



Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of English Language and Literature

**THE EVOLUTION OF BRITISH AND IRISH GOTHIC DRAMA  
FROM THE LATE EIGHTEENTH TO THE EARLY TWENTY-  
FIRST CENTURIES WITHIN A SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT**

Tuğba ŞİMŞEK

Ph.D. Dissertation

Ankara, 2024



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## ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

The committee finds that Tuğba ŞİMŞEK has on the date of 03.06.2024 successfully passed the defense examination and approves her Ph.D. Dissertation titled “The Evolution of British and Irish Gothic Drama From the Late Eighteenth to the Early Twenty-First Centuries within a Socio-Political Context.”

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## ABSTRACT

ŞİMŞEK, Tuğba. *The Evolution of British and Irish Gothic Drama from the Late Eighteenth to the Early Twenty-First Centuries within a Socio-Political Context*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Ankara, 2024.

The Gothic emerged as a predominant genre from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth centuries. Though it primarily started with the novel, the Gothic also became a prominent and popular dramatic genre. Albeit popular over the years, especially in the 1820s and onwards, Gothic drama remained prevalent mostly through adaptations and translations. Despite the decline of Gothic drama during the Victorian Period, the Gothic as a genre never totally disappeared as its traces could be found in many later plays of the following centuries. And particularly in the twentieth century, the Gothic disseminated into other media such as cinema, music and fashion. In the 1960s, the political conflicts of the age contributed to the revival of the Gothic, especially in fiction. Besides, the era also saw the emergence of Gothic themes and motifs in many plays of this period. In this regard, this dissertation looks into the evolution of the Gothic in British and Irish drama from the late eighteenth to the early twenty-first centuries focusing on the playwrights' utilisation of the Gothic in relation to the socio-political background of the period the plays were written in, and manifests that Gothic drama still exists and thrives on the contemporary stage. In Chapter I, the late eighteenth-century Gothic is discussed with reference to the shifting class and gender dynamics in the society through Joanna Baillie's *De Monfort* (1798). Chapter II focuses on the early nineteenth-century Gothic and the Byronic hero as a disillusioned representative of his age through Lord George Gordon Byron's *Manfred* (1817). Snoo Wilson's *Vampire* (1973), in Chapter III, addresses and criticises the ongoing socio-political oppression through the vampire motif within the context of the 1960s and 1970s. Finally, in Chapter IV, a zombified portrayal of early twenty-first-century Ireland addressing postcolonial traumas in the aftermath of a dramatic economic crisis is explored in Conor McPherson's *The Veil* (2011). In conclusion, by discussing the peculiar features of the Gothic in every age, this dissertation investigates the evolution of Gothic drama.

### Keywords

Gothic, British Gothic drama, Irish Gothic drama, Joanna Baillie, Lord Byron, Snoo Wilson, Conor McPherson

## ÖZET

ŞİMŞEK, Tuğba. *On Sekizinci Yüzyıl Sonlarından Yirmi Birinci Yüzyıl Başlarına Kadar İngiliz ve İrlanda Gotik Tiyatrosunun Sosyo-Politik Bağlamda Gelişimi*, Doktora Tez, Ankara, 2024.

Gotik, on sekizinci yüzyılın sonlarından on dokuzuncu yüzyılın başlarına kadar döneme hâkim olan bir tür olarak ortaya çıktı. Öncelikle romanla başlamış olsa da Gotik zamanla tiyatrodaki öne çıkan ve popüler bir edebi tür haline geldi. 1820'lerden itibaren Gotik tiyatro, çoğunlukla uyarlamalar ve çeviriler yoluyla sahneye hâkim oldu. Viktorya döneminde Gotik tiyatro düşüşe geçmesine rağmen sonraki dönemlerde birçok oyunda Gotik motifler devam ettiği için bir tür olarak Gotik, hiçbir zaman tamamen ortadan kaybolmadı. Özellikle yirminci yüzyılda, Gotik, sinema, müzik ve moda gibi diğer alanlara da yayıldı. 1960'larda, çağın siyasi çatışmaları, özellikle romanda, Gotik türün yeniden canlanmasına katkıda bulundu. Ayrıca bu dönemin bazı oyunlarında Gotik temaların ve motiflerin yeniden canlandığı görüldü. Bu bağlamda, bu doktora tezi, oyunların yazıldığı dönemlerin sosyo-politik arka planı çerçevesinde yazarların bu türü ele alış biçimlerine odaklanarak on sekizinci yüzyıl sonlarından yirmi birinci yüzyıl başlarına kadar İngiliz ve İrlanda tiyatrosunda Gotik türün gelişimini ele almakta ve Gotik türün hâlâ tiyatrodaki devam ettiğini göstermektedir. Birinci bölümde, Joanna Baillie'nin *De Monfort* (1798) adlı oyununda, on sekizinci yüzyılın sonlarındaki Gotik tür, toplumdaki değişen sınıf ve cinsiyet dinamikleri çerçevesinde tartışılmaktadır. İkinci bölümde, Lord George Gordon Byron'ın *Manfred* (1817) adlı oyununda on dokuzuncu yüzyılda görülen özellikleriyle Gotik ve çağının hayal kırıklığına uğramış bir temsilcisi olan Byron kahramanı incelenmektedir. Üçüncü bölümde, Snoo Wilson'ın *Vampire* (1973) adlı oyununda 1960'lar ve 1970'ler bağlamında vampir motifi ile tarih boyunca devam eden sosyo-politik baskı ele alınmakta ve tartışılmaktadır. Son bölümde ise Conor McPherson'ın *The Veil* (2011) adlı oyununda büyük bir ekonomik krizin ardından sömürge sonrası travmaların ortaya çıktığı zombileşen yirmi birinci yüzyıl İrlanda'sı incelenmektedir. Sonuç olarak, bu doktora tezi, her çağda Gotik türün kendine özgü özelliklerini inceleyerek Gotik tiyatrosunun gelişimini tartışmaktadır.

### Anahtar Sözcükler

Gotik, İngiliz Gotik Tiyatrosu, İrlanda Gotik Tiyatrosu, Joanna Baillie, Lord Byron, Snoo Wilson, Conor McPherson

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## INTRODUCTION

As it disseminates into various forms ranging from literature and film to fashion, and music, the Gothic is a predominant genre, which has been generally associated with the novel from the late eighteenth century onwards. Although it was deemed as a novelistic genre, the second half of the eighteenth century through the early nineteenth century witnessed a plethora of Gothic plays written, adapted and staged. Therefore, it is clear that the Gothic has a significant status in the dramatic tradition as well. Until the early twenty-first century, Gothic drama had its vicissitudes from time to time, but it survived into the present by adapting itself to socio-political and cultural contexts and flourished continually. Still, the focus of research has been predominantly on the Gothic novel and Gothic drama, in comparison, has been vastly neglected. With reference to Joanna Baillie's *De Monfort* (1798), Lord Byron's *Manfred* (1817), Snoo Wilson's *Vampire* (1973) and Conor McPherson's *The Veil* (2011), this dissertation, hence, aims to discuss the evolution of Gothic drama from the late eighteenth century to the early twenty-first century and demonstrates the resilience of the Gothic in drama throughout the centuries by exploring how the Gothic is utilised to reflect upon the very period it is born into. In this sense, this dissertation is to track the Gothic in dramatic works within a socio-political and historical scope and to acknowledge its discursive and challenging approach so as to illustrate and discuss its *modus operandi* within the British and Irish dramatic tradition.

In order to understand the contested nature of the Gothic, it is important to trace the definition of the Gothic as a term since the perception of this term changed over time, and also some contradictory connotations continued to co-exist during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Historically, the term 'Gothic' goes back to the Goths, the Germanic tribes whose name was correlated with ignorance, barbarity, and vulgarity when compared to the Roman Empire with its classical literary tradition and architecture, hence "its use then implied a reproach" (Smith, *Architecture* 44). As David Punter explains, "[w]here the classical was well-ordered, the Gothic was chaotic; where simple and pure, Gothic was ornate and convoluted; where the classics offered a set of cultural models to be followed, Gothic represented excess and exaggeration, the product of the wild and the uncivilised" (*The Literature of Terror* 5). However, during the

eighteenth century, the Gothic also assumed a more positive meaning as it started to be associated with medievalism most probably due to the revived antiquarianism. According to Rosemary Sweet, “the literary Gothic did not emerge *ex nihilo*; rather it drew on well-established cultural meanings and a long-standing interest in the Gothic which was developed largely within the antiquarian tradition” (15). Especially during the eighteenth century, antiquarianism became a dominant and popular phenomenon prompting a huge interest in medieval antiquities, especially in terms of architecture as well as medieval literature such as folk tales, myths, or romances. This brought along the emergence of the Gothic romance in literature. It is, therefore, not wrong to state that the rise of the Gothic in literature was precipitated by the return to medievalism with an antiquarian curiosity. Moreover, particularly the Gothic architecture, though seen as inferior to classical architecture, played an important role in stimulating the Gothic imagination with its return to a medieval aesthetic “with its unprecedented pointed arches, soaring verticality, stained-glass windows, labyrinthine patterns, and filigreed tracery” (Howard 25).

Furthermore, the political discourse of the eighteenth century made use of the Gothic past as a historical legacy of Britain. Politicians explored their national heritage within the Gothic tradition as “[t]he gothic revival [...] played an important part in the development of both political and literary nationalism” (Kilgour 13). The antiquarian interest triggered the discovery of the fact that “the original forebears of the English were the Germanic invaders of Rome whom they called not Germans but Goths, [...] [and] they thought, founded the institutions of public assemblies” (Kliger 1). This nationalist agenda concerning the Gothic was thus exploited by both political parties, namely the Tories and the Whigs to support their own principles. Since the Goths defeated and plundered the Roman Empire in AD 410, the Gothic, as a term, came to be a representative of democracy and liberty as Dale Townsend states, “[i]n place of the tyranny of Roman leaders, [...] the Goths were perceived as the harbingers of democratic systems of government in Europe” (“Terror and Wonder” 27). Besides, since the Goths caused the downfall of the Roman Empire, the epithet ‘Gothic’ turned out to be “in religious discussion a trope for all those spiritual, moral, and cultural values contained for the eighteenth century in the single word ‘enlightenment’” (Kliger 34). Considering these, for the Tories, the Gothic meant the representative of order,

hierarchical and traditional values while for the Whigs, it signified freedom, liberty, democracy, anti-absolutism, and anti-Catholicism (Sage 92; Kedra-Kardela and Kowalczyk 16). Both parties situated the term according to their own ideological perspectives, hence the term is likely to have both conservative and liberal leanings. Accordingly, the Gothic is an ambivalent and ambiguous term that has the potential to be utilised according to specific discourses. These meanings and connotations are significant in terms of the reception of the Gothic which was mostly criticised and denounced based on its dichotomic historical, aesthetic, and political implications.

To better understand the growth of the Gothic, it is fundamental to touch upon the socio-politics and literary tradition of the eighteenth century. This was the age of the Enlightenment, that is, the age of reason and scientific truth and inquiry as well as a paradigm shift in society's approach to the world and its rules with a trust in human's rational capabilities to attain knowledge. As a literary and aesthetic movement of the Enlightenment period, Neoclassicism in literature dominated the century, adhering to order, rationalism, common sense, and the objective and strict moral principles which restrained the imaginative and creative faculties. Considering its essence, the Gothic could not accommodate itself within the principles of the age so that, according to Robert Kiely, "[w]riters in the second half of the eighteenth century were more and more inclined to associate the term with a salutary break with a discipline which had become too mechanical in its application" (28). Robert D. Hume also describes the emergence of the Gothic as "a widespread shift away from neoclassical ideals of order and reason, toward romantic belief in emotion and imagination" ("Gothic versus Romantic" 282). Thus, the Gothic turned out to be a term denoting the irrational, the imaginative, and excessive emotions. According to Andrew McCann, the Gothic is actually a textual and discursive form of cultural production and consumption regarding its being anti-thesis of society: "The public production of unreason as the antithesis of society can thus also be read as the preservation of the possibility of transgression once this production has been recuperated from policing and judicial practices in the form of literature" (16-17). Therefore, the Gothic, as a result of its own intrinsic antithetical stance, grew as opposed to the dictates of the age of the Enlightenment.

Furthermore, the eighteenth century was the age of the rise of the novel and literacy as well as of the rise of the middle class; hence, an age of socio-cultural and political transformations on every level of society. The eighteenth-century novel broke away from the romance tradition characterised by implausible stories and turned into a realistic style of writing with “an attempt to ascertain and report the truth” (Watt 31). The thriving middle class and growing literacy provided a necessary ground for the development of the novel appealing to the needs and tastes of the relevant class which became the very subject matter as well as the target audience of these works. As David Punter asserts, “the middle-class reading public clearly developed in these years a taste for a kind of reading which, while dealing in unreal incident, nonetheless located such incident in a readily recognisable world, rather than in the idealised and remote countries of the Elizabethan romancers” (*The Literature of Terror* 21). On the other hand, in opposition to the conventions of the Realist novel, during this period, another kind of novel began to rise to prominence, that is, the Gothic novel. Considering the eighteenth century as the age of the Enlightenment, the flourishing of the Gothic as a sensationalist and extremist mode of writing clearly demonstrated a socio-cultural and literary divergence from the current literary tradition. However, although the Gothic delineated a total break from current socio-cultural and literary conventions, it was also a return to the romance tradition which was discarded by the realist writing of the time. Ian Duncan points out that “[t]he eighteenth-century Gothic novel is the first modern British fiction to identify itself as a distinct kind under the name of ‘romance’” (20) which was revived in the mid-eighteenth century and became the dominant genre during the 1790s. Therefore, it can be asserted that the Gothic flourished both against and within the existing literary tradition.

It is significant to highlight that “from the mid-1790s until at least the early 1830s, British culture was self-consciously ‘Gothic,’ and [...] there [was] an identifiable cult of the Gothic—and [...] there is, hence, a sub-set of literary and social practice in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries that might be called ‘Gothic culture’” (Duggett 8). Because of the antiquarian interest starting from the late seventeenth century and growing into a very popular interest during the eighteenth century, it can be claimed that the Gothic did not strictly appear in the mid-1790s onwards but it was before this historical point that the prevalence of the Gothic was visible. Nevertheless,

during the 1790s, the Gothic turned out to be more established and ubiquitous, especially in the literary field. Considering this, the Gothic seems to dominate the whole era and cannot be thought separate from the literary and socio-political circumstances of the age.

From the mid-eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century, the period was characterised by various interrelated literary movements like the Graveyard School of Poetry, English Romanticism, and German Romanticism/*Sturm und Drang* all of which interacted and intersected with the Gothic. Therefore, to examine the relation of the Gothic to these concurrent movements, it is necessary to look into the extension and prominence of the Gothic within the scope of literary frameworks.

When looking into the poetic tradition of the eighteenth century, it is obvious that eighteenth-century poetry and the Gothic “inhabit a shared discursive field where numerous strands intersect and cross over, sometimes running parallel, at other times diverging” (Quinn 37). Considering the Gothic culture of the eighteenth century, the Gothic clearly permeated through the existing poetic traditions. As a transition from the Neoclassical poetic tradition to Romanticism, the Graveyard School of Poetry adapted itself to the spirit of the age and embodied some features of the Gothic. It is argued that “[t]he tones of despair, the odour of the charnel house, meditations on the shadow of the grave and the mystery of the future, contained the seeds of the Gothic epoch” (Varma 28). The Gothic and the Graveyard School are intertwined in terms of their approaches as they both deal with the mysterious and terrifying aspects of life and death as their subject matters. Moreover, the Gothic and the Graveyard School are interwoven into each other in terms of a melancholic or gloomy tone and atmosphere as well as their use of common themes such as death, grief and decay, all of which can be considered the fundamental elements of the Gothic which can be exemplified in the following poems: Thomas Parnell’s “A Night-Piece on Death” (1722), Robert Blair’s “The Grave” (1743) and Thomas Gray’s “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” (1751). Though starting as a novelistic form, the Gothicism of the age infused into the poetic form of the eighteenth century as well, which would soon be extended into Romantic poetry.

The Gothic and Romanticism were the two main strands of the late eighteenth century even though the Gothic had a significant but ambiguous stance in Romanticism.

According to Robert D. Hume, whose article “Gothic versus Romantic: A Revaluation of the Gothic Novel” (1969) was the first to recognise the relationship between the Gothic and Romanticism, “[t]he early Gothic novels can be considered the precursors of romanticism in their concern with sensibility, the sublime, and the involvement of the reader in a more than rational way. Gothic also prepares the way for and shares the romantic ‘confusion’ of good and evil” (289). As stated before, the Gothic culture dominated the eighteenth century, hence the emergent poetic forms could not avoid being engaged with it as Gothicism infiltrated into various forms of literature from novels and poetry to drama. In the case of the Gothic and Romanticism, many critics agree on their organic connection and interaction. Concerning these two literary trends of the late eighteenth century, Anne Williams argues that the “Gothic is a poetic tradition. [...] ‘Gothic’ and ‘Romantic’ are not two but one” (1), and Williams further continues: “Gothic prose of the 1790s is in fact disturbingly ‘poetic’” (4). Michael Gamer distinguishes this bilateral relationship between the Gothic and Romanticism in that both constructed each other through their receptions, leading them to be defined in terms of their being low and high literary forms respectively as “the gothic perpetually haunts, as an aesthetic to be rejected, romanticism’s construction of high literary culture” (*Romanticism and the Gothic* 7). Moreover, Tom Duggett identifies a “‘Gothic’ phase or strand within Romantic writing; [...] a part of canonical Romanticism as Gothic” (7). Regarding all these perspectives, it is argued that the Gothic dominated the late eighteenth century as an aesthetic movement and the literary Gothic and Romanticism grew side by side. The Gothic and Romanticism in fact shared various similarities as they developed during the same period, so it is significant to establish that their relationship to each other was permeable (McEvoy, “Gothic and Romantics” 27) rather than being differentiated from each other.

Moreover, the *Sturm und Drang* or “Storm and Stress” movement, a precursor of Romanticism, and such genres as the *Ritter-*, *Rauber-*, and *Schauerroman* “featuring knights, robbers, and ghosts” (Hale 63) particularly affected the development of the Gothic in Britain. In the late eighteenth century, German works were flooding into Britain through translations and adaptations, such as Friedrich von Schiller’s *The Robbers* (1781) and *The Ghost-Seer, or Apparitionist* (1787-89), and August von Kotzebue’s *The Stranger* (1798). Considering this was the period of literary exchange,

English materials had influenced German works but they came back with additional Gothic elements such as “secret tribunals and a diablerie which included blue flames and decaying witch beauties” (Evans 151-2). Translations and adaptations from German literature became very popular, as E. J. Clery further explains:

The 1790s saw the belated discovery of a whole new field to exploit, the productions of the *Sturm und Drang* movement and the sensationalist *Schaurromane* – ‘horror novels’ – that came in their wake. For a readership accustomed to the school of Radcliffe the first encounter with this alien literature was eye-opening and disconcerting. (*The Rise of Supernatural Fiction* 140)

These exchanges between Germany and Britain, thus, fed a new pattern of terror and horror literature while the growing public demand and publishing market of the late eighteenth century triggered the popularity of these Gothic works. So, the impact of German Gothic works upon the British Gothic literature of the time cannot be denied and at the turn of the century, the words ‘German’ and ‘Gothic’ were already used interchangeably.

For the critics of the age, “German taste [...] came to connote wild extravagance of sentiment and incident, passion wound up to the highest pitch, horror, grotesqueness, and the expression of all these qualities in inflated language” (Tompkins, *The Popular Novel* 289). In this regard, it can be said that the Gothic received an ambivalent reception and, in fact, was transformed into Britain’s unwanted other. Despite the popularity of the Gothic on the stage, the reviewers and critics of the period condemned and regarded it as a threat to British culture because of its moral and political excesses. These critical opinions affected the attitudes of some writers who began to deny their connections with the Gothic. Especially, Romantic poets explicitly expressed their negative opinions on the Gothic despite their use of the Gothic in some of their works. William Wordsworth in his Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) argues that “[t]he 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” (117). What Wordsworth referred to as “frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies” are the Gothic works of the period. In *Biographia Literaria* (1817), Samuel Taylor Coleridge also disdains Gothic drama in particular because he associates it with German drama, or

“modern jacobinical drama” (390) since the Gothic connotes revolutionary and subversive impulses. He defines German drama as “the mere cramps of weakness, and orgasms of a sickly imagination on the part of the author, and the lowest provocation of torpid feeling on that of the readers” (382-3). However, Coleridge also acknowledges the fact that “[t]he so-called *German* drama, [...] is *English* in its *origin*, *English* in its materials, and *English* by re-adoption” (383, italics in orig.), thereby drawing attention to the constant literary exchange in the period and their own Gothic heritage. Although involved in the Gothic tradition with such works as “Christabel” (1797-1800) and “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” (1797-1798) by Coleridge, *The Borderers* (1796/1842) and “Tintern Abbey” (1798) by Wordsworth, Wordsworth and Coleridge attempted to keep their distance from the Gothic. The impact of the German literary imports was undeniable and there was a notably mixed reception of the Gothic in the late eighteenth century because of its association with the German works. Considering the Gothic mania of the day, British writers and critics approached the Gothic suspiciously and saw it as a threat to both literary taste and national identity while the public enjoyed reading and watching such works.

Also, the historical and political background of the period impacted the Gothic. The late eighteenth century was the age of revolutions, namely the American Revolution (1775-83) and the French Revolution (1789) which affected and shaped the mood and attitude of the century. People across the world strove for their liberty, rights and democracy although this also meant Britain’s colonial decline considering the loss of its thirteen colonies. Particularly the French Revolution affected Britain because of its continental proximity. J. M. S. Tompkins affirms that “[t]he French Revolution, by shaking the foundations of society, had engendered an atmosphere of insecurity and excitement that quickened the nerves of literature” (*The Popular Novel* 251). Therefore, “[t]he French Revolution [...] provoked a crisis in Britain by providing an example of constitutional, political, social and religious upheaval which inspired some in Britain and appalled others” (Macleod 117). During the Reign of Terror (1793-1794) following the French Revolution, many people including the members of the monarchy were executed, thereby leading to literal terror and horror in the streets of France. The British government thus began to see the French Revolution as a threat to monarchy in general, which instigated a reign of political turmoil and sanctions within Britain.

Hence, the British government took strict precautions and introduced some sanctions such as the suspensions of *Habeas Corpus*,<sup>1</sup> and the Treason Trials of 1794, all of which were to keep the radicals under control. Besides, it passed the Gagging Acts in 1795 through which “all criticism of the king, his heirs and successors (spoken or written) became a treasonable offence, and the publication of radical pamphlets was effectively stopped” (Stabler, *Burke to Byron* 158-9). However, this meant that the government as a representative of the so-called democracy curbed free speech and thought. Thus, “[t]he self-declared constitutional protector of the rights of the individual began to assume the characteristics of its demonised other, the secret state, and saw the ideal of the ‘free-born Englishman’ it had cultivated in the past used to challenge its authority” (Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction* 167). Moreover, while the British government carried out the persecutions of English Jacobins<sup>2</sup> or the radicals and dealt with the ongoing protests for reform at home, it also tried to take control of Irish revolutionaries who frightened the government to a great extent. Indeed, the Irish Rising of 1798 was seen as “the closest that Britain came to imitating the French revolution” (Haywood 103). Besides, Britain was at war with France from 1792 to 1815, during both the French Revolutionary Wars (1792-1802) and the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815) ending with the defeat of France at Waterloo. All of these conflicts enhanced the already chaotic atmosphere of the age. Considering the political turmoil of the period, it is undeniable that the British were afraid of revolutionary activities and foreign invasion, especially by the French. As a result of the abovementioned sanctions, Prime Minister William Pitt, thus, actualised an atmosphere of terror and insecurity in Britain. Hence, the 1790s onwards were very influential in the formation of the Gothic mindset while the impacts of homegrown problems and subsequent anxieties were also considered the contributing factors to the development and popularity of the Gothic.

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<sup>1</sup> *Habeas Corpus* grants a legal right to justify oneself in front of the court against unfair or illegal imprisonment. In this sense, the suspension of *Habeas Corpus* refers to the detention of an individual without being brought before the court.

<sup>2</sup> Since the radicals “had been sympathetic to the Revolution and were opposed to the war, they were regularly called ‘Jacobins’ (a term used by loyalists as a synonym for ‘French’), and frequently attacked as traitors” (Jimack 158). The radicals firstly advocated the Revolution because of its ideals of freedom, democracy and anti-absolutism; however, later ongoing massacres and executions led many to disillusionment and to lose their belief in their ideals for a better future.

All in all, the “‘Gothic’ [...] was the historically dated response of the English psyche to what was happening on the far side of the Channel” (2), as Maurice Levy argues. It is obvious that the Gothic was triggered by such chaotic historical and political circumstances at home and abroad. Consequently, the Gothic developed into “a term invoked in many political debates, signifying, for a range of political positions, revolutionary mobs, enlightened radicals and irrational adherence to tyrannical and superstitious feudal values” (Botting, *Gothic* 5) as well as the controversial anti-Catholic sentiment which continued since the Reformation. Thus, the Gothic was intrinsically absorbed into the socio-cultural and historical texture and became the very tool to reflect upon the age. In this regard, the abovementioned literary and socio-historical context paved the way for Gothic literature which itself reflected all these features.

Horace Walpole, an enthusiastic antiquarian, pioneered the Gothic tradition in literature writing *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) which is acknowledged as the first Gothic novel. In his first Preface, Walpole, however, presented his novel as a translation by William Marshall from a sixteenth-century Italian story written by Onuphrio Muralto, thus passing it off as a found manuscript in a library. Later when he received a good reception for his book, he admitted to the authorship of the work in the second Preface. Considering his essential accomplishment here, Walpole engendered a new form of writing merging the old and the new as he stated in the second Preface:

It was an attempt to blend two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern. In the former all was imagination and improbability: in the latter, nature is always intended to be, and sometimes has been, copied with success. Invention has not been wanting; but the great resources of fancy have been dammed up, by a strict adherence to common life. (9)

Thus, Walpole highlighted that the literary tradition of his time was exhausted and attempted to bring a new sense of vitality to the current realist writing of the period by blending the ancient and the modern. As Robert Kiely argues, “[i]t is out of this sense of external nature ‘exhausted’ by conventional art that Walpole took to portraying, as an antidote, unnatural acts performed by improbable characters in unlikely places and thereby established the general fare of Gothic fiction for decades to come” (42). Walpole recognised the need for a change in the literary field and risked being

condemned due to his attempt,<sup>3</sup> considering the contrary and controversial attitude toward the reception of the Gothic during the eighteenth century. It turns out, luckily for him, that his novel “was not only innovative, but succeeded in shifting an entire paradigm” (Groom x). By adding the subtitle “A Gothic Story,” Walpole changed the course of the literary tradition with a deliberate attempt to create a new form, as stated in his second Preface.

Besides, Walpole was likely to be claiming his national heritage and past as a Whig politician since “labelling one’s product ‘A Gothic Story’ may suggest a form of patriotism and Whig complacency about the past” (Wright, *Britain* 9). As mentioned before, the Gothic as a term was exploited by the politicians to claim their national heritage in its historical roots going back to the Goths and it connoted liberty, democracy and anti-absolutism which were supported by the Whigs. Therefore, it is possible that Walpole protected himself from the harsh criticisms of the age and aligned himself with a national heritage as well as a great national bard, Shakespeare. In his second Preface, Walpole states that he was inspired by Shakespeare and defends or legitimises his writing stating, “I had higher authority than my own opinion for this conduct. That great master of nature, Shakespeare, was the model I copied” (10). In this regard, it is important to mark that because the Gothic was recognised as a low literary form, Gothic writers felt the urge to defend themselves by relating the Gothic with their national literary heritage going back to Shakespeare and Spenser. As Dale Townshend states,

Gothic writers from Walpole onwards sought to legitimize their own popular-cultural productions by situating them within the national “Gothic” literary heritage that ran from Chaucer, through Spenser and Shakespeare, and into Milton: the classicism of Milton was often overlooked in what was taken to be the embrace of a native English literary tradition. While Shakespearean allusion, citation, and appropriation undoubtedly served to authenticate the low cultural form that was the

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<sup>3</sup> *The Monthly Review* of 1765 published two different reviews of *The Castle of Otranto* before and after the revelation of its authorship. When it was considered as a translated work, the first review evaluated the novel positively in that “the language is accurate and elegant, the characters are highly finished; and the disquisitions into human manners, passions and pursuits, indicate the keenest penetration, the most perfect knowledge of mankind” (97). When the author was revealed, the second review was revised stating, “[i]t is, indeed, more than strange that an Author, of a refined and polished genius, should be an advocate for re-establishing the barbarous superstitions of Gothic devilism!” (394).

Gothic, it was also through the Gothic that Shakespeare was popularized. (“Gothic Shakespeare” 48)

It is seen that returning to or claiming the native heritage dominated the mindset of the eighteenth century. All in all, as a result of his new endeavour, the Gothic as a literary genre came into being with Walpole setting the typical characteristics of the Gothic novel.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, the Gothic genre was identified by a certain setting, recurring plot, characters, themes, a typical atmosphere and mood which was also the cause of the assault on the genre because of its formulaic pattern. Although the Gothic started with the novel genre, these same characteristics were applied to Gothic plays as well. In terms of setting, such works are mostly set in the past and/or a foreign place where tyrannical and oppressive forces operate within enclosed or decayed edifices like castles, convents, monasteries, or dungeons. The woods or the forests are also popular locations as they are mostly utilised to reflect the psychology of the characters. As for the typical Gothic plot, it consists of a power struggle between a villain who is mostly a usurper, murderer or lustful tyrant, and an innocent heroine oppressed and trying to survive in the hands of the villain or left at his mercy. Considering the plot pattern, complete poetic justice cannot always be claimed, but a kind of order is restored in the end as separated lovers or parents and children are mostly united. There are also common plot devices like story-within-a-story, dreams, the supernatural, omens, long-lost-then-found manuscripts, diaries, or letters. Moreover, the Gothic employs certain stereotypical characters such as nuns, monks, demons, tyrannical parents, monsters, vampires, ghosts, or the othered/marginalised figures in addition to the villain and heroine. When thematically considered, the Gothic deals with usurpation, succession, patriarchy, repression of women, sexuality, dismantled families, incest, loss and regret, ambition, and anti-Catholic sentiment. Besides, the atmosphere of horror, terror, mystery and obscurity contributes a lot to these Gothic features and complements their effect to a certain extent. Fred Botting explains further that “Gothic atmospheres – gloomy and mysterious – have repeatedly signalled the disturbing return of the pasts upon the presents and evoked emotions of terror and laughter” (*Gothic* 1).

Thus, the return of the past or the repressed, obscurity, mysterious occurrences, gloomy mood, and terror/horror become the inevitable parts<sup>4</sup> of the Gothic.

To be able to understand the operation of the Gothic, it is significant to look into some of these typical Gothic motifs. The first one of these is the castle or any enclosed space which is employed to evoke the mood and the atmosphere. The Gothic makes use of such settings as (ruined) castles, convents, graves, and such to create a claustrophobic environment stifling the characters. During the late eighteenth century, the castle as a setting became the norm for these works by presenting a menacing and confusing labyrinth with its secret passages, cellars, dungeons, or hidden doors. J. M. S. Tompkins describes the Gothic castle as follows:

The Gothic castle itself, that formidable place, ruinous yet an effective prison, phantasmagorically shifting its outline as ever new vaults extend their labyrinths, scene of solitary wanderings, cut off from the light and human contact, of unformulated menace and the terror of the living dead – this hold, with all its hundred names, now looms to investigators as the symbol of a neurosis; they see in it the gigantic symbol of anxiety, the dread of oppression and of the abyss, the response to the political and religious insecurity of disturbed times. (“Introduction” xiii)

Thus, all these conditions, that is, neurosis, anxiety, oppression, political and religious ambiguity are amalgamated into one concrete existence in the Gothic. Moreover, the Gothic space, physically and psychologically, illustrates haunting, mystery, and incarceration of any sort. Hence, this enclosed space helps construct the gloomy or terrifying mood or atmosphere throughout the work. Moreover, Anne Williams also accentuates the fact that the castle is likely to be treated “as a complex metaphor for the structures of cultural power (whether private or public, sexual, political, or religious) and for the gender arrangements such institutions both found and mirror” (47). Considering the changing class hierarchies during the eighteenth century, the castle may

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<sup>4</sup> Most of these Gothic components are indebted to *The Castle of Otranto* in the first place. But it is important to point out that they were later perfected by Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823), as Varma argues: “Although it was Walpole who made the first formative attempt to give a new turn to the plot by adding a dramatic technique, Mrs. Radcliffe carried that method to a higher artistic development, making a much finer use of the principle of suspense, which was rather of a nightmarish nature in Walpole’s goblin tale” (109). Radcliffe made use of the explained supernatural, – that is, the seemingly supernatural is explained logically – and the sublime and picturesque scenery, which were her contributions to the genre.

also represent the last vestige of the feudal system which was about to collapse. Or the castle is likely to be taken as a symbolic patriarchal order suffocating and imprisoning women as the absolute seat of the patriarchal villain. Such an enclosed claustrophobic space is, then, utilised to explore the socio-cultural and political implications and anxieties in society by exposing them.

In the traditional Gothic, a tyrant or villain complements the castle. He usurps the power, seizes an illegitimate inheritance by discarding the rightful heirs, pursues a woman who is mostly his relative or ward and spreads fear all around. It is not wrong to say that the villain is misogynist as he victimises the heroine particularly. He is portrayed as a powerful figure independent of any restrictions and capable of doing anything to achieve his aims. Unsympathetic as he is, especially in the novel genre, the villain is inclined to cruelty, sadism and monstrosity with his unyielding ambitions and passions. As Devendra P. Varma states, “[w]hile the passive agent of terror is the castle, the active agent of terror is the Gothic villain” (19). Considering the fact that the eighteenth century was the age of revolutions, the villain as an absolute oppressor can be associated with despotic aristocratic rulers of the feudal system and their downfall represents the collapse of the existing system. In this regard, Jeffrey N. Cox explains further: “The Gothic villain/hero, the charismatic yet terrifying figure at the heart of these plays, seems both to presage and to reflect the titanic figures of the revolutionary era, both the aristocrats of the *ancien régime* and such powerfully controversial revolutionary figures as Danton, Robespierre, and Napoleon” (“English Gothic Theatre” 129). It was already established that both continental turmoil and home-grown problems triggered the Gothic imagination; therefore, fear and anxiety grew to be the norm of the day considering the popularity of the Gothic works. So, this Gothic villain operates as a projected silhouette of fear and anxiety dominating the age.

Like the villain, the heroine is an indispensable part of the Gothic works. As Maggie Kilgour argues, “Gothic novels revolve around a battle between antithetical sexes, in which an aggressive sexual male, who wants to indulge his own will, is set against a passive spiritual female, who is identified with the restrictions of social norms” (12). In the midst of this battle, the heroine becomes an object of the tyrant’s desire and obsession. She is mostly portrayed as a suffering or an obedient figure at the mercy of

the patriarch. Despite this, the heroine defies patriarchal repression and protects herself at all costs though some of the Gothic works<sup>5</sup> employ total submission of women to the patriarchy. Considering the tough conditions women were impelled to live in, that is having no rights, and no property but only being the property of the father and husband, Gothic works illustrate their incarceration at home and in the society through the villainous and oppressive patriarchs. While doing this, the Gothic refers to an attempt to challenge the oppressive conditions women live in and develops into a vehicle to express that struggle. Maybe the best example of this is Joanna Baillie's *De Monfort* (1798) which portrays a strong and independent woman challenging society's expectations for the role of women.

Another Gothic element is the supernatural or extraordinary that becomes an indispensable part of the Gothic, which shows itself through ghosts, mysterious noises, gigantic figures, omens, dreams, and people coming out of portraits. According to Ellen Moers, the purpose of the supernatural in Gothic works where

fantasy predominated over reality, the strange over the commonplace, and the supernatural over the natural, [is] with one definite auctorial intent: to scare. Not, that is, to reach down into the depths of the soul and purge it with pity and terror (as we say tragedy does), but to get to the body itself, its glands, muscles, epidermis, and circulatory system, quickly arousing and quickly allaying the physiological reactions to fear. (90)

In addition to this explicit 'scary' element as Moers states above, the supernatural helps trigger the frightened mood or tension and contributes to the mysterious or unknown atmosphere of the story. Therefore, the supernatural is utilised to create an "ambivalence or tension [...] between certainty and doubt, between the familiar and the feared, between rational occurrence and the inexplicable" (Briggs 176). The supernatural, then, engenders confusion, obscurity and the uncanny in the Freudian sense. Besides, the supernatural is deployed to express inner reality as "psychological projections running up against pervasive external drives that may really control the psyche after all" (Hogle, "Foreword" xvii). Anything that remains hidden, regretted, or

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<sup>5</sup> Hippolyta in *The Castle of Otranto* can be given as an example for a subservient woman. Also, George Colman (the Younger)'s play *Blue-Beard; or, Female Curiosity!* (1798) is a perfect example of how the society assigns certain roles to women as it expects total obedience from them, as seen in the case of Fatima.

repressed, hence, comes to the surface level as the supernatural incarnate, or the uncanny. It is necessary to briefly note that during the late eighteenth century, there were two types of the supernatural employed by the writers, that is, the explained and unexplained supernatural. Radcliffe makes use of the supernatural which is ultimately explained in a rational manner following the suspenseful experiences of the characters. Walpole and later Matthew Lewis employ the unexplained supernatural exploring the unknown without any urge or desire to explain it away. Consequently, the supernatural, whether explained or unexplained, is employed to create fear, suspense, terror and horror and to explore the psyche so as to unveil the hidden or the repressed.

One of the Gothic themes listed above is the anti-Catholic sentiment and this turns into one of the crucial components of the Gothic. As a consequence of the impacts of the French Revolution, the French Revolutionary Wars and the Napoleonic Wars, anti-Catholicism in Britain increased during this period as

[t]he informed and persuasive accounts of the Protestant British readership expelling or abjecting their fears of invasion and revolution onto a Catholic ‘other’ continent demonstrate an increased attention in Gothic criticism to the historical and religious contexts from which the Gothic was born. (Wright, *Gothic Fiction* 89-90)

Considering the peak of the Gothic from the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century, the continental turmoil, the Irish Rising, the Catholic Emancipation and the growing national identity based on Protestantism most probably enhanced and intensified this sentiment and increased British fear and anxiety because of the possibility of losing national and religious values. As Robert Kiely explains, “[f]or the eighteenth-century English Protestant the trappings of the Roman Church provided an exotic background, but, more than that, they were symbols of superstition, fanaticism, and odd behavior” (31). Thus, some Gothic writers exploited anti-Catholic sentiment for both aesthetic and religious reasons and treated the clergy as evil and lust incarnate. While Diane Long Hoeveler states that “the majority of Gothics are primarily invested in an anti-Catholic ideological agenda” (*The Gothic Ideology* 48), it is significant to underline that not all Gothic works bear this sentiment. Angela Wright also argues that “monastic institutions are more often than not portrayed in the Gothic as a source of terror [...], [but] it is important to acknowledge that some portrayals of monastic spaces

are substantially less condemnatory” (*Gothic Fiction* 94). For example, in the earlier Gothics like Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto*, Father Jerome is represented as a benevolent figure, unlike the wicked Father Benedict in Walpole’s play *The Mysterious Mother*. As it is observed, the Gothic had an ambiguous stance towards religious representation though the historical dimension was influential in reading Gothic texts, particularly regarding religious concerns.

In Gothic works, maybe rather than the typical elements or any other tangible features, it is the atmosphere that creates the Gothic effect. The atmosphere can be considered an essential element to stimulate the imagination, enhance the suspense or create fear and anxiety. The Gothic, then, encompasses an atmosphere of mystery, gloom, terror and tension pervading throughout the work. The Gothic tropes such as natural elements like wind or thunder, or chains, shadows, eerie sounds, or night also contribute to heighten the Gothic atmosphere. Maggie Kilgour argues that “the gothic’s main concern is [...] to create a feeling or effect in its readers by placing them in a state of thrilling suspense and uncertainty” (6). In this sense, the Gothic also features an atmosphere of obscurity which unsettles the reader/audience.

These are some of the basic features of the typical Gothic in literature that emerged in the late eighteenth century and was inspired by antiquarian and architectural interests as well as the literary movements of the age, and employed in the novel and drama. Considering the literary and socio-historical background, the Gothic appeared in a transitional period when a lot of change was occurring. It developed against the philosophy of the Enlightenment and later was affected by the French Revolution, thereby merging inseparably with the politics of the period. So, the tumultuous moments catalyse the Gothic into the pages of literary works as a way of expression and reaction in a subverted manner.

As stated before, although the Gothic started with the novel genre, Gothic drama adopting the same typical Gothic elements with the novel experienced its heyday from the late-eighteenth to the early nineteenth centuries. Gothic drama was born out of the socio-cultural and political turmoil during the late-eighteenth century and onwards. As Jeffrey N. Cox states, “[d]uring an era when English audiences anxiously lived through a series of political, economic, social, cultural, and literary innovations the Gothic

drama provided a major new form of entertainment and of reflection upon a world in major upheaval” (“English Gothic Theatre” 125). Diane Long Hoeveler also argues that

[e]ach [play] participates in the ongoing national debate about the proper role of the monarchy, the threat of violent revolution, the shock of sudden class transformation, the anxiety of changing gender roles within the family structure, and, finally, the construction of a newly nationalistic British empire that sought to justify its absorption of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. (“Gothic Drama” 169)

Therefore, it is natural that Gothic drama was at its peak in this period. Jeffrey N. Cox particularly draws attention to two historical points affecting the development of Gothic drama, that is the fall of the Bastille in the 1790s and the fall of Napoleon in 1815 (*Seven Gothic Dramas* 8). So, the ideological and historical dynamics cannot be overlooked in the Gothic plays of this period. In this regard, Gothic plays expose the collapse of the aristocracy, the corruption of morality, the ongoing socio-cultural changes in terms of gender, class, family, and nation, and broken social hierarchies. Thus, through socio-political references, Gothic drama functions to unveil and dismantle the individual and society piece by piece to reveal what is underneath.

Walpole, pioneering the Gothic novel, was also considered a pioneer of Gothic drama.<sup>6</sup> His play *The Mysterious Mother* (1768), as Bertrand Evans asserts, “represents the true beginning of the Gothic school of drama” (58). Walpole considered this play highly scandalous to be published because of its subject matter; therefore, it was circulated only among friends. The play is based on an incestuous desire of a mother for her son who himself unknowingly continues this incestuous circle further by marrying his own daughter/sister. On the day of her husband’s death, the Countess of Narbonne gave in to her lust and slept with her son Edmund; Edmund thought she was the maid. Her lustful act and remorse make her commit herself to charity, yet Father Benedict insists on taking confessions from her and when he cannot, he helps the Countess’s son and daughter, that is father/brother and daughter/sister to marry each other. When the familial secrets are revealed, the Countess goes mad and commits suicide, the son goes to war to die and the daughter enters a convent. With its unconventional story, the play deals with excess, overt sexual desires, incest and clerical oppression. The castle as an

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<sup>6</sup> Although some sources date it back to John Home’s *Douglas: A Tragedy* (1756), most of the critics regard Walpole’s *The Mysterious Mother* as a pioneering Gothic drama.

enclosed space, the cloistered heroine, the mysterious past and secret, guilt, remorse, incest, gloomy and eerie atmosphere, sensation, terror and death as the basic features of Gothic drama are explored in this play. Frederick S. Frank argues that “Walpole generated psychological tension through familial victimization and created the paradigmatic Gothic drama of internecine filial conflict and sexual depravity” (“Gothic Drama” 155-56). It is, therefore, significant to touch upon some of the characteristics of this play to mark its place in the Gothic tradition.

In terms of characterisation, the play may be considered a precursor in its relation to the Byronic hero. The protagonist, the Countess of Narbonne, is portrayed as an independent and rebellious figure rejecting any religious institutions, but remorseful on her own account without seeking any absolution or salvation as she says:

We want no preacher to distinguish vice  
From virtue. At our birth the god reveal'd  
All conscience needs to know.  
[...] Weak minds  
Want their soul's fortune told by oracles  
And holy jugglers. Me, nor oracles,  
Nor prophets, Death alone can certify,  
Whether, when justice's full dues exacted,  
Mercy shall grant one drop to slake my torment,  
– Here, father, break we off; you to your calling;  
I to my tears and mournfull occupation. (I.v.191)

Though anachronistically, it can be said that her ideas and attitude resemble Byron's Manfred in *Manfred* (1817), who is the epitome of the Byronic hero. For this reason, the Countess is likely to be the first proto-Byronic heroine with her mysterious past though revealed in the end, irredeemable guilt, unorthodox and rebellious personality as well as repudiation of the religious institution. Besides, as Francesca Saggini accentuates, the play is “all the more revolutionary when linked to the gender of its protagonist” (*The Gothic Novel* 59) considering that later protagonists are male figures. In this respect, *The Mysterious Mother* is prominently radical. In fact, “the Countess is an Enlightenment figure: she relies on conscience and rationality, refusing to enclose herself in the Gothic space of the confessional. She is nonetheless Gothic (‘mysterious’) in her resistance to disclosure and revelation” (Baines, “This Theatre of Monstrous Guilt” 296). Unlike the restrictive gender roles assigned to women during this age, the

Countess is defined by self-confidence, nonsubmissiveness and outspokenness. All in all, her qualities bring her close to the type of the Byronic hero.

Moreover, Father Benedict in the play illustrates the anti-Catholic sentiment in that he attempts to frighten the Countess to be able to get a confession from her and it is seen that his intimidations are far from any religious reasons but the consequence of his evil nature. He believes that both Edmund and his mother the Countess are “thinking heretics” (IV.i.221). As Paul Baines argues, “[t]he Countess voices proto-Protestant sympathies against the corruptions of the Church which the play very obviously seconds ([...] by references to the incipient Reformation in which the action is set), leaving her as a sort of icon for an imagined future liberty of conscience (if not of action)” (“This Theatre of Monstrous Guilt” 292). In the play, Father Benedict’s goal is to ruin Edmund and his mother no matter what, so he brings them together by marrying them as he guesses the secret of the Countess. Father Benedict says: “I mumbled o’er the spell that binds them fast,/Like an invenom’d robe, to scorch each other/With mutual ruin – Thus am I reveng’d” (V.i.234). Unlike Father Jerome in *The Castle of Otranto* who is depicted as a benevolent and good religious figure, Father Benedict in this play is one of the first representations of the anti-Catholic sentiment within the Gothic tradition considering his pretentious, ambitious, wicked and insidious nature. Diane Long Hoeveler argues that “Walpole’s dramatic strategy was one of bifurcated demonization: both sexualized mothers and greedy Catholic monks are ‘othered’ and condemned as monstrosities” (“Ghostly Visitants” 120), thereby subverting the norms and expectations. George E. Haggerty also reads the play as a “demonization of normative relations” (“Psychodrama” 245) as it problematises socio-cultural norms like marriage, patriarchy, and family. Walpole, thus, displays fears, anxieties, and desires in the face of the dictates of the Age of Reason. Frederick S. Frank explains that Walpole’s “Gothicizing was no longer ‘merely architecture’ but an attitude of discontent reflecting the subconscious fears and desires of an age grown too fond of reason and beginning to question its own empirical assumptions” (“Introduction” 13). By going against the grains of the ideals of the Enlightenment, this first Gothic play presents the familial, sexual and religious tension and conflicts, and the excess and transgression embodied in the Gothic genre, all of which will be sustained in other Gothic plays as well.

