooted from Catholic origins is finally confirmed, again theatrically, when Canto XVI breaks off right at the revelation that this specter has been a costume for disguising the "voluptuous" Duchess of Fitz-Fulke (ll. 1031-32), another Abbey guest who has amorously "look'd at Juan hard" for some time (11. 245-46).

Not surprisingly, such a parodic and satiric replay of the first Walpolean step rapidly shifts into the second, in which the specter as a palimpsest of floating signifiers and the house as its now Walpolean stage-set become quasi-allegories for several complexes of conflicting ideologies haunting the West more in the 1810s-20s than in the 1530s-40s. When, to start with, we find that the Black Friar tale has been "coined" from "superstition" in a world where ghosts have become exchangeable "currency," we are reminded of another revelation by E.J. Clery (80-91) that, believed in or not, hauntings in texts had become a "consumer choice" in England by the end of the eighteenth century. Their sheer "commercial interest" for bourgeois readers consequently warred frequently with debates over whether their appearance in novels or on stage

were violations or affirmations of long-standing religious claims of higher spiritual realities. Moreover, the ghost-figures of castles or mansions in commercial circulation, even more than the underground trade that haunts *The Old Manor House*, are signals of what Byron know all too well, "that the aristocratic status" he ostensibly inherited, just like that of the Amundevilles, now "failed to count as the sort of privilege it once did" (Christenson 60). Aristocracy, with the dominant economy (as Charlotte Smith saw) shifting from landed estates to middle-class market values, was becoming, like a Walpole statue or portrait, a ghost of itself without its former basis. The leading Amundeville lady, Adeline, strives to reverse this trend by arranging marriages for younger women connected to her that might shore up the estate's finances, its pedigree, and her own devotion to Catholicism – thinking she will "save [Juan's] soul" in the process – all the while acknowledging that the signs of such old grounds have become elements in a woman's "market price" (Canto XV, ll. 217-32; Byron 646). Canto XVI, alongside longings for the past, even points forward, in the Abbey ghost-story being "currency like gold" (l. 174), to the prospect of mansion owners having to tell (or *sell*) such tales to make "these halls of old" attractive to investors and customers as well as guests (1. 170).

At the same time, the use of a ghost-disguise in this Canto as a masculine cover for a sexually predatory woman (not our hero's first) shifts this haunting towards enacting the ideological tug-of-war in the 1810s-20s highlighted by Susan Wolfson in *Don Juan*: the conflict between anxious reinforcements of "categories" that clearly "discriminate 'masculine' from 'feminine'" and "agents of sexual disorientation that break down, invert, and radically call into question [those] categories," both functions that Byron had practiced and knew well (585). Fitz-Fulke's ghostly disguise builds on, by inverting, Juan's cross-dressing as an odalisque in Canto V, where he attracts both the sultana and the sultan of Constantinople (V, ll. 577-1248; Byron

534-53), but also on the lust of *The Monk's* title character for the boy-novice "Rosario," who proves to be a Gothic disguise for the shape-shifting succubus Matilda, whose apparent femininity quickly proves assertively masculine (Lewis 66-80). Seeming the shade of the Black Friar thus allows the Duchess to play out the pleasures of "transvestism and [the] female appropriation of male property" and "prerogatives" otherwise denied to her (Wolfson 609) even as she also prepares to reinvoke standard categories by discarding her disguise to become the chief female object of Juan's male desire. Reworking the hollowed-out and hovering Gothic specter by way of Lewis, then, at least momentarily, allows Byron's Canto XVI to unfold the potential in such figures, from Walpole on, for becoming disseminated in "a set of social signifiers that challenge . . . customary boundaries of demarcation" (Wolfson 592).