From the late-eighteenth century onwards, countless Gothic plays dominated the period, such as Hannah Cowley's *Albina* (Haymarket, 1779), Richard Cumberland's *The Mysterious Husband* (Covent Garden, 1782), Francis North's *Kentish Barons* (Haymarket, 1791), James Boaden's *The Secret Tribunal* (Covent Garden, 1795), Matthew Lewis's *The Castle Spectre* (Drury Lane, 1797) and *The Wood Daemon* (Drury Lane, 1807), Sophia Lee's *Almeyda, Queen of Granada* (Drury Lane, 1796), Harriet Lee's *The Mysterious Marriage* (1798), George Colman's *The Iron Chest* (Drury Lane, 1796) and *Blue-Beard* (Drury Lane, 1798), Joanna Baillie's *De Monfort* (Drury Lane, 1800), William Sotheby's *Julian and Agnes* (Drury Lane, 1801), Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Remorse* (Drury Lane, 1813), Charles Robert Maturin's *Bertram; or, The Castle of St. Aldobrand* (Drury Lane, 1816), Jane Scott's *The Old Oak Chest* (Sans Pareil, 1816), Lord Byron's *Manfred* (1817) and Edward Fitzball's *The Flying Dutchman* (Adelphi, 1827). Furthermore, during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Gothic was also popularised by the stage adaptations of the Gothic novels. Throughout the 1790s, Anne Radcliffe's novels were especially very popular source materials in this sense. James Boaden's *Fountainville Forest* (Covent Garden, 1794), adapted from Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) as well as Boaden's *Aurelio and Miranda* (Drury Lane, 1798) from Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), Miles Peter Andrews's *The Mysteries of the Castle* (Covent Garden, 1795) from Radcliffe's *The Mysterious of Udolpho* (1794), Robert Jephson's *The Count of Narbonne* (Covent Garden, 1781) from Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, Richard Brinsley Peake's *Presumption; or, The Fate of Frankenstein* (English Opera House, 1823) from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or the Modern Prometheus* (1818), James Planché's *The Vampire: or, The Bride of the Isles* (English Opera House, 1820) based on John William Polidori's novella *The Vampyre* (1819) can be given as examples. This practice shows the popularity and prevalence of the Gothic performances during this age. From the late eighteenth century, as it is seen, growing public demand for terror literature ignited the penchant for Gothic performances as well as publications that were supplied by the thriving publishing market. As it can be understood from the list above, Gothic plays were prevalent on the stage. Among all the plays staged at the time, Matthew Lewis's *The Castle Spectre*, as the most successful play of the period, is considered a paradigm of the genre and therefore will be briefly examined.

*The Castle Spectre* embodies typical Gothic conventions such as the castle as a claustrophobic space, a villain, a lady in distress, patriarchal oppression, usurpation, and the supernatural, all foregrounded earlier by Walpole. Set on the borders of Wales and England and probably around the tenth century, the play revolves around Angela who is imprisoned in a castle by a feudal lord named Osmond, forcing her to be his wife. Later it is revealed that Osmond was the instigator for the assassination of his brother Reginald, and Angela is the daughter of Reginald. Therefore, Osmond's desire for her turns out to be incestuous. It is also revealed that one of the assassins, Kenric has saved Angela's father and kept him for 16 years in a dungeon. As the plot unfolds, secrets, murders, and betrayals are revealed along with supernatural occurrences. Finally, the play ends with the union of father and daughter, and both get freed from the despotic brother and uncle, Osmond. As for its socio-political context, this play touches upon many issues ranging from slavery, class and gender to British colonialism.

Considering the historical and political context of the late eighteenth century, *The Castle Spectre* resonates with the revolutionary atmosphere of the late eighteenth century in terms of liberation and freedom from the aristocracy as represented by the overthrow of the feudal lord, Osmond. However, Jeffrey N. Cox also mentioned that because of the censorship, the plays could not directly make any comments on the political issues of the time, yet still "the Gothic drama's portrayal of a conflict between a tyrannical aristocrat and young lovers, often offered as being from the lower orders even if later discovered to be nobles in disguise, could not help but be seen as reflecting upon the revolutionary struggle" ("English Gothic Theatre" 130). In fact, it is impossible not to allude to the socio-politics of the period since the Gothic flourished within the chaotic circumstances of the late eighteenth century. Diane Long Hoeveler argues that the play in terms of its setting "both localizes the place and makes the gothic a British phenomenon to explore British anxieties about nationhood, borders, and outsiders – women and blacks" ("Gothic Drama" 170). Gothic works are mostly set in a foreign place so as not to provoke any problems at home. For this reason, the domestication of the setting can be taken as an indirect comment on the British society and the politics of the period.

In terms of the abolition debates of the age, Lewis's introduction of two black servants, Saib and Hassan, is very radical considering the circumstances of the century. Both characters are outspoken and constantly point out their background and current conditions. In terms of his black characters, Lewis states that "[f]or my own part, I by no means repent the introduction of my Africans; I thought I could give a pleasing variety to the characters and dresses, if I made my servants black; and could I have produced the same effect by making my heroine blue, blue I should have made her" (qtd. in Evans, 168). Despite his statement, the presence or selection of these characters is crucial to shed light upon the colonial implementation of Britain. In the play, Hassan articulates his case straightforwardly:

I have been dragged from my native land, from a wife who was every thing to me, to whom I was every thing! Twenty years have elapsed since these Christians tore me away: they trampled upon my heart, mocked my despair, and, when in frantic terms I raved of Samba, [they] laughed, and wondered how a negro's soul could feel! In that moment when the last point of Africa faded from my view, when as I stood on the vessel's deck I felt that all [...] I loved was to me lost for ever, in that bitter moment did I banish humanity from my breast. (I.ii.161)

Though denying the play's status as a political statement and ironically becoming a slave owner in 1812, Lewis commented on the moral and social outcomes of slavery. For this reason, this play can be considered a statement on colonisation and a projection of the impacts of colonisation.

Also, in the context of this socio-political background, Osmond is portrayed as a typical Gothic villain, a usurper and a lustful murderer. He is obsessed with Angela who resembles so much her mother. Osmond confesses killing Evelina, Angela's mother whom he was in love with, saying: "Since the moment when I pierced her heart, deprived of whom life became odious; since my soul was stained with his blood who loved me, with hers whom I loved, no form has been grateful to my eye, no voice spoken pleasure to my soul, save Angela's, save only Angela's!" (II.i.168-9). Like a typical villain, he is capable of doing anything for his desires and ambitions. Moreover, it is significant to assert that he is depicted as an isolated and mysterious figure who can be considered as a step towards the Byronic hero. As Motley, one of Osmond's servants, remarks,

[...] as to its master, he's the very antidote to mirth: He always walks with his arms folded, his brows bent, his eyes louring on you with a gloomy scowl: He never smiles; and to laugh in his presence would be high treason. He looks at no one – speaks to no one. None dare approach him, except Kenric and his four blacks – all others are ordered to avoid him [...]. (I.i.159)

Thus, Osmond is portrayed as a gloomy, dark, shadowy, terrifying yet alienated figure. Jeffrey N. Cox argues that the play “focus[es] on the struggle of the tyrannical yet charismatic aristocrat to maintain his power and position and thereby move toward the tragedy of a titanic figure later known as the Byronic hero” (“English Gothic Theatre” 128). Therefore, Osmond stands for not only a typical Gothic villain but also one of the first proto-representatives of the Byronic hero.

However, patriarchal institutions like family and religion in the play are not altogether represented as evil and oppressive. Unlike Osmond, Reginald is not depicted as a traditional father figure as he rejects Osmond's marriage offer to his daughter although this means being saved from imprisonment for himself. On the other hand, as a religious yet comical figure, Father Philip is represented with his fondness for licentiousness and gluttony. As Diane Long Hoeveler argues, “Lewis introduces an absurdly comic and superstitious priest, Father Philip, a bumbling, greedy, lecherous, and buffoonish man who functions throughout the play as a caricature of the ineffectual and flawed Catholic clergy” (“Ghostly Visitants” 125). However, unlike the vicious priest of *The Mysterious Mother*, Father Philip is the one who tries to help Angela and Percy to free themselves from Osmond, as he says: “I've saved this poor knave from Osmond's vengeance – and should my plan for the Lady's release succeed – Poor little soul! – To see how she took on, when Percy was torn from her! Well, well, she shall be rescued from her tyrant” (II.ii.173). Though a comical and flawed religious representative, the anti-Catholic sentiment seems to be toned down in this play.

With this quintessential Gothic drama, Lewis contributed to the development of the British Gothic tradition, specifically to Gothic drama. He was a prolific playwright who also made translations and adaptations from French and German sources, thereby contributing to the literature of terror of his time. As Bertrand Evans asserts, Lewis “contributed to the English tradition, lent materials to German and French writers for development in their respective countries” (193). Evans further states: “With *The Castle*

*Spectre*, Gothic drama assumed a popular position not below that of the Gothic novel. Besides having a very long and eminently successful first run, this concoction went through seven printed editions in 1798 and eleven by 1803” (177). For this reason, Lewis has a prominent place in the development and popularity of Gothic drama by imitating the Gothic formula set by Walpole in the first place. This play, as an epitome of Gothic drama, illustrates the late eighteenth-century dramatic Gothic tradition and reflects upon its own age in terms of oppression of women, despotic leadership, colonisation and class consciousness through the Gothic.

It is clear today that Gothic drama became a prominent genre from the late eighteenth century through the 1820s. So, it is significant to mark that the Gothic in fact was reinforced by the popularity and remarkable contribution of Gothic drama during the late eighteenth century. As Bertrand Evans argues, “[s]tudy of Gothic drama may prove more fruitful than study of Gothic novels in tracing the stages of evolution which hitherto have not been revealed. The medium of dramatic verse remains constant; hence plays afford a bridge between the centuries” (23). Accordingly, unlike the Gothic novel which started becoming popular only in the 1790s, about 30 years later after the first Gothic novel *The Castle of Otranto*, Gothic drama during these years became a dynamic force in the society. Frederick S. Frank explains further as follows:

[...] [T]he drama rather than the novel now became the preferred mode of Gothicism for nearly three decades after the initial Gothic explosion. A perusal of the approximately 2,650<sup>7</sup> play titles contained in the catalog of the Larpent Collection of Eighteenth Century Drama at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, verifies the popularity of the Gothic drama for the remainder of the eighteenth century and confirms the importance of the Gothic’s dramatic phase to the acceleration and proliferation of the Gothic tradition as a whole. (“Gothic Drama” 152)

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<sup>7</sup> In another source titled *The Origins of The Modern Study of Gothic Drama, Together with a Re-Edition of Gothic Drama from Walpole to Shelley* (1947) (2006), Frederick S. Frank states in his note to Evans’s Appendix: “The collection of eighteenth and nineteenth century drama that bears [John Larpent’s] name is housed in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California and contains 2,503 items, mostly official copies of plays written by professional copyists and submitted to the Examiner for licensing in accordance with the Licensing Act of 1737” (287). It is important to mark that there seems to be a discrepancy between the number of items stated and the actual number of items in the library, which can also be verified on the collection website.

This profusion of Gothic plays especially after the publication of *The Castle of Otranto* demonstrates that the Gothic was mostly popularised through stage performances, and Gothic plays of the time essentially provide the necessary materials to be able to understand the structure and discursive context of the Gothic.

All things considered, the Gothic novel and Gothic drama share most of the Gothic characteristics in terms of settings, characters and themes which are utilised to explore the society, the politics, the family and the psyche embroiled in the atmosphere of mystery, gloom, and terror. The basic Gothic conventions such as the castle, the supernatural, the return of the dead, the usurping villain, the heroine, terror and horror, the excessive, the sensational and revolt are common features of both forms. However, in some ways, Gothic drama distinguishes itself within the Gothic tradition. One of the differentiating features is the evolution of the villain-hero into the Byronic hero and the other is its contribution to progress in the stage machinery.

On the evolution of the Gothic villain into the Byronic hero, Peter Thorslev comments as follows:

The Byronic Hero [...] is invariably courteous toward women, often loves music or poetry, has a strong sense of honor, and carries about with him like the brand of Cain a deep sense of guilt. He is almost invariably sympathetic in spite of his 'crimes,' none of which involve unnecessary cruelty, as do the crimes of the Gothic villain. Although the Byronic Hero bears a strong physical resemblance to Mrs. Radcliffe's Gothic Villains, he has been ensouled and humanized, and this is a crucial difference. (*The Byronic Hero* 8)

Cochran also states that the main characteristics of the Byronic hero are “[h]is sociopathic mystery, [...] his air of superiority, [...] his piercing eye, [...] the suspicion of a guilty secret behind his hauteur, [...]” (“Byron Reads” 13) and “[p]iety, and the ability to reason, are not Byronic attributes” (13). As its name indicates, the Byronic hero is associated with Lord Byron, who perfected the character in his works. As a rebellious, independent and brooding character, the Byronic hero characterises the spirit of the age going against the established norms and values. Considering the transformation from the Gothic villain to the Byronic hero, Bertrand Evans argues that

[i]t was upon drama that forces operated which inevitably moved the protagonist through stages of villain-hero and hero-villain to the special kind of hero to whom Byron's name has been given. [...] The novel, long before, had created him as an

agent of terror; but drama gradually made him a hero and passed him on, laden with agony, to the nineteenth century. (24)

In the early Gothic novels, the Gothic villain functions as the agent of terror, persecuting or oppressing anyone who defies his desires. In Gothic drama, unlike the Gothic novel, the villain's agony became the focus of the plays besides his gloomy and melancholic attitude. The roots of the Byronic hero are also likely to be found in Gothic novels such as Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), and Lewis's *The Monk* (1796); however, "the pre-Byronic Gothic Villain (of the novel, at least) is never sympathetic; if anything, he and his crimes are made to appear even more monstrous and grotesque by the addition of gratuitous acts of cruelty or sadism" (Thorslev, *The Byronic Hero* 22). Because of their agony and remorse, the villains in drama began to gain the sympathy of the reader/audience, which led to the merging of the villain and the hero. By the turn of the century, as Thorslev argues, "a number of dramatists felt free to dispense with the usual weak and sentimental hero and make their villains fill both roles" (*The Byronic Hero* 57). Thus, Gothic drama helps the evolution of the Gothic villain into the Byronic hero, and from a despotic and unrelenting tyrant to a gloomy, lonely, suffering and agonised individual.

Furthermore, regarding the popular appeal of the theatre to the public and burgeoning and incessant demand for the theatre of sensation and terror, the competitiveness between the theatre companies increased, leading to many technical changes and innovations in the theatres ranging from lighting, visual and sound effects to music and stage machinery. As Jeffrey N. Cox explains,

[t]he Gothic theatre of shock and wonder was arguably the first form to capitalize fully on evolving lighting techniques, new stage effects, and the increasing presence of continuous music behind the action. The extremely powerful and popular apparitions in Boaden's *Fountainville Forest* and Lewis's *Castle Spectre*, the secret chamber with its moving skeleton in Colman's *Blue-Beard*, and the appearance of Sangrida in a chariot pulled by dragons in Lewis's *Wood Daemon* all indicate how the Gothic drama matched perfectly with the theatrical tastes and techniques of the 1790s and beyond. ("English Gothic Theatre" 127)

Gothic drama is a spectacle intrinsically; for this reason, Gothic performances mostly relied on specific techniques and effects. The spectacle and scenery were very important to heighten fear, wonder and excitement in the audience so that over time the theatres

launched such stage techniques or devices as the conscious use of gas lighting for the characters or the ghosts on different accounts. Stage devices like vampire traps, moving objects and gauze were employed to create Gothic illusions in order to show the movements of the vampires and the appearance of the ghosts, thus boosting a sense of fear and thrill and of the supernatural in the audience. Lighting, optical and sound effects were used to depict the supernatural on the stage and “[m]ystery and terror are conveyed through sound effects” (Saggini, “The Transforming Muses” 155). Eerie and ominous music was used to change the atmosphere and also to enhance the power of the scene. Frederick Burwick elaborates that “[s]tage illusions were enhanced by innovative mechanical devices. Phantom images projected by the *laterna magica* and the virtual images reflected by giant parabolic mirrors were made possible by advances in lighting technology, which progressed rapidly during the era” (*Romantic Drama* 7). Especially during the nineteenth century, in terms of lighting, the theatre witnessed an apparent transformation from gaslight to electricity. The venues also presented spectacular scenes with thunder, storm, mist and fire, all of which continued to flourish throughout the nineteenth century. Particularly sensation drama made use of such theatrical machinery to create sensational effects as realistically as possible.

Moreover, it is essential to mention the theatrical context where Gothic drama thrived in order to better understand its status. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, serious drama or legitimate drama<sup>8</sup> that refers to the five-act tragedy and comedy, was staged only by legitimate theatres which were established in accordance with the Licensing Act of 1737<sup>9</sup>. The Drury Lane and the Covent Garden were the only patent or ‘legitimate’ theatres in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries along with the Haymarket which was also licensed to present plays during the summer when the other

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<sup>8</sup> The distinctions between the illegitimate and legitimate or patent theatres were abolished by the Theatre Regulation Act of 1843 because it seemed by then that both theatre types did not have so many differences between them at all. Since in time the patent theatres also took the taste of the audience into consideration and included some spectacle into their theatres like the illegitimate theatres. However, the Lord Chamberlain’s Office still continued its strict regulations and control over the plays until its abolition in 1968.

<sup>9</sup> The Lord Chamberlain was responsible for censoring and licensing the plays and each play had to be submitted to his Office to be scrutinised in terms of moral, political and religious issues that could be seditious or threatening. In 1737, Sir Robert Walpole (1676-1745) introduced the Licensing Act of 1737 and appointed the first Lord Chamberlain as a censor (Thomas et. al. 2) though theatrical censorships went back to the sixteenth century when the Master of the Revels exercised control on the plays.

two were closed. As the words ‘legitimate’ and ‘illegitimate’ refer to, there was a question of dramatic hierarchy as the literary quality of drama began to be called into question. This actually indicates that there was a division between the high and low dramatic forms. From the early eighteenth century, various forms of spectacle entered into English theatre which complicated the idea of authentic theatrical form so that “writers and graphic satirists identified ‘monstrous’ theatrical kinds – namely pantomime, opera, puppet shows and farce – as the definitive sources of cultural pollution in the English theatre” (Moody 12). Because such theatrical entertainments were seen as vulgar and buffoonish, the question of dramatic legitimacy appeared. These entertainments or spectacles were staged at illegitimate or minor theatres such as the Surrey Theatre, the Adelphi Theatre and the Olympic Theatre. Besides, the political events of the age like the French Revolution and the Napoleonic War provided the materials for the minor theatres which started to produce equestrian and aquatic spectacles (27-28). These theatres only produced popular entertainments, musicals, pantomime, burletta, operas, or other spectacles. Besides, because of censorship and the so-called vulgar taste of the audience, many playwrights preferred to be or in any case were already categorised as closet dramatists. Many Gothic plays were defined as closet plays such as Baillie’s *De Monfort*, Lord Byron’s *Manfred* and Wordsworth’s *The Borderers*.

In this regard, Gothic plays were controversial because of their appeal to the demands of larger audiences with their superstitious, immoral, and terrifying elements rather than to select intellectual taste. Besides, the hybrid nature of Gothic drama also problematised its status. As Diego Saglia argues, “[a]n impressively spectacular jumble, mid-to-late-eighteenth-century stage Gothic combined comedy and tragedy, as well as a host of devices of ‘legitimate’ and ‘illegitimate’ drama and theater” (“Gothic Theater” 357) such as opera, burletta, melodrama as well as historical drama. Though this was popular entertainment for the audience of the day, the critical perception problematised the outlook towards Gothic plays as it was not seen as a pure genre. However, Jeffrey N. Cox defines the Gothic drama of the period as a form of “serious drama”:

[T]he Gothic drama provided audiences with a vital new form of serious drama. It may be hard for us to see today that these plays – beyond constant allusions to Shakespeare, as in Boaden’s echoes in *Fountainville Forest* from *Hamlet* and

*Romeo and Juliet* – seem to reach back beyond the neoclassical drama to the great plays of the Elizabethan and Jacobean period. (“English Gothic Theatre” 127)

Though described as a jumbled form and as part of both legitimate and illegitimate drama, Gothic drama became the theatrical form and genre during the Romantic Period, appealing to a large number of people and being fed by the historical and political turmoil of the age. So, despite the controversy about the legitimacy of Gothic plays, Gothic drama was a popular and predominant phenomenon considering the number of the plays staged. As previously stated by Frederick S. Frank, this popularity can be observed in the cataloguing of over 2,500 Gothic plays in *the Larpent Collection of Eighteenth Century Drama* at the Huntington Library; this popularity is also observed in the number of performances such as Matthew Lewis’s *The Castle Spectre* with 47 performances, James Cobb’s *The Haunted Tower* (1789) with 84 performances, Colman the Younger’s *Blue-Beard* (1798) with 64 nights (Bakscheider 199) and some others.

Despite its popularity, from the Victorian Period to the 1970s, Gothic drama was in decline. For this reason, it is important to look into other dramatic traditions of this extended period in order to understand the decline of the Gothic in drama. In the nineteenth century, novels and poetry became dominant forms while drama lagged behind their popularity. As Booth argues, “[t]he nineteenth century has not generally been regarded as a period of theatrical experiment and innovation, but it was, and struggling underneath the apparent tyranny of conformity and convention was the rebellious spirit of reform” (*Prefaces* 3). Considering the period as an experimental transition in dramatic forms, from the early nineteenth century onwards, domestic melodramas, burlesques, farces, nautical drama and sensation drama became popular and pervasive as well as the adaptations from the well-known popular novels. There was a craving and passion for spectacle during the age and the flourishing of the theatrical effects and techniques helped the evolution of the theatre in this way. However, at the same time, as Allardyce Nicoll and Michael Booth point out, there was a decline in tragedy and comedy during the nineteenth century and there were various and controversial explanations for this decline. According to Nicoll, each decade from 1800 to 1850 had its own responses to the decline in drama, which were “the size of the theatres,” “the paucity of good authors and managers,” “the star system and spectacle” “the patent monopoly” and “the French companies and opera” (*A History of English*

*Drama* 59), respectively. Booth also gives similar reasons while also touching upon some other reasons such as the theatres “overburdened with the expense of providing virtually separate companies for tragedy, comedy, opera, and pantomime” as well as the existence of various entertainments competing for public appeal and the preference of novel reading over theatregoing (*Prefaces* 4-5). Besides, the licensing act did not allow political, religious and sexual matters on the stage and this also hindered the growth of drama at the time as Booth states, “[t]he legal exclusion of politics and religion from the stage was a restriction that contributed to the feeling among many contemporaries that the drama was trivial and isolated from the mainstream of English life” (*Theatre in Victorian Age* 146). In addition to these, the nineteenth-century playwrights in fact wrote according to the demands of the reader/audience and the period (Nicoll, *A History of English Drama* 80-81); therefore, playwrights and theatre managers were inclined to stage popular or conventional forms like melodrama or revive Shakespeare’s plays which were particularly popular during this period. Taking all these into consideration, nineteenth-century drama until Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw who wrote at the turn of the twentieth century was deemed to be so mediocre that mostly it was ignored and neglected despite the fact that theatre was robust in this era in terms of the stage machinery and through the adaptations from the well-known novels of the time.

While Gothic drama had its peak during the Romantic Period, melodrama<sup>10</sup> began to be a major genre during the Victorian Period, marked by “sensationalist theatrical technique, overwhelming and generally violent plots, and an overriding sense of morality” (Cox, *Seven Gothic Dramas* 41). Starting from the 1860s, sensation drama grew into a popular form which was replete with such spectacles as trainwrecks, volcanoes, avalanches and horse racing. Melodrama and sensation drama replaced Gothic drama, yet, as Jones argues, “[s]hape-shifting and refusing to die outright, the Gothic mode would inform melodrama, domestic drama, sensation drama and even the emerging realist dramas to the end of the century” (“The Theatrical Gothic” 163). Besides, penny dreadfuls and ghost stories became prevalent in this age. While Gothic novels and stories dominated the nineteenth century, especially at the turn of the

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas Holcroft’s *A Tale of Mystery: A Mèlo-drame in Two Acts* (Covent Garden, 1802), adapted from the French, was accepted as the first melodrama. Yet, the prevalence of melodrama on the stage started during the 1820s and melodrama dominated the Victorian Period.

twentieth century<sup>11</sup>, the stage was rife with adaptations from Gothic novels or stories and translated works. Diane Long Hoeveler, in fact, divides the nineteenth-century Gothic into three periods: the early period with the revival of the earlier Gothic plays and melodramatic adaptations, the middle period with performances constituting technical innovations like the vampire trap, ‘Pepper’s Ghost,’<sup>12</sup> lighting techniques, and the late period with the performances carried out by star actors (“Victorian Gothic Drama” 57-8). While adaptations and translations defined the age, star actors overwhelmed the audience with their powerful performances on the stage. As Hoeveler refers to, the period from the 1820s to the mid-nineteenth century was characterised by the revivals of earlier Gothic plays and new adaptations especially based on John William Polidori’s novella *The Vampyre* (1819) and Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818), such as James Planché’s *The Vampire: or, The Bride of the Isles* (1820) and Richard B. Peake’s *Presumption, or the Fate of Frankenstein* (1823). In addition to these, there were adaptations from the works of popular writers of the Victorian Period such as Charles Dickens, Willkie Collins, Robert Louis Stevenson and Bram Stoker. Such works include the stage adaptations of Dickens’s *The Haunted Man and the Ghost’s Bargain* (Adelphi, 1848), Collins’s sensation novel *The Woman in White* (Surrey, 1860/1871), *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (Lyceum, 1888) based on Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), Stoker’s copyright reading of *Dracula or The Un-Dead* (Lyceum, 1897) adapted from his own novel and later performed at the Little Theatre in 1927. Various stage adaptations were inspired by penny dreadfuls such as *Varney the Vampire; or, the Feast of Blood* (1845–1847) written by either James Malcolm Rymer or Thomas Preskett Prest, and James Malcolm Rymer’s *The String of Pearls: A Romance* (1846-47), which tells the story of a murderous barber Sweeney Todd of Fleet Street, adapted to the stage by George Dibdin Pitt and entitled *The String of Pearls or the Fiend of Fleet Street* in 1847. In this context, to be able to understand

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<sup>11</sup> Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818), Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) and Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897) can be given as examples. These were very popular works and embodied the very essential Gothic tropes such as the double or *doppelgänger*, monsters and vampires, all of which extended into the twentieth century. The essence of the *fin de siècle* Gothic focuses on the concept of humanity, exploring the depth of human potential and capabilities by questioning scientific, moral and social boundaries as well as human limitations.

<sup>12</sup> It was invented by the scientist John Henry Pepper (1821–1900). It is an illusion technique and the ghost is projected upon the stage as a transparent figure via lighting and a glass.

the Gothicism of nineteenth-century theatre, some particular dramatic pieces will be briefly discussed.

One of the popular and prolific playwrights of the period was Dionysius or Dion Lardner Boucicault. Boucicault was a prolific and successful Irish-American playwright and actor of the nineteenth century, having written over 150 plays for the stage. He was one of the prominent figures of the Victorian Period defining the dramatic tradition of the age. Based on Polidori's *The Vampyre*, Boucicault's *The Vampire* (1852) is a three-act Gothic play whose each act is set a hundred years apart, namely in 1660, 1760 and 1860. *The Vampire* was deemed a failure at the time and it was not published (Doig 22). A few years later, Boucicault revised it into two acts and changed its name to *The Phantom* (1856). As Doig states,

[t]he play is a loose adaptation of Alexandre Dumas' *Le Vampire*, which Boucicault had seen in Paris in 1851, six months before his own version premiered at the Princess Theatre, London, in June 1852. Dumas' play was based on Charles Nodier's *Le Vampire* (1820), which was in turn a free adaptation of John Polidori's "The Vampyre" (1819). (19-20)

Here it is important to note that, as understood from the quotation, there was a constant circulation of dramatic exchange at the time, which characterises the spirit of the age. In the published version, *The Phantom*, the first act of the play takes place in the 1650s and the second act a hundred years later, in the 1750s. The first act is set in the aftermath of the Civil War during the Cromwellian period, thus having some political overtones. Alan Raby, the vampire or the phantom of the story is a Puritan who killed his brother, a Royalist named Owen Raby. After the castle was attacked by the Royalists, Alan was thrown out of the window but his body was never found. Afterwards, Alan haunts the Raby Castle and feeds upon the blood of people. As it is told, whoever goes near the castle cannot see the next day alive. Yet, Lucy wants to look for her lover Roland Peveryl and with a group of people, she goes to the castle where she is killed by Alan who already killed her lover. Lord Albert tries to avenge Lucy, but Alan tricks him into believing that he was trying to rescue Lucy rather than killing her. Due to Alan's last will, Lord Albert takes him to the peaks of Snowdon where Alan comes back to life by the moonlight. In the second act it is revealed that Alan feeds upon the blood of the maiden whom he takes as his bride, yet, in the end,

one of the characters understands that he is a vampire and throws Alan into the darkness so as to prevent him from coming to life again. The play features such Gothic tropes as the haunted castle, the ruins, the dark and gloomy atmosphere, a story-within-a-story, the suffering hero and heroine, the vampire and the return of the dead by the moonlight. It is important to note that Boucicault's play anticipates Stoker's *Dracula* as they share some similarities (Wynne 22-24) considering the fact that "Stoker saw and reviewed [Boucicault's plays], amongst numerous others, in his capacity as theatre critic for the *Dublin Evening Mail* between 1871 and 1876" (2). Thus, the most well-known Gothic character of all, namely Dracula, emerged during the vampire frenzy of the age. The vampire theme in the nineteenth century was indeed very widespread. This popularity contributed to the development of stage machinery as well. Boucicault was particularly "the most successful of nineteenth-century theatrical playwright-entrepreneurs and someone used to stage machinery. The 'Corsican' trap had to be devised for Boucicault's adaption of Alexandre Dumas's *The Corsican Brothers*, which [was] brought to the stage in the 1850s" (Bloom, *Gothic Histories* 135). While the 'vampire trap' which had been used in Planché's *The Vampire* allowed the vampire to vanish immediately, the 'Corsican' trap enabled the phantom to move easily from one place to another. Thus, through the portrayals of the vampires and the ghosts, and the progress in stage machinery, stage Gothic continued to exist.

Another important writer and playwright of the age is Willkie Collins who was very popular with his sensation novels and also collaborated with Charles Dickens in writing and producing plays. Collins's sensation novel *The Woman in White* was adapted by Collins in 1871 for the Lyceum Theatre. *The Woman in White* is about anxieties related to women's position in marriage and society, and their property rights. The play revolves around usurpation, domestic abuse and oppression. Wilkins makes use of some Gothic tropes such as the mad woman who can be regarded as the uncanny double of Laura, illegitimate children (Anne and Sir Percival), an oppressive, villainous and usurping husband, a helpless hero and victimised females. Though his theatrical attempts were popular at the time, unlike his novels, "[h]is plays and dramatisations [...] are more limited: they retain the melodramatic conventions but often jettison the depth" (Davis 178-79). By simplifying the plot and characterisation in the case of *The Woman in White*, Collins aims to achieve a sensational effect by utilising the Gothic.

Foreign influence on the stage was common in the nineteenth century. One of the popular adaptations was Leopold Lewis's *The Bells* (1871) adapted from "The Polish Jew," a dramatic study by Émile Erckmann and Alexandre Chatrian. Henry Irving was the star actor of this play and his acting in the play was acknowledged as his "defining performance" (Wynne 29). The play revolves around Mathias who murdered a Polish Jew fifteen years before, to steal his gold. Because of his guilty conscience, he begins to see the ghost of the Jew and keeps hearing the bells of the Jew's horse ringing in his mind. In his dream, he stands trial and with the help of a mesmerist, he is hypnotised to tell what happened fifteen years ago, thus revealing the whole story of his murder. His guilty conscience is disclosed in his dream despite his scheme of marrying his daughter off to the Quarter-master of Gendarmes so as to protect himself. The play features delusions, uncanny revelations, the return of the repressed, the supernatural, the story-within-a-story, a Gothic atmosphere created by the gushing of winds and crashing glasses and the dream in which everything is revealed eventually, leading Mathias to his death. From the mid-century onwards, murder, sensation and crime became the seeds of the popular theatre. Thus, the Gothic is intertwined with these elements defining the theatre of the period.

During the late nineteenth century, adaptations and vampire stories were ubiquitous, thereby feeding the sensation hunger of the audience as "playgoers wanted the excitement of murder, sensation and the new spiritualism" (Bloom, *Gothic Histories* 135) and this extended into the twentieth century as well. It is important to mark that the theatre in the 1890s was affected by European plays, especially Henrik Ibsen's and moved towards social realist tendency and drama of ideas which can be seen in Bernard Shaw's plays. The turn of the century also saw the revival of the comedy of manners exemplified by the plays of Oscar Wilde. Thus, at the turn of the century, there was an obvious decline in Gothic drama.

It is important to note that despite the undeniable contribution and popularity of Gothic drama and theatre from the mid-eighteenth century to the nineteenth century, it is clear that for a long time, Gothic drama did not get enough critical attention; this was directly related to the established perception in the nineteenth century concerning the decline of the drama. The critics mostly focused on the poetry and the novels of the Romantic

Period, thereby pushing drama aside to a certain extent, and thus causing it to be ignored. Jeffrey N. Cox designates this negligence as a ‘dramatic ideology’ which he describes through two concepts, namely the ‘peak phenomenon’ and the ‘cultural gap.’ As for the ‘peak phenomenon,’ Cox states that “[t]he history of the drama – particularly as it is embodied in anthologies and survey courses – leaps over the nineteenth century, or at least that part of it that precedes the advent of Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekov [*sic*], and Shaw” (*Seven Gothic Dramas* 3), thus the dramatic works of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were dismissed and left in the margins. As for the cultural gap, it refers to the fact that “canonized plays are presented as having more in common with their great precursors and descendents than with the dramatic and theatrical cultures within which they were created” (3). Therefore, Gothic plays were deemed unoriginal and uncanonical compared to the established canon. Probably, for these reasons, in terms of dramatic works, the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have been underestimated even though from the late-eighteenth century onwards Gothic drama was a popular dramatic and theatrical form. Moreover, since they were mostly based on spectacle and adaptations, Gothic plays were likely to be considered without any literary value even though it needs to be acknowledged that they were notorious but significant pieces of the popular culture of the period.

During the early twentieth century, the Gothic mostly continued in the form of ghost stories. Foley states that “the ghost story remained a popular form – as did the short story itself – in the interwar period” (50). During the interwar period, Ben Travers, known for his farces, and Noel Coward were very popular playwrights. Because of the wars, the theatre of the period was more about light-hearted comedies such as Arnold Ridley’s *Ghost Train* (1925) about a story of a haunted train station or Noel Coward’s *Blithe Spirit* (1941) which deals with domestic issues revolving around the return of the dead, that is the ghost of a deceased wife. In this period, “British theatre historiographies often present the 1930s as a decade of didactic political plays and/or entertaining farces, spectacles, or thrillers that provided some escape from the turbulent politics” (Warden 48). Besides, the advent of cinema affected the growth of the theatre as well (Smart 21). Vampire stories and adaptations already anticipated “the development of the twentieth-century horror film genre with its steady proliferation of *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* adaptations” (Hoeveler, “Victorian Gothic Drama” 69).

During the first half of the century, Gothic literature, and specifically drama, was in decline as it was intertwined with other media. As a hybrid form right from the beginning, Gothic hybridity continued in the twentieth century as well. As Clive Bloom states, “by the early twentieth century live gothic thrills were more and more to be found at the fair or in carnivals, in ghost rides, freak shows, the chambers of horror in the wax museum and increasingly in the fetishization of Hallowe’en celebrations” (*Gothic Histories* 173). In terms of the twentieth-century Gothic theatre, the Grand Guignol, the French horror theatre, was popularised for a very long time with its focus on horror, crime and violence. However, a literary revival of the Gothic occurred in the 1960s and 1970s when Gothic fiction was still abundant, unlike Gothic drama. Taking into consideration the prevalence of the adaptations, the dramatic shift at the turn of the twentieth century as well as the decline in the Gothic in general, this dissertation does not include any plays as a main chapter between the Victorian Period and the 1970s, but it will discuss the revival of the Gothic in the 1960s onwards within a shifting socio-political paradigm as it was a period of political revolution as well as the end of the censorship in theatre in 1968.

Taking the revival of the Gothic into consideration, it is essential to approach the Gothic from a critical point of view in order to understand the genre, its thematic scope and its broader implications in literary works. In this regard, although the Gothic was recognised as a literary genre during the early twentieth century, there was and has been a controversy about whether it was a mode, an aesthetic, or a genre, in addition to conflicting views related to its nature and structure. Many critics have defined the Gothic hermeneutically or theoretically. To understand its multifariousness, it is essential to look into these definitions to achieve an overall understanding of the Gothic. By drawing attention to its essence, in her analysis of the Gothic from a Bakhtinian perspective, Jacqueline Howard defines “the gothic as an indeterminate genre” (2). According to Maggie Kilgour, the Gothic is also “shadowy and nebulous a genre, as difficult to define as any gothic ghost” (3). Its vagueness as a genre makes it hard to define it even though indeterminacy, ambiguity, mood, and terror become the common reference points for the Gothic. Besides, by highlighting the fear effect, Judith Halberstam describes the Gothic as “the rhetorical style and narrative structure designed to produce fear and desire within the reader” (2). It is also significant to highlight that,

unlike Halberstam's statement, "the gothic," as Markman Ellis states, "is not simply a narrative of terror or a set of properties, but is also a tone or mood that is, in its own way, quite experimental" (8). In addition to these definitions, some critics accentuate its textual and contextual dimensions, as well. As Robert Miles asserts, "the Gothic is a discursive site, a carnivalesque mode for representations of the fragmented subject" (*Gothic Writing* 4). Agreeing with Miles, Michael Gamer identifies the "gothic neither as a mode nor as a kind of fiction (the 'gothic novel') but as an aesthetic" yet "not as a site – which carries with it suggestions of anchored stability – but rather as something more organic and protean" (*Romanticism and the Gothic* 4). Moreover, similar to Halberstam, David Punter and Glennis Byron put forward an analogy between the content and the form of the Gothic in that the "Gothic is, perhaps, a staggering, limping, lurching form, akin to the monsters it so frequently describes" (xix). Considering all, Dale Townsend puts forward that "[i]t is best conceived of today as a protean, ever-changing mode rather than a fixed generic category – an imaginative tendency able, perhaps like no other, to infuse a variety of forms, mediums and technologies across historical time and cultural space" ("Terror and Wonder" 36). In light of all these definitions of the Gothic, it is claimed that with its discursive and transgressive constituents, the Gothic is a multifaceted and inclusive genre and mode which exhibits the fear and anxiety of the individual, society and the age. Therefore, maybe it is better not to restrain the Gothic within some specific definitional boundaries because as a protean form, it essentially resists any classifications. As Gamer argues,

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. (*Romanticism and the Gothic* 9-10)

In this sense, considering the abovementioned definitions, it can be asserted that the Gothic evolves and adapts itself into various contexts.

In the eighteenth century, the Burkean sublime provided an understanding of the essence of the Gothic so that it became relatable and the mostly-applied aesthetic in the Gothic writings of the eighteenth century. Edmund Burke defines the sublime in his *A*

*Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) as follows:

Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling. (58-59)

Hence, the sublime refers to the stimulation of emotions and imagination in a very heightened way. Burke further puts forward that the sublime produces “a sort of delightful horror, a sort of tranquillity tinged with terror” (136), suggesting the experience of awe is both terrifying and pleasurable. According to Burke, although there are other elements contributing to the sublime such as power, vastness, infinity and magnificence, “terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently the ruling principle of the sublime” (97). Terror, thus, is the main source of the sublime for Burke since it is capable of arousing powerful emotions. Besides, Burke highlights that obscurity is necessary for creating terror as it engenders a distance from the known or familiar and thus creates terror, which in the end leads to the sublime. Burke explains this further as follows:

To make any thing [*sic*] terrible, obscurity seems in general to be necessary. When we know the full extent of danger, when we can accustom our eyes to it, a great deal of the apprehension vanishes. Every one will be sensible of this, who considers how greatly night adds to our dread, in all cases of danger, and how much the notions of ghosts and goblins, of which none can form clear ideas, affect minds, which give credit to the popular tales concerning such sorts of beings. (99)

Burke’s idea of the sublime with its emphasis on terror and obscurity is observed to be influential on the Gothic writings of the age and seems to affect the writers who made use of terror, fear, and obscurity in their Gothic writing. Furthermore, Andrew Smith argues that “Gothic writers do not [...] simply copy from Burke, but they do respond to his formulation of Terror, seeing in it a language for representing fear, and a debate about the role that the imagination plays in generating emotionally heightened states” (*Gothic Literature* 12). It is seen that for the eighteenth-century writers, the Gothic became a field of study where they could discuss their ideas about these extreme or undefinable emotions.

In this respect, Ann Radcliffe plays a significant role in the Gothic tradition in terms of her critical perception of terror and horror as she touches upon them in her essay “On the Supernatural in Poetry” (1826). In her essay, Radcliffe argues that

[t]error and horror are so far opposite, that the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them. I apprehend, that neither Shakspeare [*sic*] nor Milton by their fictions, nor Mr. Burke by his reasoning, anywhere looked to positive horror as a source of the sublime, though they all agree that terror is a very high one; and where lies the great difference between horror and terror, but in the uncertainty and obscurity, that accompany the first, respecting the dreaded evil? (149-50)

Thus, according to Radcliffe, terror stimulates the mind and imagination, thereby creating delusional fears while horror turns terror into reality as it is the actualisation of terror. In the Radcliffean Gothic, terror is thoroughly accompanied and enhanced by suspense and obscurity which are the cores of her writings. Radcliffe is, hence, hailed as “the mistress of suspense, who put Burke’s theories of the sublime into action” (Kilgour 113). Moreover, it is significant to remark that while Radcliffe is accepted as the mistress of terror, Matthew Lewis, on the other hand, represents the other side of the Gothic coin. Especially in his *The Monk* (1796), Lewis blatantly and starkly illustrates a world ridden with brutality, violence, murder, sadism, perversion, rape and abuse. As Andrew Smith argues, “Lewis’s world is one of chaos and anarchy, whereas for Radcliffe order is restored” (*Gothic Literature* 33). Thus, Radcliffe and Lewis form the two opposite strains of the Gothic genre, namely terror and horror, respectively. All in all, it seems that in the light of Burke’s theory, certain Gothic aesthetics developed and flourished over time.

To add more to the prominence of the Burkean sublime in the Gothic tradition, as Diane Long Hoeveler argues, “one of Burke’s greatest contributions to aesthetic theory was his ability to secularize the supernatural and situate the divine as a confrontation with the stark inescapability of mortality and death” (“Ghostly Visitants” 117). In addition to theorising about terror and the supernatural in his aesthetic theory, Burke provides an insight into the concept of the subject which is ruled by extreme or uncontrollable emotions of the heart and the mind. As Andrew Smith states in regard to the Burkean theory of the sublime,

the subject is not defined by noble or lofty feelings, but by anxious feelings relating to self-preservation. This version of the subject seems at one level to be manifestly Gothic, whilst its suggestion that the self is defined by moments of trauma anticipates Freud's conception of the subject as shaped by childhood anxieties. (*Gothic Literature* 12)

Therefore, from the perspective of Burkean aesthetics, the subject is not only an anxious individual but also a repressed figure.

The Gothic subject has been scrutinised from the early twentieth century onwards leading psychoanalytic criticism to become so integrated with Gothic studies. The revelation of the irrationality, the deeper dark side of human beings and the repressed consciousness prompted psychoanalytic studies to excavate the psychological dimension of the Gothic. As Maggie Kilgour states, "psychoanalytical terms are useful in discussing the gothic, [...] not [...] because they provide a key to unlock the mysteries of the gothic but rather, as some critics have noted, because psychoanalysis is itself a gothic, necromantic form, that resurrects our psychic pasts" (220). Though anachronistic, psychoanalysis became intertwined with the Gothic itself and provided prominent insight into the comprehension of the Gothic subject. Although, according to Robert Miles, "[t]he Gothic novel is not fantasy in need of psychoanalysis but a coherent code for the representation of fragmented subjectivity, a code organized along structuralist principles" (*Gothic Writing* 2), the uncanny and the abject become the main concepts within the scope of Gothic criticism. By means of these concepts, the Gothic foregrounds the concept of the other, subjectivity, sexuality and gender, repressed concerns and fears.

According to Sigmund Freud, the *unheimlich* or the uncanny "belongs to the realm of the frightening, of what evokes fear and dread" (123) as he described in his seminal essay "The Uncanny" (1919). He continues to argue that "the uncanny is that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar" (124). So, the long-forgotten returns as the uncanny and brings back the familiar or the previously experienced to the surface. On the other hand, Freud contends that

*heimlich* is not unambiguous, but belongs to two sets of ideas, which are not mutually contradictory, but very different from each other – the one relating to what is familiar and comfortable, the other to what is concealed and kept hidden.

*Unheimlich* is the antonym of *heimlich* only in the latter's first sense, not in its second. (132)

Thus, anything kept in the unconscious is let loose by an encounter with an uncanny experience. Gina Wisker underlines the fact that the Freudian uncanny plays a significant role in Gothic works because of its “destabilising fictional characters, spaces and readings, enacting confusion, dread and apprehension. It makes the homely frightening, the familiar unfamiliar, and the secure insecure, and this destabilisation produces both fear and potential new insights and understanding” (15). Through destabilisation, the Gothic reveals long-suppressed anxieties or becomes the expression of fears on the surface level. Besides, the uncanny enables the formation of the typical Gothic atmosphere and uncovers the repressed and nightmarish familial and socio-political contexts.

In addition to the uncanny, Julia Kristeva's ‘abject’ becomes significant in Gothic writing and criticism. This concept is identified with the marginalised, the othered, the excluded, the abnormal, or the socially and individually outcast which are prevalent in the Gothic. Kristeva defines the abject in *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1980) as follows:

[W]hat is *abject*, [...] the jettisoned object, is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses. A certain ‘ego’ that merged with its master, a superego, has flatly driven it away. It lies outside, beyond the set, and does not seem to agree to the latter's rules of the game. And yet, from its place of banishment, the abject does not cease challenging its master. Without a sign (for him), it beseeches a discharge, a convulsion, a crying out. (2, italics in orig.)

The abject is, thus, something discarded with repulsion and loathing. Kristeva continues as follows: “I experience abjection only if an Other has settled in place and instead of what will be ‘me.’ Not at all an other with whom I identify and incorporate, but an Other who precedes and possesses me, and through such possession causes me to be” (10). The other she refers to is essential to define oneself that is the ‘me’ who is constructed in opposition to the other, that is the abject. Moreover, “[t]he abject is perverse because it neither gives up nor assumes a prohibition, a rule, or a law; but turns them aside, misleads, corrupts; uses them, takes advantage of them, the better to deny them” (15). Thus, the abject is literalised by the Gothic that encompasses the othered,

the so-called monstrous or abnormal figures who are repudiated or in conflict with the normative societal norms or identities. As Jerrold E. Hogle explains, “[i]n abjection the most multifarious, inconsistent, and conflicted aspects of our beings are ‘thrown off’ onto seemingly repulsive monsters or ghosts that both obscure and reveal this ‘otherness’ from our preferred selves that actually exists very much *within* ourselves” (“The Gothic Ghost” 498, italics in orig.). Because the abject is the unacceptable, the shunned, and the unorthodox, it becomes an appalling and frightening and eventually discarded entity that is rejected by the same individuals or society that have produced it. As in the uncanny, the abject refers to the actualisation or materialisation of the other or the shattered boundaries that are set by certain individuals or societies according to the established norms and ideas. Therefore, “Kristeva’s theory of abjection foregrounds the loss of all boundaries, or the dissolution of the individual, ‘human’ subject” (Wright, *Gothic Fiction* 122). For this reason, the concept of the abject is very relevant to Gothic criticism since the Gothic, through its discursive approach, discusses and deconstructs the very subject within specific contexts through the dissolution of the boundaries, and transgression, thereby creating abject figures that are socially and culturally discarded. In this sense, it is fundamental to underline that “the gothic shows us that monsters are not so much our fearful others; rather they are our own irrepressible desires and our own insecurities. Uncanny, abject, and queer beings underscore the fissures in our identities and in society’s foundations” (Wagner xi). Therefore, the abject, as well as the uncanny, is connected to the “I” and “not I” or the familiar and the unfamiliar at the same time, and that is how the Gothic effect is generated through a split and/or a collision of these dichotomies.

Furthermore, feminist criticism contributed to Gothic studies to a great extent considering the fact that the Gothic deals with sex, sexuality, gender and related power dynamics within the scope of orthodox and heterodox views clashing with each other. Especially women’s Gothic writing attempts to reconstruct their assigned roles and spaces, and the norms entrapping them. In her book *Literary Women* (1976), Ellen Moers coined the term ‘Female Gothic’ which refers to “the work that women writers have done in the literary mode that, since the eighteenth century, we have called the Gothic [...] [which] has to do with fear” (90) and “where woman is examined with a woman’s eye, woman as girl, as sister, as mother, as self” (109). Moers reflects upon

the fear and anxieties of women about sexuality, childbirth, and female selfhood with references to Ann Radcliffe, Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley. Thus, Moers drew attention to the affinity between the Gothic and women's writing, which inaugurated a critical space of discussion for women's Gothic writing. In this regard, the Female Gothic, which is associated with the Radcliffian Gothic, revolves around "an orphaned heroine in search of an absent mother, pursued by a feudal (patriarchal) father or his substitute, with the whole affair monitored by an impeccable but ineffectual suitor" (Miles, "Ann Radcliffe" 96). During the eighteenth century, women were restrained in the domestic space and left to be subservient socially and legally until the emancipation of women came into being in the late nineteenth century. Within this context, the Female Gothic typically refers to Gothic writing dealing with the incarceration and oppression of the female in a tyrannical patriarchal order. Hence, the boundaries and repressions surrounding and restraining women are challenged within the concept of the Female Gothic. By pointing out the prominence of the Female Gothic in relation to women's condition, William Hughes asserts that it "is central to both generic definitions of the Gothic, to the wider problems of canon formation and resistance to the restraints of canon, as well as to broader women's issues beyond literary criticism" (21). Gender and sexuality are domains for the exploration and reversal of orthodoxy by means of the Gothic which is a discursive form; for this reason, the Female Gothic embodies a prominent status in Gothic criticism through its problematisation of these issues.

However, it is important to mark that although Moers highlights female authorship as Female Gothic, in her analysis of the Northanger Novels which are the Gothic novels stated in *Northanger Abbey* (1817) by Jane Austen, Angela Wright puts forward that "it becomes difficult to argue for a 'Female Gothic' aesthetic in the 1790s that is predicated upon either the gender of the author or the gender of the reader" ("Disturbing the Female Gothic" 65). Though attributed to Radcliffe whose novels revolve around her persecuted heroines, a heroine-centred plot is not unique to female writers; for example, Francis Lathom employed the Female Gothic as well (Wright, *Gothic Fiction* 147). Besides, the Male Gothic is also employed by female writers such as Clara Reeve, Charlotte Dacre and Mary Shelley (Ledoux, "Was there ever a 'Female Gothic'?"). Therefore, female or male authorship does not matter for the Female Gothic because "the Female Gothic aesthetic is feminine, rather than female, as it was one that was

widely used by both male and female authors (and was consumed by male and female readers” (Wallace and Smith 8). It is then the treatment of the subject matter that places a work within the Female Gothic or the “‘feminine’ tradition of Gothic” (“Disturbing the Female Gothic” 72) as Angela Wright expresses. Besides, the Female Gothic as a part of the Gothic tradition seems to be a fluid and evolving term which is re-shaped continuously by its authors, the periods and contexts it is written in, attaining new names or labels like feminist Gothic, queer Gothic, or postfeminist Gothic. This actually shows that the Female Gothic, like the Gothic genre, is not static and addresses current problems and conflicts related to gender and sex.

Furthermore, it is important to highlight that while the Female Gothic is associated with the terror writing of Radcliffe, the Male Gothic is represented by Matthew Lewis’s horror writing. Miles defines the Female and Male Gothic as “a series of antitheses: terror/horror; sensibility/sensation; poetic realism/irony; explained/unexplained supernatural; Radcliffe/Lewis” (“Ann Radcliffe” 97). The Male Gothic embodies the grotesque, the violent and the excessive and “specializes in horror-the bloody shroud, the wormy corpse” (Williams 104). Moreover, “Male Gothic plot and narrative conventions also focus on female suffering, positioning the audience as voyeurs who, though sympathetic, may take pleasure in female victimization” (104). Hence, the focus and the style of the Female and Male Gothic are different from each other. Despite their antithetical strains, both the Female and Male Gothic become important agents illustrating the hardships women face, as both types of writing portray women as victims who suffer and are incarcerated.

Taking the emergence of the Gothic into consideration, it can be observed that it is a reactionary genre from the beginning against not only the existing literary forms but also the society and politics because the late eighteenth century “is a period of rapid change or expectation of change, and its restiveness is conveyed in literature and the other arts long before there is violence in the streets of Paris” (Butler, *Romantics* 11). Considering the context of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in relation to the emergent Gothic, - that is, the Revolutions, Industrial Revolution, growing middle class, struggle for social and political rights, and the philosophical trends of the age, - it was nearly impossible not to respond to or be affected by these abovementioned

changes and circumstances. Especially the 1790s as a decade of radical voices, military conflicts and political unrest was consequently the peak of the Gothic. As Kedra-Kardela and Kowalczyk argue, “[e]ver since it emerged, the Gothic has provided a form of commentary on the times, people, and culture – and on the underside of life, encompassing fears, psychological disturbances, insanity, crime, racial prejudices (e.g. the so-called Black Gothic in America), and gender relations (e.g. queer Gothic)” (41). So, the Gothic cannot be divorced from its contexts, and adapts itself to the age continuously.

Moreover, the Gothic is a discursive genre dealing with such issues as identity, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, and politics. As a discursive form of writing, the Gothic is identified as a reactionary and transgressive genre by treating these subject matters from different points of view so that it leads to normativity and established beliefs to be challenged through heterodoxy. In other words, the Gothic exhibits the world in a disrupted, inverted and perverted way in order to shake the so-called reality and/or hauntings that are stifling and confining. Thus, it disturbs and turns upside down established values by challenging them because “[c]hallenges to the status quo, whether they be cultural, gendered, social, political or emotional, etc., destabilise, but sometimes this very instability is a vehicle for imaginative change, as in the bringing about of equality through the rewriting of forms and relations of power, and other reimaginings” (Wisker 16). The destabilisation of the truths and norms is the essence of the deconstruction of the socio-cultural and political infrastructure. Maybe here it is appropriate to emphasise what Chris Baldick said about the Gothic, which can be evaluated in terms of its ‘anti-’ feature. According to Baldick, “literary Gothic is really anti-Gothic” (xiii). Although Baldick asserts this in terms of the Gothic’s “ingrained distrust of medieval civilization and its representation of the past primarily in terms of tyranny and superstition” (xiii), the anti-Gothicness of the Gothic precisely delineates its discursive and transgressive angles since it deliberately goes against its own grains.<sup>13</sup>

Taking the transformation of the Gothic into consideration, it is an evolving and flourishing genre. Therefore, considering Gothic works in general, the abovementioned

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<sup>13</sup>Though defined as subversive and transgressive, some critics (Carson 257; Hogle, “Introduction” 13; Howard 16) emphasise the conservative aspect of the Gothic as well. It indicates that the Gothic oscillates between opposites and it is dichotomic in nature.

generic features are not enough to define the Gothic as every age seems to produce its own specific motifs or themes in terms of the Gothic tradition but the core of the Gothic as a reflection of anxieties and fears of the individuals and society remains constant. Therefore, the “Gothic [...]” as Lucie Armitt argues, “has become a means of reading culture, not just a cultural phenomenon to read” (*Twentieth-Century Gothic* 10) since it sheds light upon the very culture and society it is born into. For this very reason, it is argued that “[t]he Gothic [...] mutates across historical, national, and generic boundaries as it reworks images drawn from different ages and places” (Smith, *Gothic Literature* 4). This substantiates how the Gothic has preserved its existence throughout centuries. When looking at Gothic drama specifically, Emma McEvoy argues that

Gothic drama proper has not dominated the stage for almost two centuries and the history of Gothic on stage since then has not been continuous. Some nineteenth-century melodramas and some of the plays in the Grand Guignol tradition of the first half of the twentieth century may be described as Gothic, but the traditions are not synonymous. (“Contemporary Gothic Theatre” 214-15)

The Gothic has not dominated the stage since the Romantic Period; however, it still maintains its existence through various forms such as musicals and horror shows like *The Phantom of the Opera*, *The Woman in White* and *The Rocky Horror Show*. These performances were very popular throughout the twentieth century and continued in the twenty-first century as well. In addition to these shows, there are some contemporary plays embodying Gothic features from the late twentieth to early twenty-first centuries, such as Peter Barnes’s *The Ruling Class* (1968), Liz Lochhead’s *Blood and Ice* (1982) and Moira Buffini’s *A Vampire Story* (2008). Yet, intriguingly, there are not many studies on contemporary Gothic drama.

In conclusion, this study aims to enrich Gothic studies by discussing Gothic drama in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as well as British and Irish Gothic drama in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Besides, while most critics locate the Gothic, especially Gothic drama as a ‘phase’ between the late-eighteenth to the early-nineteenth centuries, this dissertation will demonstrate that the Gothic in drama evolved across centuries and that every age has its own Gothic. In this regard, by pointing out Gothic drama’s resilient existence, hence evolution up to the early twenty-first century, Joanna Baillie’s *De Monfort* (1798), Lord Byron’s *Manfred* (1817), Snoo

Wilson's *Vampire* (1973) and Conor McPherson's *The Veil* (2011) will be examined within their historical and socio-political contexts in terms of how they address the fear and anxieties of the society and individuals through their distinct utilisation of the Gothic.

## CHAPTER 1

### LATE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY GOTHIC DRAMA: JOANNA BAILLIE'S *DE MONFORT*

Although Joanna Baillie (1762-1851) was very successful and popular in her own time, she seems to have been forgotten for nearly two centuries until her life and works began to be assessed from the second half of the twentieth century onwards. As it is established now, Baillie was a well-known, prolific and eclectic Scottish playwright, poet and essayist. She began to write in the very late eighteenth century witnessing socio-cultural transformations that also influenced her works. In addition, Baillie not only adapted herself to the age's most popular frenzy, the Gothic, but also utilised the genre for socio-cultural scrutiny. For these reasons, it cannot be wrong to regard Baillie as a prominent playwright of a transition period. In this regard, this chapter aims to analyse her well-known Gothic play, *De Monfort* (1798) by looking into her distinct use of the Gothic with regard to the socio-political transitions relating to class and gender dynamics in the society.

Baillie started her literary career by writing poetry. Her first poetry collection, anonymously published, was *Poems: Wherein It is Attempted to Describe Certain Views of Nature and of Rustic Manners; and also, to Point out, in Some Instances, the Different Influence Which the Same Circumstances Produce on Different Characters* (1790). However, it “did not meet with much critical success, though the poems from the volume were later included in her successful *Fugitive Verses* (1840)” (Slagle, *Joanna Baillie*, 90). Later Baillie turned to playwriting and in 1798 she anonymously published the first volume of *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*. The second and third volumes followed in 1802 and 1812, respectively. Baillie continued to write until her death and the last volume of her complete works was published a few months before her death. Her other works included *Miscellaneous Plays* (1804), *Metrical Legends of Exalted Characters* (poetry, 1821), *A View of the General Tenour of the New Testament Regarding the Nature and Dignity of Jesus Christ* (1831), *Fugitive Verses* (poetry, 1840) and her final work being *The Dramatic*

and *Poetical Works of Joanna Baillie: Complete in One Volume* (1851). She wrote 27 plays<sup>14</sup> but only seven of them – “*De Monfort, The Family Legend, Henriquez, The Separation, The Election, Constantine Paleologus, and Basil* – have been professionally produced” (Carhart 109).

During her time, Baillie was hugely recognised and admired by her contemporaries “including some of the most prominent cultural figures of the day. Maria Edgeworth, Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Walter Scott, Lord and Lady Byron, Wordsworth, and Southey were among her ardent admirers” (Clery, *Women’s Gothic* 86). Baillie had a huge reading public even though her plays did not have many opportunities to be staged. She was highly esteemed by her contemporaries and mostly compared to Shakespeare in terms of her themes and dramatisation. She did “develop her own theory of tragedy and comedy based on human emotions, elemental instincts that had prompted Shakespeare’s characters to action over two hundred years before” (Slagle “Joanna Baillie” 4) and “[w]hat Baillie hoped to accomplish was a more realistic, characteristic drama than that promoted by Shakespeare and earlier dramatists and by her peer Richard Brinsley Sheridan and his Drury Lane company” (3). Her life-long friend Sir Walter Scott<sup>15</sup> hails Baillie as “the best dramatic writer since the days of Shakespeare and Massinger” (99). By ironically highlighting the sexist attitude of the age, Lord Byron also admires Baillie a lot and writes in his letter: “When Voltaire was asked why no woman has ever written even a tolerable tragedy? ‘Ah (said the Patriarch) the composition of a tragedy requires *testicles*’. – If this be true Lord knows what Joanna Baillie does – I suppose she borrows them” (5:203, italics in orig.). Despite this sexist approach, Baillie was distinguished as a prominent playwright in her own era with her distinct and outstanding dramatic style, especially in terms of the demonstration of the psychological complexity of her characters.

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<sup>14</sup> Some sources state 26 works, taking *Ethwald: A Tragedy* Part I and II together as one play.

<sup>15</sup> In his *Marmion, A Tale of Flodden Field*, Scott also writes:

“From the pale willow snatched the treasure,  
And swept it with a kindred measure,  
Till Avon’s swans, while rung the grove  
With Montfort’s hate and Basil’s love,  
Awakening at the inspired strain,  
Deemed their own Shakespeare lived again” (122).

Although Baillie's contemporaries acknowledged her achievements as a playwright, poet and theatre theorist, after her death and until the late twentieth century critics seemed to sideline and ignore her success and accomplishment. Until the 1970s, most critics criticised Baillie's lack of dramatic technique or the anti-theatricality of her works though acknowledging the distinct quality of her "Introductory Discourse" (Burroughs, *Closet Stages* 103); for this reason, Baillie had an "unjustified reputation as the writer of unreadable and unactable plays" (105). However, starting from the 1970s and the 1980s, this perception of Baillie began to be revised by the critics and there was a revival of interest in Baillie and her works. Thus, Baillie was established as a remarkable playwright "with her own very original dramatic critical theory and feminist understanding of the human passions" (Slagle, "Joanna Bailie" 21). The critical re-evaluation of Baillie and her works led her to earn her deserved place as a dramatist in the literary field.

When her first volume of *A Series of Plays* which is also called *Plays on the Passions* was published anonymously, it was welcomed and hailed by everyone as a milestone in its new dramatic approach while causing among the literary circles a stir of curiosity regarding the identity of its writer. In 1798, *The Critical Review* describes her work which "will not only be honourable to the writer, but to the literature of our country" (13) as follows:

[T]he design is excellent, and [...] the author is equal to the task of properly executing it. [...] We would advise this writer to study the versification of Shakespeare, and other dramatists of that time. He may soon verify with their facility; and we may then place his volumes near those of Maffinger and of Beaumont and Fletcher. He has already avoided the faults of our modern theatrical authors; we meet with no whining dullnefs, no idle rhapsodies, no metaphorical absurdity. (Smollett 21-22)

Baillie was mistaken to be a male playwright since it was taken for granted that her work could be only written by a man. This demonstrates how prejudiced and sexist the society and literary circles were at the time by so misjudging the gender of the playwright. *The Monthly Review* of 1798 also acknowledges that "though his versification is sometimes rugged and inharmonious, and his style has an antientry of phrase which often savours of affection, yet his characters are in general strongly

discriminated, and his scenes abound in beautiful passages” (“A Series of Plays” 66). After her work was recognised for its merit and transferred to the stage,<sup>16</sup> Baillie stepped forward to claim her work as her own. This actually turned out to be problematic for many people in the London society as she was a woman, and nobody probably expected a woman to manage to write and reflect upon such passions so meticulously and intently. As Ellen Donkin states, “[f]ar from activating a certain protective impulse in the public, the discovery that the author of *Plays on the Passions* was a woman apparently damaged both the sale of her book and the box-office receipts” (129). Regarding the reception of her plays at the time, during her time and until the latter reassessment of her works, her achievement was undermined not only because of her gender but also because of her plays’ focus on emotions rather than actions. In her letter to her nephew William Baillie, Baillie mentions the sexist prejudice and reaction towards herself and her work as follows:

The first vol of Plays lay for some months at the Booksellers, who had refused to publish them at his own risk and cared very little about its success, without being called for or noticed, notwithstanding a review of them full of the highest & most liberal praise, published in the first Review for reputation in those days, the writer of it being equally ignorant of the Author.... [...] [T]he discovery of the hitherto conceald [*sic*] Dramatist being not a man of letters but a private Gentlewoman of no mark or likelihood, turned the tide of publing [public] favour, and then influential critics and Reviewers from all quarters North & South, attacked the intention of the work as delineating in each of the Dramas only one passion, and therefore quite unnatural & absurd. (qtd. in Slagle, “Joanna Baillie Through Her Letters” 11-12)

Many years later, in her letter dated 1826 to Sir Walter Scott, Baillie even accepted that she had made a mistake by revealing her identity because of the prejudiced attitude of the age toward her authorship: “John any-body would have stood higher with the critics than Joanna Baillie. I [...] was unwisely thwarted on this point” (*The Collected Letters* 439). Despite this, like many female writers of the time, Baillie achieved huge success with her publications of both drama and poetry, and criticised the existing dramatic practice with her commentary on the dramatic tradition, theatrical production and staging in the prefaces of her three volumes of *Plays on the Passions*.

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<sup>16</sup> As Slagle argues, “[t]he fact that the play [*De Monfort*] opened with the author still unidentified, with Baillie’s identity revealed on the second night of performance, may explain why that play was not vetoed in the first place” (*Joanna Baillie* 94).

Considering the period's prejudice and norms, it was taken for granted that women were incapable of having an intellectual perspective and of reaching a high literary status like men. Yet ironically women were not given any access to education as men were. Like Baillie, many women writers of the Romantic Period found alternative ways to express their opinions and go against the cultural imperatives through prefaces, reviews, prologues, epilogues, advertisements (Burroughs, *Closet Stages* 5) or introductory discourse as Baillie did. This is how they bent the system for the articulation of their opinions. Baillie as well as other female writers like Hannah More, Hannah Cowley, Elizabeth Inchbald and many more wrote within a specific cultural convention which Burroughs calls "the tradition of self-debasement" (79). During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, women embraced this social necessity to explain their motives in their writings as if they were overreaching to do something they were not capable of, yet they still attempted to write by leaving themselves to the mercy of the reader/audience. Therefore, female writers referred to their alleged incompetence in their introductions or prefaces to be able to be accepted by the public. Burroughs defines this as "*the act* of emerging from private into public space" (79, italics in orig.) since women performed their gender or femininity for the acknowledgement of their works. So, the introductory remarks, discourses, prefaces, or reviews were core critical territories through which women voiced their opinions and criticisms under the disguise of modest femininity. Baillie's "Introductory Discourse" places her in this tradition of disguise in which she underestimates her own writing as she writes: "It is distrust and not confidence, that has led me, at this early stage of the undertaking, to bring it before the publick" ("Introductory Discourse" 66). Hence, Baillie defended her endeavour and found a place for herself in the literary arena dominated by male majority. After settling her position among male writers by assuming a modest femininity, she put forward her critical perspective and her new method of writing plays each of which was based on a specific passion. Moreover, the playwriting itself manifests the female writers' confrontation with the current system and the assertion of their voices in public. As Ellen Donkin states,

[p]laywriting, as a profession, violated all the rules of conduct. It conferred on women a public voice. It gave them some control over how women were represented on stage. It required that they mingle freely with people of both sexes in a place of work that was not the home. It made ambition a prerequisite, and,

perhaps most importantly, it offered the possibility of acquiring capital. In other words, playwriting was something of a loophole; it allowed women to push the system considerably further than it was prepared to go. (14)

Thus, the female writers of the period managed to break down the perception regarding women's comparatively inferior position in the society by taking the pens in their hands and contorting the established norms to be able to exist within the patriarchal system.

In her "Introductory Discourse" in the first volume of *Plays on Passions*, Baillie describes her dramatic theory and provides a criticism of the current dramatic tradition. As Stuart Curran states, Baillie "two years before Wordsworth celebrated preface, had published her own seventy-two-page argument for naturalness of language and situation across all the literary genres" (185-86). In her discourse, she not only explains her plan to create a series of plays on passions but also presents her theory of drama; hence she establishes a place for herself as a theatre theorist. Through her plays, Baillie's "great object here is to trace passion through all its varieties, and in every stage" ("Introductory Discourse" 58) each of which is to be illustrated in both a tragedy and a comedy. Baillie's theory is based on the idea of "sympathetic curiosity" (4) as she asserts: "From that strong sympathy which most creatures, but the human above all, feel for others of their kind, nothing has become so much an object of man's curiosity as man himself" (2). So, witnessing the characters' living their passions gives the reader/audience a kind of knowing agency to acknowledge their own circumstances in the same way. Unlike her contemporaries, Baillie intends to go into the "secret closet"<sup>17</sup> (30) of her characters to unveil or witness human passions, that are unseen or unshown most of the time, to instruct people about the extremity and subsequent consequences of these uncontrolled passions.

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<sup>17</sup> Baillie explains it further in her "Introductory Discourse" as follows: "Those unseen passions which conceal themselves from the observation of men; which cannot unbosom themselves even to the dearest friend; and can, often times, only give their fulness vent in the lonely desert, or in the darkness of midnight. For who hath followed the great man into his secret closet, or stood by the side of his nightly couch, and heard those exclamations of the soul which heaven alone may hear, that the historian should be able to inform us? and what mode of rehearsed speech will communicate to us those feelings, whose irregular bursts, abrupt transitions, sudden pauses, and half-uttered suggestions, scorn all harmony of measured verse, all method and order of relation?" (30).

Furthermore, according to Baillie, “[w]e expect to find them creatures like ourselves; and if they are untrue to nature, we feel that we are imposed upon” (24). Baillie, thus, aims to create a more realistic and true-to-nature dramatic tradition by delving into the closets of the individuals to discover how they feel in reality. So, the fall of “a feeble stranger” (21) will have more impact than the fall of a mighty hero. In this regard, Baillie turns to criticise the current dramatic tradition since her contemporaries “have been more occupied in considering the works of the great dramatists who have gone before them, and the effects produced by their writings, than the varieties of human character which first furnished materials for those works, or those principles in the mind of man by means of which such effects were produced” (31). Therefore, for Baillie, the nature of the characters and their development seem to be neglected in contemporary writings. Baillie aims to

unveil[...] the human mind under the dominion of those strong and fixed passions, which, seemingly unprovoked by outward circumstances, will from small beginnings brood within the breast, till all the better dispositions, all the fair gifts of nature are borne down before them, her poets in general have entirely neglected, and even her first and greatest have but imperfectly attempted. (37)

Her concern is to provide a new model or design for theatrical representations which is to trace the passions brooding in a person or the life in the closet realistically, thereby empathising with others to eventually understand ourselves. Through especially the anatomical scrutiny of the characters<sup>18</sup> such as their gestures, manners and physiognomic reactions like breathing, restless eyes, exclamations and mutterings, Baillie surveys the real and very intimate feelings and emotions of her characters and their natures.<sup>19</sup> According to Baillie,

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<sup>18</sup> Baillie was familiar with the medical world because of her brother Matthew Baillie, a physician (who also later became physician to King George III) and her uncle William Hunter, a famous anatomist. So, she was most probably affected by their works in terms of presenting the physiognomy and psychology of her characters. (Burwick “Joanna Baillie” 51; Elliott 86)

<sup>19</sup> It is essential to note that Baillie is likely to be influenced by the philosophy of the period. According to Baker, “David Hume’s *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1740), Adam Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), and Edmund Burke’s treatise, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) all preceded her theories by several decades. [...] While Hume, Smith, and Burke apply their philosophy of emotion to human life and existence, Baillie applies it to the drama, both in terms of dramatic writing and theatrical practice” (23-24). Peter Duthie also gives a whole picture of the philosophical and

Drama improves us by the knowledge we acquire of our own minds, from the natural desire we have to look into the thoughts, and observe the behaviour of the others. [...] As examples applicable to ourselves, therefore, they can but affect us; it is only from the enlargement of our ideas in regard to human nature, from that admiration of virtue and abhorrence of vice which they excite, that we can expect to be improved by them. (36)

So, the focus on passions in each play helps her corroborate her moral objective to instruct people about the consequences of excessive passions.

During the late eighteenth century, being affected by the Gothic craze of the time, Baillie employs the Gothic in most of her plays. Baillie understands the power that the theatre has on people and society as she states in her “Introductory Discourse” that “[t]he theatre is a school in which much good or evil may be learned” (57). According to Christine A. Colón, “[b]y capturing the attention of the audience in such a powerful way, Baillie feels that she can more easily convey the moral truths that lurk behind the Gothic trappings” (“Joanna Baillie” 135). Colón thinks that Baillie’s use of the Gothic is to “enact her unique theories of moral reform” (“Joanna Baillie” 129). Baillie employs specifically the Gothic to have an impact on people. In this regard, Bertrand Evans argues that “[w]hen both the quantity and the quality of her contributions are considered, Joanna Baillie must be placed among the foremost Gothic dramatists” (241) and he categorises her ten plays “*Orra, The Dream, Henriquez, Romiero, Ethwald* (in two parts), *De Monfort, Rayner, The Family Legend, The Separation, and Witchcraft*” (242) as Gothic drama. It is clear that Baillie contributes to the Gothic tradition and holds an important position within it. Among these plays, in this dissertation, *De Monfort* (1798) is chosen because it is a transition play on various levels meditating on the anxieties of the age with its evolving Gothic characteristics. Though there are some studies on Baillie and her works in terms of themes related to gender and class,<sup>20</sup> this

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psychological context from which Baillie was likely to be influenced (27-34). He says: “Whether or not Baillie actually read [David] Hume or [Francis] Hutcheson, we cannot absolutely be certain. But we can see in her work the philosophical moral tradition that they helped shape” (33). Also mentioned in Whelan’s “The Suffering Stage: Joanna Baillie, Spectacle, and Sympathetic Education,” *European Romantic Review* 24.6 (2013): 665-81.

<sup>20</sup> Those works include Watkins’s “Class, Gender, and Social Motion in Joanna Baillie’s *De Monfort*,” *A Materialist Critique of English Romantic Drama*; Purinton’s *Romantic Ideology Unmasked*; Colón’s “Joanna Baillie and the Christian Gothic: Reforming Society through the Sublime”; Burroughs, *Closet Stages*; Mellor’s “Joanna Baillie and the Counter-Public Sphere”; Kucich’s “Joanna Baillie and the Re-staging of History and Gender.”

chapter seeks to explore how the Gothic functions in her exploration of these themes and how the Gothic becomes an instrument to examine socio-cultural and psychological projections of Baillie's own time.

In 1800, *De Monfort* was performed at Drury Lane with John Kemble as De Monfort and Sarah Siddons as Jane De Monfort. As Christine A. Colón states,

[e]ven though this production lasted for only eight performances, *De Monfort* was popular enough to be produced in New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Edinburgh, Bath, and Birmingham in the next few years, and in 1821 *De Monfort* was revived at Drury Lane with Edmund Kean in the title role. (*Joanna Baillie* 52)

However, at the beginning, the reviews were not very optimistic. In the *Dramatic Censor*, or, *Weekly Theatrical Report* of 29 April 1800, Thomas Dutton wrote that

we shall content ourselves with generally observing, that the success of the Play depends more, in our humble opinion, in the exquisite acting of Mr. KEMBLE and Mrs. SIDDONS, than on its own intrinsic merit. The language is, indeed, chaste and elegant; the diction elevated and impressive, without becoming turgid, vapid, and bombastic; and the sentiments are delicate and natural. But the Piece wants interest – it wants variety – it wants activity – it is too barren of incident – and very little art has been employed in the conduct of the plot. (448)

In his review dated 2 May 1800 in the *Dramatic Censor*, Dutton claims that “we never saw a Tragedy more woefully deficient, more culpably ill-conducted” (450). Lack of action, the faulty composition of the characters and the plotwise shortcomings<sup>21</sup> are highlighted in the reviews of Dutton. These are the criticisms that Baillie received and that led her play to be categorised eventually as a closet play in fact.

Before the analysis of the play, it is important to state that *De Monfort* is a play based on hatred though, in her “Introductory Discourse,” Baillie acknowledges that hatred grows slowly but because of the limitation of the dramatic time, she cannot prolong it (63). Baillie further explains:

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<sup>21</sup> It is essential to mark that besides her focus on psychology rather than action, both Baillie's gender and some of her dramatic weaknesses like the appearance of Conrad in *De Monfort*, also condemn her plays into the closet. As Norton argues in the case of *De Monfort*, “the play is weak structurally. This is largely because the tragedy depends so much on exposition. Not until the fourth act does the entry of Conrad set the play moving towards its catastrophe; and even his entrance and his agency may be regarded as superfluous by a purist in motivation” (140).

This passion, as I have conceived it, is that rooted and settled aversion, which from opposition of character, aided by circumstances of little importance, grows at last into such antipathy and personal disgust as makes him who entertains it, feel, in the presence of him who is the object of it, a degree of torment and restlessness which is insufferable. (63)

In this regard, the plot of the play revolves around the eponymous character De Monfort's hatred and subsequent disgust and contempt for Rezenvelt. De Monfort comes to a German town called Amberg seemingly to isolate himself as he is occupied with some gloomy thoughts and is running away from something bothering him as understood from the opening of the play. Nearly at the same time, he learns that his arch-enemy Rezenvelt also arrives in the town. In the meantime, Jane De Monfort, his sister, comes to check on her brother because De Monfort has disappeared without saying anything to her. With the help of the Frebergs, who are portrayed as sociable and party-loving people, Jane appears at the party with a veil to be able to understand her brother's distress through her disguise. After the party, because Jane is very concerned about De Monfort, he is forced to confess to her his hatred for Rezenvelt. Hearing this, Jane is determined to heal De Monfort and save him from his hatred. It is also revealed that De Monfort once dared Rezenvelt into a duel which he lost and they parted as friends. However, when the reconciliation moment arrives as De Monfort and Rezenvelt meet to end this enmity between them, the former gives his hand to the latter by admitting in front of Count Freberg and Jane that he owes his life to Rezenvelt. Yet, when Rezenvelt wants to embrace him, De Monfort recoils, which makes things worse than even before. On the other hand, while Countess Freberg is planning to spread a rumour about Jane out of jealousy because Jane is worshipped by everyone including the Countess's husband, a self-seeker man gets involved in the story to tell De Monfort that Jane is engaged to Rezenvelt. Subsequently, a misreading of a scene between Jane and Rezenvelt leads De Monfort to murder Rezenvelt in the woods. The deceased Rezenvelt and De Monfort are brought to a convent. When De Monfort is left with Rezenvelt's dead body in the convent, he shrinks away from it and realises what he has done, which results in his huge remorse and mental suffering, thus leading him to his tragic death in the arms of his sister Jane.

To set the tone of the play, it is significant to start with the setting and its function. Traditional Gothic plays like Gothic novels are set mostly in claustrophobic and ghastly venues like castles, abbeys, or monasteries in isolated and distant countries, as well as being set in a distant time specially to avoid being associated with any current issue or person. As a symbolic element, the setting points out an undeniably compelling symbiosis between the overt and the covert. The setting accompanies the relevant themes and strengthens their effects by illustrating socio-cultural dynamics as well as the psychological reactions of the protagonists. Anne Williams highlights the function of the setting which evokes “claustrophobia, loneliness, a sense of antiquity [and] recognition that this is a place of secrets” (39-40). In this context, because the setting establishes the mood for the whole play, by setting the play in a town in Germany and in an unknown time as time is not specified in the play, Baillie exploits the setting for grounding her characters’ desolation and suffering within a claustrophobic environment as well as providing a safe and distant place to comment on the current atmosphere of Britain. As Clive Bloom states, “[t]he Gothic is a mode of cultural production [...] [with] its ability to mutate and adapt to different times and spaces, becoming an effective reflection of societal fears” (“Introduction to the Gothic” 8). Hence, the setting functions as a means to explore and scrutinise the concerns of the society and the individual.

When De Monfort arrives in this town, it seems he craves for his isolation from everything that is bothering his mind and heart. However, what he finds in the end is a claustrophobic environment that is incarcerating him more and more since the moment of his arrival. Though actually only in need of his own companionship, De Monfort is forced to be immersed in social activities because of the Frebergs, the sociable elite of the play. And then particularly the arrival of his arch-enemy Rezenvelt pushes him to his very limits. De Monfort does not have anywhere to go and is blocked on every corner in this town. The claustrophobic effect of the setting in this sense sets the character’s psychological state of mind; De Monfort feels suffocated and his world is reduced to being surrounded by invisible walls. Considering the traditional Gothic, the castle or subterranean passages work in the same way to create a claustrophobic impact on the characters. However, in Baillie’s design, the town functions as an alternative to the traditional enclosed spaces. Therefore, in this confined space, the play demonstrates

how De Monfort unveils and increases his inner turmoil and chaotic mindset. Paul Baines and Edward Burns further explain that the setting

provides a decorative frame for Baillie's exploration of suppressed emotion; incestuous attraction, the impulse to gratuitous violence, and irrational fascination with a *doppelgänger*/rival of the same sex are all recurrent themes in Gothic and Romantic writing, and Baillie's treatment of them is subtle and detailed, grounding them in the emotional life of individually plausible figures, and using the ersatz historical setting to isolate her psychological concerns and so focus audience on the characters' interiority. (*Five Romantic Drama* ix)

The sense of claustrophobia or claustrophobic space is one of the significant qualities of the Gothic to evoke an unsettling, fearful or suffocating effect upon the characters. As Thomas C. Crochunis states, "space is so often naturalized as the given condition of social and political life that Gothic dramatic writing exploits theatrical space for political and psychological effect" ("Writing" 167). Baillie, in this sense, makes use of such a setting to illustrate the state of mind of her characters and to reflect upon their circumstances.

In this regard, especially the gloomy woods as one of the important venues in the play function to refer to the mental states of the characters. In this scene, the binary attitudes of both De Monfort and Rezenvelt can be clearly seen in the Gothic setting which helps to delve into the mental states of these two characters. As for Baillie's use of such a setting, Michael Gamer asserts that she "mak[es] the mind the sole source of Gothic effects, rather than having her characters misinterpret ambiguous stimuli outside of themselves. Her usual stage practice, then, is to provide recognizably Gothic settings and effects, but to withhold actual supernatural representations" ("National Supernaturalism" 57). The mind becomes a catalyst for creating a Gothic effect, thus evoking a sense of the supernatural. In the woods, Rezenvelt considers the surroundings beautiful:

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.  
 [...]  
 Those aged oaks their crossing branches wave,  
 And through them looks the pale and placid moon.  
 [...]

Yon sailing cloud bears on its dusky length!  
 And now transformed by the passing wind,  
 Methinks it seems a flying Pegasus. (IV.i.160)

Greeting nightbirds, harmonious hooting, the moon seen through tree branches and wind like Pegasus, all of these demonstrate how Rezenvelt finds joy in nature and is in harmony with nature. He celebrates nature by seeing the beauty and life in it. On the other hand, De Monfort's mind runs wild with his dark and upcoming intention of murdering Rezenvelt and he reflects upon the scenery as follows:

How hollow groans the earth beneath my tread!  
 [...]
 And thickly-tangled boughs o'er-hang this spot.  
 Oh that a tenfold gloom did cover it!  
 [...]
 As in the wild confusion of a dream,  
 Things horrid, bloody, terrible do pass,  
 [...]
 Art thou instinctive drawn to scenes of horror?  
 [...]
 How those fall'n leaves so rustle on the path,  
 With whisp'ring noise, as though the earth around me  
 Did utter secret things?  
 [...]
 A dismal wailing. Oh mysterious night!  
 Thou art not silent; many tongues hast thou.  
 [...]
 And dark clouds fleetly hasten o'er the sky:  
 Oh! that a storm would rise, a raging storm;  
 [...] (*Starting*) Footsteps are near – (IV.i.159)

Groaning earth, gloom, horrid things, rustling leaves, whispering noise, ghastly wailing, dark clouds, raging storm and approaching footsteps, all of these set a thrilling, suspenseful and dreadful atmosphere for De Monfort and his impending action. As Michael Gamer explains, De Monfort "responds to his surroundings as if they were supernatural" ("National Supernaturalism" 58). Nature becomes a vehicle to create and evoke the fear and horror in De Monfort by De Monfort himself who conceives these in his own mind. The perception of the environment in a Gothic vision illustrates De Monfort's paranoid nature as well. Thus, Baillie makes use of such scenery to exhibit two different minds and their contradictory perspectives. Hence, the scene with its

thrilling and dreadful atmosphere and premonition of the yet-to-come murder sets the Gothic mood for the story.

The claustrophobic and suspenseful atmosphere of the play is correlated with anxieties about the socio-political status of the eponymous character, which can be observed in relation to the transformations happening in the late eighteenth century. As discussed in the Introduction, the late eighteenth century was a period of transitions. One of them was “the transition from an aristocratic to a bourgeois social structure” (Watkins 41). In the late eighteenth century, the industrialisation of Britain gained momentum as “a social corollary of the dramatic changes in trade and manufacturing that characterized the economy in these decades, transforming Britain into an ‘industrial nation’ and also bringing into being a self-conscious working class” (Gunn 31). Accordingly, the social structure of the society began to change. Industrialisation fuelled the growth of the middle class who played an important role in this transition through their entrepreneurship. During the 1790s, the political upheavals of the age, namely the French Revolution leading to the redefinitions of social ranks and titles, prompted the growing disruption of the established class system. As Penelope J. Corfield argues, “[e]ighteenth century British society was therefore increasingly experienced as mutable and combative. Power was resynthesised into active terms, of acquisition, production, display; [*sic*] rather than inheritance, formal title, and ancient lineage” (61). The shifting social and economic structure and the impact of the Revolution, thus, caused a decline in the power of the aristocracy which depended on inheritance and title, and the bourgeoisie acquired economic and political power. Hence, power relations were redefined and the middle class began to grow stronger, as will be observed in the play.

After witnessing tension arousing between De Monfort and Rezenvelt at the Freberg’s party, Jane De Monfort insistently begins to question the reason for De Monfort’s current mood and his escape from their home to this town. De Monfort is restless and confused “*with a disordered air, and his hand pressed upon his forehead*” (131) as the stage direction reads, and he does not want to reveal his most intimate secret to anyone, especially Jane to whom he is very much devoted. Jane resolutely beseeches him to tell his secret and De Monfort finally unveils the reason for his unrest as he says: “No, it is hate! black, lasting, deadly hate;/Which thus hath driv’n me forth from kindred

peace,/From social pleasure, from my native home,/To be a sullen wand'rer on the earth,/Avoiding all men, cursing and accurs'd" (II.ii.133). His hatred isolates him from the world and everyone else. De Monfort is forced to become a lonely wanderer on earth. He continues to explain his hatred of Rezenvelt:

[...] When, low in fortune,  
 He looked upon the state of prosp'rous men,  
 As nightly birds, roused from their murky holes,  
 Do scowl and chatter at the light of day,  
 I could endure it; [...]  
 But when honours came,  
 And wealth and new-got titles fed his pride;  
 Whilst flatt'ring knaves did trumpet forth his praise,  
 And grov'ling idiots grinned applauses on him;  
 Oh! then I could no longer suffer it! (II.ii.134)

Here, in this monologue, though Baillie was criticised for her lack of motive behind De Monfort's hatred, De Monfort actually states the reason for his hatred resulting in his restless and anxious disposition, and this is Rezenvelt's acquisition of wealth and title.

De Monfort's hatred of Rezenvelt displays a kind of tension and anxiety related to the shifting class dynamics. Since the very first mention of Rezenvelt's name, De Monfort cannot rest and cannot contain his loathing and contempt as he resembles Rezenvelt to a snake which obstructs his path while he is trying to take firm steps forward: "Here can I wander with assured steps,/Nor dread, at every winding of the path,/Lest an abhorred serpent cross my way,/And move" (I.ii.116). These lines referring to the serpent obstructing De Monfort's path also foreshadow their future encounters in this town, namely at the party, in the woods and lastly in the convent. This foreboding, finding its expression in De Monfort's growing and unsatiated hatred for Rezenvelt, demonstrates the extension of his fear of the loss of power and status as well as contributing to suspense throughout the play. These constant encounters between them cause to further the sense of De Monfort's claustrophobia which will eventually lead to his mental breakdown. In this regard, as James M. Keech states, "[t]he response of the Gothic novel is fear, universally inherent in every man's nature, primitive and basic, and existing regardless of time, place, or culture" (131). Although Keech is referring to the novel genre, his remarks also apply to drama. Hence, the fear factor is very important as

De Monfort is fuelled by his fear though in disguise of hatred because everything seems to be slipping away from his hands.

Rezenvelt is conscious of the source of De Monfort's condescending attitude towards himself. As a representative of the growing bourgeoisie class, Rezenvelt has experienced the effects of the shifting social dynamics since his childhood. He has witnessed the changes in the society and is naturally built to adapt himself to this changing environment. However, De Monfort's self-esteem and superiority complex as a consequence of his inherited title and social class cannot tolerate these changes. Rezenvelt knows De Monfort is a proud and pompous character as he says: "since he [De Monfort] proudly thinks that cold respect,/The formal tokens of his lordly favour,/So precious are, that I would sue for them" (III.ii.149). Rezenvelt describes how he is looked down upon by De Monfort as follows: "Oh! from our youth he has distinguished me/With ev'ry mark of hatred and disgust./For e'en in boyish sports I still opposed/His proud pretensions to pre-eminence;/Nor would I to his ripened greatness give/That fulsome adulation of applause/A senseless crowd bestowed" (III.ii.149). Due to the class difference between them, De Monfort regards Rezenvelt as unequal to himself and despises him. As Rezenvelt says: "when unlooked-for fate on me bestowed/Riches and splendour equal to his own,/[...]Feeling inclined to be at peace with him,/And with all men besides, I curbed my spirit,/And sought to soothe him. Then, with spiteful rage,/From small offence he reared a quarrel with me,/And dared me to the field" (III.ii.149). As observed in the previous lines, Rezenvelt's newly-acquired wealth and upward social mobility disturb the peace of mind of De Monfort to a great extent. During the late eighteenth century, "the hegemonic order of the time [...] was a system of ascribed, inherited and privileged status by birth, rank and wealth" (Kelly xxii). De Monfort wants to maintain his hegemonic power and, therefore, he sees Rezenvelt as a threat to this order. As Martin Hewitt states, "class was not only the single most important form of social categorization, but also the bedrock of understandings of political and social change, and of the narratives which were constructed around them" (305). So, at the turn of the nineteenth century, the changing class dynamics became an essential matter since it not only changed the socio-cultural structure but also created a new sense of identity by breaking down the walls of the aristocratic status.

When Freberg questions the motives of De Monfort's coming to Amberg, Rezenvelt interrupts to say, probably to mock De Monfort: "Oh! 'tis love of me./I have but two short days in Amberg been,/And here with postman's speed he follows me,/Finding his home so dull and tiresome grown" (I.ii.120). Thus, Rezenvelt makes himself an object of desire in the eyes of De Monfort. Besides, while Rezenvelt revels in taunting De Monfort at every opportunity, he can be flirtatious as well. Addressing De Monfort at the party of the Frebergs, Rezenvelt says: "(*smiling archly.*) What, think you, Freberg, the same powerful spell/Of transformation reigns o'er all to-night?/Or that De Monfort is a woman turned./So widely from his native self to swerve,/As grace my gai'ty with a smile of his?" (II.i.128). Since Rezenvelt is an object of desire, he seeks the absolute attention of De Monfort and he cannot help but express this in a teasing and homoerotic tone. De Monfort is also highly aware of Rezenvelt's presence to the extent that he can recognise Rezenvelt's footsteps from afar:

De Monfort: (*off his guard.*) 'Tis Rezenvelt: I heard his well-known foot,  
From the first stair-case, mounting step by step.  
Freberg: How quick an ear thou hast for distant sound?  
I heard him not.  
(*De Monfort looks embarrassed, and is silent.*) (III.i.144)

This intense recognition or acknowledgement of each other's existence accentuates their specific affinity. As George E. Haggerty asserts, "the play dramatizes the consequences of same-sex desire between these men and exposes its full (and fully contradictory) function in patriarchal culture" (*Queer Gothic* 95). And this affinity is mostly considered a transgressive act against heteronormative discourse.

While many critics point out the homoerotic possibility between these two characters (Wozniak 56; Burroughs, *Closet Stages* 116; Schaff 337), it is important how to evaluate this implication in terms of De Monfort's identity crisis. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argues that "[i]t was part of the strange fate of the early Gothic that the genre as a whole, conflicted as it was, came in the nineteenth century to seem a crystallization of the aristocratic homosexual role, even as the aristocracy was losing its normative force in English society more generally" (*Between Men* 94). In this regard, while the aristocracy is losing their power in the society, they are becoming feminised in their clashing interests with the middle class. Sedgwick further argues that "[a]n important,

recurrent, wishful gesture of this ideological construction was the feminization of the aristocracy as a whole, by which not only aristocratic women [...], but the abstract image of the entire class, came to be seen as ethereal, decorative, and otiose in relation to the vigorous and productive values of the middle class” (*Between Men* 93).<sup>22</sup> As a result of the changing class dynamics, the aristocracy is characterised by femininity. According to Barbara Schaff, “this points to an identity conflict fuelled by a socially unacceptable passion, turning the tragedy about hate into a tragedy about self-hate, in which the protagonist tries to comply with the heteronormative order by killing the object of his desire” (338). Thus, De Monfort’s fear and anxiety bring about resentment and loathing directed at his own self, thereby turning it into self-hate. He becomes his own abject; he is disgusted by himself. He embodies an “otherness, a burden both repellent and repelled, a deep well of memory that is unapproachable and intimate: the abject” (Kristeva 6) because he cannot be the man he craves to be. The masculinity crisis he is going through is a direct threat to his aristocratic identity which is deemed as ‘decorative’ and ‘otiose’ as opposed to the vigorousness of Rezenvelt. While his hereditary class-based identity is threatened by the uncanny permeating presence of Rezenvelt, the homoerotic tone is also considered a threat to his aristocratic status. However, it is important to point out that Baillie’s play does not revolve around two antithetical sexes as in traditional Gothic works but rather around two antithetical male characters.