Yet the Gothic signifier in *Don Juan*'s haunted house is not finally allowed to drift too far – and not just because, like Fitz-Fulke, this Canto finally "contains its subversive impulses" regarding gender (Wolfson 606). Before setting the Gothic stage for the "Black Friar's" haunting of the house, Byron's narrator addresses the reader at least semi-seriously, as he has done before, to maintain that, "whatever bar the reason rears/'Gainst [a] belief" in the reality of ghosts and the realm from which they may come, "there's something stronger still/In its behalf" (Canto XVI, ll. 54-56). Perhaps recalling that Walpole's first preface discourages belief in the *Otranto* ghosts, the initial framing of Canto XVI asserts something close to the opposite before revealing the Norman Abbey specter to be a ruse as though there were something to the "explained supernatural" in Radcliffe's novels. We therefore do understand Juan's "corporal quaking" at the prospect of the "Black Friar" even late in this Canto right alongside his "own internal ghost" feeling inclined to see the inseparability of "soul and body" as "odds against a disembodied soul" (ll. 989-92). Like Juan, given this Canto's beginning, the reader is led by

these moments to the third Walpolean step, the aporia between beliefs. During the opening stanzas of XVI, in fact, the narrator has set that hesitation up even more emphatically: “Those holier mysteries which the wise and just/Receive as gospel grow more rooted,/As all truths must, the more they are disputed” (ll. 46-48). Hence, as this Canto proceeds, the more the ghostly signifiers in the haunted Norman Abbey appear ungrounded, the more they also are pulled towards much earlier “roots,” even though the “truths” that lie there are “holier mysteries” so unworldly that they have receded and keep receding beyond human perception.

Most of Canto XVI, after all, is situated in a fallen world much different from the one at which “something stronger” lies, however fitfully the current Abbey harkens back to such a vague primal referent. Reactivating, as Scott does less flagrantly, the comic and satiric dimensions that have been in the “Gothic Story” as early as Walpole, especially in its specters of effigies, and the “dangerous sense of parody” that Emma McEvoy has seen in *The Monk* (see Horner and Zlosnik 323-25), *Don Juan’*s Canto XVI is the Gothicized culmination of a Norman Abbey sequence that sends up the English aristocracy as having declined into a parody of itself from its own lost functions and ideals, much as Miguel de Cervantes suggests about the Spanish aristocracy of his own time in Part Two of *Don Quixote* (1615; see Dunn). Fitz-Fulke’s vulgar theatricality and the overwrought Gothic accoutrements that surround it not only provoke laughter; they stand against Lady Adeline’s story of the ghost-friar’s primal point of reference, set apart in an eight-line stanza pared down (possibly purified) from the *ottava rima* of the rest. There, Adeline recalls from older retellings, an original “monk remain’d, unchased, unchain’d” as if not “form’d of clay” while the oldest known “Amundeville,” claiming himself the carrier of “King Henry’s right,” “Made Norman Church his prey/And expell’d [all] friars” save “one” (XVI, ll. 325-34). Norman Abbey becomes a specter of its family’s past violence against the

"Norman Church" and the latter's "holier mysteries" now long forgotten, parodying not just Henry VII's despoiling of the monasteries but the "Norman" Conquest of 1066 which violently subjugated an earlier and (perhaps) a better, more spiritual England. The original figure behind the ghost-monk, only the latter of which turns out to be "formed of clay," remains above and beyond all these falls from "holy mysteries," uncontaminated by the "currency" of "superstition's mint" that its latter-day avatar has become. In Adeline's tale, a "form" of the original monk may walk to haunt the guilt-ridden Amundevilles but, if this visage in her view could really "trace" the old figure from which it descends, it would appear without any visible "face" and with "eyes," if they could be seen, that "seem of a parted soul" (ll. 349-52) like the ghosts of Walpole that are sundered from their foundations but nonetheless prompt gazes at them which long for the receding past that their features still recall.

Fallen, Gothicized, and self-disguising humanity in Canto XVI of *Don Juan* is like "Man" in Byron's earlier "Prometheus" (1816), "A troubled stream from a pure source," of which the title figure in that poem is "a symbol and a sign" (Byron, p. 241; ll. 45-48) like the original monk of Adeline's story as opposed to Norman Abbey's parodic ghost. The backward inclination of the aporia in this haunted house is towards a "truth," but one that is so removed, far in the past, and continuing to fade that its floating signifiers, while never totally free from it, are cut off from its distant level and enabled to refer to newer belief-systems now in conflict, although those same signifiers remain conflicted themselves in doing so. In the end, though, moves are made in Canto XVI to make sure that this suggestion is both left dimly hovering, if ever-receding, and yet abjected (the fourth Walpolean step once again) behind a parody-Gothic disguise. Lady Adeline, so reminiscent of Juan's pious mother (as in Canto I, ll. 73-140), draws Juan towards her by "Betraying only now and then her soul" of an unearthly order, but she also