While De Monfort is suffering from anxieties and fears, the Frebergs are living joyfully and indifferently. The social activities carried out by the Frebergs become a way to ignore the socio-political shifts occurring in the society. Daniel P. Watkins states that “[i]f anxiety and claustrophobia are signs of tense of psychological pressure produced by antagonistic class relations, the feasts and parties described through much of the

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<sup>22</sup> However, David Van Leer takes the idea of feminisation as a continuation of the derogatory ideological practices. According to Van Leer, the terms Sedgwick uses for male homosexuality “does not challenge the terms’ validity but reaffirms it, showing they have an even wider range of applicability than had been thought” (588). This dissertation does not validate the socially constructed understanding of femininity and masculinity but aims to show how the characters, as representatives of their society, perceive and enact these assigned roles. In many instances, through his teasing flirtations, Rezenvelt likens De Monfort to a woman. In this respect, the feminisation of the aristocracy, as argued by Sedgwick, helps to comprehend the socially constructed status of the characters here.

early part of the drama suggest one way that aristocracy deals with that tension” (47). Yet, De Monfort fails to do so, as he cannot tolerate Rezenvelt’s social mobility and his complacent manners. Rezenvelt, with his newly-acquired wealth and title, is welcomed into this society while De Monfort is restless in the presence of Rezenvelt. On the other hand, the Frebergs who are the representative of the aristocratic lifestyle seem to accept Rezenvelt more easily than De Monfort and think of him as a very pleasant gentleman, as Count Freberg says: “He is so full of pleasant anecdote,/So rich, so gay, so poignant is his wit,/Time vanishes before him as he speaks,/And ruddy morning through the lattice peeps/Ere night seems well begun” (I.i.114). The Frebergs, along with Rezenvelt, seem to enjoy their lives in a cheerful and joyous way, unlike De Monfort. Referring to the aristocratic lifestyle, Catherine B. Burroughs asserts that “[t]heirs is a world of flattery, of false, feigned and indiscriminate friendships, of hyperbolic and superficial discourse” (“Out of the Pale” 230). The Frebergs are not obsessive about their status unlike De Monfort and live in their world of flattery and indifference. As it is observed, firstly the duel between De Monfort and Rezenvelt and secondly Rezenvelt’s being socially accepted and recognised by De Monfort’s elite circle cause the latter to be frustrated as neither can be acceptable to De Monfort. While Rezenvelt benefits from this recognition and becomes more and more involved in this elite circle, De Monfort is estranged from the same society because he cannot adapt to this changing environment and cannot become welcoming to the bourgeoisie like them, and this results in the fact that at the end “De Monfort has become the naturalized monster of a gothic narrative” (Elliott 96).

Rezenvelt turns into a threat for De Monfort’s identity and position, and De Monfort cannot discard his hatred and contempt for Rezenvelt. As Andrew Smith states, “[u]ncanniness might appear to be a purely psychological phenomenon but it represents a model of anxiety which needs to be seen within the social context that gives rise to it” (*Gothic Literature* 90). Rezenvelt becomes the projection of De Monfort’s fears and anxieties. In other words, this sort of anxiousness is an uncanny experience for De Monfort reflecting the fear of loss of his power and class status. De Monfort thinks Rezenvelt “will not let [him] be the man [he] would” (II.ii.132). Therefore, Rezenvelt turns into the uncanny other or *doppelgänger* of De Monfort whom the latter wants to

repress though in vain because things always come to the surface no matter what. Corinna Wagner states that

[h]istorically, the gothic trope most associated with questions of identity has been the *doppelgänger* or double. Doubling may occur when gothic protagonists encounter a ‘second self,’ that is, uncannily similar character or an opposite. Alternatively, a troubled character might ‘split’ into two figures, usually as a way of dealing with psychological pain or repressed emotion. (xxxii)

As a result of the inescapable ‘split’ presence of Rezenvelt, De Monfort’s paranoia disrupts his whole sense of being and is about to reduce him into a nobody as his world is about to collapse, shattering his sense of identity, which is his ultimate fear. In this context, it is convenient to refer to Anne Williams’s perception of the uncanny. Williams explains the uncanny in relation to the Gothic setting’s exploration of the familial dynamics as follows: “the Gothic also literalizes Freud’s point of departure regarding the uncanny: the *Unheimlich* as a presentation of the utterly familiar as strange. The German term declares such things ‘un-home-like’; English has adopted the term ‘uncanny’ to speak of this familiarly ‘unfamiliar,’ the ‘un-family-like’” (45-46). Considering the fact that the word ‘uncanny’ refers to ‘un-home-like,’ it can be observed that De Monfort does not feel at home anymore as his class identity is stripped of its meaning and he cannot maintain it anymore since his inherent class status is about to break down and so is his inherent family name, hence, home. Manfred seems to be gradually estranged from his home because of this suffocating and haunting image of Rezenvelt invading his own space.

Throughout the play, De Monfort’s claustrophobia and paranoia are triggered by Rezenvelt. At the beginning of the play, as it is clearly highlighted by the stage directions, when De Monfort hears his arch enemy’s name mentioned by one of his servants, his mood immediately changes, he becomes frenzied “*dashing his clenched hand violently upon the table, and overturning every thing*” (117). De Monfort marks in agitation as follows:

It is too much: by heaven it is too much!  
 He haunts me – stings me – like a devil haunts –  
 He’ll make a raving maniac of me – Villain!  
 The air wherein thou draw’st thy fulsome breath

Is poison to me – Oceans shall divide! (*Pauses.*)  
 But no; thou think'st I fear thee, cursed reptile!  
 And hast a pleasure in the damned thought.  
 Though my heart's blood should curdle at thy sight,  
 I'll stay and face thee still. (I.ii.117-18)

For him, Rezenvelt is the villain disturbing and tormenting him. In the presence of Rezenvelt, De Monfort cannot know what to do but is mostly confused, impatient and aggressive as he paces up and down, asking irrelevant questions, ringing the bell for the servant but for nothing (I.ii.119-21). Besides, as the last lines in the above quotation (I.ii.118) suggest, throughout the play, De Monfort, as a noble and prideful person, tries to keep up his appearances whenever the issue is Rezenvelt until his last nervous outbreak which brings the demise of both characters. His frustration or displeasure and sense of pride are quite overt from the very moment of the first mention of Rezenvelt's name. After their first encounter, De Monfort says:

Abhorred fiend! he hath a pleasure too,  
 A damned pleasure in the pain he gives!  
 Oh! the side glance of that detested eye!  
 That conscious smile! that full insulting lip!  
 It touches every nerve: it makes me mad. (I.ii.121-22)

De Monfort's observations or imaginary thoughts about Rezenvelt's manners towards him make him feel more nervous and paranoid because of the latter's so-called surveillance over him. This supposed surveillance may reflect the spirit of the age because of its political evocation. Considering the French Revolution and its aftermath, Prime Minister William Pitt's government took very strict precautions to avoid any revolutionary activities or radical dissent by invoking sanctions and thus spreading fear and paranoia. The government, hence, employed coercive measures and actions, namely the 1794 Treason Trials and the 'Gagging' Acts of 1795, suspended *habeas corpus*, conducted raids or searches without warrants or insubstantial allegations from informers, resulting in "a contemporary climate popularly known as 'Pitt's Terror'" (Worrall 150). Thus, fear and paranoia which dominated the society during the late eighteenth century even led to such a "contrast between 'Robespierre's Terror' and 'Pitt's Terror'" (Davis et. al. 7). This homegrown terror in Britain triggered constant political paranoia and fear of incarceration as the government tried to oppress anything

radical. Regarding the changing atmosphere of the late eighteenth century, David Punter elaborates further that

it is hardly surprising to find the emergence of a literature whose key motifs are paranoia, manipulation and injustice, and whose central project is understanding the explicable, the taboo, the irrational. [...] The[...] [Gothic] symbols, we may say, were forged as a response to a period of social trauma; and perhaps that trauma is one which British culture is still trying, in increasingly sophisticated ways, to understand. (*Literature of Terror* 112)

The uncertainty and the fear in the society as a result of the shifting political and social dynamics find their expression in the Gothic.<sup>23</sup> The social trauma Punter refers to is characterised by Gothic motifs like ‘paranoia, manipulation and injustice’ and these become the everyday reality<sup>24</sup> of the late eighteenth century. So, by reflecting the fears and anxieties of the period, the Gothic is “an exploration of the tensions that arise as a result of political, economic, and social change” (Cólon, “Introduction” xxxv). Hence, taking into consideration the fact that Baillie’s composition of *De Monfort* demonstrates the general state of mind during the era, the fearful atmosphere of the late eighteenth century seems to affect Baillie. Throughout the play, this sense of suffocation, restlessness and anxiety will be at work. *De Monfort*’s sense of being haunted by Rezenvelt wherever he goes illustrates his anxiety and fear of surveillance related to the paranoid atmosphere of the age because of the strict political sanctions.

Furthermore, *De Monfort*’s first name is never revealed as he only bears a family name, “*De Monfort*,” throughout the play. The (non)existence of his personal name turns into

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<sup>23</sup> In her *Spectacular Politics*, Paula R. Backscheider discusses Gothic drama as a reflection of the society: “The gothic suited the times, for it challenges the limits of the predictable, the ‘natural,’ the possible. If borders and limits do not hold, then the assumptions that determine our interpretations of phenomena and behavior are threatened. The public and private, the affectionate, the social, and the political become areas of uncertainty and insecurity, and every person and every event is capable of arousing dread” (149-50).

<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, in this context, it is important to highlight how the current atmosphere and events were reflected onto the lives of the people during the late eighteenth century. Because of the Gothic craze of the period, there appeared some satirical publications related to the Gothic which were labelled as “Terrorist Novel Writing,” “the terrible school,” “the hobgoblin-romance” (“Terrorist Novel Writing” 182-83). An anonymous text titled “The Terrorist System of Novel-Writing” (1797) satirises the current tradition imitating the Reign of Terror as follows: “[...] so prone are we to imitation, that we have exactly and faithfully copied the SYSTEM OF TERROR, if not in our streets, and in our fields, at least in our circulating libraries, and in our closets” (299-300). Thus, terror writing or the Gothic infiltrated all platforms of the late eighteenth-century life.

a contributing factor to De Monfort's fear and anxiety as the surname "De Monfort" is a carrier of his nobility. Sophie Coulombeau argues that

[t]he binomial name, constituted of given name and surname, is often understood to confer individuality and enable its bearer to participate within this circulatory reputational economy. But this model does not go unquestioned. It co-exists with another model of naming, one stressing that personal proper names locate the bearers within taxonomies of gender, class, nationality, religion and political affiliation. (48)

The value attributed to the name defines individuality and this sort of identification signifies one's status in relation to the others; however, the hereditary family names problematise the issue of individuality while they connote social and political power. De Monfort embodies no individuality and no personality separate from his name, which complicates his situation more. According to Baines and Burns, "De Monfort is never merely an individual, he is the representative of a moribund baronial class, in retreat from the newly ennobled and enriched Rezenvelt whose growing power oppresses him" (xxi). De Monfort is so self-aware of his own nobility and class that any feeling of losing his grip on his power and authority can be devastating for him as he is already consumed inside with his hatred. Moreover, after murdering Rezenvelt, De Monfort defines himself as nameless and a nobody which is something he had dreaded the most: "I have no name –/I'm nothing, now [...]" (V.ii.172). The loss of Rezenvelt who represents Manfred's fear and anxiety regarding his class identity is intersected and interwoven with the loss of the latter's name. Until now, Manfred seems to be holding on to his last name but at the end, he loses that as well. The obliteration of the name demonstrates the process of disintegrated identity, teetering on the edge of annihilation and, consequently, turning into a monstrous being.

The Gothic is known as a genre dealing with transgression and subversion leaving one in obscurity and ambiguity in terms of its outcomes and boundaries. Fred Botting states that "Gothic excesses [...] the fascination with transgression and the anxiety over cultural limits and boundaries, continue to produce ambivalent emotions and meanings in their tales of darkness, desire and power" (*Gothic* 1). In this regard, it is important to

look at one of the most employed Romantic themes of the period, that is incest.<sup>25</sup> It is possible that Baillie was aware of this theme while building up her characters' sibling relationship. In *De Monfort*, the relationship between De Monfort and Jane bears an overtone of incest as many scholars point out (Hoeveler, "Joanna Baillie" 129; Schaff 340; Wozniak 56; Gilbert 99; Colón, *Joanna Baillie* 143; Haggerty, "Psychodrama" 256; Burroughs, *Closet Stages* 116). There are always some hints to their unconventional relationship. For example, when Jane comes to ask about her brother, she tells the Frebergs: "The sight of me would wake his feeling mind/To other thoughts. I am no doting mistress,/No fond distracted wife, who must forthwith/Rush to his arms and weep. I am his sister" (II.i.125). It seems she needs an urge to highlight her position in this relationship by crossing out the other options. Since Jane and De Monfort lost their parents, Jane has become a mother figure for all the De Monfort siblings. De Monfort describes her as "[t]he virgin mother of an orphan race/Her dying parents left, this noble woman/Did, like a Roman matron, proudly sit,/Despising all the blandishments of love;/Whilst many a youth his hopeless love concealed,/Or, humbly distant, wooed her like a queen" (II.i.130). It is possible to read these lines as a reflection of his Oedipal complex as Watkins explains further: "In purely psychological terms, the relationship may thus be seen as reflecting oedipal and pre-oedipal desires that were shocked by the death of the parents and then transferred to the sister, where they were allowed to flourish, as the law of the father had been effectively removed" (52). Instead of his mother, De Monfort projects his desires upon his sister/mother figure. From the very beginning, it is observed that they are very close and even confidants to each other as Jane says: "There was a time when e'en with murder stained,/Had it been possible that such dire deed/Could e'er have been the crime of one so piteous,/Thou wouldst have told it me" (II.ii.131). This demonstrates how close their relationship is and probably that is why, De Monfort recoils to tell her his secret, so he runs away from home and comes to this town because probably he does not want her to think badly of him. He bemoans after Jane learns his secret passion: "Ha! thou hast

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<sup>25</sup> In his letter written to his friend Mary Gisborne in 1819, Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) defines the incest theme as a poetical device: "Incest is like many other incorrect things a very poetical circumstance. It may be the excess of love or hate. It may be that defiance of every thing for the sake of another which clothes itself in the glory of the highest heroism, or it may be that cynical rage which confounding the good & bad in existing opinions breaks through them for the purpose of rioting in selfishness & antipathy" (143).

heard it, then? From all the world,/But most of all from thee, I thought it hid./[...] ‘twas that which drove me hither./I could not bear to meet thine eye again” (II.ii.134-35). De Monfort’s displaced or unsettled identity and partly uprooted status in the society because of his being an orphan find its expression in incestuous desire.<sup>26</sup> So, the identity crisis of De Monfort can be clearly seen in his approach to his sister/mother as he is so displaced that he cannot find a solid ground to hold on to since everything is falling apart around him while his own established world is also dwindling. Here, the incestuous tone bespeaks De Monfort’s desire and need for a stable attachment, and preservation of his status via his sister who is regarded as the representative of the aristocracy.

Furthermore, the play contextualises a challenge to the perception of male and female roles in the late eighteenth century with its portrayal of De Monfort and Jane De Monfort. In the eighteenth century, because of industrialisation and increasing wealth, the domains of home and work, once the same place, began to be separated from each other. According to Ellen Donkin, “[o]ne of the effects of this separation was that spheres of public and private activity were now also seen to be separate, and gendered. The world of the home was the place of privacy and women’s work; the world of business and affairs was designated male and public” (26). Thus, economic factors determined gendered separation of home and workplace which led to the redefinition of the roles of man and woman in the society by pushing women behind the doors. When they behaved contrary to the expected norms, then they were most likely to be condemned by societal prejudices. Until the nineteenth century, women were treated as properties of patriarchy, namely father, brother, husband, and confined to their domestic spheres. However, one of the important turning points is that towards the end of the eighteenth century, Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* (1792) was published, which is concerned about a very radical gender politics regarding the biased gender perspective of the period. Wollstonecraft asserts that “[i]t is time to effect a revolution in female manners – time to restore to them their lost dignity – and make them, as a part of the human

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<sup>26</sup> According to Diana Long Hoeveler who evaluates the incestuous inclination of De Monfort in relation to his hatred, “De Monfort is in the grip of a tabooed love for his sister, and somehow that love has veered off and disguised itself as a perverted, displaced, hysterical hatred of Rezenvelt” (“Joanna Baillie” 129).

species, labour by reforming themselves to reform the world” (71). Thus, Wollstonecraft underlines the idea of a woman’s becoming a subject within the society rather than being nobody or merely an object in the eyes of the patriarchy. As Marjean D. Purinton states, “Wollstonecraft advocates equality between the sexes so that women can achieve a realization of ‘self’ which the present system denies them” (128). Consequently, the concepts of the feminine and the masculine, man and woman, were put into question and the assigned connotations to these terms began to be debated. This is illustrated in Baillie’s play which indicates how the gendered lines of the Gothic narrative are re-defined.

Within this context, it is important to mark that the theatre played a significant role in the changing perception of gender roles. By participating in the socio-cultural and literary arena through their works, women dramatists blurred the lines between socially attributed spaces of the domestic and the public by shuttling between these roles, thereby challenging the very norms that tie them up. Although women playwrights began to be seen as threatening to the patriarchal structure, after much relentless struggle to make their plays performed on the stage, the stage turned into a space where they were given voice. Then, the concept of the female on the page and the stage created a new perception of womanhood that was not constrained by the constructed discourse of the age. Burroughs examines the ‘closetness’ of Baillie’s plays in terms of gender issues and characterises this closetness as a transformation of a female voice from a private space or woman’s realm, that is a domestic closet, to the public arena. For this reason, “her concept of the closet [is] [...] a showcase for the subtle mechanisms that women theater artists in the Romantic era developed for questioning the ideological restraints that governed and still govern gendered experience” (“Out of the Pale” 235). Anne K. Mellor also argues that “[b]y moving the realm of private, psychological feelings from the domestic ‘closet’ to the public stage, Baillie implicitly asserts that a hitherto culturally marginalized ‘women’s realm,’ the realm of feelings, sympathy, and curiosity, is in fact the basis of all human culture, and especially of political culture” (42). Thus, Baillie created a space for herself to communicate through her writing and despite the criticisms and prejudices of the age, she reached out to the reader/audience. Besides, in her plays, Baillie shows the strength and resistance of female characters. As Watkins asserts,

Baillie's imagination intervenes powerfully in this social, historical, and formal-generic crisis, tracking the complex intersections of psychological, social, and imaginative motion at an especially intense moment of historical – specifically class and gender – anxiety, when one structure of authority and belief is on the verge of displacement by another. (40)

Hence, Baillie's wandering through the layers of socio-cultural context and focusing on the psychology of her characters substantiated her distinct voice in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

In the play, Jane De Monfort is depicted as a proper lady conforming to the eighteenth-century ideals of femininity and moral standards and praised by everyone who sees her celestial beauty and decent mannerisms. She is described as “[s]o queenly, so commanding, and so noble” (II.i.123) or “an apparition” (II.i.124) as her existence cannot bear any other explanation since she is kind of otherworldly. Jane is the one who takes care of her family and becomes “from early youth/The friend and mother of her younger sisters” (II.iii.138). For De Monfort, “she was come through the rough winter's storm,/To seek and comfort an unhappy brother” (II.iii.138). Everyone feels sympathy and affection towards Jane. She is portrayed as an idealised woman in the eyes of people. Although her idealised femininity distinguishes her significantly, it is not her only quality. In *De Monfort*, the conception of the female and the male is subverted and particularly a rather novel impression of woman is portrayed by Baillie. While De Monfort is driven and controlled by his passions, irresistible delusions and paranoid thoughts, Jane tries to keep everything and everybody under control with her rational and moral stance. In this regard, Baillie fashions a different portrayal of man and woman in her play. Alan Richardson elaborates further that

[b]y insisting throughout the play on the embodied and emotive character of male subjectivity, Baillie has already departed from the traditional alignment of male with mind (and culture) and female with body (and nature), found throughout the Western tradition and thrown into question by the emergent biological psychologies of Baillie's time. (“A Neutral Theatre” 140)

Thus, the playwright turns the tables over by renouncing such a normative dichotomy. Baillie lets Jane dominate the play all along with her strong, rational, independent, dedicated, and unyielding attitude. For this reason, Sarah Siddons who performed Jane De Monfort on the stage tells Baillie: ““Make me more Jane De Monforts”” (qtd. in *The*

*Dramatic and Poetical Works of Joanna Baillie* xi), thus encouraging the continuity and maintenance of such female characters. And it is for this reason that although the play seems to be about a tragic male character, as Frederick Burwick puts it, “it is a play with a heroine: Jane de Monfort. She is the one who struggles vainly to rescue her brother from the inexorable progression of his destructive mania” (“Joanna Baillie” 54). Jane breaks the norms and challenges the assigned femininity. As Steven Bruhm states, “the Gothic, itself [is] a narrative of prohibitions, transgressions, and the processes of identity construction” (263). In this regard, Jane is distinguished from or has transgressed the traditional Gothic heroine of the eighteenth century.

Moreover, there is a clear nominal distinction between De Monfort and Jane De Monfort. De Monfort is deprived and stripped of his individuality and only exists in his inherited aristocratic name, which results in his frustration and confusion about himself. Jane becomes an esteemed individual complimented and applauded all the time. What is denied to a male heir of an aristocratic line is given to a female heiress of the same line. Carolyn Tilghman further explains that with her personal name “Jane lends character, substance, and gender difference to the noble title, and as a woman who inhabits the primary position of power at the play’s end, she accesses the rights and privileges associated with that surname, doing so publicly and with approbation” (612). In this regard, the naming of the female unlike the male is very significant when the circumstances of the age are considered; that is, a woman is given voice and identity contrary to the normative expectations of the period for women. Jane De Monfort is acknowledged as “a subject rather than an object in culture” (Donkin 30) by Baillie, which is a very radical stance. Though there seems to be a strict prejudice about the distinct roles of men and women during the century, Baillie, like Wollstonecraft, manages to break this established structure to formulate a new type of womanhood stripped of all the debasing tags around it. Thus, Baillie draws a new line where she flips over the gendered norms and traditions and offers a novel outlook for women and men.

In this regard, the play challenges the typical representations existing in the Gothic tradition where women are represented as passive and obedient figures or as repressed or imprisoned in a castle or convent. Jane is not the typical ‘damsel in distress’ of the

Gothic tradition. The playwright engenders an alternative portrait of a Gothic heroine in *De Monfort*. Jane is depicted as a person of reason, composure, and self-control contrary to De Monfort who is driven by his emotions. As Jeffrey N. Cox argues, “*De Monfort* comes to a point within the evolution of the Gothic that enables its author to reflect upon Gothic conventions, but Baillie does so not to render the Gothic ideologically tame but to raise potentially radical questions about its portrayal of women” (*Seven Gothic Dramas* 5). Frederick S. Frank further states that “in her portrayal of women Baillie refused to repeat the character cliché of hysterical maiden, or shrieking, weeping, virginal victim, although her villains retain the stereotypical traits of Gothic villainy on stage” (“Introduction” 14). The Gothic traditional storyline is, thus, subverted for the illustration of a new perception of the heroine at the turn of the century. Here, the heroine tries to save the villain-hero from his mental incarceration. Regarding this, Baillie formulates her own Gothic by modifying the characters as well as the typical Gothic storyline within the context of the socio-cultural transitions at the turn of the century.

In terms of characterisation, De Monfort is not a typical Gothic villain<sup>27</sup> either, but he oscillates between the hero and villain types which later on evolve into the Byronic hero. As discussed in the Introduction, the Byronic hero descends from the Gothic villain of the novel. As Jeffrey N. Cox further elaborates, “Gothic drama [...] began to develop a more complex inwardly divided figure in the villain-hero, who was destined to enter the romantic drama and become the Byronic hero” (*In the Shadows* 113). Therefore, unlike what is observed in the novel, the Gothic villain’s agony becomes the focus of Gothic plays. In this play, while De Monfort possesses some typical qualities of the Gothic villain,<sup>28</sup> he is also a victim of his own passions and dies of grief and regret in the end. So, there is no clear-cut white and black portrait of De Monfort. De Monfort, therefore, becomes a Gothic villain-hero type. Though most of the critics think there is nothing sympathetic about De Monfort (Baker 93; Scullion 164; Tilghman 609),

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<sup>27</sup> Baines and Burns define him as follows: “De Monfort is not the stable, self-contained villain of Gothic type but a contradictory being, lurching from mood to mood, from self-control to wildness and back to restraint, unpredictably” (xxi).

<sup>28</sup> De Monfort also carries some features of a typical Gothic villain as Thorslev describes him: “Gloomy, haughtily reserved, and inordinately proud, he is given to ‘tossing his arms,’ clenching his fists, and gnashing his teeth in a half-suppressed rage which he relieves in near-apoplectic soliloquies” (*The Byronic Hero* 58).

the last scenes show how he suffers and torments himself for his murderous act. De Monfort paves the way for the emergence of the Byronic hero which will be observed in Lord Byron's *Manfred*.

In the case of De Monfort, his physical and mental state reflects how he has changed because of something that is consuming him from the beginning of the play. When Jerome, the landlord, sees De Monfort, he says: "Ah, Manuel, what an altered man is here!/His eyes are hollow, and his cheeks are pale –/He left this house a comely gentleman" (I.i.112). Indeed, De Monfort has become a "sullen wand'rer on the earth,/Avoiding all men, cursing and accursed" (II.ii.133). Considering his situation, at first De Monfort seems to have a secret about his past and his escape to Amberg, which is one of the qualities of the Byronic hero leading him to his demise in the end. De Monfort's secret is revealed to be his hatred for Rezenvelt. Unlike the Byronic hero type, there is not a crime or mysterious event preceding De Monfort's hatred despite the fact that the duel between De Monfort and Rezenvelt might be one of the reasons for his frustration, but his crime takes place later on and is conveyed to the reader/audience in the play. In fact, here Baillie seems to present the journey towards the so-called mysterious crime of the Byronic hero rather than presenting it in the beginning; the crime is exerted towards the end of the play. Moreover, from the very beginning, De Monfort has an agonised state of mind as he says: "Torments more fell than I have felt already/It cannot send. To be annihilated;/What all men shrink from; to be dust, be nothing,/Were bliss to me, compared to what I am" (II.ii.135). Like the Byronic hero, he wants to vanish because of something that he cannot endure. Later, after his villainy, he becomes more and more agonised, desperate, and regretful. One of the monks describes his state of mind as follows: "From the violent agitation of the mind,/Some stream of life within his breast has burst;/For many times, within a little space,/The ruddy-tide has rushed into his mouth./God, grant his pains be short!" (V.iii.176). Taking into account his gloomy and tormented nature, superiority complex, anti-social behaviour, self-imposed exile, a mysterious matter troubling him, disdain for people around him as well as his sense of repentance and guilt, De Monfort can be regarded as the prototype of the Byronic hero. However, it is important to note that De Monfort is not a rebel like the Byronic hero as he does not challenge the society or any institutions and in fact, he is only struggling in vain to keep his only identity, that is his inherited name and class

status. De Monfort is mostly concerned with his own passions and becomes the victim of these passions.

Furthermore, unlike in the traditional Gothic, Baillie does not employ any supernatural elements in her play;<sup>29</sup> however, a sense of haunting overhangs in the play. Christine A. Colón states that “[a]t the time that Baillie was writing, the Gothic was at its height and many playwrights used supernatural spectacles to captivate their audiences; however, as Baillie’s plays reveal, the Gothic may be used for more than just spectacle” (“Joanna Baillie” 134-35). Baillie’s priority is to reflect upon the passion and psychological journey of her characters by means of the Gothic. In Gothic works, the supernatural operates as a tool to explore the workings of the minds of the characters. Baillie, hence, makes use of the atmosphere, and the imagination of her characters to evoke a sense of the supernatural even though there are no actual supernatural happenings or beings. For example, as mentioned before, the different perception of the woods by De Monfort and Rezenvelt shows how a supernatural effect is created by the playwright. The mental state of De Monfort as it is described in his monologue, instigates the uncanny and forms an eerie atmosphere. As Michael Gamer states, “Baillie almost never haunts her characters with anything other than their own minds” (“National Supernaturalism” 57). His psychological mood oscillates back and forth throughout the play and creates a kind of haunting effect capturing and turning every bit of his life into hell. Sean Carney argues that “[t]he passion becomes the ghost and, effectively, the ghost rhetorically becomes the passion” (242). De Monfort is, thus, haunted by his hatred. Moreover, in the last scene, De Monfort turns into a haunted, tormented soul as the stage direction reads: “*the light is turned away, so that he is seen obscurely; but when they [the monks] come to the front of the stage they all turn the light side of their lanterns on him at once, and his face is seen in all the strengthened horror of despair, with his hands and clothes bloody*” (165). In this scene, as George E. Haggerty states, “[t]he spectral presence of De Monfort – Baillie is insistent about the exact lighting for the effect she seeks – and

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<sup>29</sup> In this regard, Baillie follows a Radcliffian concept of supernaturalism as Ann Radcliffe does not make use of actual supernatural elements, but the imaginations of her heroines create a supernatural impact. For Radcliffe, the Gothic is to stimulate the mind and enhance suspense. She employs obscurity and suspense perfectly to trigger the imagination but, in the end, her mysteries are resolved without becoming true. Radcliffe’s status in the Gothic tradition is significant in that she makes a distinction between terror and horror, as mentioned before. So, terror triggers the mind and imagination while horror makes one stand on end.

places him in a realm that seems almost supernatural” (*Queer Gothic* 98). By means of the lighting, Baillie aims to create a supernatural effect, constructing a sense of being haunted that immerses De Monfort. Even though there is no supernatural element manifested in the play, the atmosphere and the mental state of De Monfort trigger the supernatural impact effectively.

After Rezenvelt’s deceased body is brought, as the stage direction reads, “*De Monfort stands fixed and motionless with horror, only that a sudden shivering seems to pass over him when they uncover the corpse*” (166). He is likely to be in a state of shock. When De Monfort is alone with the corpse, his mind runs wild and he happens to believe that the body has moved, which frightens him a lot:

[...] What sound is that?  
 I heard a smothered groan. – It is impossible!  
 (*Looking steadfastly at the body.*)  
 It moves! it moves! the cloth doth heave and swell.  
 It moves again. – I cannot suffer this –  
 Whate’er it be, I will uncover it.  
 (*Runs to the corpse, and tears off the cloth in despair.*)  
 All still beneath.  
 Nought is there here but fixed and grisly death,  
 How sternly fixed! Oh! those glazed eyes!  
 They look upon me still.  
 (*Shrinks back with horror*) (IV.iii.167-68)

Rezenvelt’s deceased body creates a paranormal and horrid effect, which leads De Monfort to a kind of madness that he cannot recover from and also leads to death in agony. Thus, the deceased Rezenvelt, who turns into the abject for De Monfort, becomes an uncanny reminder of De Monfort’s adrift subjectivity as his aristocratic power is in decline. As Mair Rigby states, “[m]adness is another common Gothic trope which can double as a code for ‘excessive’ relations between men and nineteenth-century Gothic texts regularly feature men who, on finding themselves under the domination of another male figure, go ‘mad’ or express a fear of madness” (52). De Monfort’s act of murder and the excessiveness of his emotions plunge him into his ultimate end.

Furthermore, it is important to state some of the Gothic elements and how Baillie exploits these devices. Baillie makes use of such Gothic tropes as clanking chains, tolling bell, thunder, dark and gloomy nights, sounds and winds which are very Walpolean Gothic elements. All these abovementioned elements correlate with the bleak atmosphere of the last scenes of the play and foreshadow and set the tone for death and agony. As Paul Ranger states, the Gothic motifs and devices “added to its [Gothic] atmosphere and occasionally became telling symbols, capable of arousing terror and pity in the audience” (15). Taking into consideration the claustrophobic world of De Monfort and his upcoming incarceration because of the murder, the emphasis on the clanking sound, one of the motifs Baillie employs, can be read as his approaching demise. When the law officers come to take De Monfort, the stage direction reads: “*Jane kneels and prays to herself; De Monfort kneels by her, and clasps his hands fervently, but speaks not. A noise of chains clanking is heard without, and they both rise*” (173). The clanking chains point out the heralding of De Monfort’s confinement either as a prisoner or maybe as a madman as well as the approaching death of the character as the chains connote a sense of restraint, coercion and supervision for the character. Manfred could not control his extreme passions; therefore, these driving passions need to be checked by the chains or his ultimate death. So, the clanking chains as well as the other Gothic tropes not only create a gloomy atmosphere of terror but also become the symbolic projections of the mental state of De Monfort. Moreover, the murder scene also brings about a dreadful and grotesque scenery starting with “horrid cries” (IV.ii.162) and then the view of “a murdered corpse stretched on its back/Smear’d with new blood” (IV.ii.163). These grotesque descriptions and scenes also become effective tools in painting the gloomy atmosphere surrounding the convent.

The convent is one of the most well-known Gothic settings as it operates in the play in regard to hovering death. The stage direction reads: “*The inside of a convent chapel, of old Gothic architecture, almost dark: two torches only are seen at a distance, burning over a newly covered grave. The noise of the loud wind, beating upon the windows and roof, is heard*” (161). A requiem procession for a deceased sister is going on and the organ is playing along with “*a procession of Nuns, with the Abbess, bearing torches*” (161). An unsettled lay sister comes in and tells about what she heard through an open window:

O no, for twice it called, so loudly called,  
 With horrid strength, beyond the pitch of nature.  
 And 'Murder! murder!' was the dreadful cry.  
 A third time it returned with feeble strength,  
 But o'the sudden ceased, as though the words  
 Were smothered rudely in the grasped throat;  
 And all was still again, save the wild blast  
 Which at a distance growled –  
 Oh! it will never from my mind depart!  
 That dreadful cry, all i'the instant stilled:  
 For then, so near, some horrid deed was done,  
 And none to rescue. (IV.ii.162)

The scenery changes from a solemn ritual for “the honoured dead” (IV.ii.162) to a wild murder. Here, the scene opens with a funeral procession as if preparing the reader/audience for the next ritual for another impending death. It presents a deathly and gloomy atmosphere for the last scenes of the play where death and horror dominate. In this regard, the convent can be associated with the sepulchre as it embodies all the deaths in the play and becomes a burial place for two characters. It is seen that the convent, as a metaphor for a grave, encloses De Monfort, burying him forever. In this sense, the convent functions to intensify the ongoing claustrophobic effect on De Monfort.

In conclusion, Baillie utilises some typical Gothic features such as claustrophobia, incest, madness, the Gothic atmosphere surrounded by gloom and dread, foreshadowing, and suspense as well as various Gothic tropes like chains, winds and tolling bells. She particularly exploits the Gothic tropes in order to create the Gothic atmosphere, reflecting De Monfort's mental state effectively. On the other hand, unlike the earlier Gothics solely depending on some Gothic elements like castles, secret passages, skeletons, or the supernatural, Baillie conveys the Gothic effect through the mind and passions of her characters, thus transforming the Gothic into a production of the mental state. For Baillie, the supernatural becomes the outcome of wild imagination and mental instability. Thus, Baillie subverts some of the traditions in the Gothic like the setting, characterisation and storyline. The town in Germany becomes a claustrophobic space unlike a literally enclosed one even though Baillie also presents the convent as a typical Gothic space functioning as a burial place for De Monfort. Her subversion of the Gothic heroine from an oppressed and suffering one to a rational and

independent one within the socio-political scope of the late eighteenth century differentiates her play from the earlier Gothics, thereby pointing out the shifting gender dynamics in the society. In this regard, unlike the earlier Gothics dealing with the struggle between the heroine and the villain, the storyline concentrates on the extreme passions of a male character, driving him into delusions, madness, murder and death. Moreover, setting Rezenvelt as the *double* of De Monfort shows that the established identity based on title and inheritance, or noble family name, is disrupted, thereby revealing the changing class structure. De Monfort is also depicted as a proto-Byronic hero, paving the way towards the emergence of the Byronic hero in Byron's *Manfred*.

## CHAPTER 2

### EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY GOTHIC DRAMA: LORD BYRON'S *MANFRED*

George Gordon Lord Byron (1788-1824) was a highly renowned poet and playwright of the Romantic Period. Byron wrote his plays in the post-Napoleonic era and witnessed the political atmosphere of the early nineteenth century, which affected his writings to some extent. The impact of Romanticism and the socio-political changes happening in the early nineteenth century led people to question their place in the world and the capacity of humankind to change the world or go beyond their limits which was likely to result from the revolutionary ideas and scientific advancements dominating the era. Byron's *Manfred* (1817) reflects this spirit of the age and distinguishes itself from the typical Gothic plays. This chapter aims to discuss Byron's use of the Gothic in *Manfred* which portrays a disillusioned and unfulfilled individual, the Byronic hero, and the political concerns of the age.

Considering Byron's relation with the theatre, he was known as an enthusiastic theatregoer and from his early ages, he himself got involved in some theatrical performances (Corbett, "Lugging Byron" 362; Erdman, "Byron's Stage Fright" 224-25). After he started working as a manager in Drury Lane between the years of 1815-16 (Gatton 139), Byron furthered his interest and enthusiasm in theatre, culminating in his desire to improve the current situation of the stage by means of creating a "mental theatre." Despite his fondness and affiliation with the theatre or maybe because he was well-acquainted with it, Byron shied away from staging his plays because not only was the theatrical criticism of the age harsh but also he had reservations about the staging of his plays: "I did not, and do not write for the stage; and would not alter a line, to draw down the upper gallery into the pit in thunder . . . the past experience shows that in the present state of the English stage, no production of mine can be adapted to an audience" (qtd. in Calvert 156). This statement shows that his plays did not appeal to the taste of the current audience. Eventually, his plays were classified as closet dramas. The above quotation may imply that Byron did not oppose the idea of staging his dramatic works, but the circumstances of the age were not ripe for his experimental and peculiar

dramatic style. In this context, Byron wrote eight plays which are all tragedies “in defiance of the popular taste of the theatre-goers of the time for melodrama and domestic comedies. Only one was staged in the poet’s lifetime” (Franklin 165). The plays include historical tragedies like *Marino Faliero* (1821), *Sardanapalus* (1821), *The Two Foscari* (1821); mystery plays or metaphysical dramas like *Cain* (1821), *Heaven and Earth* (1821), Gothic plays like *Manfred* and *Werner* (1822); and lastly *The Deformed Transformed* (1822), which is an incomplete play with Gothic features. Considering these last three plays, Byron made use of the Gothic in his dramatic works as he was also influenced by the Gothic craze of his age.

To further elaborate on Lord Byron’s relation to theatre, in his article “Byron’s Stage Fright,” David V. Erdman discusses the contradictory attitude of Byron who “[wrote] plays ‘to reform the stage’ – and then violently protest[ed] against their being staged” (219) and associates this dilemma with Byron’s stage fright and “hypersensitiveness to failure” (233). Byron’s denial to enter a competition for an opening address at the Drury Lane in 1812 (226) and his constant protests about his plays’ unsuitability for the stage while also desiring them to be successful on the stage (236-37) demonstrate Byron’s anxiety related to the reception of his works. Byron, furthermore, writes: “*My object is not immediate popularity in my present productions, which are written in a different system from the rage of the day. – But [...] the time will come – when these will be preferred to any I have before written*” (*Byron’s Letters* 9:92-93, italics in orig.). Byron believed he was writing out of his time; it is for this reason that the current stage could not appreciate his dramas. Moreover, John Spalding Gatton discusses that “Byron clearly intended his plays to serve in the vanguard of an assault on the abuses rampant in the British theatre and to sound a call to arms in international political struggles for freedom” (146-47). Gatton continues to argue that though Byron stated in his preface to *Marino Faliero* that he could not write a stageable play, by designing his historical tragedies based on neoclassical unities and making them appropriate to the physical conditions of the contemporary theatre, he in fact intended his plays to be performed on an actual theatrical space (146-47). In his review of Byron’s tragedies, Francis Jeffrey, a well-known critic of *The Edinburgh Review* in the early nineteenth century, also wrote on Lord Byron’s attitude towards and restlessness about the criticisms the playwright received for his works: Byron “has not certainly been very tractable to advise, nor very

patient of blame. But this, in him, we fear, is not superiority to censure, but aversion to it” (419). So, his hesitant attitude may be considered a defence mechanism for Byron who was fond of attention yet was not keen on any adverse reaction towards himself and his works.

Byron’s dramatic design, as he named it, “mental theatre,” was the offspring of how he viewed current British drama and theatre. His purpose was “to make a *regular* English drama – no matter whether for the Stage or not – which is not [his] object – but a *mental theatre*” (*Byron’s Letters* 8:187, italics in orig.). Regarding the oppressive and chaotic period Byron lived in, he was likely to recoil from the idea of staging his dramas either because of his stage fright as mentioned before, or since staging a play before the public could be perilous because of the political atmosphere of the period. Thus, closet drama evolves into the concept of “mental theatre” in Byron’s case. Through “mental theatre,” Byron desired to reform the stage by appealing to the minds of people. As Marjean D. Purinton argues,

Byron’s dramas expose and undermine mental systems giving rise to societal values and traditions we blindly inherit. The challenge depicted in the plays is to change not simply the social structures – i.e., Catholic Emancipation, parliamentary representation – but to change the mental or ideological structuration beneath them. (62-63)

Therefore, Byron craved an ideological and revolutionary change of mentality so that real reform could happen. For Byron, the psychological aspect and inner turmoil of characters matter more than the action itself. As Alan Richardson defines “mental theatre,” “[d]ramatic action would not function to portray or set off character; rather, character becomes plot as the dramatic interest centers on the history of a protagonist’s consciousness” (*A Mental Theater* 1). “Mental theatre” deals with the confrontation of opposites, transgression or crime, a divided, tormented and restless self-consciousness, self-destruction, death or self-exile (6-9). This Romantic concept of self-consciousness and individuality can be found in some other closet drama of the Romantic Period such as Wordsworth’s *The Borderers* (1796/1842) and Shelley’s *The Cenci* (1819) in addition to Byron’s *Manfred*. As an example for “mental theatre,” the essence of *Manfred* is about this exploration of the inner reality and feelings rather than its appropriateness for the stage. *Manfred* illustrates the unrest and anxiety of the early

nineteenth century in which an individual strives to assert his subjectivity but, as a result of his ambitious and passionate nature, is left with a disintegrated identity leading him to disassociate himself from humankind, thereby becoming dehumanised in a way.

Byron started writing *Manfred* in Switzerland, 1816, therefore the play was very much inspired by his Alpine journey with many references to his real-life experiences. After writing the first two acts in Switzerland, Byron completed the third act in Venice which was later largely revised. Considering the play's reference to the Faustian myth, Byron denies reading any Faustian texts like Marlowe's *Dr Faustus* (1592) or Goethe's *Faust* (1808/1832), but he admits that Matthew Lewis, the author of *The Monk* (1796), translated some of Goethe's *Faust* for him (Macdonald 26; Sperry 190). Moreover, Goethe also reviewed Byron's *Manfred* stating:

This singular intellectual poet has taken my Faustus to himself, and extracted from it the strangest nourishment for his hypochondriac humour. He has made use of the impelling principles in his own way, for his own purposes, so that no one of them remains the same; and it is particularly on this account that I cannot enough admire his genius. (119)

According to D. L. Macdonald, Byron was also inspired by Coleridge's "Christabel" (1816) as understood from his references to this poem in his letters (35). In the light of these influences, the Faustian along with Promethean themes and the abject self become the core of *Manfred* as Manfred is observed to be exploring his boundaries throughout the play.

Moreover, it is also essential to highlight that the root of *Manfred* also goes back to a ghost-story contest among Mary Shelley, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lord Byron and his personal physician Dr John Polidori in Switzerland, 1816. These writers created the most famous literary pieces of their lives there: Byron's *The Prisoner of Chillon and Other Poems* (1816) along with *Manfred*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), John Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819) and Percy Bysshe Shelley's *The Cenci* (1819) emerged out of this competition (Hogle, "Gothic and Second-Generation" 112). Regarding the milieu of their meeting, it is possible that Lord Byron was most probably influenced by Shelley's creation. Inspired by the Prometheus myth, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* clusters around the anxieties of the society during a remarkable industrial and scientific

change in the early nineteenth century. Such a concoction of humanity and science in one body and the desire to overpass one's inherent or natural boundaries are inevitable consequences of the shifting socio-cultural dynamics and expanding imagination and creativity. Both Victor Frankenstein and Manfred shatter their lives in order to reach out beyond their limits and bring about the end of their loved ones, thereby condemning themselves to constant agony or wandering in search of either death or oblivion. This gives rise to the controversies over the idea of being human and its disruption as the questioning and disruption of the established concept of the human form is the essence of Byron's *Manfred*.

As Fred Botting argues, in the nineteenth century the "Gothic became part of an internalised world of guilt, anxiety, despair, a world of individual transgression interrogating the uncertain bounds of imaginative freedom and human knowledge" (*Gothic* 7). Extreme passions, individual liberty and consciousness, and transgression of the boundaries, particularly human limitations, became hallmarks of the nineteenth-century Gothic. The mind became a space of hell and torture which was intensified by revolutionary ideals and scientific thirst of the age contributing to the transgression of these boundaries. Therefore, the Gothic turns into a more introspective genre dealing with inner turmoil, dilemmas and mental states while challenging and questioning societal norms. Besides, the defiant force of the nineteenth-century Gothic finds its expression in Byron's formulation of the Byronic hero in *Manfred*.

In his letter to John Murray dated 15 February 1817, Byron describes his play *Manfred* as

a kind of poem in dialogue (in blank verse) or drama – [...] – it is in three acts – but of a very wild – metaphysical – and inexplicable kind. – Almost all the persons – but two or three – are Spirits of the earth & air – or the waters – the scene is in the Alps – the hero a kind of magician who is tormented by a species of remorse – the cause of which is left half unexplained – he wanders about invoking these spirits – which appear to him – & are of no use – he at last goes to the very abode of the Evil principle in propria persona – to evocate a ghost – which appears – & gives him an ambiguous & disagreeable answer [...]. (*Byron's Letters* 5: 170)

In this letter, Byron mentioned *Manfred* as a play though he also "rendered it *quite impossible* for the stage" (*Byron's Letters* 5: 170, italics in orig.); however, later in another letter to Murray dated 9 April 1817, "You must call it 'a Poem,' for it is *no*

*Drama*” (*Byron’s Letters* 5: 209, italics in orig.). In its final form, the play was considered a “dramatic poem.” Though Byron deemed the play as fundamentally unstageworthy and resisted the idea of its staging, “*Manfred* has had a stage history of five productions, the first running 16 days in 1834” (Erdman, “Byron’s Stage Fright” 230). Besides, it is significant to point out that there are two versions of the play. In 1817 Byron sent the manuscripts to Murray who showed it to William Gifford, Murray’s advisor. Gifford “praised Act I as ‘wonderfully poetical,’ but disapproved of Act III. Byron himself had already realised that this part was inferior to the rest, and accepting Gifford’s criticism without resentment or demur he went back to work on it, and soon produced a greatly improved version” (Rutherford 79). Following the feedback, Byron made two radical changes to the text. Firstly, in the earlier version, the Abbot who is associated with his worldliness and immorality is carried away by a demon while in the second version, the Abbot becomes a more sympathetic figure who tries to help and save Manfred. Secondly, while, in the first version, Manfred dies in the arms of his servants, in the second version, he dies defiantly, going against the spirit which has come to take him, with the Abbot by his side, holding his hand.

In its final form, *Manfred* revolves around the eponymous character Manfred who lost his beloved Astarte and seeks oblivion or death throughout the play. Manfred travels across the metaphysical realms to find a solution or an end to his pursuit but in vain. In the first act set in a Gothic gallery, Manfred conjures up the Spirits of earth, ocean, air, night, mountains, winds and his star. He asks for oblivion which they cannot give to him. When Manfred wants to see their faces, the seventh spirit assumes the form of a beautiful female, making Manfred fall senseless. This figure is later revealed to be his half-sister yet beloved, Astarte. After this scene, a voice utters the Incantation, the curse imposed on Manfred. The second scene starts with Manfred wandering in the Mountain of Jungfrau. He attempts to kill himself but the Chamois Hunter stops him in time and takes him to his cottage where Manfred tells him that he destroyed his beloved. Though the Chamois Hunter tries to help him by advising “[t]he aid of holy men, and heavenly patience” (II.i.259), Manfred believes there is nothing to be done for him as those remedies only work for “mortals of a dust” (II.i.260) like the Chamois Hunter. In the second scene, Manfred summons the Witch of the Alps just to look at her beauty as he seems to have given up searching because the spirits did not give him what he desires.

Manfred tells the Witch about his past scientific endeavours and how he lost his beloved Astarte. Hearing all these, the Witch offers her help to Manfred in return for his obedience, which Manfred rejects immediately even though it means he may see Astarte again. Now, Manfred is determined to raise the dead. For this purpose, he appears in the Hall of Arimanes while the Destinies and Nemesis inform their sovereign about the conflicts and disasters they have created in the world. Nemesis calls the phantom of Astarte, who only utters the upcoming end of Manfred. In the last act, Manfred is in his castle and the Abbot of St. Maurice comes to convince him to redeem his soul as the former becomes involved in the dark arts, but Manfred rejects him. Besides, his attendants, Herman and Manuel's conversation reveals that Manfred worked for years in his chamber with his only companion Astarte, but one day something bad happened, which is not revealed as the Abbot interrupts the conversation. In the last scene, Manfred is in the tower waiting for his end. The Abbot appears again and, one more time, tries to save Manfred from his dark path. Yet, the dark spirit or demon appears to take him away, also calling the other spirits. Manfred defies all of them. In the end, he dies on his own terms, refusing to obey anyone while the Abbot is nearby holding his hand. Throughout the play, Manfred's mental agony and his superhuman powers are in conflict. And his remorse and dissatisfaction lead him to a constant seeking a remedy for his condition, namely forgetfulness or annihilation.

To set the tone of the play, it is essential to investigate how the setting operates, particularly in relation to the Gothic tradition. There are three settings in *Manfred*: the mountains of the Alps, the cottage of the Chamois Hunter and the castle. Because the setting is mainly the Alps, it is significant to look into its role in Manfred's world. The Alps, unlike the typical Gothic enclosed place that refers to a claustrophobic environment, is widely open in *Manfred*. The vastness and grandeur of the setting<sup>30</sup> here problematise the idea of humanity and its boundaries by accentuating the sublime beauty and splendour of nature and the universe. Infinity and powers beyond human

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<sup>30</sup> As Erin Sheley argues, “[r]epeatedly throughout the text, Byron utilises physically vast natural spaces and phenomena to effect a counterintuitive sense of entombment: time after time he establishes sites of constriction, stasis and death both within and beyond visual spectacles of natural enormity” (53). For Sheley, the vast space embodies a sort of threat and danger ready to burst. In line with Sheley's argument, even though the open space seems boundless, it carries a potential of a star's collapsing into itself like a black hole.

capacity are underscored by the gravity of this setting. As Fred Botting argues, “the awe and terror inspired by the sublimity of wild, mountainous realms not only signifies a grandeur beyond human powers, but mirrors the internal world of the heroic sufferer, the magnificence of his suffering” (*Gothic* 64). Thus, the setting creates a contrast between Manfred’s position and the vast universe though Manfred tries to show off his mastery over natural and spiritual realms. For this reason, it is possible that Byron makes the Alps his setting in order to problematise human corporeal existence and the idea of the self before infinite nature and the universe. Moreover, “the Alps stand for a certain ideal model of the human mind” and also “an assertion of the sovereignty of the mind” so that it turns into “a philosophical orientation, which includes the notion that the mind is its own place” (Cheeke 86). Therefore, the setting can be taken as a reference to the immenseness of the mind despite the corporeality of the human body. In this sense, the setting represents a sort of freedom and liberation from any corporeal boundaries surrounding one, including even one’s own body.

Starting from the first moment of the play, Manfred is portrayed as discontented and hopeless. The first lines of *Manfred*, which take place in a Gothic gallery, give a feeling of dissatisfaction with everything, like even the light not burning for long or sleep not being sleep anymore (I.i.149). The tone of resentment and weariness dominates Manfred’s first monologue. His experience of life “avail[s] not” (I.i.250). A sort of aloofness and paralysis surrounds Manfred from the beginning even though he is a wanderer. He has “no dread,” “no natural fear,” no “fluttering throb,” no “lurking love” (I.i.250); hence, there is nothing to change his condition. It seems he is caught in a certain pattern, that is, a constant wandering and seeking of a remedy. This vicious circle makes him more alienated and isolated which further escalates his dissociation from humanity. This is his doomed destiny bounded by “the clankless chain” (I.i.255). Every move is ineffectual as silence pervades and there is only stagnation. An atmosphere of inertia dominates the play which arouses Manfred’s self-incarceration as well as obsession and desperation. This actually contributes to the mysterious and obscure atmosphere of the play.

Moreover, in the middle of the same monologue, Manfred states: “[...] I live, and bear/The aspect and the form of breathing men” (I.i.249). It sounds like Manfred

becomes a feigned or mechanical being, embodying only an exterior human form. By depicting himself as “barkless” and “branchless” (I.ii.257), Manfred further accentuates his alienation from the outer world as he cannot fit in the society. He condemns himself to eternal suffering and wandering not only because he does not conform to society but also because he has a repulsion for his own self seeing himself as “[a] blighted trunk upon a cursed root” (I.ii.257); decay and deterioration are all he sees in himself. In this regard, the Incantation at the end of the first act is crucial as the voice imposes a curse upon Manfred:

[...] by thy brotherhood of Cain,  
I call upon thee! and compel  
Thyself to be thy proper Hell!

And on thy head I pour the vial  
Which doth devote thee to this trial;  
Nor to slumber, nor to die,  
Shall be in thy destiny;  
Though thy death shall still seem near  
To thy wish, but as a fear;  
Lo! the spell now works around thee,  
And the clankless chain hath bound thee;  
O'er thy heart and brain together  
Hath the word been pass'd – now wither! (I.i.255-56)

Added to the text later and “first published as a separate piece in Byron’s 1816 collection, *The Prisoner of Chillon and Other Poems*” (O’Neill 101), this incantation refers to Manfred’s current state of mind and condition. The motif of the curse points out both self-incarceration and self-torment for Manfred. The curse seems to be a starting point, and fundamental to understand him as an individual. How Manfred sees himself and how the reader/audience sees him are given in these lines and construct his personality for the rest of the play. According to Peter J. Manning, the voice is Manfred’s own voice so the charges “must be understood as an externalization of Manfred’s self-accusations” (78). Stuart M. Sperry evaluates the curse as “an act of moral and psychological self-enslavement” (192). The voice condemns Manfred into perpetual hell that follows him around as he somehow embodies it, and he cannot die until the premonition of the resurrected Astarte. Manfred is doomed to wander and seek oblivion and forgiveness. Besides, the voice of the Incantation makes another statement

as follows: “Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,/Thou art gathered in a cloud;/And for ever shalt thou dwell/In the spirit of this spell” (I.i.254), thus not only condemning but also burying Manfred in this curse. By drawing upon Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s concept of ‘live burial,’ Eric Sheley argues that the Incantation refers to a kind of a “gothic entombment” (55) and *Manfred* embodies “[t]he fear of entombment within the visually sublime” (55). In this regard, the claustrophobic effect and the curse or the burial construct Manfred’s whole world from the beginning creating a prison for him in his mind, hence causing mental agony.

Moreover, the dehumanisation of Manfred is further underlined by the seventh spirit which was conjured by Manfred and who ruled his star of destiny once. The seventh spirit talks about the star which was “fresh and fair” (I.i.252) revolving around the sun but later “[...] it became/A wandering mass of shapeless flame,/A pathless comet, and a curse/The menace of the universe;/Still rolling on with innate force,/Without a sphere, without a course,/A bright deformity on high/The monster of the upper sky!” (I.i.252). Because it is his star of destiny, Manfred’s fate is the same as his star’s. Shapeless and pathless like his star, Manfred wanders as a curse incarnate. The star and Manfred are posed as menaces, deformities, and monsters of the upper sky. Even the spirits think that “[h]ad he been one of [them], he would have made/An awful spirit” (II.iv.272). Jerome McGann explains the word ‘awful’ as follows: “that word means, first of all, ‘awe-inspiring,’ like God Almighty. [...] It is a vulgate meaning of ‘awful’ that he received out of his Scots linguistic heritage and that is now the primary meaning of the word” (89). Though the word “awe” contains a kind of reverence and wonder in it, it also embodies dread and fear; for this reason, it is possible to consider Manfred a destructive menace regarding all other references mentioned above. In line with his star, from the beginning, Manfred has drifted towards an unknown and uncertain path, becoming a wanderer. It feels like he is created from the bits and pieces of his star into a moulded human body, that is his “soul’s sepulchre” (I.ii.256). While Manfred shares some affinities with Shelley’s Dr. Frankenstein,<sup>31</sup> the deformity in his creation recalls the creature, too. Yet, Manfred does not possess the grotesque appearance of

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<sup>31</sup> As Peter Cochran argues, both “protagonists [Manfred and Frankenstein] are alienated from humanity” (*Manfred* 156); they are “scientific-philosophical overreachers” (157) and guilt-ridden (161), and they have a complementary other like Astarte and Elizabeth (160).

Frankenstein's creature which causes fear and disgust in the first place. What is grotesque in Manfred is his existence as a human being within a human body. As David Punter states, "the principal object of abjection is the body itself, and this is where the abjection, the abhuman and the Gothic come together" (*The Gothic Condition* 96-97). Manfred finds his body repulsive. As Julia Kristeva argues, "[w]hat is abject is not my correlative, which, providing me with someone or something else as support, would allow me to be more or less detached and autonomous. The abject has only one quality of the object – that of being opposed to I" (1). By being opposed to 'I,' the abject becomes the very entity intimidating his very individual existence. Manfred is opposed by his own corporeal being as his fainting and convulsion from time to time show his limited power. His alienated and disrupted humanness is the abject he wants to discard. In this sense, his abject body becomes the representative of the dehumanised and disintegrated sense of his self. All in all, Manfred goes against his own entity, thereby turning himself an abject.

While meditating on humanity's place in the world, Manfred states:

But we, who name ourselves its sovereigns, we,  
Half dust, half deity, alike unfit  
To sink or soar, with our mix'd essence make  
A conflict of its elements, and breathe  
The breath of degradation and of pride,  
Contending with low wants and lofty will,  
Till our mortality predominates [...]. (I.ii.257)

Seeing himself as "[h]alf dust, half deity," Manfred belongs to neither realm. And he is aware of his mixed essence or duality. This "expresses his own sense of a divided self" and "expresses his unbearably estranged self-consciousness" (Richardson, *A Mental Theatre* 52-53). This is the first time that Manfred finds himself being on the same threshold with the rest of humanity as he always defies any affinity with any human being. Manfred acknowledges the dichotomies of "degradation" and "pride," and of "low wants" and "lofty will" residing in his nature all at the same time as a human being. This part sounds like a lamentation for what he is in the literal sense. As Fred Botting states, "the wanderer encounters the new form of the Gothic ghost, the double or shadow of himself. An uncanny figure of horror, the double presents a limit that

cannot be overcome, the representation of an internal and irreparable division in the individual psyche” (*Gothic* 60). Manfred’s split personality, or his other half, thus, turns out to be his own shadow which he cannot evade and has to struggle with, as seen throughout the play.

During the Romantic Period, the Faustian myth was a popular trope to point out the measure and extension of human potentiality. And the Faustian pact with the devil to know the unknowable also became a recurrent theme in Gothic literature. During the nineteenth century, the Gothic became more introspective and illustrated the essence of the Romantic Period, thereby “disturbing conventional social limits and notions of interiority and individuality” (Botting, *Gothic* 59). Man’s dissatisfaction with their place in the universe and questioning their relation to the vastness of the universe leads to a quest for identity as there is “profound dissatisfaction with the ordinary, limited, mechanical views of man’s place in the world. The resulting quest can be thrilling and noble; it can also be completely disastrous” (Hume, “Exuberant” 111). So, the Romantic writers looked for some “emotional, religious, and sometimes metaphysical certitude, and in its heights celebrate[d] attainment of such assurance” (110) in their quest which may lead to nothing but subsequent despair and agony. Thus, even though overreaching characters manage to attain absolute knowledge, they end up in despair and hopelessness and become isolated and alienated figures drifting towards death or madness. In this context, the Faustian figure became predominant during the nineteenth century as a representation of this urge to go beyond.

As already mentioned, Manfred considers himself separate from the rest of humanity. He also has an obvious disdain and despise for humankind: “I had no sympathy with breathing flesh” (II.ii.262). He prefers solitude and becomes self-exiled, as he says: “From my youth upwards/My spirit walk’d not with the souls of men,/Nor look’d upon the earth with human eyes” (II.ii.262). Manfred looks down upon humanity because he does not feel a sense of belonging. Earthly pleasure or human company does not appeal to him. Thus, Manfred’s (non)human essence is delineated from the very beginning and also even from his ancestral line. In the third act, Manfred’s retainer, Manuel talks about Manfred’s father who did not resemble Manfred in “mind and habits” (III.iii.278) and describes their difference as follows:

Count Sigismund was proud, – but gay and free, –  
 A warrior and a reveller; he dwelt not  
 With books and solitude, nor made the night  
 A gloomy vigil, but a festal time,  
 Merrier than day; he did not walk the rocks  
 And forests like a wolf, nor turn aside  
 From men and their delights. (III.iii.278)

Manfred's father, Count Sigismund is depicted as a joyful man, unlike Manfred who behaves as if he carries all the burden of the world on his shoulders. Manfred lives like an owl or vampire and prefers to befriend the night and sublime nature.

Regarding all these, Manfred's disassociation from humanity prompts him to explore the undiscovered beyond human knowledge. By working in the graveyard, "the caves of death" (II.ii.263), Manfred undertook a search for the unknown and more accurately the unbestowed knowledge as he states:

[...] [I] drew  
 From wither'd bones, and skulls, and heap'd up dust,  
 Conclusions most forbidden. Then I pass'd  
 The nights of years in sciences untaught,  
 Save in the old time; and with time and toil,  
 And terrible ordeal, and such penance  
 As in itself hath power upon the air,  
 And spirits that do compass air and earth,  
 Space, and the peopled infinite, I made  
 Mine eyes familiar with Eternity [...] (II.ii.263)

Manfred, thus, delved into the untaught realm of knowledge. As his retainer, Herman says, year after year Manfred worked on his studies diligently at his castle: "[...] there is/One chamber where none enter: I would give/The fee of what I have to come these three years/To pore upon its mysteries" (III.iii.278). In that chamber, he attained the forbidden knowledge by isolating himself from the people and society. Analogous to the birth of the creature in Shelley's *Frankenstein*, the bits and pieces of the dead, namely "withered bones, and skulls" became tools for Manfred to discover this unearthly knowledge and power. This is how he can command over "the dwellers of the dark abodes,/The many evil and unheavenly spirits" (III.i.274) that "are forbidden to the search of man" (III.i.274) and cast spells and wander through the ethereal realms. Manfred, thus, turns into a Faustian figure who aspires more and gets involved in the

demonic realm though there is no mention of a demonic pact in exchange for his soul which is typical in Faustian legend. Manfred obtains the forbidden knowledge through his assiduous studies while he relies solely on science.

In this context, as Anne Stiles argues, “[s]cientific genius was a timely theme well-suited for imaginative literature. Significantly, the rise of the mad scientist as fictional trope coincided with the growth of scientific professions” (323) as can be illustrated by *Manfred* and later works like Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, Stevenson’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886). Fred Botting states that “[s]cientific theory and technological innovation, often used as figures of human alienation and Gothic excess themselves, provided a vocabulary and objects of fear and anxiety for nineteenth-century Gothic writing” (*Gothic* 8). Thus, all the developments and progress<sup>32</sup> are influential in shaping the mindset of the early nineteenth century in that the overreacher becomes the archetype of this century with his ambitions and desires to reach out for something unknown or undiscovered. And this problematises the meaning of human existence and their place in the universe. Roslynn D. Haynes points out that rather than their being an overreacher, the Promethean or Faustian characters of the Romantics are actually depicted as “someone less than human, not so much arrogant as deficient in human qualities” (75) as these figures suffer from their limitations mostly because their human qualities are not sufficient to attain what the characters desire and, therefore, these characters cannot be satisfied with their so-called achievements. In the case of Manfred, his Faustian achievement is a wasted, dangerous, maybe evil force causing his constant wanderings and continuous seeking for oblivion and annihilation. J. W. Smeed states that “Manfred is certainly dissatisfied with knowledge, as was Faust, and is tormented by the

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<sup>32</sup> As Roslynn D. Haynes explains in detail: “The work of Henry Cavendish and Joseph Priestley on electricity and the composition of gases in England, of Antoine Lavoisier in chemistry in France, and the experiments with electricity of Benjamin Franklin in America and Galvani in Italy seemed, in the popular mind, to reveal a world not far removed from alchemy and magic. Electrolysis appeared to fulfill the alchemists’ dream of depositing pure gold; Galvani’s experiments with static electricity applied to a dead frog’s leg, causing it to twitch, were suggestive of restoring, if not creating, life and held promises of breaking down the barriers between living and nonliving. In chemistry the theory of elective ‘affinities,’ evolved to account for the relative tendencies of elements to form stable compounds, had clear analogies with human behavior and suggested a unitary principle applicable to both the animate and the inanimate world. Even the isolation of the gas oxygen and demonstrations of its necessary role in sustaining life were seen as related to vitalism” (75-76). They all contributed to the innovative atmosphere of the age from the literary perspective.

dichotomy of knowledge and life, as Faust had been” (226). Manfred understands his limitations as he cannot bring back the only person he loves, Astarte. He cannot even take his own life with this knowledge he has attained. He recognises a fatal truth: “The Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life” (I.i.249) as “Sorrow is knowledge” (I.i.249). Based on this, the whole play problematises the relation between Manfred’s profane attainment and agonising aftermath causing the loss of his other half as a result of his thirst for knowledge.

Manfred’s learning does not come to any good but turns out disastrous and fatal. Nobody and nothing can help him because “[his] sciences,/ [his] long pursued and super-human art,/ Is mortal here – [he] dwell[s] in [his] despair –/ And live[s] – and live[s] for ever” (II.ii.264). Manfred understands the real meaning of attaining such knowledge. However, he is still seeking more as he tries to reach out to the dead. So, Manfred does not stop and he finds himself in a vicious circle going on forever. His pursuit encompasses the forbidden knowledge, then oblivion and annihilation, and lastly the resurrection of the dead. As Walter Perrie states, the Byronic hero’s “energetic disillusion makes him deeply restless, compelling him to seek ever fresh sensations and new experiences to whet his jaded appetites and assuage his self-conscious suffering. He is profoundly aware of being a prisoner of his own nature” (144-45). This never-ending loop for Manfred reflects his ambitious, arrogant and narcissistic personality as this constant pursuit turns out to be an obsession for him.

Furthermore, Manfred regards himself proudly as a Promethean figure who is another rebellious titanic character employed during the Romantic Period with his willpower and sacrifice. Prometheus is a champion of humanity as he steals the fire from Olympus and saves humans from their misery and gives them life along with “writing, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, metallurgy, architecture, and agriculture” (Cochran, *Manfred* 165) even though this means challenging to the gods, ending up being chained to a mountain and tormented by an eagle every day. In one of his letters to John Murray, Byron writes: “Prometheus – if not exactly in my plan – has always been so much in my head – that I can easily conceive its influence over all or anything that I have written” (*Byron’s Letters* 5: 268). Manfred believes he has an affinity with Prometheus in his endeavour: “[t]he mind, the spirit, the Promethean spark,/ The lightning of my being, is

as bright,/Pervading, and far darting as your own,/And shall not yield to yours, though coop'd in clay!" (I.i.253). Manfred goes beyond his limits to gratify his own ambitions and passions, unlike Prometheus who acts in favour of humanity by stealing the fire from the gods, thus going against the gods' tyranny. However, like Prometheus, Manfred desires to achieve something beyond his boundaries; this is to obtain the knowledge that is not meant for human beings, yet, in the play, it is not revealed if this desire is driven by his own ambitions or for humanity's sake. Manfred is associated with Prometheus in his unwavering resistance against any force he encounters. As Samuel C. Chew states, "Manfred is far less noble a personage than Prometheus; [...] but he shares the endless torment and unconquerable mind, the pride, the endurance, and the defiance of the titan" (77). It seems Manfred is more of a narcissistic and self-indulgent figure seeking relief from his own curse. In the end, his Promethean spark and Faustian attainment bring about the demise of both Manfred and Astarte. This can be observed in his following lines: "The spells which I have studied baffle me –/The remedy I reck'd of tortured me" (I.ii.256). Neither the spirits he abjures nor the knowledge he has attained can alleviate his mental state as Manfred is damned to be a wanderer. So, even though he has Promethean features, it is nothing but futile for him.

The figure of Prometheus connotes the political concerns of the early nineteenth century; for this reason, it is essential to briefly look at the politics of the age and Byron's political attitude. Stephen Cheeke argues that "for Byron this idea of Promethean virtue is always both a political virtue and a private refuge – a form of liberal politics which is also psychologically fatalist" (84) since there is not much hope or any possibility of transformation in the society as represented in *Manfred*. Though Manfred identifies himself with Prometheus, he cannot proceed in his intention to become "[t]he enlightener of nations" (III.i.275), as he says: "I have had those earthly visions/And noble aspirations in my youth,/To make my own the mind of other men" (III.i.275). His past youthful aspirations are possibly parallel to Byron's own aspirations, as already pointed out by Peter Cochran in his footnote to the play (*Manfred* 105). In addition to Byron's political ambition, his subsequent disillusionment also finds an expression in Manfred. Byron grew up in the post-revolutionary period during the Napoleonic Wars with France (1803-1815); therefore, he was naturally involved in the politics of the time. Byron attended the parliamentary debates in the House of Lords and

made speeches on significant issues like “the conciliation of industrial unrest, on Catholic emancipation, and on the liberty of the subject to petition for parliamentary reform” (Kelsall, *Byron’s Politics*, 4). Byron, thus, addressed the grievances of workers suffering from unemployment and the mechanisation of industry, and the oppression of the Catholics, yet the government did not implement anything to solve these problems. Besides, Byron was very outspoken and fearless about the radical issues of the time, which resulted in his ostracism by both the Tory and the Whigs (Trueblood 54). But his radical and ambitious position creates “the figure of Lord Byron, rebel, [who] occupies a unique and formidable place in this stormy period. For he alone was looked upon as one who might wield not only the pen but the sabre” (Erdman, “Byron and Revolt” 240). Therefore, Byron turned out to be a potential threat who might incite revolution in Britain. Moreover, for Byron, “[r]adicals, like actors, spoke their lines and played their parts; but when the curtain descended at the end of the final act, the audience returned to a social configuration structurally and conceptually intact. The action of reform was a delusion, and [...] totally unsatisfactory” (Purinton 62). Therefore, a sense of inertia dominated the political arena of the early nineteenth century. This is actually correlated with the inertia of Manfred as he cannot change anything whether it is internal or external. As a representative of the age, Manfred embraces the Promethean ideal for reform and liberty, yet he is powerless at the same time since his version of Prometheus is hugely ineffectual.

Though it is not obviously a political play, it is significant to mark that *Manfred* was written amidst this historical turmoil and the post-Napoleonic era. Somehow disappointed and disillusioned, Byron makes his hero lose his aspiration of being an ‘enlightener.’ When the destinies and Nemesis appear at the beginning of Act II Scene iii, they harangue on the destruction and desolation of people and nations. They all represent the evil side of the universe and are responsible for the annihilation and slaughter around the world, as understood from their speeches. Among all this chaos, Nemesis becomes the mouthpiece of the destructive aspects of the age:

I was detain’d repairing shattered thrones,  
 Marrying fools, restoring dynasties,  
 Avenging men upon their enemies,  
 And making them repent their own revenge;

Goadng the wise to madness; from the dull  
 Shaping out oracles to rule the world  
 Afresh, for they were waxing out of date,  
 And mortals dared to ponder for themselves,  
 To weigh kings in the balance, and to speak  
 Of freedom, the forbidden fruit. (II.iii.268)

The speech of Nemesis, thus, comments on the aggressive politics of the era. “[S]hattered thrones,” “restoring dynasties” or “weigh[ing] kings in the balance” refer to the continental conflicts during the Napoleonic Wars. The Napoleonic imperial expansion and hegemony over Europe led to the reconfiguration of the continental borders and regimes; therefore, this was a period of obvious turmoil. Moreover, Byron makes an obvious political reference to Napoleon, who is the ‘Captive Usurper’ who turned into a tyrant:

The Captive Usurper,  
 Hurl’d down from the throne,  
 Lay buried in torpor,  
 Forgotten and lone;  
 I broke through his slumbers,  
 I shiver’d his chain,  
 I leagued him with numbers –  
 He’s Tyrant again!  
 With the blood of a million he’ll answer my care,  
 With a nation’s destruction – his flight and despair. (II.iii.266-67)

In these lines, Byron reflects upon the rise and defeat of Napoleon. As Michael Simpson explains further,

the voice may be reporting [...] the successful resurrection of Napoleon from Elba in 1815. Given one resurrection, there is precedent for another. What may also be insinuated here is the corresponding, asymmetrical restoration of the European monarchs that Napoleon had displaced: as Napoleon goes down in 1814, Louis XVIII comes up, then vice versa, and once again in 1815. Meanwhile, each resurrection requires, potentially, “the blood of a million.” (49)

This cyclical rise and fall of Napoleon created a scene of horror and chaos on the continent, and Byron’s spirits became mouthpieces of these violent occurrences. In addition to the tyranny of Napoleon, his defeat also brings about another kind of tyranny. After the final defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815, Europe was to be

redesigned by the main powers, Britain, Russia, Prussia and Austria at the Congress of Vienna in 1814-15. However, this means that Europe once again was at the mercy of some powers disregarding the liberties of the people. Byron was very disappointed that “the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity that had inspired the French revolution and its republic had been first perverted into a bloodthirsty dictatorship and then finally extirpated by the forces of conservatism, and that his own country was enforcing the restoration of monarchies throughout Europe” (Franklin, *Byron* 14). Regarding this historical trajectory, Byron’s political aspirations and his interest in the Napoleonic image become intertwined.

It is significant to highlight that the political image of Napoleon became dominant during the Romantic Period. For the Romantics, “Napoleon was [...] important as an ‘imaginary’ figure, a fabricated embodiment of their political and personal hopes and fears and a site for debating the crucial issues of the day” (Bainbridge 8). The Romantic writers were fascinated by the figure of Napoleon as a symbol of liberty, but as Purinton states,

[h]opes invested in Napoleon as a leader for social and political reform were dashed by his ambitious conquests, and his blatant usurpation of one system of tyranny only to make room for his own system. Among others, Byron was fascinated by Napoleon’s opposition to the old regime, but he was critical of Napoleon’s aspirations to become emperor. (54)

Thus, the image of Napoleon began to shatter because of Napoleon’s ambitious expansionist policy. Byron both admired Napoleon and defied him for his imperialistic ambitions. Considering Byron’s political endeavour in the parliament and his image of Napoleon, he was actually disillusioned by the political atmosphere of the age.

In this regard, it is important to mark the duality of Manfred in relation to Napoleon. When Manfred wants to conjure the spirits, he says:

[...] by a power,  
 Deeper than all yet urged, a tyrant-spell,  
 Which had its birth-place in a star condemn’d,  
 The burning wreck of a demolish’d world,  
 A wandering hell in the eternal space;  
 By the strong curse which is upon my soul,

The thought which is within me and around me,  
I do compel ye to my will. – Appear! (I.i.250)

As a condemned star burning with a curse in this demolished world (I.i.250), Manfred sees himself also as a tyrant, as understood from these lines. With the charm or spells at his use which “makes [one] tremble” (I.i.250), Manfred strives to exert his power upon the spirits by summoning them and making them bow to him as a ruler. As Jeffrey N. Cox argues, “what the romantics did was to redefine aristocratic pride, heroic energy, and self-conscious remorse as attributes of revolutionary figures rather than their opponents” (*In the Shadows* 115). Thus, Byron embellishes his revolutionary character with ‘pride, heroic energy, and self-consciousness’ while at the same time questioning his duality between “hero and tyrant, liberator and dictator, redeemer and usurper” (Purinton 52) that is associated with the image of Napoleon. Manfred embodies the dichotomic nature of Napoleon. Considering this historical correlation, it is easier to associate Manfred with this major figure of the period with his Promethean ideals. *Manfred* represents the failed political aspirations of the post-Napoleonic era.

Moreover, his relationship with Astarte is significant to better understand his ongoing wanderings. Manfred describes their relationship as such: “[...] ’tis blood – my blood! the pure warm stream/Which ran in the veins of my fathers, and in ours/When we were in our youth, and had one heart,/And loved each other as we should not love” (II.i.259). These lines complicate and problematise their relationship as they imply incest as many scholars point out as well. Besides, it is significant to state that *Manfred* has been also read as an autobiographical reference to Byron’s incestuous relation with his half-sister Augusta Leigh as the play “encouraged readers to take it as Byron’s direct confession” (Elfenbein 197). During the Romantic Period, incest was one of the most employed Gothic themes. According to Jenny DiPlacidi, “representations of incest are revealed as synonymous with the Gothic as a whole: complex, multifaceted and consciously resistant to the dominant social and sexual hegemonies in their models of alternative agencies, sexualities, forms of desire and family structures” (3). So, the motif of incest is exploited as a manifestation of defiance against the established norms of the period. Fred Botting elaborates further that “Gothic terrors activate a sense of the unknown and project an uncontrollable and overwhelming power which threatens not only the loss of sanity, honour, property or social standing but the very order which supports and is

regulated by the coherence of those terms” (*Gothic* 5). Thus, the Gothic helps uncover the hidden aspects of the social, familial and individualistic dynamics in society by illustrating this threatened order or putting any order or norm in the spotlight. In the case of *Manfred*, incest symbolises the “hero’s complete alienation from the society around him” as well as “his narcissistic sensibility, or, more philosophically speaking, his predilection for solipsism” (Thorslev, “Incest” 50). In this regard, it is a defiance of and dissociation from society and normative institutions like religion and law which may be seen as “no more than social conventions” (50-51). Therefore, incest further accentuates Manfred’s separation from normative discourse. Moreover, it is important to highlight that, as Emily Bernhard-Jackson argues, Byron did not recoil from “publishing a work that he knew would be widely read as confessional, featuring as its main character a version of himself who demonstrated no regret for what he had done. All this suggests that, while he [Byron] may have been concerned about public reaction, he, like Manfred, did not regret the act itself” (“Love in the First Degree”). In this sense, as Peter L. Thorslev, Jr. puts it, it is a mere social convention that Byron may think he can transgress. And thus, the norms, the so-called natural laws of the society, are shattered by Manfred because of his narcissistic and solipsistic tendencies.

In the play, how Astarte died or what caused her to die is never explained but rather always deferred in the course of the play.<sup>33</sup> Hence, it is not exactly known what happened in the past or to what extent Manfred is complicit in the death of Astarte. As it was revealed in the play, Manfred and Astarte were working together, sharing the same mind and passion in their Faustian search like two mad scientists: “[...] the same lone thoughts and wanderings,/The quest of hidden knowledge, and a mind/To comprehend the universe” (II.ii.264). Astarte is “[t]he sole companion of [Manfred’s] wanderings /And watchings” (III.iii.279). In their search for forbidden knowledge, as it is revealed, things did not go as they wished, and they ended up in a catastrophic situation which led to the death of Astarte. On a gothic night when the wind “[w]as faint and gusty, and the

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<sup>33</sup> In her “The Dashes in *Manfred*,” Jane Stabler investigates how the dashes are utilised by Byron in his manuscripts. Stabler describes them “as a graphic means of drawing out and intensifying affect” (“The Dashes in *Manfred*”) as the dashes connote interruptions, tension, Beckett-like pauses, agony, resistance and so on. They “signal the boundlessness of mental travel.” There is always a sort of ‘a break’ in the flow of the play so that it does not disclose enough. So Stabler’s argument makes a very tangible point in this sense to be able to show Manfred’s mental state.

mountain snows/Began to glitter with the climbing moon” (III.iii.279), something happened in Manfred’s castle which changed the course of the events for Manfred forever. In their mysterious experiment, Manfred lost Astarte and totally held himself responsible for her death: “Her faults were mine – her virtues were her own –/I loved her, and destroy’d her!” (II.ii.264). Consequently, Manfred becomes a wanderer with his guilt and despair for the loss of his beloved. As mentioned earlier, with his desire to delve into unexplored knowledge Manfred turns into one of the overreaching characters of the nineteenth century and so does Astarte. In their Faustian search, they are complementary pairs. Moreover, though society deemed their love to be as “[t]he deadliest sin to love as [they] have loved” (II.iv.271), Astarte is Manfred’s way of connecting himself to the world. For this reason, her existence “offers obeisance to the need to ward off solipsism, promising a partaking of the world that grants what seems to be the most satisfying completeness” (Garber 132). Maybe because it is the deadliest sin, the play starts with agony over the already dead and ends with the death of an oblivion-seeking wanderer. The loss of Astarte causes Manfred’s total break with the world as well as with himself, as this break refers to Manfred’s incomplete and unfulfilled sense of identity.

Furthermore, Manfred describes Astarte as his mirror-image: “She was like me in lineaments – her eyes,/Her hair, her features, all, to the very tone/Even of her voice, they said, were like to mine” (II.ii.263). She functions as a complementary figure for Manfred’s duality. Pamela Boker argues that “Astarte was not only an Oedipal figure, but a narcissistic object-choice in the formation of Manfred’s ego ideal” (5), so she is “his narcissistic ‘double’” (6). Andrew Elfenbein also states that “Astarte alone destabilizes Manfred’s sense of his uniqueness, because, in his eyes, she threatened not only to know him, but to be him. Manfred describes her as having been almost exactly his double” (35). Because they mirror each other in this way, when one is gone, the equilibrium between them is broken. When it is established that Manfred and Astarte are each other’s doubles or split others, then any detachment from one another will cause them to descend into madness and death. Besides, as part of his political disillusionment, the loss of Astarte signifies his loss of connection with the world making him unable to enact any social and political change because she is the only individual he can connect with; now that she is gone, so are his hopes and aspirations.

Moreover, in her likeness to Manfred, Astarte becomes a haunting double figure dominating Manfred's life after her death although Manfred himself seeks her out for forgiveness. This haunting other self is the reason for his ongoing wandering because Manfred wants to achieve a fulfilled idea of the self which can be only achieved when they become one and unified.

Another duality can be observed in the representation of religion in the play. In Gothic writing, religion holds a contradictory status. It is widely known that the Gothic has an anti-Catholic sentiment, yet this argument is contested as the Gothic possesses a conservative aspect as well and does not always necessarily pose an anti-Catholic sentiment. In this regard, *Manfred* can be a good example as it does not provide the demonised version of religion, though the first version of the play totally illustrates the avaricious and lecherous side of the Abbot. Thus, the text itself becomes the very embodiment of this controversial status of religion in Gothic writing. *Manfred* as a text embodies this very duality in itself.

In the light of this background, like all the other established institutions, religion is a discursive site that Manfred challenges. As a rebellious figure, Manfred defies all the institutions and is illustrated as a Promethean figure going against society and God. In the play, the Chamois Hunter becomes a voice of Christianity when he tries to stop Manfred from committing suicide. He tries to warn him saying "for the love/Of him who made you" (I.ii.258) though not heard by Manfred in that scene. The Chamois Hunter believes that "there's comfort yet –/The aid of holy men, and heavenly patience –" (II.i.259). However, Manfred does not have any faith in holy men or institutions. Additionally, from a religious perspective, suicide is a sinful and blasphemous act deeming one's soul to eternal suffering. Before the Suicide Act of 1961, suicide was seen as a crime as a result of which the person's property went to the monarchy, and burial in consecrated grounds was not allowed; therefore, it was not only self-destructive but also a public disgrace (Hughes and Smith, "Introduction" 3-4). For this reason, the Chamois Hunter suggests this profanity by referring to Manfred's "guilty blood" (I.ii.258). As a self-destructive figure, Manfred condemns himself to constant damnation and his suicide attempt can be read as a resistance against the Church which frames a person's life within certain boundaries. William Hughes and Andrew Smith

argue that “[i]n Gothic, arguably, suicide is not merely a significant act but a crucial one, engaging as it does the central existential motivations which mobilise the genre from Walpole’s eighteenth century to the twenty-first-century present” (“Introduction” 3). In the case of *Manfred*, thus, suicide is a transgressive act against all established values and rules.

Regarding the suicide, as Jane Stabler argues, “*Manfred* is standing not just on the verge of suicide, but also on the precipitous edge of human experience: the play is preoccupied with edges, border states of mind between madness and sanity” (*Burke to Byron* 67). This dichotomy dominates the play as *Manfred* is already teetering on the brink of sanity and insanity in addition to the realms of human and non-human. Thus, *Manfred* challenges these oppositions, and questions his existence in the society.

In addition to the Chamois Hunter, the Abbot is portrayed as a benign and good figure. As an official representative of religion, the Abbot, like the Chamois Hunter, thinks there is always a way to redeem oneself through penitence and atonement. All *Manfred* must do is have patience and ask for forgiveness from God, but he only asks forgiveness from Astarte. For *Manfred*,

there is no power in holy men,  
Nor charm in prayer – nor purifying form  
Of penitence – nor outward look – nor fast –  
Nor agony – nor, greater than all these,  
The innate tortures of that deep despair,  
Which is remorse without the fear of hell,  
But all in all sufficient to itself  
Would make a hell of heaven [...]. (III.i.276)

As Richardson states, “*Manfred*’s great claim is now his embodiment of the Satanic mind [...]. It is equally clear that Byron – with his emphasis on tortures, despair, the mind’s self punishment—has weighed the immense cost of Satan’s ultimately self-defeating autonomous stance” (*A Mental Theater* 55-56). Thus, resembling himself to Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost*, *Manfred* is already living in his own hell, so he does not have any fear of the other world or of what is next to come for him. The earthly agony or hell he is going through is already his punishment as “there is no future pang/Can deal that justice on the self-condemn’d/He deals on his own soul” (III.i.275).

For Manfred, it is too late for any absolution or salvation even though according to the Abbot, there are “even those who do despair above,/Yet shape themselves some phantasy on earth,/To which frail twig they cling, like drowning men” (III.i.275). According to Martyn Corbett, “the disputation between the two men arises from the clash of creed and personal conviction” (*Byron* 42). Manfred denies any religious redemption and gets involved more and more in the demonical powers for his constant search until the end. For this reason, religious redemption is not dealt with in the play, but the important thing is where one stands as an individual. Taking into consideration both the Chamois Hunter and the Abbot, religion does not provide any explanation or solution for the existential crisis and the agony of Manfred who defies religion altogether.

In the play, the supernatural is a pervasive element from the beginning until the end, as Manfred wanders through the metaphysical realms and interacts with the spirits. One of the important supernatural occurrences in the play is the resurrection of Astarte. Manfred goes to the Hall of Arimanes to raise the deceased Astarte. When Astarte is summoned by Nemesis, Manfred says:

Can this be death? there's bloom upon her cheek;  
But now I see it is no living hue,  
But a strange hectic – like the unnatural red  
Which Autumn plants upon the perish'd leaf.  
It is the same! Oh, God! that I should dread  
To look upon the same – Astarte! – No,  
I cannot speak to her – but bid her speak –  
Forgive me or condemn me. (II.iv.271)

The phantom or corpse-like figure of Astarte leads Manfred to question if she is the same person. Manfred looks at somebody who lost her lively colour and somehow resembles her to a ‘perished leaf’ with a reference to the unnatural red on her face. Though it is not always the case, as Philip Cox argues, the supernatural brings about “an often almost obsessive interest in the grotesquely, perversely or putrescently physical[...] [such as] rotting corpses, charnel houses, graves and crimes of unthinkable depravity and violence (often of a sexual nature)” (*Gender, Genre* 123). Astarte creates a horrid spectacle with her appearance which awakens a sense of terror in Manfred. Despite this, Manfred tells her: “[T]he grave hath not changed thee more/Than I am

changed for thee” (II.iv.271). It seems that Manfred can still see a resemblance between them as he himself turns into a living corpse with the only purpose of oblivion and obliteration. This uncanny likeness between them foreshadows Manfred’s upcoming demise.

The return of the dead not only shows the uncanny concept of death but also functions as a Gothic premonition. As in most Gothic narratives, a premonition is significant as a herald of the terrifying future. Astarte serves as a messenger to announce Manfred’s approaching end. Here, the foreboding of Astarte operates as a relief for Manfred because all he wants is to vanish. Therefore, it does not pose a threatening or terrifying end for the protagonist because this is already what Manfred craves from the very beginning. Moreover, though Astarte is raised by the spirits, she does not obey the orders of the spirits; like Manfred, she also defies the spirits. As one of the spirits Nemesis says: “She is not of our order, but belongs/To the other powers” (II.iv.271). This actually brings about a sense of mystery and obscurity as the spirits cannot fully know where or what she is. In addition, although both Manfred and Astarte are portrayed as the mad scientists of the play and Manfred gets more involved in the dark arts, the lines of Nemesis make it controversial whether Astarte becomes involved in the dark arts or not. Thus, her resurrection and the enigma surrounding her contribute to the Gothic atmosphere.

Towards the end of the play, Astarte’s premonition for Manfred’s impending death is about to come true when the Abbot visits Manfred once again to try to save his soul. Then, a mysterious spirit or demon appears to take Manfred’s earthly life. The Abbot describes the demonic being as follows:

That which should shake me, – but I fear it not –  
I see a dusk and awful figure rise  
Like an infernal god from out the earth;  
His face wrapt in a mantle, and his form  
Robed as with angry clouds: he stands between  
Thyself and me – but I do fear him not. (III.iv.281)

Like Manfred, the Abbot also shows a brave defiance against this being and is not scared and is ready to fight it. The Abbot continues observing their encounter: “Why

doth he gaze on thee, and thou on him?/Ah! he unveils his aspect: on his brow/The thunder-scars are graven; from his eye/Glares forth the immortality of hell –/Avaunt!” (III.iv.281). This monstrous creature, thus, brings hell onto the earth, and his grotesque appearance produces a scene of tension and horror heightening the sense of uneasiness and the suspense about what will come next. Manfred’s last battle is fought with this demonic figure who tries to summon him; however, Manfred resists and says: “I am prepared for all things, but deny/The power which summons me” (III.iv.282). On his deathbed, he still does not bow to anyone, as he states as follows: “I have commanded/Things of an essence greater far than thine,/And striven with thy Masters” (III.iv.282). Manfred denies their power over him and he prefers to die alone just as he has lived and wandered:

I do not combat against death, but thee  
 And thy surrounding angels; my past power  
 Was purchased by no compact with thy crew,  
 But by superior science – penance – daring –  
 And length of watching – strength of mind – and skill  
 In knowledge of our fathers – when the earth  
 Saw men and spirits walking side by side,  
 And gave ye no supremacy: I stand  
 Upon my strength – I do defy – deny –  
 Spurn back, and scorn ye! (III.iv.282)

Thus, no matter what, Manfred defends his individual and autonomous position. For Manfred, the mind is the superior entity commanding and controlling everything: “The mind which is immortal makes itself/Requital for its good or evil thoughts –/Is its own origin of ill and end” (III.iv.283). From the very beginning, he has trusted his mind and self to be able to carry out his achievements and reach out the forbidden knowledge. And in his last breath, he continues believing in himself and delivers his last words: “Old man! ’tis not so difficult to die” (III.iv.283). According to Peter J. Manning, this is “Manfred’s assertion that he dies unconquered by any force, natural or supernatural” (72). Manfred, thus, embraces death as his suicidal wish comes true. His everlasting agony gives way in the end and he dies as a result of the premonition of Astarte who becomes his saviour in this sense.

Moreover, Stuart M. Sperry argues that Manfred's death is "a kind of lonely heroism" of "a man who, confronting the reality of his own misdeeds, has found it in his heart, if not to absolve, at least to release himself, a man who has achieved liberation not by self-repudiation but by going to the bottom of the night of his own experience and somehow reemerging on the other side" (201). Sperry sees Manfred's defiant death as a sort of salvation for him. But when Manfred is gone, the Abbot says: "[...] his soul hath ta'en its earthless flight –/Whither? I dread to think – but he is gone" (III.iv.283). The Abbot does not know where he might be gone. Because of his transgression, it might be hell but even the Abbot seems to be hesitant about Manfred's whereabouts. As Mervyn Nicholson argues, "[w]hat matters is not whether Manfred goes to hell or heaven, but his power to re-authenticate his life here, now: to self-transform – from a void of meaninglessness to purposeful action in a genuine direction, from time-out-of-joint to authentic existence as irreversible temporality" (42). In line with Sperry's statement, Nicholson also refers to the liberation of Manfred from his chains, thereby turning his life into a meaningful existence in his defiance. Considering these approaches, salvation or redemption or meaningful existence does not matter in Manfred's case; dying itself is a transgressive act for Manfred as he rejects religion, morality, and society all of which he avoids getting involved in. For this reason, it is not difficult to die, to let go and become one's own person without any chains.

Sperry further argues that the encounter with the demonic spirit in the end is "Byron's confrontation with his own persona, his latent realization of the danger of personal domination by the character of his own creating who comes, somewhat like Frankenstein's monster, to turn upon his master" (198). In the early nineteenth century, Byron was ostracised from the society and had to go on self-exile because of his scandalous lifestyle. After his separation from his wife, "Byron, facing a charge of buggery, not to mention incest, wisely fled abroad in 1816" (Speck 352). In this regard, the year 1816 was very chaotic and scandalous for Byron. As mentioned at the beginning, he was always too conscious of the attention he got and his reception by the public. For this reason, "he was also obsessed by the knowledge of his own offenses and his sense of personal guilt. *Manfred* depicts the initial stage in the exorcism of that obsession" (Sperry 199). Thus, the spirit materialises as Manfred's or Byron's uncanny double whom they seek to dispose of in a way. As a biographical reading, this could be

taken as Byron's personal anxiety according to Sperry; however, regarding Byron's attitude in terms of publishing such a biographically sensitive and risky text, it does not sound plausible that Byron creates this spirit or thinks of it as a personal redemption because the text's main point is not Byron's exorcism but it is how Byron problematizes the social and political dynamics of the society from which he had to exile himself. That is, the indifference and inertia of the society and hopelessness and disillusionment accompanying them feed the Gothic essence of the play in its obsessive yet futile 'Promethean spark.' Besides, Kelsall defines this spirit as "a daemonic representation of his [Manfred's] 'evil genius' [...] like the picture of Dorian Grey [*sic*] [who] seems to have absorbed into his outer being all the evil signs of Manfred's corruption" ("Goethe, Byron, Ibsen" 68). In this regard, the demonic spirit can be substantiated as the external projection of his transgression. At last, Manfred meets his craved annihilation by freeing himself from his chains and even from his own evil genius which condemned him to everlasting wandering since his youth. His last words, thus, indicate that his death is to reassure his liberation and relief in the literal sense unlike an affirmation of the demise of his self since dying is a way to assert his free being.

Moreover, in this last scene, Manfred does something that is out of character for him. Though until now Manfred does not need any human connection and rejects any sort of connection, in the end, he dies holding the Abbot's hand. This hand-holding can mean "Manfred's gesture of shared humanity" (Stabler, *Burke to Byron* 77) or "a last abandonment of his walled interior stronghold" (Stauffer) to be able to move on, even in death. Or "though failing to repent and pray, [...] Manfred has reached a contact at least with mankind if not directly with Holy Church" (Butler, "An Examination" 635). Maybe his hand-holding is a way to make up for his previous loss of touch with the world as a last attempt because, considering the political disillusionment of the age, Manfred dies with personal defiance yet without any social impact. Manfred has been bound by "the clankless chain" (I.i.255) before but now his curse<sup>34</sup> is removed. So, the real connection can be possible now.