repels him because he starts to “doubt how much of Adeline was *real*” (XIV, ll. 813-16), meaning that he anticipates Kristeva’s sense of abjection as both longing for and casting off even mother-substitutes as somehow un-real. Then, with Adeline disappearing from the poem even though her tale continues to haunt it, the build-up to the disembodied specter exposing a female body inside it combines pathos (“The ghost, if ghost it were, seemed a sweet soul”) with bathos (“voluptuous but not *o’ergrown* bulk”) and the Gothic sublime with the parodically ridiculous (ll. 1025-31). Byron thus leaves us with a “phantom of her frolic Grace – Fitz-Fulke!” (l. 1032) where the surface combination of a blatant opposites intimates but also abjects -- making us laugh at a cross-dressing so that we forget – an oscillation between “ancient” beliefs, whose “truths” are here retracted beyond understanding, and “modern” contests among many conflicted attitudes. This tug of war, after all, is the abjected aporia which makes possible the Walpolean Gothic tradition, the haunted house from Charlotte Smith to Byron, and the means by which they all half-suggest and half-obscure what most underlies them.

The Victorian haunted-house tales that came after these, we now realize, were far less hesitant in choosing between “real” and psychological specters or even in choosing to make them impossible to distinguish (as in Henry James’ *The Turn of the Screw* [1898]). But that was only because their Romantic-era predecessors experimentally struggled with and exploited the contradictions basic to the Walpolean Gothic that Victorian extensions developed over many more variations. In these efforts, Romantic visions of haunting could never escape, even though they made some efforts to conceal, the Janus-facedness of the Gothic. It kept pulling their most progressive leanings, as we have seen, back towards figures, however emptied-out, that promised, even if they withheld, some kind of “truth” akin to, if not exactly the same as, the groundings of “ancient” romance (hence the “*Romantic* period”). Although she was rarely prone

to haunted houses in her fiction, Mary Shelley in her 1824 essay “On Ghosts” confronts such contradictory attitudes of her time about her subject, among them Wordsworth’s Walpolean “look[ing] for ghosts” even as he believes that “intercourse/Between the living and the dead” is “falsely said” (qtd. in Shelley). She asks the question “what is the meaning of this [undecided] feeling?” and follows it with her memory of her own visit to the “house where I had last seen” a friend who had died “a few months” before. There the manifestly Gothic emptiness of the “vast halls and spacious apartments” in which his “breath had mingled with that atmosphere” may not make him reappear as a full specter, but it does make the visitor read herself, while also projecting at least aspects of her friend, into the “vacant chambers.” In this imaginative process, “the earth [becomes] a tomb, the gaudy sky a vault, we but walking corpses” as though what haunts this house are images of *everyone’s* death, including his and hers to come, yet images that still are felt to move across the hollowed-out space. Shelley then answers her question: “There is something beyond us of which we all are ignorant” even for one who does not accept traditional Christian beliefs; “beyond our soul’s ken there is an empty space,” so “our hopes and fears . . . occupy the vacuum” yawning behind those specters that are our perceptions and lead the “heart” to a “belief that influences do exist to watch and guard us,” influences beyond ourselves whether or not past and present minds have put them there. Otherwise, she also writes, we moderns have completely lost all the “deep profound” of the “antediluvian” time (Byron’s lost “pure source”?) when “men’s imaginations” could “soar over the boundary” of whatever appeared to them. Mary Shelley here sounds like Walpole in the second Preface to *Otranto*, where he calls for “the great resources of fancy” from “ancient” days to no longer be “dammed up’ (9) even when emptied-out shades from that past, as he saw them, need to have their voids refilled with new, if conflicting, beliefs. The Gothic haunts Romanticism, then, and prompts the latter’s movement

through disbelief, conversion, aporia, and abjection, particularly in tales of haunted houses, because every emptiness that looms in vestiges of what is past *has* to be backfilled by its observers. There is an impulse in all human beings, we must admit, to project our thoughts and longings, then to abject our contradictions, into what immediately surrounds us *and* into the past that seems to open up behind – and hence to haunt us from – whatever we behold.

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