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<sup>34</sup> According to Daniel M. McVeigh, the Incantation refers to the fact that Manfred is a cursed hero: "Manfred's role as hero is darkened by his curse; the seeds of his humanity, his imagination and curiosity, are dead. The Incantation serves as his accusation against himself, a proclamation of the curse which has always been his" (608). Manfred is a self-destructive

Depicted as “a play of deep personal and psychological catharsis” (Sperry 201), *Manfred* is already very well known for its ultimate portrayal of the Byronic hero. As Bertrand Evans argues, “[t]he crude Gothic protagonists of nearly fifty years passed into this most striking portrait of the Byronic hero” (274). In this context, “Manfred is more than merely a remorseful Gothic Villain. He is the Byronic Hero in the process of maturing, of taking on a philosophical and psychological depth” (Thorslev, *The Byronic Hero* 167-68). The Byronic hero is described by his defiance and questioning of social, moral and political norms and by absolute individualism, as depicted through Manfred. Also, Walter Perrie explains that “[m]elancholy and lonely, the Byronic hero hides his true feelings behind a mask of aristocratic pride and hauteur. His alienation from society, often imaged as an exile, is not merely passive but shades over into a deliberate defiance of conventions: political, moral and religious” (145). Throughout the play, Manfred resists and denies political and religious institutions as their formulaic and exclusive qualities can only function oppressively. For these reasons, Manfred is a remarkable example of the Byronic hero defined by such traits as the mysterious past or untold sin, remorse, gloom, melancholy, superiority complex, disdain for humankind, rebellious nature, arrogance, self-exile, alienation and captivating appeal. His self-destructive and self-tormenting nature as a Byronic hero makes him indispensable in the Gothic tradition. Besides, considering his political aspect, as Perrie states, the “idealism [of nobility, courage and personal honour] easily merges into a Promethean fixation on moral absolutes. [...] [H]e denounces society for its cant and hypocrisy, seeing it as corrupt: the product of a decline and fall built into the nature of the human condition” (145). The rejection of absolutism and resistance against the domineering forces through the constant assertion of independence and autonomy are the prominent features of the Byronic hero as all these characterise the concerns of the age itself. Thus, Byron’s Manfred becomes the Byronic hero, especially with his rebellious, remorseful and agonising essence. The idea of improving the society, the Promethean feature and at the same time individualism and freedom that are craved are reflected and merged in the Byronic Hero.

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person and he regards himself as a cursed one; for this reason, he suffers and torments himself via his remorse.

In conclusion, though employing the typical Gothic features like the castle, the supernatural, premonition, foreshadowing, Gothic atmosphere, the wanderer, incest, a sense of mystery and horror, dark magic, madness, claustrophobia, the return of the dead and necromancy, the play distinguishes itself from the earlier Gothics. The play does not have a typical Gothic storyline but, maybe more than earlier Gothics, it is rife with a supernatural atmosphere, realms and beings. Byron utilises the Gothic trope of an overreaching mad scientist, being inspired by the Faustian myth. In the nineteenth century, science became the source of the Gothic effect, thus contributing to the Faustian and Promethean themes which are functional in challenging certain boundaries and dichotomies like madness and sanity and the human and non-human. Unlike the incarceration of a heroine in a typical Gothic story, Manfred imprisons himself in his own mind, enforced by the curse as well. This indicates that the nineteenth-century Gothic deals with inward and mental states. In this regard, individualism and consciousness enhance the Gothic effect as they create an agonised, unfulfilled and transgressive as well as self-tormented and -incarcerated figure. Manfred is surrounded by a Gothic world defined by death, gloom, melancholy and suffering. Furthermore, the Byronic hero evolving from the Gothic villain becomes incarnate in Manfred, as a representative of the revolutionary and defiant character of the age. In this sense, the failure of the Promethean aspirations of Manfred correlates with Byron's own political expectations as Byron grew disillusioned due to his unfulfilled political objectives regarding liberty and reform. This can be observed in Manfred's constant yet abortive pursuits, whether they are the pursuits of science, oblivion, or annihilation. Therefore, Manfred's obsession and desperation define the spirit of the age, identified by disillusion, political turmoil and scientific progress, culminating in the figure of the Byronic hero, thereby complicating the above-mentioned binary oppositions.

## CHAPTER 3

### TWENTIETH-CENTURY GOTHIC DRAMA: SNOO WILSON'S *VAMPIRE*

Andrew James Wilson, known as Snoo Wilson (1948-2013), was a prolific writer, director, screenwriter and novelist who had an eclectic, witty and surrealist style. Though he is a very well-known writer, there are not many studies on his dramatic achievements. As the actor Simon Callow says, “he committed the fatal error of being unclassifiable, which in Britain condemns a man to the margins” (“Simon Callow Remembers”). Besides, Wilson wrote at a time when political theatre was at its peak, so he touched upon and criticised the politics of the period in his works. In this chapter, Wilson’s *Vampire* (1973) is to be analysed within the political context of the late 1960s and 1970s, revealing socio-political oppression and apathy in the society through the lens of the twentieth-century Gothic.

In his college days, Snoo Wilson started “writing experimental plays and revues for student productions” (Dietrich 450) such as *Girl Mad as Pigs* (1967) and *EllaDaybellefesse’s Machine* (1967). He later became one of the co-founders of Portable Theatre with David Hare and Tony Bicat (Grant 726). Together with such playwrights as Howard Barker, David Hare and David Edgar, Wilson wrote some collaborative works such as *Lay By* (1971) and *England’s Ireland* (1972). Some of his well-known plays include *Blowjob* (1971), *The Pleasure Principle* (1973), *Vampire*, *The Beast* (1974), *Soul of the White Ant* (1976), *The Glad Hand* (the John Whiting Award, 1978) and *HRH* (the Eileen Anderson/Central Broadcasting Premiere Award, 1997). Moreover, he worked as a script editor for the BBC and wrote screenplays such as *Sunday for Seven Days* (1971) and *Shadey* (1985); libretto adaptations such as Charles Gounod’s *La Colombe* (1983) and Jacques Offenbach’s *Orpheus in the Underworld* (1985); and musicals like *Son of Freud* (1983) and *80 Days* (the San Diego Theater Circle Award, 1988). He was also awarded the UK-US Bicentennial Fellowship in 1980. Besides, Wilson wrote such novels as *Spaceache* (1984), *Inside Babel* (1985) and *I, Crowley* (1996). He also worked as a director in the Scarab Theatre for many years in the 1970s. In 2016, the University of East Anglia where Wilson graduated from

and which also houses the Snoo Wilson Archive started to hold the annual Snoo Wilson Scriptwriting Prize, which continues to this day, to those “whose work shows particular promise and is true to the spirit of inventiveness in Snoo’s work” (“Snoo Wilson”).

In one of his interviews, Wilson mentioned that he was classified by a Swedish journalist within the movement of the Angry Young Man with John Osborne (*Look Back in Anger*, 1959) and Arnold Wesker (*The Kitchen*, 1959). He further states: “I have written plays with Howard Brenton, David Hare, David Edgar, and Trevor Griffiths. And they are all ‘engry.’ But they are all so wildly different close up that what they seem to share more than anything else is a desire to inject a new political perspective into the work” (“Theatre on the Wrong Side of the Law” 56). However, Wilson did not feel that he belonged to such a group or any group as his aesthetic ideals differed from all these writers. Wilson further elaborated his statement as follows: “[A]ny kind of social realism makes me go queasy. My artistic conscience is aesthetic. Paradoxically I am in love with the surrealist idea that a surrender to the language and symbols of the unconscious is the only possible political response to the apparent obscenities of everyday life” (“Theatre on the Wrong Side of the Law” 56). Thus, he merges his political views with his surrealist approach, thereby wandering at the intersection of illusion, dream and reality. Moreover, as H. C. I. Andersen argues, Wilson had “a dislike for so-called naturalistic or representational theatre, [...] [as] it only seemed capable of catching s [*sic*] surface appearance of reality and not the forces at work under the surface of human life/society” (84). He was more concerned with exploring the irrational mind and the unconscious with his interest in psychology, particularly in such theorists as Freud and Jung whose impacts or ideas can be found in some of his plays like *Vampire*. For these reasons, his plays are not very conventional but distinct in their own ways. Considering Wilson’s dramatic works, James Bierman argues that

[d]reams, psychic healings, astral union, astrological events, sex magic, the Bermuda Triangle, vampirism and black magic, play roles in his plays, drawing attention to the mysterious workings of the human psyche and their projection outward on the universe of the plays or vice versa. Snoo finds such subjects particularly appropriate to the theatre because it is a domain of illusion. (426)

Wilson was more interested in the workings and complexities of the mind and tried to explore its mysterious aspects through fantastic and surreal Gothic elements, as “[t]he subject matter of such plays as *The Beast*, *Vampire*, *The Glad Hand*, *Flaming Bodies* leans toward the occult, the mysterious and the unknown” (426). As Ada Coe argues, “his theatre is indeed that: the serious questions intermingle with the world of the fantastic, with the ‘monsters within ourselves’ conjured up by the ‘magic’ of theatre” (73). Michael Coveney also describes him as “the alternative Tom Stoppard, clever and witty, but with a pronounced enthusiasm for the supernatural, the occult and the bizarre” (“Snoo Wilson”). So, Wilson’s distinct style established him as an esteemed playwright and led him to create a significant arena to debate the important socio-political issues of the time. Snoo’s theatre, or “Snoorealism” as Coe puts it (73), explores the boundaries between reality and fantasy and dream, and within those boundaries, Wilson scrutinises society itself.

Wilson started writing in the late 1960s which “were a revolutionary era – a time of cultural revolution, and of largely unsuccessful attempts at political revolution” (McLeod 5). During this political turmoil, he was concerned with politics and societal problems. He dealt with such political and environmental issues as “the racial problems of South Africa, the victimized rural proletariat, the endemic problems of communism and socialism, pollution” (Coe 73). According to Wilson, “[t]here is no doubt that politics and theatre are two sides of the same coin, the desire of people to share in an unfolding story with which they can strongly identify” (“Theatre on the Wrong Side of the Law” 58). Although Wilson did not want to identify himself with any group of writers, he was, to some extent, a politically conscious playwright and took his stance against any kind of oppression. Therefore, it is undeniable that “Snoo Wilson’s drama melts the edges of that repression. In it, dreams, sex, magic, and mystery come alive, often producing shock and surprise. It is these surprises which remind us of our own aliveness by reawakening us to it, with a resultant sense of liberation” (Bierman 434). In this regard, socio-political issues along with the themes of liberation and oppression are crucial matters in Wilson’s writings. Considering the period that he wrote in, that is mainly the 1970s, liberation movements within various socio-political dynamics dominated the period and Wilson’s works were born out of these social and political occurrences of the time.

Because Wilson started his writing career in the midst of the worldwide political upheavals in the late 1960s, it is significant to look into the political atmosphere of the period briefly. The year 1968 was the year of changes in various political and social dynamics resulting from the ongoing crises in Britain as well as around the world, such as student protests, the Women's Liberation Movement, civil rights protests, ongoing wars and political conflicts, campaigns for nuclear disarmament, Soviet politics, anti-war and anti-imperialist struggles. In this context, especially "1968 therefore marked the coming to consciousness – to political consciousness – [...] to an awareness of environmental plundering and pollution, to cold-war imperialism, to conspicuous consumption in the first and second worlds and to the struggles of the third world" (Itzin 3). Starting as a political movement in the 1960s, the New Left focused on different kinds of "struggles around political equality and freedom" in the society such as "a resurgent feminism, and gay and lesbian struggles [...] [and] the politicization of more quotidian issues like housing, welfare, and equal pay for men and women" (Taylor 881). In this regard, the 1960s and also 1970s were celebrated for promoting liberation on various platforms. Besides, the 1960s was defined by a widespread counterculture movement that upheld ideals of peace, justice and love. Many people struggled for and claimed their individual rights and identities during these years. These protests also brought about violence and aggression. As William S. McConnell argues, "[a]s the sixties drew to a close, the student movement and the counterculture revolution became tarnished by violence, disorganization, and disillusionment" (29). While political consciousness turned into the hallmark of this period, disillusionment also became its defining feature.

Furthermore, the late 1960s was a period of contraceptives as well as fashion and music which were exploited as symbols of peace and rebellion. Especially the introduction of the pill leading to a sexual revolution liberated women in terms of sexual freedom and birth control. In this context, one of the most important movements of this period was the Women's Liberation Movement which is defined as the second wave of feminism. To better understand the women's struggle, it is essential to briefly look into the first wave of feminism firstly because Wilson's play *Vampire* specifically refers to both waves. As Nursel Gömçeli states, "for almost three hundred years, that is, throughout the Renaissance, the Restoration, and the Enlightenment, women could mainly work as

domestic servants, as nurses or governesses, which involved child-care and teaching, or in trades which involved some kind of domestic work” (3). Women had been restrained into specific roles in the society for a long time. Especially, in the nineteenth century, as a result of the growth of industrialisation, the gap between the public and private spheres in terms of the roles of men and women increased as men were given many job opportunities while women were more limited to the domestic space and domestic roles. In the 1860s, women took action to change this sexist pattern and to become more involved in social and political life:

Beginning with a petition to reform the laws which oppressed married women and deprived them of any property, the early feminist activists soon turned their attention to expanding the range of employment open to women, to improving secondary education and making higher education accessible to women, and then to the suffrage. (Caine 88)

The Suffragette Movement which was known as the first wave of feminism emerged to find a voice for women in the oppressive and restrictive society without rejecting the traditional roles of women (DuBois 65). The suffragettes desired to reform the system to be able to have equal rights with men in property ownership, education, employment and enfranchisement. Especially the demands for women’s suffrage starting from the mid-nineteenth century became the essential issue of the age and intensified in later years. All these efforts for reform also led to the emergence of the “New Woman” in the late nineteenth century. As Kelly Hurley states, “[t]he New Woman had abandoned the role prescribed by Victorian gender ideology, that of the ‘angel in the house,’ guardian of the private sphere” (119). Thus, traditional norms were called into question and the established dynamics of the society were shattered. Besides, some legal changes that occurred improved the conditions of women to a certain extent. Among these were, for example, the Married Women’s Property Act of 1882 which allowed women to have their own property, and the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1884 giving women a right to divorce an adulterous man immediately without waiting for extra proofs. As Carol Margaret Davison states, “[a]mong these developments was the growing number of working- and lower-middle-class women entering the workforce” (“The Victorian Gothic and Gender” 125). Moreover, the First World War became a turning point for women’s position in the society as the war provided more job opportunities to women while men were fighting in the war. Yet these opportunities lasted only until men came

back from war; therefore, women once again began to be defined by their domestic roles though they continued to struggle for their rights. Eventually, women achieved their right to vote in 1928. However, their fight for equal rights, equal payment and employment opportunities continued.

While first wave feminism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries mainly focused on the attainment of the legal rights of women, especially the right to vote, second wave feminism of the late 1960s and the 1970s concentrated on the social, political and sexual rights of women. Michelene Wandor defines second wave feminism as follows: “This feminist movement, more far-reaching than its suffragette precursor, has, at its most radical, approached the social and sexual divisions within our society by analysing them from the point of view of women” (xv). Hence, the social and gender roles and sexuality began to be reevaluated and questioned. So, the Women’s Liberation Movement in the late 1960s and the 1970s started a radical phase in women’s lives as individual and autonomous beings. As Barbara Caine argues, “feminism ceased to be defined in terms of women’s political and legal ‘emancipation’ and became concerned with their personal ‘liberation’, and that this was a point of very significant change” (225), thereby aiming “to confront existing structures of oppression, to challenge their power, and to demand rapid and radical change” (256). Considering the atmosphere of the period, “people were increasingly insistent by the 1970s about defining and claiming their individual rights, identities and perspectives. Many expressed desires for greater personal autonomy and self-determination, even if these desires were not always realized” (Robinson et al. 302). Liberation was the essential concept of these years and became the motto of women as well as everyone else who wanted a cultural revolution during these years.

In this widespread political and social turmoil, British Labour Prime Minister Harold “Wilson had seemed to offer to the majority of left activists the last chance, within a broadly Parliamentary framework, of instituting a full programme of socialist change as initiated by the 1945 administration” (Bull 5); however, he failed to implement his proposal. For this reason, there was a conspicuous sense of disillusionment and hopelessness among the leftists. Besides, “[a]mid rising anxiety, social and industrial cohesion appeared threatened, and there was widespread concern about rising crime

levels, as well as fears that Britain was broken and finished, which led to lurid talk of the need for extraparliamentary solutions” (Black 145). Hence, while social and political dynamics and order began to shatter, despair and pessimism dominated the period. Although “[t]here was still, in 1968, some feeling of the possibility of reforming bourgeois capitalism, [...] the Conservative government of 1970, and the Labour government of 1974, finally crushed those hopes on the left, and fuelled the fire of political theatre<sup>35</sup>” (Itzin 7). So, following this sense of gloom, despair and hopelessness, with its provocative and anti-establishment tone, political drama which “would stand in the vanguard of political and social change” (Bull 1) emerged and dominated the 1970s up to the 1980s. Besides, 1968 was a turning point in terms of theatre as state censorship was abolished with the Theatres Act, thus paving the way for plays that dealt with taboo themes. In this period, new collaborative and touring companies were established by leftist playwrights to voice the political problems and conflicts happening at home and abroad. Their purpose was to reach out to the public to convey their political messages in order to create awareness and raise political consciousness. Therefore, these new theatre companies performed their plays anywhere outside of the mainstream theatrical venues to be able to appeal to especially the unrepresented working-class audience. The playwrights of this period like David Hare, Trevor Griffith, Howard Brenton, John McGrath and Caryl Churchill overtly dealt with political issues in their plays with the aim of progress and change.

The political reality of the period is represented through the plays of the abovementioned playwrights, which manifest a certain sense of disillusionment, apathy and grotesque. Catherine Spooner describes “the end of the sixties [...] as a time of violence, protest and paranoia” (“Gothic and the Counterculture” 200) and states that

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<sup>35</sup> However, it is also essential to highlight that though the Labour government could not handle economic crises like the devaluation of the currency and political dynamics abroad like the Vietnam war, the Suez and the Rhodesian crises, the years between 1970 and 1974 under the Labour government were also characterised by some progressive changes. As Jeremy Black summarises, “[I]beralization of the laws concerning abortion, homosexuality, capital punishment, censorship, and divorce and the passage of the Race Relations Act in 1965, which criminalized racial discrimination and banned the incitement of racial hatred, were intended to transform Britain into a more tolerant and civilized society. Access to birth control, a governmental issue due to the NHS, was extended and totally detached from marital status” (139-40). So, while conflicts and struggles in the name of liberation continued, some improvements occurred at the same time.

“[t]he 1970s were widely recognised as a particularly dark decade” (200). The plays written during this period focus on the “almost the celebration [...] of the decay. The plays were bizarre, surreal manifestations of late-sixties sub-culture, and their aim was to disturb, to shock” (Bull 17). The chaotic socio-political circumstances of the late 1960s and the 1970s became an inspiration for the plays written at the time which adapted a Gothicised tone with their presentation of the grotesque and violence as well as paranoia, trauma, transgression and rebellion. In this context, considering the claustrophobic and chaotic atmosphere of these almost two decades, the 1960s and the 1970s, the Gothic is seen to be revived to scrutinise society and politics by illustrating the darker, violent, scandalous and grotesque aspects of the period.

From the 1960s onwards, the Gothic became a predominant mode especially in terms of fiction<sup>36</sup> as it disseminated into other genres such as horror fiction, science fiction and detective fiction in addition to the medium of cinema which largely produced Gothic films starting from the late 1950s that were inspired by Gothic works mostly based on Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818) and Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897). Moreover, in the postwar period, the gloomy and confrontational atmosphere also contributed to the predomination of the Gothic. As Catherine Spooner argues, in the 1960s,

[the] Gothic provided a ready-made language. On the one hand, its imagery had already been claimed by the Surrealists as expressive of the darker reaches of the unconscious; on the other, its preoccupation with qualities such as indeterminacy, excess and paranoia anticipated postmodernism. (“Gothic and the Counterculture” 201)

In addition, Bart Moore-Gilbert associates the experimental style of the 1960s fiction with the ambiguity, obscurity and elusiveness of the Gothic style and further elaborates as follows: “As in earlier periods, hallucination, nightmare and paranoia stalk the protagonists of contemporary Gothic, emphasizing the unstable and elusive nature of the boundaries between subjective and objective reality” (145). In the midst of confusion, trauma and paranoia when realities, identities and truths were shattered and

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<sup>36</sup> In his chapter “The Return of the Repressed: Gothic and the 1960s Novel” in *Cultural Revolution? The Challenge of the Arts in the 1960s*, edited by Bart Moore-Gilbert and John Seed, Moore-Gilbert points out a Gothic renaissance in the novels of the 1960s and presents a comprehensive list of Gothic novels (142), which clearly demonstrates the popularity of Gothic fiction.

redefined, horror and the grotesque dominated the period. Regarding these, the 1960s onwards provided the proper environment triggering the Gothic's popularity and pervasiveness considering its subject matters and themes that reflected the spirit of the age. Furthermore, as Catherine Spooner marks, the Gothic manifested through Gothic romance novels in the 1960s and 1970s, crime and horror fiction in the 1980s, the renewal of the vampire narratives in the 1990s, and it explored such themes as "trauma, hauntings, and other uncanny returns" ("Gothic 1950 to the Present" 301) in the 1990s and 2000s.

The Gothic is almost always concerned with history and the past. As Spooner argues, the Gothic in the twentieth century "is bound up with an interrogation of the crucial elements of revenant history and claustrophobic space that have always been defining features of Gothic" ("Gothic in the Twentieth Century" 45). Considering the fact that the eighteenth-century Gothic is mostly located in a distant setting to evade the censure of the present, the retrospective aspect of the contemporary Gothic is not unusual to the Gothic genre, though, in general, not all the Gothic works are set in the past. The essential point here is what Robert Miles defines as a "Gothic cusp" which is "a transitional phase, when the Gothic epoch came to an end, and the modern one began" (*Ann Radcliffe* 87), that is, a change from feudalism to the modern world in reference to Ann Radcliffe's works in the late eighteenth century. Drawing upon Miles's term, it is not exactly the temporal certainty but the evocation of the past, the uncivilised, the unenlightened or most accurately, an 'other' to look into and investigate the present in the light of the past. For the earlier Gothic writers, it was mostly the Middle Ages set against the Enlightenment. In the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Gothic temporality became the Victorian Era. As Catherine Spooner argues,

[i]f, in the early Gothic novels, this enabled novelists to dramatise the struggle between the Gothic past and the progressive new era to which they themselves belonged, then in contemporary fiction the Gothic cusp is frequently relocated to the nineteenth century. The Victorian era thus is newly revealed as site of struggle between incipient modernity and an unenlightened past. ("Gothic in the Twentieth Century" 44)

In this context, Victor Sage and Allan Lloyd Smith define the Gothic as "a language, often an anti-historicising language, which provides writers with the critical means of transferring an idea of the otherness of the past into the present" (1). Thus, the Gothic

correlates the uncanny otherness of the past with the present, which allows it to revisit and question current matters in line with the past.

Regarding the otherness of the past, during the second half of the twentieth century, the Gothic evolved into neo-Victorian Gothic which flourished in terms of especially neo-Victorian Gothic novels and films. As Marie-Luise Kohlke and Christian Gutleben argue, “*neo-Victorianism is by nature quintessentially Gothic*: resurrecting the ghost(s) of the past, searching out its dark secrets and shameful mysteries, insisting obsessively on the lurid details of Victorian life, reliving the period’s nightmares and traumas” (4, italics in orig.). Neo-Victorian Gothic’s retrospective outlook intends to dissolve the past by relocating it as a kind of mirror projection between the past and the present, ‘us’ and ‘them’ “not least via the Gothic tropes of self-alienation, trauma, obsession and paranoia that underpin postmodern subjectivity” (44). However, as Xavier Aldana Reyes opposes Kohlke and Gutleben’s generic statement, it is important to mark that it is wrong to assume that neo-Victorianism is always Gothic: “It is much more important that the past, often in the shape of a curse or nightmarish presence, returns to either exert its evil grasp or impose a revision of forgotten, repressed, or unknown events or memories” (“The Contemporary Gothic” 5). Therefore, the return to the uncanny seems to be much more important in order to create that Gothic effect. In this regard, Victorianism represents the uncanny other in the latter half of the twentieth century. Taking the uncanniness of Victorianism into consideration, Kohlke and Gutleben argue that

[...] neo-Victorianism also tries to understand the nineteenth-century as the contemporary self’s uncanny *Doppelgänger*, exploring the uncertain limits between what is vanished (dead) and surviving (still living), celebrating the persistence of the bygone even while lauding the demise of some of the period’s most oppressive aspects, like institutionalised slavery and legally sanctioned sexism and racism. Such are the very Gothic constitutive features of neo-Victorianism. (4)

In this sense, the Victorian setting symbolises the return of the repressed. The eruption of the past in the present is always part of the Gothic tradition and from the 1960s onwards, the Victorian past turned into an arena to fight the demons of the present. Jones et al. explain further that “the Gothic has conventionally been characterised as a genre that is obsessed by an abjection of the past either via the return of the repressed or

through a depiction of an older medieval (and specifically Catholic) world that we wish to distance ourselves from” (10). By creating such a distance, the panoramic view of the past and the present that are interrelated to each other demonstrates the very abject that is desired to be buried and hidden out of view. The neo-Victorian attitude of this period, thus, provides a new juncture to investigate both the past and the present in a more clear vision.

Though Victorian Gothic abounds with Frankenstein’s creature and Dracula as the abject bodies of that period, monstrous figures such as vampires and zombies dominate this century as well. These are also prevalent figures in the twenty-first century, particularly resulting from the substantial contributions of the film industry through Gothic films. In addition, it is significant to mark that “the supernatural aspect of earlier Gothic disappears; ghosts, vampires and monsters survive only metaphorically, within a psychologically realistic framework” (Moore-Gilbert 144). The changing values and norms of the period are also influential in the shifting understanding of the supernatural as people see the world differently from the earlier reader/audience of the Gothic. The attitude towards these monsters also become ambivalent and changes in the way to criticise human behaviour; as Xavier Aldana Reyes argues that “[i]n the contemporary Gothic, humans are often the morally grotesque monsters” (“The Contemporary Gothic” 15). The meaning and connotation of monstrosity are called into question and reevaluated. Furthermore, “apocalyptic scenarios and a posthuman world, as well as [...] transgender rights, bodily autonomy, and abortion laws” (Faber and Munderlein 101) develop into new anxieties and fears in the contemporary world. As Botting argues, in the postmodern condition, metanarratives are shattered, revealing a sense of horror and “there emerges a threat of sublime excess, of a new darkness of multiple and labyrinthine narratives, in which human myths again dissolve, confronted by an uncanny force beyond its control” (*Gothic* 111). The way to perceive the world changed in line with postmodernism as the boundaries and metanarratives started dissolving, thus creating new anxieties, meanings and horrors. Moreover, it is significant to note that Bradford Morrow and Patrick McGrath define the late twentieth-century Gothic as “the new gothic,” because “[t]hough no longer shackled to the conventional props of the genre, the themes that fuel these pieces – horror, madness, monstrosity, death, disease, terror, evil, and weird sexuality – strongly manifest the gothic sensibility” (xiv).

Although the new Gothic is not different from the earlier Gothics, it is utilised in the context of that period as “[n]ow hell is decidedly on earth, located within the vaults and chambers of our own minds” (xiv). In terms of their contemporary relevance, these themes are in fact the hallmarks of the second half of the twentieth century.

Considering the studies related to the Gothic in drama from the 1960s onwards, there are only two book-length studies, MaryBeth Inverso’s *The Gothic Impulse in Contemporary Drama* (1990) and Jones et al.’s *Contemporary Gothic Drama: Attraction, Consummation and Consumption on the Modern British Stage* (2018), which also covers plays from the twentieth century, in addition to some isolated articles and chapters on some Gothic plays. The Gothic impulse and tropes, or Gothic sensitivity as Morrow and McGrath refer to, are observed in some of the plays of the period such as David Rudkin’s *Afore Night Come* (1962) presenting a scene of ritualistic violence and horror; Peter Barnes’s *The Ruling Class* (1968) utilising the Jack the Ripper story by dealing with madness, schizophrenia, tyranny; Edward Bond’s *Early Morning* (1968) dealing with the Gothic excess through “the ghosts, skeletons, corpses, and the dead, flesh-eating Victorian royal family” (Jones et al. 7); and such tropes as the return of the dead in Caryl Churchill’s *Fen* (1983) or a vampiric character in a surreal scene in again Churchill’s *Mad Forest* (1990). It seems the Gothic is mostly characterised by the grotesque, horror, sensation, ghosts, monstrosity, perversion, madness, claustrophobia, and transgression all of which contribute to the unsettling atmosphere of these works. Moreover, in this period, some stage musicals became popular Gothic performances, featuring remarkable Gothic atmospheres such as *Sweeney Todd* (1979) based on a popular Victorian penny dreadful dealing with the horrors enacted by a murderous barber, and *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986) revolving around a singer and her secret music teacher, the Phantom who haunts her obsessively. Also, adaptations, as customary in the Gothic tradition, continued such as Liz Lochhead’s *Dracula* (1985), based on Stoker’s *Dracula*, Stephen Mallatratt’s *The Woman in Black* (1987), an adaptation of Susan Hill’s novel with the same name, or the theatre company Grid Iron’s adaptation of Angela Carter’s short story “The Bloody Chamber” in 1997.

The fact that there are not many works on contemporary Gothic drama manifests the hybrid and multifaceted nature of the Gothic which merges various genres and

continues to exist along with them like the ones mentioned above. Maybe for this reason, there are not many studies focusing on the Gothic aspects of twentieth-century plays. Taking into consideration the contingent appeal of fear and horror to the reader/audience, the resilience of the Gothic never ceases though some of its features change. It concerns itself with the permeable lines of dichotomies such as reality and illusion/fantasy/dream as will be illustrated in *Vampire*. As Jones et al. assert, “[a]s with Gothic film and literature, theatrical Gothic seeks to unsettle through its effect and affect upon its audiences, evoking and invoking fear, shock, horror, claustrophobia and disorientation” (3). The stimulation of distressing sensation, horror and fear in the reader/audience is an inevitable part of the Gothic. Within the Gothicised environment of the 1960s and 1970s, Wilson wrote his play *Vampire* and was inspired by this obscure and paranoid time to reflect on, thereby exploiting time, space and sensation through his retrospective play.

Wilson’s *Vampire* was written for Paradise Foundry, formerly the Portable Theatre and staged in 1973 at the Oval House, and it was published in 1979. It consists of three acts with a span of fifty years between them. The play revolves around a family starting from the Victorian Period moving into the Great War and later into the 1970s. In the first act, Davis, a parson, becomes a spokesperson for religious and moral oppression. While he tries to repress his sexual desires, he also oppresses his daughters, Joy, Jesse and Ruth who find themselves trapped in their claustrophobic house and spend their time telling stories to each other. One day, Jesse, Ruth and her fiancé Reuben are seated around a table and start a séance to talk to a spirit. Joy is grounded in her room and because of boredom, she deceives them into believing that she is the spirit. While Jesse and Ruth are frightened, Reuben thinks it must be a fraud, and goes to look for the reason for the noises. When Joy surprises him, they fall on the bed and start making love. The noises coming from their sexual act causes Ruth to lose her mind. Out of hysteria, Ruth wants Reuben to marry her at once which results in Reuben’s agonised surprise after what happened with Joy. Her father, Davis seems to sense what happened and he also rushes their wedding. Ruth and Reuben are married; however, on the wedding night, Reuben confesses what happened and Ruth commits suicide. Reuben also shoots himself in the head, yet he does not die. At the end of the scene, a vampire comes and takes away the deceased Ruth. Joy is also banished by her father. And

Charles Dickens appears and reads the script from his novel *Old Curiosity Shop* (1840-1) telling little Nell's "flight from the terrors of London with her grandfather" (I.i.21-22). After being banished because of her unconventional behaviour, Joy begins to work at Mrs Sugg's Clairvoyant Parlour and Reuben who has become blind now works there as well. With a coffin nearby, she starts conducting a séance and the customers are the sadist and paedophilic soldier, and Davis. Davis attends the séance to see "behind the veil" (I.ii.27). When Joy comes out of the smoke, Davis thinks she is his wife and chases her into the coffin. The soldier causes more chaos as he wants to be with Joy. The scene ends with a photographer, Al Fung, stabbed by the soldier, Davis shot by Mrs Sugg, Reuben shot by Mrs Sugg and Mrs Sugg stabbed by the soldier, respectively. And Joy runs away from the crime scene.

In the second act, the Suffragette Movement and the ongoing war intermingle both political and sexual oppression in the case of Sarah, the granddaughter of Joy. Anthea, Sarah and Violet are watching a cricket match in which Anthea's fiancé Henry is playing. Sarah tells them her grandmother and great-grandfather committed incest in a coffin. Then the scene turns into the Great War and Anthea urges the men to go to war while Sarah is in prison because of her aggressive suffragist actions. Then, Henry who died in the battle visits Sarah as a ghost. It is understood he is mentally unbalanced because of the war. After a while, the scene turns into a surreal event. In their Passion Play clothes, Sarah becomes Mary, accompanied by Joseph and the Ox. Freud and Jung take part in the play as the characters, talking about human impulses and desires. Sarah/Mary is about to give birth and Jung becomes a midwife to Sarah/Mary. She gives birth to a vampire baby. Henry and the Ox bring out the coffin which Freud gets into and Freud is staked like a vampire. The third act revolves around Sarah's granddaughter, Dwight organising a funeral for a deceased friend of some bikers. The reporters Jill and Moira interview Dwight about her life. Dwight, formerly Marcia, is planning to establish a sperm bank as she believes in love and free thinking. With her eulogy, the bikers go into ecstasy, "*an orgy of weeping*" (57). In an increasing Gothic atmosphere, the bells start tolling and the lid of the coffin opens and a vampiric man appears to make his speech about the disasters and paralysis in the world.

In his Preface, Wilson states that “[i]n the three acts of the play, separated by fifty years, I have tried to show the masks of style and oppression and their relativity to an age” (8). The playwright makes use of three different settings in terms of time to reflect upon the present by contrasting it with the past. It can be observed that, throughout history, the same oppression continues in terms of sexuality, religion and politics. The Victorian setting is especially significant as Victorian ideals in terms of sexuality and morality were acknowledged as rigid and strict. As Steven Seidman states, “[i]n the early decades of the twentieth century, liberal reformers, political radicals, and sex rebels developed a construction of the repressed Victorian. This stereotype was adopted by scholars and by the 1960s became a kind of orthodoxy” (47)<sup>37</sup>. For this reason, Wilson may take this setting as an antithetical force to set the tone of the whole play. Besides, the Great War of the second act exemplifies other kinds of oppression, that is political oppression and patriarchal oppression which are to be disavowed by the protests of the Suffragette Movement. In the third setting, the 1970s, Dwight seems to be liberated in her sexuality and gender, especially as can be seen in her idea of founding a sperm bank, yet she still seems to be portrayed as an alienated and disillusioned figure. The speech of the last Vampire is delivered by the notorious political figure of the age, Enoch Powell, with some obvious references to his infamous speech called “Rivers of Blood” addressing the impacts of immigration. Particularly, this last speech refers to the paralysis of people who do not attempt to change anything. Considering the background that has been built until the end of the play, this last setting illustrates the inertia of society and people with its portrayal of indifference and apathy as represented by Dwight. All these settings provide an idea of how to approach the main themes of the play, that is oppression and liberation. As Lucie Armitt argues, “[t]he Gothic is certainly an interiorizing form, claustrophobic in nature and inherently architectural” (“The Magical Realism” 513). Therefore, the settings in terms of place namely the Victorian house, the brothel, the prison and the place for the burial service in the last act, also

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<sup>37</sup> Drawing on Michel Foucault’s repudiation of this repressed sexuality, the prudish image of the Victorians began to be reconsidered starting from the 1980s and subsequent studies on Victorian sexuality reshaped the understanding of Victorian sexuality and morality. As Holly Furneaux states, “[r]esponses, in and out of the academy, to Foucault’s discursive thesis of Victorian sexuality – far from being silenced, sex was spoken everywhere in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in a wide range of contexts including the law, medicine, religion, education – have resulted in a similar proliferation of sexual discourse on the Victorians” (767).

present claustrophobic environments for the characters as they cannot evade their current circumstances and these places refer to a kind of metaphoric burial for all of them. For this reason, the settings in terms of time and place are significant in increasing the Gothic atmosphere.

The first act starts with a mysterious atmosphere with Joy, Jesse and Ruth walking in their white Victorian nightdresses. The stage direction points out that they are after a mischievous deed as they are invading the privacy of their father by reading his diary which reveals a “deed of darkness” (*Vampire* I.i.5). This revelation creates a kind of suspense and mystery which will be resolved through their stories. Here it is important to mark that diaries, stories and claustrophobic enclosed spaces are part of the Gothic tradition to reveal the secrets and mysteries or buried desires. The play, thus, sets the Gothic atmosphere from the beginning by presenting the established tropes. In the play, especially Joy tells some stories which project some dark realities in their claustrophobic house. For example, she starts to tell a story about three girls stuck in an ice tomb: “Their father, the King of Iceland, came in and frightened them half to death with horrid stories, about blood, and spiders and Jews, and Roman Catholics, and it was night all the time there, and the sheeted dead gibbered in the streets” (I.i.7). While they are waiting in the ice tomb, one night “a thing – with teeth and claws, and sharp ripping and biting and tearing and gouging and blood-red eyes and teeth” (I.i.7) visits them. Maybe as a premonition, “it had a big cloak to hide its wickedness in” (I.i.7). Joy continues to tell that the sisters “could not move, because they were so cold, and as they got warmer and warmer the ice began to melt away – and the thing – came in!” (I.i.7). The confinement, the coldness and the entrapment presented in this story refer to the girls’ reality. Joy’s wild imagination which is revealed through her stories demonstrates how she and her sisters are locked up by the patriarchal system. Particularly, the story-within-a-story is one of the narrative techniques of the Gothic enabling to explore the very reality in a mirror image. It expresses the “unspeakable terrors” (Punter, *Literature of Terror* 1) which cannot be articulated otherwise. According to Sedgwick, “[i]f the story-within-etc. represents the broadest structural application of the otherwise verbal or thematic convention of the unspeakable, it has a similar relation to the convention of live burial” (*The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* 20). Not only the story-within-story but also live burials are important components of the Gothic. These three girls are

buried alive in an ice tomb which represents their incarceration that is disclosed through Joy's story. As Sedgwick points out, their condition is part of the unspeakable, that is the shunned and the fearful. Thus, by merging the unspeakable and live burial, the story within the play refers to the sisters' oppression and repression implemented by a tyrant. Ankhi Mukherjee argues that

[b]eing buried alive is a recurrent phobia in the claustrophobic world of Gothic fantasy, an extension of the terrifying image of catalepsy or narrative suspension. Fears of unfair and untimely burial at the hands of a tyrant aside, [...] [l]ive burial signifies a crisis of spatialization, where the self is blocked off from life-sustaining elements: free air, circumambient life, community, love. (114)

Hence, these girls are deprived of their basic life forces in their claustrophobic worlds by their tyrant father. The father figure, thus, assumes the role of a terrifying oppressor in their stories, which recalls the late eighteenth-century aristocratic despots oppressing their female wards or relatives within Gothic spaces like castles, convents or any other enclosed space. In this sense, the family house establishes a claustrophobic atmosphere and environment, thereby creating a sense of confinement, fear and horror in the lives of Ruth, Jesse and Joy as well as implying incest which is to be actualised later in the play as Joy's story also has a sexual implication which represents the girls' repressed sexuality.

In the third act, it is seen that Dwight, the granddaughter of Sarah, also had a same kind of experience which is revealed through her own story. During her eulogy for the deceased biker, Dwight reads the autobiography of St. Theresa of Lisieux from a book. The story of St. Theresa entering the cloister as a bride of Jesus turns into an exploration of her own sexual desires, as follows: "The unbelievable condescension of the spouse of virgins who loves his lilies to be white as snow ... Our Lord ... made me think of the caresses he would soon be lavishing on me in front of all the saints - what consolation it brought me - and inexpressible sweetness - like the foretaste of Heavenly glory" (*Vampire* III.55). Religion and sexuality are intermingled in this sense to reveal how St. Theresa or most probably Dwight herself ends up in a kind of enclosed space like a cloister which is also a sort of a live burial for women who are suppressed because of their sexual desires. The story-within-the-story reflects her own reality as implied by her leaving the book aside. As Sedgwick argues,

‘live burial’ is the name of a conventual punishment that is popular in Gothic novels, but it is also, as phenomenological criticism can make clear, a more general description of the novels’ physical ambience. The psychoanalytic application of ‘live burial’ to the repression of the libido is inevitable [...]. (*The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* 5)

Dwight is also affected by the same oppressive system dating back to her ancestors more than a hundred years ago. Thus, the sense of being buried alive within an oppressive system forms a suffocating space and atmosphere for these women who are restrained by social and religious norms.

The hypocrisy of Victorian morality can be observed in Davis who has committed a sinful act and despite this, he believes he can still control his daughters. In the opening scene, when his daughters take his diary, they read about their father’s “deed of darkness with Mrs Plum, an English woman who was raising money by subscriptions for an iron-frame chapel for the Colonies, upon a *tombstone*” (I.i.5, italics in orig.). The deed of darkness refers to Davis’s uncontrolled passion. Its enactment on a tombstone makes it controversial for a parson as he violates the sacredness of that place as well as his own moral stance. On the other hand, as a parson, he seems to be a genuine believer and really wants to control his desires deeply. He tries to resist these desires, as his prayer indicates: “Oh God, preserve us from all wicked and scandalous thoughts for we know in our heart of hearts that to imagine them is to Thy mind, which sees our innermost workings, the same as actually having consummated them” (I.i.8). Davis tries to repress his thoughts and desires just as he represses his daughters’. This sexual repression dominates the whole play from the very beginning. Moreover, it is revealed later that Davis’s wife committed suicide. Paul William Siemers argues that it is possible that “she was sexually unfulfilled in a marriage with an overly zealous parson who could never accept his own strong sexual desires” (280). Considering the oppressive father figure and Davis’s repressed sexual desires as well as his daughters’, it is observed that repression results from societal and religious norms and values which restrain people from living their individual desires and feelings. As Linda Bayer-Berenbaum argues,

Gothicism is no more inclined to accept sexual restriction than psychological or aesthetic confinement. Sexual excess functions physically as madness does psychologically; one drive, one intention, becomes overpowering, all-consuming. Sexual perversions are important in Gothic literature for their intensity born of

repression and for the expansion they provide in the range of sexual practice. (39-40)

In line with Bayer-Berenbaum's statement, these perversions refer to everlasting oppression that keeps people incarcerated. Through this perversion and extremism which cannot be contained, the characters disclose their true natures. As Corinna Wagner states, "the terrifying elements of the uncanny do not originate in the exotic, the alien, or the unknown so much as within everyday experience and, indeed, within ourselves" (xxxiii). The tombstone sex, for example, displays the burst of Davis's repressed desire.

On the other hand, Joy is the opposite of her father, Davis as she is ready to embrace and explore her sexuality. For this reason, according to the period's moral yet hypocritical standards, she is likely to be deemed as a fallen woman and, in the end, she becomes one when she starts working in a brothel. The ongoing repression and Joy's liberated spirit are further unveiled in a séance scene. While Jesse, Ruth and her fiancé Reuben are trying to communicate with the spiritual realm, Joy who is confined to her room as punishment for her improper behaviour responds to their summoning, thereby making them believe that a ghost has risen from the dead. When Reuben goes to check where the noise is coming from, the scene ends with Joy and Reuben having sex. In the aftermath of their sexual encounter, the stage direction reads that "*Reuben is emotionally shattered and sits down heavily at the table with his head on his arm, taking his hand away from Joy*" (15). Reuben is obviously remorseful. On the other hand, Joy looks like she does not care about the consequences of their action. Joy is depicted as a liberated woman who knows what she wants and does not recoil from it. She represents the New Woman of the Victorian Age who

was perceived to have ranged herself perversely with the forces of cultural anarchism and decay precisely because she wanted to reinterpret the sexual relationship [and] [...] expressed her quarrel with Victorian culture chiefly through sexual means – by heightening sexual consciousness, candor, and expressiveness. (Dowling 438).

It is important to note that, as David Punter and Glennis Byron argue, the emergence of the New Woman triggered new fears and "Gothic texts of the time repeatedly produce powerful and sexually aggressive females as alien or monstrous, setting them in

opposition to the ‘pure’ woman in an attempt to stabilize gendered identity” (*The Gothic* 40). In the Victorian context, Joy is represented as a transgressive and monstrous figure because she goes against strict moral and sexual norms.

From the beginning, religion functions as a repressive vehicle employed by Davis. Religion is so influential in their lives that it causes a sense of delusion and paranoia in the characters. In the séance scene, while Ruth and Jesse are listening to the strange noise coming from Reuben and Joy as they are having sex, they assume it is the noise of a devil talking in tongues. Both are terrified and this results in Ruth’s getting hysterical. Davis thinks she is possessed by the devil and he tries to exorcise her. What Ruth gabbles in this scene depicts her confused and fragmented mind which is fraught with some horrifying religious stories, as follows:

*(frothing and rolling on the table)* In the water – he held me – in baptism – his hard strong chill fingers – so young was I – he bent my bones, and drew the marrow from them – more than a handful – putty of the flesh for our Lord to fill – mould into a chamber for his graces – and he came – the cruel grasp of his fingers – and he drew blood – the stench of the charnel house – twenty men’s force – and the strength of death – *judgement* ... (I.i.15, italics in orig.)

Thus, her fear turns into a paranoid state of mind and she loses her sense of reality and fantasy. Ruth’s insanity and paranoid state complicate the ongoing repression of women both in the domestic and public spaces because religion was very influential in defining the role of women during the nineteenth century considering “the division of Victorian womanhood into the polarised extremes of ‘madonnas’ and ‘magdalenes’, a distinction which – however simplistic – played an important part in the popular imagination” (King 10). Joy’s desire to explore sexuality and Ruth’s strict adherence to moral and religious norms exhibit this dichotomy clearly. Regarding the religious politics of the age, Ruth, on the edge of madness, represents the victimised figure of systemised oppression which ruins her mental health.

Moreover, Davis participates in a séance in Mrs Sugg’s parlour which also serves as a brothel. It is seen that he just seeks something more since he has lost everything and everyone, as Davis explains: “It’s not a lapse in faith ... I just want to see if there’s anything behind the veil – with modern scientific advances ...” (I.i.27). His statement demonstrates that he has begun to question his religious belief and tries to understand

the reason for his helpless condition. He continues to state his resentment as follows: “They said about my wife that it was suicide. I wanted to give her a Christian burial but there was a strong argument amongst the deacons for putting her outside of sacred ground altogether. I would like to ask God if he knows what he’s doing ...” (I.i.28). He cannot even properly bury his wife just because the religious norms do not allow it and this results in his despair. As William Hughes and Andrew Smith argue, suicide

is the most Gothic of acts. Its presence conditions death, profoundly reconfiguring the customary religious, moral and legal ramifications of the fleeting moment at which life is pronounced extinct, and thereby affecting the cultural value of both the individual who has taken their own life and the relationships of the deceased to their still-living associates. (2-3)

Davis cannot live his life happily and cannot be saved from his past and the ghost that haunts him, that is his wife. So, the haunting presence of the wife and Davis’s repressed desires turn his life upside down. Especially the social and religious norms to which he tries to adhere cause him to lose his mental balance. His delusional mind leads him to his death as a result of the outburst of his repressed desires in the second séance scene.

As mentioned in the previous chapters of this dissertation, incest, like madness, becomes the inevitable Gothic motif to describe transgression and nonconformity towards societal and cultural norms. During another séance scene when Joy appears out of flame and smoke, Davis’s mind plays a trick on him and he directly assumes she is his wife. He chases Joy to the coffin which she jumps in and he rapes her in the coffin. It is already mentioned that Davis had sex over a tombstone once and this time he commits an incestuous rape. Each time Davis transgresses moral, religious and social norms by giving in to his desires. As Peter L. Thorslev, Jr. argues, “[t]he Gothic uses of the incest theme – to symbolize a basically irrational element in the order of things, a capricious fate, or to symbolize the psychologically dark and irrational, the unconscious and ‘unnatural’ desires in the heart of man” (“Incest” 44-45). For this reason, incest is exploited as a tool to unveil repressed desires in Gothic writing. The perversity and extremity of Davis’s desires demonstrate that the repressed always comes to the surface.

In addition to Davis’s excessive desire, as Jenny DiPlacidi states, “[u]nderscoring connections between family and fear, sexuality and imprisonment, feminist scholars equate patriarchal institutions with violence and terror, locating incest as an extension of

these dangers” (11). Incest works as an assertion of the patriarchal system within the family which imprisons women by frightening them with moral and religious values as Davis has done to his daughters, because “[g]entle society cannot take that sort of madness” (I.i.11). Incest also unveils the hypocrisy of the system as Davis contradicts what he preaches. Linda Bayer-Berenbaum argues that “[t]he emphasis on rape also unmask[s] the socially repressed association of sexuality and aggression on the part of the male [...]” (40). In this sense, incestuous rape refers to the reassertion of the power balance between men and women in the play as Davis tries to establish authority over his daughters from the beginning.

In the séance scene, incest and rape become intermingled, thereby enhancing the terrifying aspect of this act. In this regard, as Ruth Perry argues, “[i]t is just this quality of sexuality that is the essence of the gothic: a sexual consciousness which is shuddering, nervous, overheated – not frank, open, earthy, bawdy and celebratory but rather voluptuous, close, fervid, intense, forbidden even horrific, and fascinating” (272). This kind of perversion and taboo strikes the nerves of the reader/audience by creating an atmosphere of fear and uneasiness. However, though it is acknowledged as horror by the reader/audience, the attitude of Joy and Sarah towards these societal and familial perversions is apathy and aloofness. Sarah tells that her grandmother Joy “did used to say ... ‘There is no rape, there is only the wrong man’” (II.39). Joy’s thinking of it as not being rape reveals another level of horror in relation to ongoing patriarchal oppression and its internalised state by women.

Considering this play from a neo-Victorian angle, *Vampire* is concerned about socio-cultural anxieties in the 1960s and 1970s in terms of the same stifling repression and oppression. According to Mark Llewellyn,

the neo-Victorian text writes back to something in the nineteenth century, it does so in a manner that often aims to re-fresh and re-vitalise the importance of that earlier text to the here and now. The contemporaneous historicism present in the text thus becomes the key to its neo-Victorian classification. (170-71)

By locating the story in the past, the contemporary Gothic deals with socio-cultural and political anxieties and conflicts of the period through its retrospective aspect. *Vampire* was written in the early years of the 1970s, so it was set during the sexual revolution

and the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1960s and the 1970s. In this context, Joy anticipates the liberated woman of the 1970s with her firm belief in sexual liberation which can be observed in her attitude towards her father and her so-called lover, Reuben. Despite the transformations in the Victorian Age in terms of women's socio-political status like the inclusion of women into the workforce and their growing awareness of their rights, women were still struggling for their rights in society and specifically in marriage, and in order not to be stigmatised they were striving with the sexual norms of the day. The Victorian debates on sexuality, thus, dominated the era. Though portrayed in the nineteenth century, Joy represents this craving for individual 'autonomy and self-determination' that became the spirit of the 1970s during the liberation movement. Joy is portrayed as an imprisoned Gothic heroine in an oppressive Gothic world yet at the same time a liberated one to some extent, as she pushes social and moral norms with her willpower.

In the second act, Joy's granddaughter Sarah appears as a suffragette. From a peaceful environment where women are watching a cricket game, the scene turns into the Great War when Anthea, a friend of Sarah's, becomes a warmonger while Sarah is imprisoned because of her destructive actions. Sarah is suffering from the consequences of what she has done in the name of social and political change which shows another kind of oppression in the play. In the early twentieth century, the suffragettes tried to obtain their enfranchisement, so they engaged in some militant actions causing social disruptions, which resulted in imprisonment and hunger strikes. As Juliet Mitchell explains further,

[...] the suffragettes burnt down houses, smashed shop windows, assaulted Members of Parliament, planted bombs, destroyed over a hundred buildings in a matter of months and disrupted communications by blowing up letter-boxes and cutting telegraph wires. They generally scarred the countryside of England with their demand for the vote. In turn, they were imprisoned, forcibly fed and beaten up. (12)

In the play, Sarah actively takes part in such political actions, leading her to be imprisoned. She says: "They took me prisoner because I listened to my suffragette friends. I set fire to churches. Big churches. During the war suffragettes were forgotten or reviled. My sinuses were crushed through force-feeding" (II.43). Thus, this time, Wilson locates the play in a political arena showing how the political system oppresses

these women. Moreover, by contrasting Sarah with Anthea, domestic roles are also questioned; as Robinson et al. state, the “heated debate about women’s role in the home has been a mainstay of the British media since at least the 1960s and was clearly visible enough to influence the ways through which many women understood domesticity as a ‘trap’” (296). While Anthea becomes a warmonger and underlines the role of women as mothers, Sarah attempts to redefine the established feminine roles by trying to achieve her sexual and political freedom. Anthea proclaims that

[t]he war has called us all to larger purposes. How we must rejoice that it has lifted us above the petty squabbles of those who want us to have votes, or property, or custody of children. In a decent world, we don’t need them threatening the sanctity of motherhood! We do have an identity. It is a glorious identity. (*Vampire* II.42)

Anthea ignores the basic rights of women, embraces domestic roles and acts with national aggression by calling men to enlist in the war. Contrary to Anthea, Sarah, though delusional, explores new possibilities rather than conforming to the system. The debate related to the role of women in the society was an ongoing struggle lasting for a long time from the Suffragette Movement to the Women’s Liberation Movement, though the former did not reject traditional roles of women while the latter aimed to deconstruct them.

In the political climate of the Suffragette Movement and current war, Henry’s ghostly return not to his fiancé Anthea but to Sarah indicates that Sarah is likely to have some anxieties as the ghost functions as a revealing mechanism in Gothic narratives. It is understood that she embodies sexual anxieties that go back to her ancestors as well as political anxieties. As Paul William Siemers argues, “Joy’s daughter [...] Sarah [...] possesses the same sexual curiosity a generation later. Instead of parental repression, Sarah faces cultural/political constraint in the form of national aggression” (294-95). Regarding sexual and patriarchal oppression observed in the first act, the second act also shows the same concern in the form of Henry’s ghost. Thinking of the supernatural as “a derivation of the erotic” (Berthin 82), Sarah projects her repressed desire which finds expression in her political aggression. Sarah’s mental state is profoundly affected by her rough life in search for her rights as well as the ongoing violence of the war, causing the death of Henry. Therefore, her unstable mental state turns her reality into a hallucinatory experience. Scott Brewster further argues that

[g]hosts and monsters are now treated as effects of mental aberration, delusion, and delirium. Yet precisely at the moment reason casts ghosts out of the material world and relocates them in the recesses of the mind, the rational subject becomes prey to the uncanny, unseen, and often unfathomable machinations of the psyche. (483)

In her bewildered situation as a result of her suffocation considering the turbulent atmosphere around her including her pregnancy, her repressed desires and her anxieties for political freedom come to the surface through Henry.

It is important to point out that before the war, Sarah mentions there was incest in the family referring to her grandmother, Joy and her great-grandfather, Davis. She says that after running away from the scene in a Hussar's uniform<sup>38</sup>, her grandmother "was picked up and had to do the most horrible things with an officer she met in the Strand just afterwards ..." (*Vampire* II.39). Henry was also in the Hussars (II.39), which could be a foreboding of what will happen between Henry and Sarah by drawing a connection with the past. As Ruth Perry discusses in relation to the Gothic novel, "[t]his atmosphere of foreboding and fear, with its intimation of sexual threat, is the essence of the gothic novel. That is, the point of the gothic novel was never to portray everyday life realistically, but to offer a set of objective correlatives that added up to eroticized danger" (265). In this case, Hussar's uniform becomes a sort of objective correlative binding two historical points together and also constructing a foreshadowing for Henry and Sarah's erotic relationship.

Furthermore, Sarah's delusional and shattered mind leads this supernatural scene to turn into a nativity play where she becomes Mary, Freud and Jung participate in her childbirth and Henry becomes Joseph. As Kelly Hurley states, the return of the repressed is "the embodiment of unbearable or unacceptable fears, wishes, and desires that are driven from consciousness and then transmuted into representations of monstrosity, just as the unconscious reshapes repressed material into dream images or hysterical symptoms" (197-98). In this scene, Sarah's unconscious translates her repressed condition into a mock nativity play, where Wilson creates a surreal scene. Taking into consideration "the reflexive self-consciousness of modern Gothic" (Sage and Smith 4), Wilson makes Freud and Jung voice the main discussion of the play in

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<sup>38</sup> The Hussars refer to light cavalry regiments known for their elegant uniforms which included a pelisse or jacket embellished with braiding or embroidery, pantaloons, busby and boots ("The Regency Wardrobe;" "Military Fashion").

terms of human nature, an oppressive system and repression. In a Gothic atmosphere where “[t]here is a roll of thunder and the stage darkens” (*Vampire* 45), Freud points out everlasting oppression, as follows: “We are told that in certain regions of the earth, where nature provides in abundance, there are races who do not know coercion and whose lives are passed in tranquillity. *Ha!*” (II.45, italics in orig.). Freud’s emphasis on ‘coercion’ and his denial of such a society to be able to exist conveys more about society because his denial shows that there is always a continual oppression and surveillance controlling people and societies. Freud continues to say that

[o]riginally, all of the dead were vampires. They had a grudge against the living and sought to injure them and rob them of their lives. We fear the dead because we fear death still and wish to put off what must be the gravest misfortune. (*He paces uneasily.*) Our bodies, however, are destined to decay and cannot dispense with anxiety and pain as warning signals. There is no escape. (II.45)<sup>39</sup>

And Jung also states that “history repeats itself” (II.48) since people cannot learn from their experiences. As portrayed by the characters in the play who experience the same things although they suffer different kinds of oppression, history repeats itself and the dead haunt and consume the present like vampires. Through intertextuality, Wilson in fact projects “[t]he twentieth century’s escalating anxiety regarding modernity as a combination of civilisation, progress and rationality” (Botting, *Gothic* 110). In this sense, by blurring the line between real and dream, the second act shows the fragmented mental state of Sarah in her chaotic environment.

At the end of the act, Freud is treated like a vampire and struck with a stake through the heart in the coffin. As Paul William Siemers states, “Freud represents the oppression of civilization upon the individual Id, perpetuating a fear of death and sex” (298). Thus, by killing Freud, Wilson sets free the myth of repression existing throughout history. Besides, as Kimberley Marwood argues, “[r]ather than create purely objective representations, the surrealists, as ardent disciples of Freudian psychoanalysis, retreated to inner experience, subjectivity, and the unconscious, fostering an approach to text as one of process and self-reflection” (39-40). Freud as a character in the play becomes a vehicle for this self-reflection of the ongoing sexual and political oppression and

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<sup>39</sup> In these two quotations of Freud, Wilson gave some references to “Why War?” (1932), Freud’s letter to Albert Einstein, and Freud’s *Totem and Taboo* (1913), respectively.

repression in Sarah's unconscious world. Wilson who defines himself as "a true surrealist" (qtd. in Bierman 429) thinks that "you should be able to accept unconscious assumptions and crises, not repress them. That's one of the little games which gets played out in the proscenium theatre as a model for a conscious society" (429). Hence, for the conscious society, the unconscious mind needs to be acknowledged and presented to the reader/audience, thereby uncovering the repressed anxieties, desires or fears.

Starting from the nineteenth century, vampires created by John William Polidori, Sheridan Le Fanu and Bram Stoker have become prevalent figures in Gothic literature. During "the nineteenth century, the vampire functions to police the boundaries between 'normal' and 'deviant' sexuality, with the narrative voice firmly positioned on the side of the 'normal'" (Punter and Byron, *The Gothic* 269-70). Through their various incarnations in literature, vampires "have enacted a host of anxieties and desires, shifting shape as the culture they are brought to life in itself changes form" (George and Hughes 1). In this context, Botting argues the function of vampiric characters as the projections of corruption and transgression, as follows:

The threat of wanton and corrupt sexuality is horrifically displayed in vampiric shape. Their decadence, nocturnal existence and indiscriminate desires distinguish vampires as a particularly modern sexual threat to cultural mores and taboos: they are modern visions of epidemic contagions from the past, visited on the present in a form that, like venereal disease, enters the home only after (sexual) invitation. (*Gothic* 96-97)

Sexual threat, perversion and corruption are amalgamated in vampires. Through this figure, the socio-cultural and political norms and taboos are called into question and as a result, the vampire turns into an embedded cultural phenomenon. In addition to challenging the traditional roles and norms in society,

[L]ike Polidori's Lord Ruthven, the Byronic vampire in the 1960s is an ambivalent figure who simultaneously stimulates desire and moral revulsion, and who acts as a catalyst to the illumination of society's flaws. This critique may equally be directed at the establishment or at the counterculture itself. (Spooner, "Gothic and the Counterculture" 206)

The vampire, thus, operates as a catalyst to disclose desires, anxieties, fears, revulsion and perversion. In the play, the vampire figure wanders as a haunting image throughout

the acts and, therefore, generations. The vampire symbolises not only the assumed sexual threat to the specific cultural and moral principles but also a constant inertia embodied in society in line with vampiric immortality. A vampire is undead, so there is both an everlasting existence and (un)living presence. In this respect, the vampire forms a proper analogy to describe the constant inertia and apathy in society.

In the first act, Joy assumes that Reuben is a vampire come to bite her in the dark (*Vampire* I.i.14). This delusion refers to her repressed desire for sexual exploration. On the wedding night of Ruth and Reuben, after hearing Reuben's confession, Ruth commits suicide as she says: "You did it to spite me! To get out of this! She did it to spite me! (*She takes the whole bottle of chloral, rather messily.*) You beast – don't you dare use force on me – you will only take me when I am *dead!* (*She tears open her dress at the front.*) When I am *dead*" (I.i.21, italics in orig.). Then the stage direction reads: "*The light starts to fade on that scene. The Vampire comes in, dressed and cowed in black, and carries off Ruth*" (21). The possibility of Ruth's being raped and her fear of this are accentuated in her lines. She has grown up in a house where her father suppressed his daughters' desires and frightened them with the likely consequences if they do not conform to societal rules. This sexual oppression makes Ruth nervous and frustrated, thereby turning her paranoid. Therefore, the arrival of the Vampire signifies Ruth's disrupted mental state although she is dead. Even in her death, Ruth cannot free herself from this fear. In this regard, the Vampire for both Ruth and Joy represents their sexual fears and desires, respectively. David Punter argues that the vampire is "the perverse union of passion and death which is the essence of the vampire" (*The Literature of Terror* 102) while Susana Onega states that the vampire is "a catalyst for the repressed tendencies of his victims to emerge into the light of day" (116). For this reason, Ruth's meeting with the Vampire in her death unveils her repression and so-called perverted desire according to social norms.

In the second act, Sarah gives birth to a vampire baby in the pseudo-nativity play as mentioned before. In this scene, Wilson blurs the line between reality and dream overtly. Sarah is likely to be having a dream or being delusional as a result of what she is going through, namely the war, the Suffragette Movement and her pregnancy. Sarah/Mary gives birth to a baby who "*has hideous fangs protruding out of its mouth*

*like a vampire*” (47) as the stage direction says. Under normal circumstances, the baby may represent hope; however, in this play, the baby vampire is described as hideous and grotesque, and consequently is regarded as the representation of the everlasting inertia in the society as the same system is maintained throughout the centuries and people are vampirised all along by normative discourses surrounding them. Moreover, Linda Bayer-Berenbaum argues that “[t]he vampire represents a repressed connection between sexuality and consumption that recalls the savagery of human sacrifice and pagan rites” (36). That is, socio-cultural and political norms repress and consume bodies. Repression ends up with “neurotic decay, embitterment, and sterility” (II.48) as Jung says in the play, since “[w]hen sexuality is constrained, human will is repressed creating illness in body, mind and soul, as well as culture” (Siemers 299). So, the baby vampire not only depicts a metamorphosed body that stems from repression and oppression but also represents the perpetuity of this system.

It is significant to mark that Wilson writes an author’s note related to the last Vampire who will emerge at the end of the play:

The original last ‘Vampire’ was not unlike Enoch Powell, but satire ages quickly and is often local, so the figure has changed from the Ayatollah Khomeini, to Colonel Kentucky, depending on the news of the day. I had hoped to find a permanent vampire but that is contradicted by the structure of the play. The speech adapts well enough to different speakers, with a little tailoring. (50)

The last speech can be made by a relevant political figure of the period such as Ayatollah Khomeini, an Iranian leader responsible for the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, or a corporate figure like Colonel Harland Sander, the founder of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) which connotes consumerism and capitalism. Any powerful or influential figure who affects the socio-economic and political dynamics in the societies can deliver the last speech, which in fact creates a timeless representation for oppression. This is significant in that this play is not overtly political, yet this vampiric figure connotes the political and socio-cultural circumstances by pointing out a correlation between the past and the present.

At the end of the third act, as stated in the stage direction, the last Vampire with “[a] heavily cobwebbed hand emerges” (59) out of the coffin and articulates the main theme of the whole play as he says: “There is a distinct parallel in the fate of nations: whole

peoples will watch disaster until it engulfs them, apparently unable to stir out of a horrified trance. Their will is paralysed and they cease to believe in the possibility of action” (III.59). Throughout the centuries, as illustrated by three generations in the play, history repeats itself and oppression remains the same without any adjustments and transformations occurring. Wilson calls attention to the apathy and criticises it through his historical trajectory along with the first insidious Vampire taking Ruth away in the first act, the grotesque baby vampire in the second and the immortalised political Vampire in the third. All these vampires symbolise oppression and repression and, therefore, the continuity of the system. Therefore, the figure of the vampire stands for Wilson’s dissident attitude throughout the play.

In the play, the last speech is made by Enoch Powell (1912-1998) as stated in Wilson’s note. Powell was a notorious conservative politician, known for his “Rivers of Blood” speech in 1968. In his speech, Powell opposed mass immigration to Britain, as he stated, “[i]t is like watching a nation busily engaged in heaping up its own funeral pyre” (“Enoch Powell’s ‘Rivers of Blood’”). Because of his inflammatory tone and imagery, Powell was mostly criticised and also dismissed from the Conservative shadow cabinet while some protests were held for the repatriation of immigrants in order to support Powell (Savage, “Fifty Years On”). In his “Rivers of Blood” speech, Powell describes these settlers or immigrants as “aliens.” While an alien refers to a foreigner in legal terms, it also connotes otherness and monstrosity. The last Vampire’s analogy to this speech is conspicuous, as the Vampire says:

All about me I hear it as you do, and people see with their own eyes what they dread, the transformation in their lifetime, or if they are old, in their children’s, of towns, cities and areas they know, into alien territory. This is the process which hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens watch as they go about their daily business and live out their lives. (III.59)

The emphasis on the word “alien” is striking in this sense as Wilson in fact makes a direct reference to Powell’s speech. In relation to this political figure, Paul William Siemers argues that the Vampire “best represents the rape of the people, [...]; whoever symbolizes oppression, repression and exploitation. The Vampire sucks from humans the will to explore the limits of experience; he removes natural curiosity, replacing it with passive submission. Passivity breeds despair allowing exploitation” (306). Thus,

by associating the Vampire with Powell, Wilson illustrates the voice of oppression leading to violence and constant exploitation. In his Preface to *Vampire*, Wilson defines the last speech as “the bleeding stump of an amputee that refuses to heal” (10), which manifests how he comprehends society. In his Preface, Wilson also writes that “it should be played by whoever, in the public eye, speaks the vampiric language of the dead and the undead, of the them-and-us” (10). Wilson refers to the ongoing discriminatory language and actions of political figures, dividing and feeding off people because these vampiric figures consume people in every possible way and continue to exist in the society. By exposing the vampiric language through these political figures, Wilson stands against schismatic oppressors, particularly taking into consideration the political turmoil around the world in the 1960s and 1970s. In the late twentieth century, vampires “are more likely to offer a site of identification than a metaphor for what must be abjected, and with the movement from the metaphorical to the metonymical, the vampire increasingly serves to facilitate social commentary on the human world” (Punter and Byron, *The Gothic* 271). The playwright, thus, exploits “the obviously ‘libidinal’ and ‘liberating’ force of the vampire” (Mighall 241) in his play to make a statement about ongoing repression, oppression and manipulation throughout history.

As Wilson states in the Preface,

[t]he third act of the play is to do with people who live in the present, or attempt to, and thus, find themselves catering for all the old all over again. Freud’s assertion that originally all the dead are vampires who had a grudge against living and sought to rob them of their lives, comes out as another anthropological delicacy.  
(9)

As a person who does not expect anything from life or anyone, Dwight spends her life hopelessly and indifferently without believing in anything. As she tells the reporters, she starts to believe in a personalised religion; she is against regular marriage as free love is predominant in her family. It is also revealed that she left her partner and sold her paintings. Besides, she has drug problems. Now she keeps herself busy organising a funeral. It is observed that she becomes an alienated and lonely figure even though she tries to avoid loneliness by making future plans like founding a sperm bank or playing the blues and preparing events like this funeral ceremony, hence behaving as if she is happy and content with her life. Her indifferent mode and tone actually dominate the

last act. As her eulogy points out, she still has to live with the same restrictive and oppressive religious and sexual norms as her female ancestors did. Dwight most probably does not achieve what she really wants as she is surrounded by “disillusionment, despair, pessimism – and anger” (Itzin 3) as a result of the turmoil of the 1960s onwards. For this reason, the nonchalant tone of the last act in fact represents the apathy of society which is represented by Dwight and reinforced by the speech of the last Vampire.

Thus, Wilson exhibits the different dynamics of oppressive systems which keep people restrained. In his Preface to the play, he writes as follows: “I am writing about and for people but people are full of ghosts; paranoia begins at home, and to extrapolate at all I am obliged to follow the iron law of the imagination” (11). As observed, all his characters, especially female characters, have their own ghosts haunting and suffocating them, which they cannot elude as they are all part of an established system restraining them into perversion or apathy while they are craving for liberation. According to Andrew Smith, ghosts “provide us with an insight into what haunts our culture. Ghosts, of course, cannot die and as such are a persistent reminder of what a culture can only express in oblique terms” (“Hauntings” 153). In this sense, Wilson represents and exhibits these ghosts or vampires, or in other words, oppressive systems surrounding people. All in all, taking the concept of oppression from the nineteenth century to the 1970s, Wilson displays the continuity of the vampirised social, religious and political systems, thereby illustrating the anxieties of the period in the name of liberation.

Considering the play within the Gothic tradition, it is seen that some of the Gothic features continue such as diaries, the story-within-the-story, a claustrophobic enclosed space like the house, an oppressive patriarchal figure repressing women, oppressed heroines, the supernatural and the return of the repressed. The story also revolves around traditional Gothic themes such as repression, paranoia, perversion, incest, madness, delusion and taboos. The play is also concerned with the trope of live burial symbolising the oppression of female characters. In addition to these features, the excessiveness and transgressiveness of the characters also contribute to the traditional Gothic atmosphere, thereby triggering uncanny encounters and outbursts.

On the other hand, as a Gothic play written in the 1970s, *Vampire* distinguishes itself from the traditional Gothic storyline and characterisation to some extent. For example, the vampire character is different from the conventional ones such as Stoker's Dracula or Le Fanu's Carmilla. Wilson's vampires are presented as symbolic beings entering and exiting the stage in order to represent the perpetuity of the system. They do not speak, and pose as captivating characters like Dracula or Carmilla. In the play, only the last Vampire speaks up as a political voice. The sense of the constant haunting by the past is conveyed through the vampire figure. Additionally, as pointed out earlier, humans become monstrous. In the play, though identified as a vampire, the last Vampire is also defined as "the man" in the stage direction of the last act. Thus, this draws attention to monstrous or vampiric human beings like Enoch Powell or Ayatollah Khomeini causing political and religious oppression and suffering in the world.

Moreover, from the late 1960s onwards, neo-Victorian Gothicism became prominent. Wilson makes use of neo-Victorian Gothic tradition and explores some Victorian themes and their projections on the present. It is important to mark that Joy is depicted as a transgressive character which actually refers to the female characters of the *fin de siecle* Gothic as a result of the emergence of the 'New Woman.' In addition, the use of a house instead of a castle is also part of Victorian Gothic as the Gothic setting in the Victorian Period turns into domestic or urban spaces. It is seen that Wilson rediscovers these motifs with his use of neo-Victorianism. Moreover, neo-Victorian attitude provides a historical point of reference to go back and delve into the current problems of the 1970s through the lens of the past.

Furthermore, the playwright portrays a surreal scene like the pseudo-nativity part of the play, which is intertwined with Gothic elements and the supernatural. In this regard, Wilson creates a mysterious, delusional and obscure scene, enhancing the Gothic effect. The play also embodies such postmodern features as intertextuality, some shattered metanarratives like religion and history, blurring the lines between fiction and reality through surrealism; therefore, particularly through its intertextuality, the play deals with and comments on the current socio-political oppression of the period. Hence, it can be argued that Wilson formulates a surreal postmodern Gothic narrative.

With *Vampire*, Wilson, thus, makes use of both traditional and twentieth-century Gothic elements to depict oppression and repression throughout the centuries. Wilson exploits neo-Victorian Gothic to compare the past and the present, and to project the society in terms of sexual and religious oppression. Through intertextuality, Wilson's play makes a commentary on its own subject by describing the real potential of human beings and the repressive systems. The playwright exploits the Gothic in an era of intense political turmoil which illustrates the fact that the Gothic is born out of the turmoil of its time. Similar to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in the late 1960s and the 1970s, the Gothic revived out of such chaos. The playwright, with *Vampire*, shows his antithetical stance against schismatic oppressors and systems and employs an immortal vampiric figure to make a statement about the continuity of systemised oppression.

## CHAPTER 4

### EARLY TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY GOTHIC DRAMA: CONOR MCPHERSON'S *THE VEIL*

Conor McPherson (1971- ) is a distinguished and popular Irish playwright, screenwriter and director. His plays are mostly written in the form of monologue and include the supernatural blended with the stories of the characters, mostly male characters, haunted by their pasts. As a playwright of the Celtic Tiger and post-Celtic Tiger periods in Ireland, McPherson has witnessed socio-cultural and economic changes in the society, which is reflected in his works. His post-Celtic Tiger play *The Veil* (2011) takes place in the nineteenth century when there was a decline in the power of the Protestant Ascendancy and poverty dominated the era heralding the upcoming Great Famine of 1845. The setting of the play correlates with the socio-economic and political circumstances of contemporary Ireland in the early twenty-first century when the Celtic Tiger economic boom was waning, particularly because of the global economic crisis in 2008 resulting from the bursting of the housing bubble and the collapse of the subprime mortgage market in the USA between 2007-2008. The recession caused severe economic problems in many countries including Ireland. In this context, this chapter aims to discuss how the Gothic is exploited by McPherson in order to mirror the contemporary anxieties of the Irish with reference to *The Veil* and to demonstrate how Gothic drama evolved into the twenty-first century.

In the 1990s, McPherson started writing and directing plays in University College Dublin's Drama Society (Dramsoc) and became a co-founder of Fly By Night Theatre Company in Dublin in 1992. His first few plays include *Taking Stock* (1989), *Michelle Pfeiffer* (1990), *Scenes Federal* (1991) and *Inventing Fortune's Wheel* (1994). His plays mostly revolve around alcoholic, alienated and suffering male characters who strive to achieve a kind of redemption and salvation. At the same time, these plays explore various dynamics of socio-cultural issues inherent in Irish society, especially at the time when Ireland was going through an immense economic boom in the mid-1990s. As Lilian Chambers and Eamonn Jordan state, McPherson's oeuvre

raises particular issues about identities, relationships, cultures and societies in which the work is set and performed, but not simply in the sense of mirroring specific cultural moments and the ideological realities therein, but more in relation to the struggles of his characters to face down the dilemmas, confusions, inequalities, opportunities and pleasures of living. (17)

While touching upon various dynamics in the society, McPherson utilises the Irish storytelling tradition as most of his plays are written in the form of monologues and he is very well-known for his monologue style. Through monologues, the playwright makes sense of the world and the characters' personal traumas, conflicts or problems by bringing them to the surface. McPherson thinks that

[t]he storytelling tradition in Ireland is still very strong. Stories allow the listener to go through experiences virtually, without having to face the consequences. You identify with the character: 'What if I did that? How would I feel? How would I cope?' And I suppose in a way it's therapeutic. It's helpful. ("Original Sin")

Hence, the storytelling tradition functions like psychotherapy for the characters and the reader/audience while disclosing the uncanny. Moreover, his idea of redemptive and empathetic storytelling correlates with his understanding of theatre and contributes to his dramatic objective. For McPherson,

the theatre is a very mysterious place which has something to do with human consciousness and our ability to create our world, which is what all of us do every day. We all create a world within our own mind which we think makes sense. It includes our own personal history as well as our intentions for the future. But it is all an illusion. It is an essential illusion because the world has to mean something to us otherwise we cannot live. ("Interview with Conor McPherson" 277)

Drawing upon his perspective about the role of theatre, McPherson creates characters with emotional depth so as to unveil the strains behind human consciousness which indicate a portion of everyone's reality. Correspondingly, the playwright completed his MA degree in Philosophy on Kantian utilitarianism with a thesis titled "Logical Constraint and Practical Reasoning: On Attempted Refutations of Utilitarianism" at the University College Dublin (UCD). As Chambers and Jordan state, "that academic thesis provides a philosophical backdrop to much of McPherson's work to date" (5) regarding the fact that McPherson deals with moral and ethical questions, emotional turmoil, traumas and existentialist crises in his plays.

Some of McPherson's later plays include *Rum and Vodka* (1992), *The Good Thief* (1994), *This Lime Tree Bower* (1995), *St. Nicholas* (1997), *The Weir* (1997) commissioned by the Royal Court Theatre, *Dublin Carol* (2000), *Shining City* (2004), *The Seafarer* (2006) and *Night Alive* (2013). He also made some adaptations such as from Daphne du Maurier's short story *Birds* (*Birds*, 2009), August Strindberg's *The Dance of Death* (*The Dance of Death*, 2012) and Anton Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* (*Uncle Vanya*, 2020). Besides he wrote a musical book *Girl from the North Country* (2017) based on Bob Dylan's songs and also the scripts of such films as *I Went Down* (1997), *Saltwater* (2000), *The Actors* (2003) and *Eclipse* (2009). Except for some plays like *The Weir* and *Dublin Carol*, he directed the premiers of most of his plays as he saw directing as a completion of the play: "I like it because it is very efficient in the sense that I can try things out and change the play very quickly. [...] That's how I finish a play" ("Interview with Conor McPherson" 280). McPherson worked with various mainstream theatre venues and his plays have been very popular in London and abroad. He won various awards including the George Devine Award (*St Nicholas*, 1997), the Meyer Whitworth Award (*This Lime Tree Bower*, 1997), the Evening Standard Theatre Award for Most Promising Playwright (*The Weir*, 1997), the Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Play (*The Weir*, 1999), the New York Drama Critic's Circle Award for Best Play (*The Night Alive*, 2014). In addition, McPherson received the Tony Award nominations for *Shining City* (2006) and *Girl from the North Country* (2022), and the Evening Standard (2006), the Olivier Award (2007) and the Tony Award (2008) nominations for *The Seafarer*.

It is important to explore the contemporary Gothic and its characteristics in general before examining the status of McPherson in relation to the Irish Gothic. Starting from the 1980s, Gothic studies have contributed to the development and literary acknowledgement of the Gothic by incorporating it into the curriculums. In the twenty-first century, the Gothic took another prominent turn and regained popularity. It is now established as a mainstream genre and mode disseminating into various mediums. The Gothic grows into a very popular genre in the twenty-first century ranging from films, music, fashion, art, and literature, thus developing as a part of consumer culture. Catherine Spooner asserts that "[i]n many ways twenty-first-century Gothic resembles that of the twentieth century; its distinctive trends and themes generally cultivate ideas

seeded earlier in the preceding century rather than plant entirely new ones” (“Twenty-First-Century Gothic” 180). Yet the distinct quality of twenty-first-century Gothic is the participation of mythical and bestiary figures in the Gothic realm along with vampires such as “demons, fairies, werewolves and, most prominently, zombies, in a revitalised bestiary of Gothic creatures. Many of these derive from folkloric traditions newly appropriated into the Gothic through the processes of globalisation” (180). In the twenty-first-century Gothic, particularly zombies become very popular figures as much as vampires, as vampire and zombie fiction and films such as Stephen Meyer’s *Twilight Saga* (2005-2008) or TV series like *The Walking Dead* (2010-2020) have dominated this period to this day. The zombie was “predominantly born of the voodoo and witchcraft beliefs of West Africa and Haiti, where a corpse could be reanimated or the living placed in a death-like trance, both perhaps controlled by a sorcerer, and created in order to serve as slave labour” (Conrich 16). So, devoid of free will and consciousness, the zombie “is a creature born of slavery, oppression, and capitalist hegemony and in that way a manifestation of collective unconscious fears and taboos” (Bishop 37). The zombie, then, refers to the fear of enslavement and return to the brutal colonial past. Also, capitalism and consumer culture of the twenty-first century triggered the popularity of these unconscious monstrous figures. Fred Botting states: “Zombies are the new vampires” (“Zombies” 755). Particularly, postcolonial Gothic makes use of such Gothic tropes as zombies as well as other liminal creatures like ghosts and vampires to discuss the colonial legacy and historical traumas. Especially with the increase of consumer culture, “the figure of the zombie has been used as a social critique of the insatiability of capitalism” (Kuhling 6). Thus, this figure calls into question not only the current economic and social lifestyle but also the dichotomy between human and nonhuman, humane and inhumane.

The socio-political and historical context functions as an active agent in reviving the Gothic as the twenty-first-century Gothic feeds on the anxieties, fears, or traumas vis-à-vis economy, globalisation, postcolonialism and technology. The contemporary Gothic deals with such issues as environmental crises, terrorism, wars, global economic crises, global diseases and apocalyptic scenarios. Thus, both “the failures of current economic policies and social structures inherited from the twentieth century” (Wester and Reyes 6) and “[t]he very fact of globalisation at the turn of the millennium” (9) become the

new faces and monsters of the contemporary Gothic. Besides, “the twenty-first century has been marked by the rise of interest in trauma and its manifestation in literary texts” (Spooner, *Postmillennial Gothic* 14), which also nourishes the Gothic narrative in terms of psychological perspective intertwined with social and cultural matters, hence exposing the uncanny return of the past or the sense of haunting in the present. Particularly globalisation and trauma narratives contribute to the early twenty-first-century Gothic and “[t]he hauntings induced by historical trauma also surfaced in a surge of books about ghosts and spirit mediums” (Spooner, “Gothic 1950 to the Present” 301). In addition, the return of the past and the repressed, the fragmented subjects, monstrous others, the grotesque, the modes of excess and extreme, sensation, terror and horror continue to become the hallmarks of the Gothic on the contemporary stage. Some plays featuring these Gothic elements include Martin McDonagh’s *The Pillowman* (2003) as an example of postmodern Gothic revealing internal stories as a projection of the characters’ horrors and traumas (Rees 61-62); Howard Barker’s *Dead Hands* (2004) revolves around a haunting dead body lying in a coffin which discloses sexual perversity, claustrophobia and transgression; Moira Buffini’s *A Vampire Story* (2008) tells the stories of the struggling female vampires by touching upon the socio-economic hardships for women; Michael Punter’s *Darker Shores* (2009) reveals a troubled and haunting past set in the late Victorian Period; and Nick Dear’s adaptation *Frankenstein* (2011) explores the complex emotional and ethical consequences of a scientific endeavour by an ambitious scientist, Dr Frankenstein with its focus more on the perspective of Frankenstein’s creature.

To be able to grasp McPherson’s place in the contemporary Irish Gothic, it is essential to briefly look into the Irish Gothic in order to understand its development over time. The Irish obsession with the past and the return of the past and the dead create a kind of Gothicised Ireland with its landscape, culture and beliefs. Especially the return of the repressed and the past in the present as the essential part of the Gothic are already embedded in Irish culture as Irish folklore and myths revolve around these themes. Jarlath Killeen argues that “if the Gothic is often seen as the return of the repressed, the past that will not stay past, Ireland has usually been constructed as a place where the past had never in fact disappeared, a place where the past is in fact the always present” (*The Emergence of Irish Gothic* 10). Considering the Irish Gothic tradition, as Christina

Morin states, in addition to Maria Edgeworth, “the works of [...] Regina Maria Roche, Catharine Selden, Henrietta Rouvière Mosse, Stephen Cullen and many others [...] represent a vital body of ‘first wave’ Irish Gothic fiction” (360). In terms of the dramatic tradition of the period, Charles Robert Maturin’s *Bertram, or, The Castle of St. Aldobrand* (Drury Lane, 1816) was regarded as a well-known Gothic play during the Romantic Period. It deals with an exiled aristocrat, Bertram, who joined a group of bandits when he was exiled and now is in pursuit of revenge and love. Its story also revolves around a lady in distress, an alienated villain-hero as well as excessive desire, murder and adultery. Also “the titanically overreaching protagonist in *Bertram* could be read as a coded representation of Napoleon’s political and personal trajectory” (Saglia “The Gothic Stage” 86). In the second half of the nineteenth century, such Irish authors as Sheridan Le Fanu (*Carmilla*, 1872), Oscar Wilde (*The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 1890) and Bram Stoker (*Dracula*, 1897) contributed to the Gothic tradition. As Stephen Carleton highlights, “there is a rich scholarly corpus focussing on the Irish Gothic as a literary phenomenon, stretching back to the early eighteenth century with writers like Robert Maturin, Sheridan Le Fanu and Bram Stoker and thence on to William Carleton, Oscar Wilde, William Butler Yeats and Elizabeth Bowen” (2). Thus, considering the fact that Gothic drama declined after the mid-nineteenth century, the *fin de siècle* Gothic literature was rich with the Gothic fiction of these Irish writers.

In the early twentieth century, the one-act plays of William Butler Yeats like *The Words Upon The Window-Pane* (1930) and *Purgatory* (1938) feature some Gothic elements such as the return of the dead, ghosts and a mysterious and gloomy atmosphere. In *The Words Upon The Window-Pane*, Mrs Henderson, a medium, is possessed by the spirit of Jonathan Swift while conducting a séance in a lodging house belonging to Stella, a beloved friend of Jonathan Swift. Issues related to Swift’s celibacy and relationship with his lovers, Stella and Vanessa come to the surface and haunt the present through the possessed medium. As Michael Billington argues, “[f]ar from being an attack on Swift, the play is a defence of his refusal to beget children because of his dread of the future” (“Forgotten Plays”). On the other hand, *Purgatory* is about an Old Man who kills his 16-year-old son. It is revealed that the Old Man also killed his father when he was the boy’s age. In the play, though there is a burned and ruined house, one of its windows is lit up and the ghost of the Old Man’s mother appears in the window as a

haunting and trapped image. Christopher Morash argues that “there is an extensive critical literature on Yeats’s *Purgatory*, much of which reads it in the context of political anxieties of dispossession and decadence in relation to post-Independence Ireland and European fascism” (67). Thus, it can be asserted that these plays, through their depiction of entrapped souls with haunting presences in the present, reflect the current anxieties of the period by employing some Gothic elements.

As observed in the British Gothic, the return of the dead, the supernatural and ghosts are also the basic elements in the Irish Gothic. They problematise the relationship between the living and the dead, and the past and the present. These elements as Gothic impulses can be observed in various late-twentieth-century Irish plays as well, such as Hugh Leonard’s *Da* (1973) about “the middle-aged Charley haunted by the garrulous ghost of his dead father” (Roche 281) or Stewart Parker’s *Pentecost* (1987) dealing with the return of the dead as a ghost in a haunted house (225). Ghosts are particularly common in Irish plays, Gothic or not, as poignant representatives of the past or traumas, as can be observed in Brian Friel’s *Faith Healer* (1979) or Frank McGuinness’s *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme* (1985). Regarding these ghosts and traumas prevalent in Irish plays, Roche points out that “[w]hat the audience most often witnesses in contemporary Irish drama are damaged people, on the verge of cracking up, lamenting the absence of wholeness in their lives and the people among whom they live, suffering the break-up of traditional forms of belief whether Catholic or Protestant” (12). Thus, the Gothic motifs become tools to reflect upon the haunting narratives of these haunted or damaged people.

Moreover, Fintan O’Toole argues that “[c]ontemporary Irish theatre is a haunted place. There has been a large-scale Gothic revival, with ghosts, the supernatural and the uncanny being constant elements in the work of Sebastian Barry, Conor McPherson, Marina Carr and Mark O’Rowe” (“Bringing a Ghostly Past”). As one of these prominent playwrights, Carr makes use of the Gothic in some of her plays such as *The Mai* (1994), *Portia Coughlan* (1996) and *By the Bog of Cats...* (1998) as “[e]ach play stages a different aspect of the horror of trauma that repeats to haunt the doomed protagonist” (Ferguson 49). In *By the Bog of Cats...*, the supernatural and the Gothic excess are overtly visible. Hester is haunted by the absence of her mother and she still

waits for her return in the bog while her own life is miserable at the same time. From the beginning, *By the Bog of Cats...* embodies the supernatural and death hovers in the play like the Ghost Fancier coming to take Hester's life and the ghost of her deceased brother, Joseph who was killed by Hester out of jealousy for their mother's love. The play ends with Hester's murdering her own daughter and taking her own life by cutting her throat. As Molly Elizabeth Ferguson argues, "[t]hrough both exploiting and inverting the sexist urges of her gothic predecessors, Carr establishes a cultural language to express women's longing and loss that reinscribes traditional forms while transforming them from within" (46). Hester's past traumas of loss, abandonment and lovelessness, thus, come to the surface uncannily by means of Gothic elements.

Another playwright that contributes to the Irish Gothic is Martin McDonagh. Considering Martin McDonagh's oeuvre such as *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (1996), *A Skull in Connemara* (1997), *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* (2001) and *The Pillowman* (2003), "McDonagh uses the genres of horror and the gothic in order to force his audience into positions that may be uncomfortable – into sympathy with monstrous characters and into recognition of its own atavistic love of aestheticized violence" (Eldred 113). In his plays, McDonagh makes use of Gothic monstrosity, shocking, sensational, violent and unsettling circumstances and elements, which makes him a significant playwright in the context of the contemporary Irish Gothic.

McPherson's plays embody some Gothic features such as the return of the repressed and the dead, and the supernatural in the form of ghosts, vampires and devils, as seen in *The Weir*, *St. Nicholas* and *The Seafarer*, respectively. Therefore, it can be claimed that McPherson participates in the Gothic tradition and exploits the Gothic so as to express the intersection of micro and macro-level stories in Ireland. In the 1990s, ghosts continued on the stage and Anthony Roche describes them as follows: "[T]hey are a dramatic means of dramatising the persistence of the past in the present, a particularly if not exclusively Irish obsession" (250). In this regard, McPherson's use of the supernatural contributes to his exploration of the legacy of the past in the present. Particularly, being brought up as a Catholic, McPherson is immersed in the supernatural. In Ireland, "pre-Christian folklore and attitudes are still present, [for this reason] Irish literature (dramatic and otherwise) has a rich relationship with supernatural

themes” (Hill 4). Therefore, Catholicism is a big influence on McPherson affecting his way of thinking and seeing the world, thereby drawing him into the Gothic world. As McPherson says:

I was brought up as a Roman Catholic so perhaps this is why I see supernatural stories as the most natural thing I can present on stage. I have always felt that the theatre is the perfect place to contemplate the unknown and often in my plays ordinary people are faced with inexplicable phenomena. These have included ghosts, vampires, fairies, premonitions and the Devil. I want to invite the darkness that surrounds the stage on to the stage in order to illuminate all that is truly important to us. And something that feels important to me is that we recognise that the experience of being alive – and being conscious of being alive – is an unfathomable mystery. It’s a mystery we should marvel at and celebrate. (“The Veil at the National Theatre”)

McPherson’s dramatic works orbit around the unknown, the inexplicable, the mystery and obscurity of life. Thus, he exploits the Gothic to make sense of the world and the Gothic is part of his writing all along from his spooky ghost stories to his characters such as the vampiric critic or the devil. There is always a supernatural eeriness and a sense of haunting dominating the works of McPherson, whether they are literal or metaphorical. According to Stephen Carleton, “McPherson’s corpus provides an almost textbook approach to [the] discussion of the Irish Gothic. His 2011 play *The Veil* is a quintessentially Gothic dramatic text, set in a big house in [the] 1820s rural Ireland, evoking the landscape, the era and the cultural politics of” (6) nineteenth-century Ireland. In *The Veil*, while McPherson makes use of some typical Gothic features such as the supernatural, the return of the past and the Gothic atmosphere, he also creates a zombified and haunted Gothic world in the twenty-first-century context. For this reason, McPherson provides a proper example for the evolution of Gothic drama in the early twenty-first century.

McPherson’s play *The Veil* pertains to the Big House narratives of nineteenth-century Ireland. For this reason, it is essential to explain the relationship between the Ascendancy and the Big House to better understand the setting of McPherson’s play. In the nineteenth century, Ireland was under the rule of the Ascendancy which refers to the Protestant settlers who had come to Ireland from Britain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They were settled on the confiscated Irish lands “with the aim to remove the native stock and replace the population with loyal English subjects, to be

rooted firmly on the spot” (State 93). The Protestant Ascendancy began to reign in Ireland by imposing the Penal Laws on Catholics to ensure their domination and control of the island of Ireland as a part of Britain. According to these laws,

Irish Catholics could not sit in parliament, or vote in parliamentary elections; they were excluded from the bar, the bench, the university, the navy, and all public bodies; they were forbidden to possess arms, or a horse worth more than five pounds. No Catholic could keep a school, or send his children to be educated abroad. [...] Catholic bishops and other higher ecclesiastics were banished from the country. (O’Brien and Cruise 77)

These laws were imposed on every aspect of social, political and religious life in Ireland to make the Irish submissive to British domination. For a very long time, the Ascendancy became the main powerholder in Ireland despite the constant Irish unrest targeted at them. In the nineteenth century, the power of the Ascendancy waned. When the Catholic Irish middle class was growing, the Protestant Irish started to lose their power “[a]s the Catholic middle class [...] began to occupy traditionally Protestant positions in municipal government and local structures of power” (Killeen, “Irish Gothic” 32). In this regard, in the nineteenth century, Ireland saw various changes in terms of social and political dynamics as class hierarchies and power structures were shifting.

Thus, the Big House of the Protestant Ascendancy turned into a political symbol for the Ascendancy’s power in the society regarding the historical and political dynamics between the English and the Irish. As Vera Kreilkamp states, “[f]or the conquered Irish, the Big House evoked memories of dispossession, exploitation, and injustice – and, simultaneously, of a remote and glamorous power, of inaccessible social position and wealth” (20). Colonised by the British, economic opportunities of the Irish people were scarce and the Penal Laws imposed by the British government further aggravated their circumstances more until these laws were repealed during the early nineteenth century. As a colonised country for many centuries, Ireland was the site of various conflicts especially in the nineteenth century when the power of the Ascendancy was in decline and tension augmented, rebellions were occurring and more were imminent, and the Great Famine of 1845 transformed the society irrevocably. In this context, the Big House connotes the political and social conflicts within the society by illustrating the colonial history of Ireland at the time. The Big House, thus, symbolises the Protestant

minority's political and economic power over Irish Catholics. However, particularly in the nineteenth century, the Big House also began to signify the former's decaying and declining situation, as it embodied colonial deterioration and economic decline. It is important to highlight that during the Irish independence struggle of the early twentieth century, many Big Houses were burned down (Donnelly 141) as they symbolised oppressive colonialism, thus overthrowing the hegemony of the Ascendancy legacy.

The Big House, thus, provides a crucial commentary on various dynamics of Irish society by disclosing the traumas and conflicts embedded in the Irish historical trajectory. *Castle Rackrent* (1800) by the Anglo-Irish writer, Maria Edgeworth, is a very well-known Big House novel depicting the declining power of the Ascendancy, thus reflecting on Irish colonial history (Cantwell 38). Heather Ingman defines the Big House features as follows:

Characteristic features of this Big House fiction include a decaying country house, tensions between its irresponsible inhabitants and their Catholic tenants, a declining family line, lingering guilt over the original sin of colonial misappropriation leading to anxieties of ownership and an outsider, such as a Catholic land agent or a rising professional man, who infiltrates the Big House with a view to taking it over. (256).

During the nineteenth century, the decaying Big House in the midst of tension between the landowners and tenants and the economic struggle in Ireland develops into a symbolic entity implying multiple political and socio-cultural divisions in Ireland at the time. Furthermore, considering that the Big House is an Anglo-Irish tradition,

[t]he persistent anxiety about the loss of the Big House – through fire, decay, or financial insolvency – provokes moral judgments of the landlord class far more often than idealization and nostalgia. Thus, the urge to mythologize the past is undercut by the ironic self-scrutiny that the Anglo-Irish novelists direct at their own culture. (Kreilkamp 20).

So, the Big House novels represent the anxieties and fears of the Anglo-Irish whose power and hegemony were eventually shattered. Besides, both Kreilkamp (23) and Ingman (266) refer to the fact that because of the absentee lords, the Anglo-Irish mothers become powerful and turn into manipulative forces over their children. As one of the features of these works, the domineering and ruling mother in the absence of the lord is also one of the Big House tropes that McPherson employs. Hence, in *The Veil*,

McPherson makes use of the Big House tropes to delve into retrospective scrutiny of Ireland within the context of present-day Ireland in order to touch upon ongoing traumas and conflicts in Irish history and society.

It is essential to look into the Celtic Tiger and post-Celtic Tiger periods so as to better understand the context in which McPherson wrote, and his exploitation of the Gothic within this historical framework. The growth of Ireland's economy in the mid-1990s was coined as the Celtic Tiger, a term referring to "the legendary success of the East Asian Tigers in the 1980s and early 1990s" (Kirby, *Celtic Tiger 2*). The Celtic Tiger economy "was fuelled by foreign investment and high-tech growth that revolutionized Ireland from one of the poorest countries in the EU-15 to one of its wealthiest" (Clancy 5). Maybe for the first time in its history, Ireland had a huge economic overturn which hinted at a more hopeful and independent future for the Irish, especially after many years of economic problems as well as political conflicts. This prosperity

made Ireland one of the most economically successful countries in the world [...]. Unemployment, for long a deep structural problem of the Irish economy, was virtually eliminated and a country used for over 150 years to seeing generation after generation of its young emigrating now had the new experience of becoming a country of immigrants. (Kirby, *Celtic Tiger 2*)

The long-established problems of unemployment and emigration were reversed as Ireland turned into a land of investment. Accompanied by "[g]lobalization, Europeanization, the Celtic Tiger, the peace process and secularization," Ireland grew into "a more liberal, cosmopolitan and diverse society, a society more open to a multiplicity of identities that is a far cry from an Ireland that appeared to be stalled in a dominant Catholic and rural past" (Wilson and Donnan 91). Thus, this economic and social progress affected the socio-cultural dynamics of the society from sexuality to religion, and the structure of Ireland began to change to a great extent becoming more inclusive as strict norms began to be loosened. However, it is important to note that only economic growth was prioritised and social improvement and the wellbeing of the people were ignored leading to a huge gap between the rich and the poor and to an increase of inequality in the society. Despite this, the Celtic Tiger period was a turning point in Irish economy and society which had been struggling for many years against

conflicts and traumas as a result of colonialism and its aftermath. Hopeful prospects for the future of Ireland became prevalent until the economic recession in 2008 when

[a] combination of a global financial crisis, political corruption, unethical banking practices, and fiscal hubris brought the Celtic Tiger to an end. The cranes stopped moving; the spec houses became ghost estates; joblessness climbed to nearly 15 percent; emigration abounded; austerity became the condition on which the government was bailed out by the European Union. (Hill 3)

Thus, Ireland experienced a dramatic economic decline leading to unemployment, huge debts, unfinished housing schemes and emigration. When economic decline turned around the booming tide for Ireland, excessive property development and consumerism, particularly triggered by individualism and economic aspirations of the Celtic Tiger period, resulted in immense debts leading to austerity measures.

From one of the most successful and wealthiest countries to “one of the largest debtor countries in the world by 2010” (Kay, *Celtic Revival?* 5), Ireland reverted to the past decades before the Celtic Tiger period when the economy had not been strong. This reversal turned Ireland into a Gothicised country with these abovementioned ghost estates which refer to “speculative, underoccupied, often unfinished housing developments that now litter the Irish landscape” (Kitchin et al. 8) because of a lack of well-thought-out planning and regulation. Carmen Leah Kuhling argues that “Irish consumerism during the Celtic Tiger took on the mindless, voracious appetites of the zombie” (11) and the unregulated investments in housing were part of this excessive consumer culture, leading to unfinished and empty houses. When the economy declined, it became difficult for the buyers to take mortgages to buy the houses or the developers to find enough funds to finish them and, therefore, the Irish landscape ended up being replete with these abandoned or uninhabited houses. So, the houses literally turned into the relics or ruins of the prosperous Celtic Tiger period. For this reason, Keohane and Kuhling describe post-Celtic Ireland as “a haunted landscape of ghost estates and zombie banks” (140). It is important to note here that the ‘zombie banks’ refer to the banks supporting the excessive housing boom during the Celtic Tiger period but the economic crisis led them to bankruptcy, yet they were still preserved through government support which helped pay the banks’ debts. For this reason, as Keohane and Kuhling also refer to (140), these banks cannibalised the country (Kirby, “When Banks

Cannibalize The State” 249) as the Irish people suffered financially. Thus, the collapse of the Celtic Tiger economic upsurge disclosed a Gothic Ireland, as Killeen and Morin explain further:

The housing boom, upon which so many Irish fortunes were based, soon produced ‘ghost estates’; the financial wizardry admired all over the world magicked up ‘zombie banks’. Property developers, who had for a decade been lauded as engineers of a cosmopolitan future, were reviled as Frankensteins, vampires and ghouls. Haunted houses, malevolent fathers and clerics, abused innocence ... none of it had really gone away. In other words, in the economic downturn we re-entered Gothic Ireland (or, more credibly, we never really left it). (“Introduction” 6)

The Celtic Tiger economic investments particularly in housing which ended up in failure turned Ireland into a big, haunted house ghosted by these developers. This economic decline and subsequent severe conditions such as debts and unemployment in the early twenty-first century brought the troubling and complicated past back into the present and immensely affected the Irish psyche. The traumas of the past like deprivation and loss of lands or houses are re-actualised in twenty-first-century Ireland. In this regard, the simile which Keohane and Kuhling draw upon to substantiate the undead past through the zombie figure is a pertinent one in order to illustrate the fear and anxieties of contemporary Irish society. As the undead, “the figure of the zombie represents the fear of history repeating itself, of a return to enslavement by an imperial master” (Keohane and Kuhling 141). Hence, the aftermath of the Celtic Tiger is characterised by the return of the past, thereby revealing the long-lasting problems and traumas of the Irish society such as unemployment, emigration, dispossession, destituteness, alienation embedded in their history as consequences of their colonial legacy.

In line with Gothicised Ireland during the aftermath of the Celtic Tiger, it is unequivocal that in *The Veil*, McPherson makes a conscious choice in terms of the setting which indicates a similar kind of decline in various ways though the setting, timewise, takes place more than a hundred years ago. In his interview with Maddy Costa, McPherson asserts that “[t]here was a big economic crash following the Napoleonic wars. So a place like Ireland, which was very poor, was just on the floor” (“Conor McPherson: Drawing on Supernatural”). With a retrospective outlook, McPherson adds as follows:

When I look at what's happened to Ireland, I think: where did this awful dysfunction in our psyche come from that we've destroyed our own country? On one level you can say it's just post-colonial corruption and mismanagement. On another level, it's like an echo of a long, violent trauma. For hundreds of years, to be Irish and Catholic meant your life was just shit. You were not allowed to go to school, you were not allowed to own land, you didn't have any rights. If people suddenly get that power back, of course they fuck it up. ("Conor McPherson: Drawing on Supernatural")

Thus, by locating his play in a certain past setting, McPherson aims to explore the past and its ongoing historical and political dynamics, thereby comparing nineteenth-century Ireland and contemporary Ireland. In his statement above, McPherson refers to the ongoing impact of colonialism and specifically the Penal Laws which denied Irish Catholics their basic rights to obtain education, property or occupation. For the playwright, colonial practices traumatised the Irish for a very long time, as when the Irish had economic and political power – that is the Celtic Tiger economic boom, – they could not handle it. For this reason, the financial crisis in 2008 brought back the predicament of the past to the present. McPherson started writing *The Veil* in 2008, so naturally, the play echoes the spirit of the period, as McPherson states:

I started making notes [for the play] in late 2008 as Ireland had suddenly started to be in bad trouble. We had been through such a strange journey in the sense that we were poor, then we were told we were one of the richest nations in the world, then suddenly we were in the hands of the IMF. For the first time, I realized the public can share a dysfunctional psyche, and that psyche can be generational. The Irish Famine is only five generations ago. I began to realize the mess we'd got ourselves into must have come from some tremendous trauma. For the first time, I accepted I am Irish – up till then I'd always felt European or a citizen of the world. ("Conor McPherson Knows")

By observing transitions and economic decline in the society as he has lived through both the Celtic Tiger and post-Celtic Tiger periods, McPherson delves into history to deal with and uncover this long-lasting historical trauma of the Irish society. Besides, modernisation and globalisation accelerating from the mid-1990s created a liminal space in Ireland where the old and the new, the traditional and the modern coexisted. As Kuhling and Keohane state, "[t]he experience of living in contemporary Ireland is that of living in an in-between world, in between cultures and identities, an experience of liminality" (14). McPherson observed this in-betweenness and ambiguity; for the following reason: He "wanted to create a play in which time was crashing in on itself,

so that what people might think is an echo of the past is in fact a premonition of the future” (“Conor McPherson: Drawing on Supernatural”). His retrospective scrutiny of the past is projected through the lens of Ireland which has undergone a huge transition in the early twenty-first century. In this regard, the echo of the past seems to be the everlasting feature of McPherson’s dramatic works.

*The Veil* was first staged in the Lyttelton Auditorium of the National Theatre and directed by McPherson himself. The story takes place in 1822, in a Big House where Hannah, her mother Madeleine Lambroke and her grandmother live together. It is set in the period of the Ascendancy whose power is gradually declining. The estate is quite in distress financially as the landlady Madeleine even cannot pay her employees, and, for this reason, her daughter Hannah is going to be married off to the Marquis of Newbury in England to save the estate. Madeleine’s cousin, a defrocked priest called Reverend Berkeley will come and chaperone Hannah to England for her marriage. When the estate manager Fingal hears this marriage plan, he is surprised as he knows Hannah has started hearing voices again. Two days later, Berkeley and his friend Audelle arrive at the house. Berkeley tells Audelle that Madeleine’s husband Edward committed suicide by hanging himself and Hannah found him when she was too young. For this reason, Berkeley believes Edward’s spirit is still there and cannot leave the house. Both Berkeley and Audelle are fond of spiritual matters and are planning to bring the unseen to the surface during their visit as they know Hannah possesses some spiritual power. Two nights later, when everyone gathers in a room and Berkeley talks about the spiritual energy of Hannah, paranormal stories come to the surface. Mrs Goulding tells the story of her son who was nearly taken by a fairy woman and began to fade physically each day but later a priest came to bless him and he was saved. Madeleine also saw the ghost of a murdered man when she was staying with some of her relatives. All these stories in the end turn into a praying session, or a séance, by Berkeley who believes he can unveil the souls trapped there but the séance ends with a very frightening loud bang. It is later understood that a terrace of houses belonging to Madeleine’s estate has collapsed.

The second act starts four days later after the séance and it is around midnight. Berkeley and Audelle convince Hannah to conduct another séance. Including Grandie, they all

hold hands and Berkeley begins his prayer. Suddenly Hannah goes into a trance, then a ghost child appears who is only seen by Audelle and Grandie, and Grandie loses herself and starts screaming. The turmoil of the séance ends with Madeleine's interruption. The next day, they gather to say farewell to Hannah. Though the gathering starts in a joyful atmosphere, Hannah tells everyone that she cannot go to England and Fingal assumes Audelle has something to do with this after what happened at the Queen's Tomb. When Hannah and Audelle went to see the Queen's Tomb, Hannah experienced an uncanny encounter that led her to a nervous breakdown and she ran all the way back from the tomb and Audelle followed her. Hannah believes that in the last séance, she saw her horrible future waiting for her in England. As Fingal unfairly blames Audelle for Hannah's unwillingness to go, Hannah also starts questioning Fingal who has cruelly beaten James Furay, an orphan boy adopted by Madeleine. Fingal thinks he has a right to judge others without looking at himself. He just wants to prove himself to Madeleine that he can manage this place and teach the boy his responsibilities, but his frustration and unrequited love for her culminate in violent outbursts. In the end, Audelle tells Hannah that in the séance, she saw his miserable past, not her future. After this, Audelle goes out of the room and kills himself. Two weeks later, Hannah is already in England and Madeleine is selling the estate to the Colonel as she plans to settle in England with her daughter along with Grandie. Fingal and Clare will marry and go to Canada together. Mrs Goulding will keep working on the estate with James Furay. Everything seems to be resolved. Towards the end of the play, Madeleine leaves the house to talk to the Colonel about the estate and Grandie and Berkeley are left alone in the room. While Grandie is singing and Berkeley is reading a letter, Grandie stops singing and starts looking at the mirror as if there is something there. Berkeley becomes aware of this and starts looking at Grandie and the lights gradually fade.

Because the setting in the play is nineteenth-century Ascendancy Ireland, it is significant to look at the representation of the Ascendancy and their relationship with the Irish in the play. Taking into consideration this historical trajectory and the relationship of the Anglo-Irish and Irish Catholics, the landlords and the tenants respectively as mentioned before, the tension and conflicts of colonialism are apparent in the play. However, the Lambrokes are not portrayed as evil in this story. Lady Lambroke is heartbroken as she cannot look after her tenants who suffer under this

economic catastrophe and die when the terrace of houses collapses. The decline of the power of the Ascendancy and the subsequent unrest are observed throughout McPherson's play. Vera Kreilkamp states that the Big House "was built on land usually expropriated by men and women who considered themselves Irish, but who were caught between two countries and two identities, separated from their tenants not only by class, but by religion, language, and national origin as well" (7). The relationship between the Lambrokes and the Irish employees and tenants on their estate reflects this dichotomy. Especially the relationship of Madeleine and Fingal portrays these political conflicts and dichotomies as Fingal is a loyal estate manager who has not been paid for many months, yet still, he works hard to help Madeleine and the management of the estate. Despite his being an Irish Catholic, he becomes a devoted helper in this Anglo-Irish household. However, he is confronted by hostile gazes and assaults by the town's people because he serves the Ascendancy. He says: "I'm neither one thing nor the other any more. Each side rejects you and everyone is suspicious" (*The Veil* I.239). Because of his love for Madeleine, he chooses to stay with her and for this, he is deemed as a traitor by the Irish people. Eventually, he bursts out his frustration to Madeleine and says:

You never think how hard it is for me. To have to show my face in Jamestown!  
Even my own family are ashamed of me! They hate me all round the country all  
around here because of my loyalty to you. No one respects me. But I stay. [...] I  
walk around with no money in my pockets, it doesn't matter, the locals and their  
keepers laugh at me, it doesn't matter. (II.297)

The complex and ambiguous position of Fingal in the Ascendancy Ireland, the economic decline and the problematic relationship of the Irish with the Ascendancy define the spirit of the age. And the Big House becomes the symbol of this spirit exposing various dynamics in the play.

The play, thus, characterises "a house haunted by history, a situation represented by way of undead spectres that, notably, elicit desire and/or dread" (Davison, *History of the Gothic* 51). The Big House becomes a vehicle to delve into this dreadful and ambiguous history and circumstances of the people living in and outside of the house. By setting the play in a haunting and haunted house, as Stephen Carleton states, "McPherson uses the postcolonial Gothic here to remind contemporary audiences of this multi-tiered history of colonisation that still presumably haunts the modern Irish nation state" (14).

The troubled Irish history intertwined with British colonialism which impaired Ireland in various ways from culture to language is what McPherson thinks has ruined the Irish psyche that remains forever haunted by them. For this reason, his historical trajectory aims to make sense of the present Ireland in the aftermath of the economic crisis during the early twenty-first century.

Furthermore, nineteenth-century Ireland was characterised by economic and political turmoil and one of the reasons for this was the failure of the harvests triggering poverty and also enmity towards the British government. Particularly because of their sole reliance on potatoes, “[b]eginning in the 1820s, Ireland experienced a series of famines, culminating in the ‘holocaust’ of the 1840s” (McCaffrey 55). So, the nineteenth century was particularly a difficult period for Irish society as their agricultural structure was forcing them into more poverty. In 1845, the Great Famine caused a huge amount of deaths and emigration, thereby contributing to the nationalist agenda of the Irish against the British. As a consequence of the famine, “[a]lmost a million people died from starvation and associated disease [...]. Irish speaking areas were among the hardest hit, with the result that only a quarter of the population was recorded as speaking the language after 1851” (Kiberd 21). Starvation, diseases and ongoing poverty dominated the period and transformed Ireland to a great extent. As R. F. Foster explains further, the famine “was seen as a watershed in Irish history, creating new conditions of demographic decline, large-scale emigration, altered farming structures and new economic policies, not to mention an institutionalized Anglophobia among the Irish at home and abroad” (318). Famine and subsequent emigration crippled Ireland for more than a hundred years in terms of economy, population, language and politics. All these traumatised the Irish society for a very long time and their impact can still be seen in the present.

Furthermore, McPherson points out some crop failures in the play. People cannot pay their rents and there is a foreboding of an upcoming famine as it is told that “[t]he meagre crop has failed again” (*The Veil* I.230). Because of the unpaying tenants, Madeleine also cannot pay her employees like Fingal who has not been paid for 13 months. Clare, the housekeeper, has been already saving some money to go to Ontario for a better life. At the end of the play, Fingal and Clare are going to emigrate to

Ontario. As Claire Allfree states, “[h]ints of the supernatural abound in an historically rich piece in which the Irish famine as good as comes knocking at the window, a decision prompted in part by Ireland’s recent catastrophic ricocheting from boom to being hauled before the International Monetary Fund” (“Conor McPherson”). The deprivation, dispossession and emigration as the realities of nineteenth-century Ireland are correlated with twenty-first-century Ireland in the post-Celtic Tiger period. These trigger the Gothic impact more by being accompanied by the supernatural and the séances which unveil the apparent economic distress and deterioration.

Furthermore, Gothic landscapes become one of the Gothic tropes as they provide spiritual and ghastly materials to unveil and discuss the relevant issues. In *The Veil*, Ireland as a geographical space is deemed to be rife with such spirituality that cannot be found in England. Throughout the play, the playwright makes the metaphysical aspects of Ireland visible to the reader/audience through the characters. When Audelle goes to visit the Queen’s Tomb, he says: “laying my hand upon those prehistoric stones induced a sense of connectedness to the mysterious ancestors of this place, the sheer ... force of which I had never experienced before” (*The Veil* II.262). Besides, Audelle also distinguishes London and Ireland in the way that “while the city of London will present the ghoulish at every corner, a true doorway to the eternal seems to demand the spiritual quietude and awesomeness as only desolate places such as Ireland may possess” (I.243). Thus, as Stephen Carleton highlights, “McPherson’s project is [...] closely aligned to the postcolonial Gothic practice of honouring pre-imperial indigenous mythology and attachment to landscape” (10). In this sense, McPherson emphasises the cultural and mythical essence of Irish culture as opposed to British culture, thus preserving and maybe celebrating their cultural identity and heritage. In the play, this Gothicised landscape created by McPherson lays the ground for the characters to express themselves or discover themselves in this sense because “[t]he Gothic is a distorting lens, a magnifying lens” (Punter, *Literature of Terror* 98) allowing to grasp the reality in a literal sense. The haunting and haunted Big House in a spiritually rich space like the Irish landscape provides both distorting and magnifying functions through which McPherson delves into the stories of the characters.

McPherson started the writing process of *The Veil* in the wake of the collapse of the Celtic Tiger and witnessed the impoverishment of Irish society after remarkable economic success. Considering this economic transition, in his interview with Claire Allfree, McPherson says:

It got me thinking: just what is this glitch in our psyche that's got us back to this state of poverty? [...] It's almost as though we were happier being bankrupt, as though being the victim is the most comfortable place to be for a country that was colonized. I've always felt very free of history, but now I'm older I feel we have to deal with these generational psychoses and traumas. ("Conor McPherson Lifts the Veil").

In this regard, poverty is one of the topics that he deals with in the play and it turns out to be a kind of local colour like emigration in the history of Ireland. The sudden transitions in the history of Ireland from the mid-1990s led the playwright to look into the origin and extension of the troubled Irish psyche in the aftermath of the Celtic Tiger.

In *The Veil*, the extremity of poverty is conveyed through the stories of the characters. When Berkeley and Audelle arrive in Jamestown, they witness the poor conditions of the people. Berkeley describes the people as follows: "Desperate men and women suddenly descended upon our coach. So numerous were the pale hands outstretched towards us, it was only later I understood that an insensible infant thrust before me by a cadaverous wild-eyed woman must surely have been deceased ..." (*The Veil* I.229). The depiction of the woman indicates their desperate and helpless conditions turning them into living dead as they are alive yet ghoulish. Poverty and starvation dehumanise these people into being zombie-like figures and they are depicted as "poor wretches" (I.239). Audelle also mentions the dreadful conditions people are living in Jamestown. He tells about the night that they spent in "a ghastly inn" (I.243) as follows:

Nothing stirred in the street outside. The only sound was the hollow ticking of a clock in the hallway. Dear Lord. After a few restless, frozen hours in a narrow beside your kicking cousin, the Reverend, I went for a dawn walk that burnt my skin raw. Where the street ended and became countryside was the brick wall of the workhouse and a crowd of haggard-looking men and women turned to look at me with such alien ferocity I thought that should I ever myself stranded here, I'd blow my brains out. Now, there's a thought. (I.243)

Desolate streets and hollow sounds create an atmosphere of suspense and terror, thereby transferring the eeriness of the night to the group of weary and ferocious people who are

probably terribly emaciated and as dreadful as the night itself. The cosy atmosphere of the Big House and the daunting outside world are thus contrasted and Audelle's narration sounds like a ghost story that is being told by the fireside. This Gothic tension and atmosphere, thus, contribute to the impoverished and dehumanised circumstances of these people.

In the play, there are no literal zombies; however, the descriptions of the abovementioned haggard people recall the images of zombies as the prevalent monstrous figures of the twenty-first-century Gothic. As Catherine Spooner argues, "zombies have become the ultimate means of investigating and exploring a number of pressing contemporary questions, not least of which is what it means to be human" ("Twenty-First-Century Gothic" 184). The destitute conditions of these poor people in the play are projected through their zombie-like states. Xavier Aldana Reyes also marks that in contemporary Gothic, despite "their romantic potential, [zombies'] rotting bodies, contagious nature and ontological status (neither fully living nor fully dead) have ensured they remain subjects of horror and abjection" ("Contemporary Zombies" 89). Because the boundary between the living and the dead is blurred, the zombies elicit horror and are deemed as abject figures in the Kristevian sense since they are uncanny creatures unsettling the realms of the known and unknown worlds. Besides, taking into consideration that the origins of the zombies are in Haitian culture, the zombies are dehumanised slaves and, therefore, the creatures of the capitalist system. As Keohane and Kuhling argue, "[t]he zombie is the proletarian subject of the dawn of the dead as the age of global total capitalism" (140). In this sense, these cadaverous people in the play, with their bodily decay and dehumanisation, correlate with the zombies. For this reason, these zombified figures create "a scene of horrific, gross corporeality" (Townsend, "Introduction" xxvi) in the play. This corporeality accentuates their circumstances better, thus revealing the impacts of poverty as they probably have no lands or houses and have to linger in the streets. Moreover, nineteenth-century Ireland was under the control of Britain; therefore, the Irish were already deprived of their autonomous power and in this regard, it can be claimed that Ireland became a zombified land created by Britain despite the ongoing Irish struggle. This can also be associated with the twenty-first-century Irish society which was cannibalised by the zombie bank like the insolvent Anglo-Irish Bank which engaged in a reckless lending during the

housing boom (Kirby, “When Banks Cannibalize” 260) and by global capitalism. In this regard, as a result of the economic collapse, the haunting financial impacts of the colonial past were evoked in contemporary Ireland. Regarding contemporary Ireland in the aftermath of the Celtic Tiger, – even throughout the Celtic Tiger period as there was a huge division between the rich and the poor – poverty has been the ongoing problem of Irish society and McPherson obviously questions and depicts how it creates such dehumanised figures while pointing at the system causing these sufferings.

One of the basic features of the Gothic is the return of the past or the repressed which erupts into the present mostly through bizarre, wild, or supernatural ways. Its eruption in the present, thus, creates a kind of uncanniness which in turn leads to terror and horror along with suspense. In this play, this kind of effect is achieved by séances when the buried things and devastating circumstances come to light. Hannah possesses a kind of spiritual power through which she may summon ghosts or hear voices. It is understood that all these started with her father’s suicide. Hannah found him hanging himself from the brace over the mirror when she was nine or ten. So, this must have been an extremely traumatic moment. As Lisa Fitzpatrick states, “the uncanny is materialized in the character of the young bride, whose betrothed status makes her a liminal character. She is thus enabled to move in the shadowy gaps between the natural world, and the hints of a supernatural landscape that lies just beyond it” (173). As a liminal character, she possesses an ability to reveal what has been hidden and repressed. Considering her uncanny liminality, séances open up the invisible realms so as to disclose what is happening in reality such as the destitute conditions of the tenants, the economic collapse of the Big House, the anxieties related to the marriage arrangement with an obscure future and a regrettable past.

The first séance is randomly yet consciously driven by Reverend Berkeley and his friend Audelle. These characters have some ulterior motives in helping Hannah as both are interested in spiritual matters, especially “a visit from the beyond” (*The Veil* I.251), and want to conduct a séance with Hannah. Although Madeleine tries to resist such an occasion, Berkeley enthusiastically drives all of them into a séance under the guise of prayer. He believes there is an entrapped spirit in the house and he thinks that it is Edward, Hannah’s father. Just as he asks, “[t]ell us, traveller, what do you want here?

What is the nature of your plight? Tell us, in the name of Almighty God, what time are you lost in? (*Pause.*) Who is there?" (I.253), a very loud noise is heard "*like a gunshot over their heads. It seems to blow the room apart with its sonic impact. Their drinks go flying, cups are dropped. Each instinctively cries out and cowers...*" (I.253) as the stage direction reads. Everyone is immensely frightened by the prospect of what is happening. Then, a constable appears at the door to inform that the terrace of houses has collapsed and families are trapped under the rubble. The housekeeper Mrs Goulding's reaction actually shows the horrible psychological impact of this news as she exclaims in a tone of dismay: "What have we done?" (I.255). She sounds as if they themselves have opened the gate to the unknown realm and let things materialise on earth or as if they have disturbed nature. Hannah feels the same and regrets what has happened. She believes all this could be related to their séance, as she says: "[P]eople have died, Mr Audelle, children have died, in property we owned and we heard something like a thunderclap here while we were ... we were ... Well ... whatever we were doing. I haven't slept since" (I.256). Thus, the output of the séance brings the social reality into the scene as the Big House owners cannot take care of their tenants and the tenants are living in harsh and deplorable conditions.

As David Punter argues, "Gothic in general is strewn with ruins, endlessly attentive to the 'other' stories that can be told about national and cultural monuments" ("Scottish and Irish Gothic" 122). The collapse of the Big House and the literal collapse of the houses on the Lambroke estate are correlated so as to signify the decline of the power of the Ascendancy while pointing at the harsh conditions in which the Irish tenants are living. The ruins of the declining estate create a Gothicised landscape evoking the past and the present at the same time as "a signpost of memento mori that engendered a melancholic response to the impermanence of human effort and the vicissitudes of history" (Davison, *History of the Gothic* 51). Ruins bespeak the disruption of the power structure and become the haunting relics of the future to summon the spirits of the past. It operates in the same way as the haunted house since they remain in the past and cannot redeem themselves from their ghosts until a certain confrontation or resolution. The Big House of the play is already haunted and is about to fall apart financially, and the ruins of the houses symbolise the economic decline within the household.

Reverend Berkeley considers Hannah's spirituality as a gift to cherish (*The Veil* II.263). For this reason, he and Audelle convince her to undertake another séance "in order to dispel the terror visited upon [her] by the voices [she] ha[s] perceived here in this house, [...] [and] through the medium of a séance, to reconsider them in this light: and thereby uncover the divine within [herself]" (II.264). This time their séance appears more professional accompanied by a cord of crucifix with feathers and stones. During Berkeley's prayer, the rattling window, the noise of "*furniture being dragged across a room above them*" (II.267), then again, some other noise of moving objects and, in the end, a thud are heard. All these paranormal occurrences increase the Gothic atmosphere, thus creating a sense of fear and horror in the room. Suddenly Hannah starts singing a song and then asks to see her daughter. She becomes hysterical and claims that "[t]hey've locked [her] in!" (II.269) while Berkeley tries to exorcise her and demands the spirit to leave the room as he assumes that it is Edward, Hannah's father who has possessed Hannah. In the meantime, while they are trying to restrain Hannah from going out of the room, Grandie who is suffering from Alzheimer is also disturbed by the ongoing turmoil and tries to move towards the hallway and beats Audelle who tries to stop her. In the midst of this chaos, while Berkeley tries to soothe Hannah, the door is opened and Audelle sees a small child "*with a pale face and dark eyes*" (II.270) who looks at him for a moment, then leaves. Grandie also sees what has happened and stares at Audelle. When Audelle meets her eyes, Grandie begins to scream and laugh at him, as the stage direction says, "*as though she knows he has just seen a ghost and is mocking him. She hits him with a stick*" (II.271). Finally, Madeleine enters the room, interrupting this chaotic scene. The next day, it is revealed that an infant was found in the rubble which was foreshadowed by the child seen in the séance.

The ghostly appearance in the séance demonstrates that the line between the realms of the dead and the living is bridged yet violated, which functions to uncover the troubles and the repressed past, traumas and desires. As Andrew Smith argues, "[g]hosts are [...] projections of our innermost anxieties and this blurring of physical and psychological realities becomes reworked in Freud's idea that the self is ghosted by the subconscious" ("Hauntings" 148). In the play, each character is haunted by their anxieties and fears which reveal themselves in the most violent or immaterialised ways like ghosts. As Avril Horner explains, "the Gothic mode feeds off the horror of traumatic situations for

plot while trauma narratives are often structured through Gothic effects in order to convey a sense of haunting, of matters unresolved, of the past intruding into the present [...]” (36). In this regard, the sense of haunting indicates the characters’ problematic connection to the past and their traumas. Following this séance, Hannah happens to believe as follows: “I have never seen the past. I saw that the child I have heard crying here is my child, the child I will never know because I will perish bringing it into the world” (II.293) and “I would forever wander looking for my baby. I have seen what eternity holds for me” (II.294). She thinks she is going to be locked up in a room, which could refer to her coffin or burial. Considering her circumstances, she is buried alive and she feels the suffocating impact of this experience. For this reason, she does not want to go to England to marry the Marquis. Live burial is one of the Gothic tropes put forward by Sedgwick, as mentioned before. The horror of confinement and sexual anxieties – as her prospective husband made a widow pregnant and both the woman and the child died, and her prospective father-in-love is fond of her more than his son – finds expression in the trope of live burial. Besides, the live burial of the tenants under the crumbled houses may become relevant in this context as a premonition of her future.

Hannah is the lady in distress from the very beginning of the play. She is expected to marry the Marquis in England for the sake of the estate. Since marriage is an economic contract between the families to improve their current life in despair and bankruptcy, Hannah feels anxious from the beginning as she does not know the man she is going to marry and is worried about the life she will have in England. For these reasons, she feels trapped within the system which does not provide her much. However, it is believed by many characters in the play that this marriage “would be the envy of any English girl, let alone an Irish girl who lives where the prospect of a decent match is remote” (*The Veil* I.235). Considering her situation, instead of an oppressive father which is common in the Gothic narratives, there is an oppressive mother figure who forces her daughter into an unloving marriage, though for the wellbeing of her daughter as well as her estate. When Hannah utters her anxieties about her husband-to-be who does not love her and about his father who admires Hannah maybe more than normal, Madeleine explodes in anger: “So what, you will you remain here at Mount Prospect with its endless debts, enduring the hatred of those who rent your holdings, until you too are finally turfed out? You will be alone for ever – stigmatised as a bumpkin from the

colonies whose only dowry is the odour of our failure!” (I.236). Both Madeleine and Hannah become the victims of the failed colonial system though, ironically, they are the ones victimising the others within the context of the colonial system. Madeleine’s marriage was also an arranged marriage at a very early age like Hannah’s. Madeleine understands that they have limited powers and opportunities in life as women. As Robert Tracy points out, in “[t]he Gothic tradition, [...] the heroine is usually threatened with sexual possession and the loss of her property” (17). Both Madeleine and Hannah are confronted with the loss of their possession, namely their estate; furthermore, their class status is on the wane as their economic power is gradually fading. In addition to the fear of dispossession, an implication of incest is made by Hannah as it is not her husband-to-be but “[i]t is his father who is attached to [her]” (I.235). Hannah is disturbed by the male gaze of her prospective father-in-law, as she says: “All the time we were there the old man’s eyes followed me like black holes of insensible longing, while the Marquis spoke to me only of dogs and guns. When he deigned to actually ask me anything my answers were greeted with a decidedly unenthusiastic silence” (I.236). Her anxieties about marriage and potentially terrifying future in England, thus, trigger her spiritual alertness; hence, voices and ghosts manifest her restless mind and psychology.

In the séance scene, it is also revealed that Audelle’s past bears some devastating details that he probably tries to forget by taking laudanum. When he met his wife, he seemed to be infatuated by her very much. But their subsequent domestic life exhausted him as he lost interest in his wife, as he says: “[O]ne morning I looked into my wife’s face at breakfast and I realised I could no longer see into the eternal” (I.259) in her eyes, yet he could see the eternal in other women’s eyes. Then he abandoned his wife and their child. One night, his wife “had walked several miles in the rain with the child to find [him]” (I.259) and he continues to say: “I thought I had heard her voice below the window while I lay deep beneath the blankets. But I... I was... The facts are that the child passed some days afterward – not that night” (I.259). Because of what he did and what happened, Audelle tried to commit suicide, yet thanks to the Reverend, he is still alive even though he takes laudanum probably to relieve himself from the agony of his past. In the séance scene, Hannah thinks she saw her future. However, Audelle thinks it is not her future or her child that she saw in her trance, but it is his own past and his

own child whom he abandoned. Audelle explains as follows: “The locked room is this moment I may never escape from. The child you hear crying is the ever waking dream child whose sobs I dose myself to quiet. She is the child I abandoned. Such is your gift, you saw Hell, Miss Hannah. But it was my Hell” (II.298). It seems that since then he has been haunted by the image of his deceased child and taking laudanum helps to soothe his troubled mental state. Like Hannah’s past trauma and marriage anxieties and unknown future, Audelle’s past is projected through this ghost child who echoes the past that Audelle tries to forget, along with his suffering and repentance. The collapse of the terrace of houses, in this sense, interconnects the downfall of Audelle and Hannah.

The tomb scene is the last piece to dissolve all the dynamics and provide an outlet for the characters to reach a kind of resolution. On her last night at Lambroke’s house, Hannah tells everyone that she does not want to marry because of what happened during the séance. In this scene, Fingal claims that Audelle defiled her at the Queen’s Tomb where Hannah was seen crying and running from the tomb and being chased by Audelle; therefore, Fingal believes that this is the reason why Hannah does not want to go to England. In reality, Hannah took Audelle to see the tomb but when she approached the tomb while Audelle was out of sight for some time, she saw a man and a woman watching her at the entrance of the tomb. When she called for Audelle to tell him that they were not alone, these figures walked towards her staggeringly. Then she realised that these were the corpses of herself and Audelle. Following this uncanny occurrence, she began to run back towards the road and was followed by Audelle.

This supernatural experience at the tomb demonstrates that both Hannah and Audelle have absolved their ghosts which were materialised in the tomb. The corpses she saw could be taken as metaphors for their fears and anxieties of the past and the past-infected present. Hannah has seen their haunted selves, the abject in the Kristevian sense. As Anne-Kathrin Braun states, “[t]he abject as a structural concept and its real placeholders thus always point towards a repressed part of our affective identity, namely the unacceptable desire for the maternal body, for dissolution, for whatever we have to expel from our bodily and psychic selves” (201). Therefore, the appearance of the corpses becomes a triggering point to achieve a resolution for everyone. It is indeed the expulsion from “psychic selves” which have been unsettling Hannah and Audelle for so

long since they need to confront what they try to repress. Hannah's future anxieties and her traumatic past, and Audelle's miserable past come to the surface as distorted images in the form of the corpses or zombies referring to their living dead conditions. As P. R. Backscheider argues, "the gothic concentrates attention on the soul in agony, one at war with itself" (201). In this sense, to compromise their agonies, Hannah and Audelle have to discharge their extreme emotions, fears and anxieties. Thus, the dissolution of the characters into ghastly figures like ghosts, corpses or zombies allows them to return to the core of their problems or their unresolved and haunting pasts.

Throughout the play, it is observed that nearly every character is haunted by the past, some person or the prospective future. For instance, Madeleine cannot eradicate the haunting presence of her husband at the house and in her life. She thinks that Edward

got out. And yet he lives. And he will live whenever I live as long as I am alive. But not because he is trapped. What lives is my knowledge that what happened to him was all a stupid mistake. It was a mistake, but every single I [*sic*] day I believe I might somehow reach out and correct it – but I can't! Don't you see that? I can't. (II.283)

Madeleine has been haunted by her husband since his death. Even while he was alive, Madeleine still had to deal with his mental disturbance. So, she did not have a comfortable life as she was trapped in her marriage life and then in this Big House. Madeleine regrets not having kept Edward safe and restrained adequately within the house as he committed suicide. Besides, Hannah witnessed her father's suicide; for this reason, she is also haunted by the image of her father. Also, for Berkeley, Edward's spirit still wanders in the house because he has been trapped there. Although Madeleine does not particularly verbalise anything about this issue, maybe she, too, feels that Edward's haunting presence always lingers in the house. On the other hand, because of her traumatic experience, Hannah thinks she will share the same fate with her father as she says: "I know now there is something real, something waiting for me, calling for me to do what my father did" (I.259). Hannah is restless and disturbed by the things she hears and sees. Her father's mental disturbance seems to be passed on to her. It is not only her father but also the marriage prospect that haunts her from the beginning. So, she is haunted by both the future and the past. The unknown future with an unloving husband makes it difficult for Hannah to hold on to life because she feels trapped in this

socio-economic system. It is the same for Audelle as well. He has been haunted by his regrettable past where he abandoned his wife and child, thereby being complicit in the death of his child. Even Fingal has been haunted by his unrequited love for Madeleine resulting in his not belonging anywhere in the society as he is othered and marginalised by the Irish society since he serves the Ascendancy with such devoted loyalty. All these characters experience a kind of eruption of feelings throughout the play. As Punter states, “the Gothic is especially powerful in rendering the complex hauntings in such conflicted histories” (“Scottish and Irish Gothic” 105). Thus, the repressed, the past and the traumas come to life in the forms of ghosts, corpses, or presences to unveil the characters’ true nature.

The title itself refers to something uncanny which needs to be revealed as the séances help unfold the past, the anxieties and the traumas. In the play, Mrs Goulding, the housekeeper, refers to Daniel O’Connell’s (1775-1847) speech at Loughferry: “‘It will take a strong draught to blow back the veil of confusion!’” (*The Veil* I.245) surrounding Ireland. ‘The veil of confusion’ suggests the play’s title. The veil imagery is utilised in the context of the political turmoil of nineteenth-century Ireland with reference to O’Connell and the revolutionaries who commit some militant actions in the background of the play, as Berkeley points out, “[t]he bridge was half destroyed by so-called revolutionaries” (I.229). Thus, the atmosphere of political unrest and instability in Ireland is brought to the fore.

In this regard, it is important to briefly touch upon the political unrest in this era. The most influential rebellion in Irish history in terms of the construction of nationalist ideology was the Irish Rebellion of 1798 which, as Mike Cronin describes, “was a landmark for the development of an Irish nationalist psyche” (113). The rebellion “saw the emergence of a new and much more radical republican nationalism determined to sever the link with Britain and committed to establishing an Irish republic that would extend civil and religious liberties to Irish Catholics” (Cleary 38) and this resulted in the Act of Union in 1801. The British increased their control over Ireland through the Union which would guarantee their dominion. Yet the Union did not redress the resentments of the Irish because it did not implement Catholic emancipation. From the late eighteenth century to the nineteenth century, the revolutions, namely the American

and French Revolutions and the Napoleonic Wars channelled the Irish revolutionary current by fuelling “the twin ideologies of republican separatism and unionism” (Barlett 74). Sectarian turmoil, agrarian disturbances and rebellions as well as the demands for and actions towards political rights dominated the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries while the Ascendancy began to lose their hegemonic power over the Irish Catholics. While the emancipation of the Catholic Irish was resisted by the British government, sectarian violence and rebellions further intensified. Eventually, the Emancipation Act of 1829 passed with the efforts of O’Connell and the Irish Catholics achieved their right to sit in the parliament, which led O’Connell to be known as the Liberator, as he tried vigorously to attain Catholic emancipation.

Considering the political turmoil of Ireland in the nineteenth century, Terry Eagleton defines the Ireland of this period as follows: “Violent, criminal, priest-ridden, autocratic, full of mouldering ruins and religious fanaticism, it was a society ripe for Gothic treatment, having much of that literary paraphernalia conveniently to hand” (188). Also, Jim Hansen argues that “[t]he [Gothic] genre itself becomes a space in which the Irish cultural imaginary pits the dichotomous logic of terror against the troubles provoked by the unhappy Union” (22). Nineteenth-century Ireland embodies Gothicism through its colonial legacy which has influenced its history, geography and culture, thus naturally fostering the Gothic. Therefore, for McPherson, the Gothic cusp, which refers to a historical and social transition as Robert Miles mentioned before, is the nineteenth century when there were traumatic transitions in Ireland. Jarlath Killeen argues further that “[t]he Gothic is located at this historical juncture as it is a product of a society that is seeking to heal itself from the crisis involved in such a traumatic transition where the traditional has been supposedly superseded” (*The Emergence of Irish Gothic* 23). For Ireland, the nineteenth century is this historical juncture which McPherson goes back to and delves into and which becomes the ghost from the past haunting the present.

In this context, in the play Eamonn Jordan sees Daniel O’Connell as a haunting figure in shaping the future of Ireland as he says: “O’Connell’s voice of protest helped define the future of Ireland, and he, like the other indigenous characters who die in the building collapse, haunt [*The Veil*]” (*The Theatre and Films* 105). O’Connell is significant

because he helped to remove a political and religious obstacle, or veil, within Irish history, which is directly associated with the play's title. In this respect, the title of the play represents irony in relation to the theme of revelation. *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the veil as “[s]omething which conceals, covers, or hides in the manner of a veil; a disguising or obscuring medium or influence; a cloak, mask, or screen” (“Veil”). So, the word signifies a sense of concealment. However, it is ironic that the play focuses on revelations and confessions. The stories of each character are veiled but everything finally comes to light. A revelation must occur so as to make the haunted and the haunting lift their veil because ghosts are the hidden remnants of the past and will be of the future if they are not confronted. Also, the supernatural is deployed as a catalyst to reveal these veiled stories. In this regard, McPherson's “tales, when they come, are confessions, or unintended revelations of the narrator's psyche, or attempts to impress and dominate, or ways of facing painful truths, or some combination of those things” (Nightingale, “Fear, Apathy, Regret”). In the Gothic narratives, the veil, a literal piece of cloth, is employed as “an essential vehicle [...] because its obscuring of the ‘real’ enables the masking of both identities and motivations as well as a troubling of the boundaries between the Other, the protagonists' own inner darkness, and the realism of virtuous, normalized society” (Foster, “Estranged by the Veil” 14). Therefore, the literal and figurative meanings of the veil are exploited by the playwright to cover and uncover the circumstances of the society and the individual by unsettling the boundaries. McPherson makes use of the veil as an ironic vehicle to demonstrate the intersection of nineteenth and twenty-first-century Ireland.

Furthermore, throughout the play, the mirror becomes a prevalent Gothic trope disclosing the past and serving as a projection of some concerns and fears. Hannah's father hanged himself from the brace above the mirror. Grandie tells a story of a king with mirrors in his eyes who told her that St Patrick was a gold prospector and converted people to Christianity, thereby discarding the pagan belief of Ireland. Audelle's story of his wife also bears another mirror imagery. When Audelle looked at her eyes, he thought he “was looking *through* her eyes into something so meaningful that [he] swore that somehow [he] could behold God there” (*The Veil* I.258, italics in orig.). Berkeley also thinks: “[W]hen we look at each other, just as I am looking at you now, it is as though God is looking at Himself in a mirror. And each eye, the beholder

and the beheld, reflect the other back and forth as mirrors do, into a kind of genuine infinity. The infinity of God” (II.264). Lastly, at the end of the play, Grandie is looking at the mirror as if something is at present there. Berkeley realises something is happening and starts observing Grandie as if there is really something there; thus the play ends with a sense of an uncanny feeling or presence. In this regard, the play starts with a mirror and ends with a mirror. To see or not to see is the focal point of the play which is intertwined with the title itself. The mirror seems to show a kind of reflection, maybe an illusion rather than reality which is the veil of glass. The title and mirror imagery complement each other in this sense. The characters need to unveil the cataract in their eyes in order to see through and live on. The mirror, thus, functions to project one’s nature, fears and anxieties. Lorna Piatti-Farnell argues that

[t]he ‘Gothic mirror’ is a distortion of the human, a re-evaluation of the known; in the reflection, the familiar become [*sic*] unfamiliar, the known becomes unknown, the certain merges with the uncertain. [...] Inevitably, the mirror allows discourses of terror and horror to be filtered through the challenge of answering one fundamental question: what is real? (“Gothic Reflections” 180)

The mirror itself is an uncanny object, “for it threatens to break the boundaries of not only the physical body, but also of the self” (180). By embellishing the whole play with mirror imagery, McPherson manifests uncanny reflections of the individuals and the society. The mirror creates doubles, another reflection of the self or society and that is how Ireland can be seen through this distorted reflection extending towards twenty-first century Ireland.

McPherson states in his interview with Sarah Hemming that

[t]here’s something in the Irish psyche which is very self-destructive, full of self-doubt. [...] So it seems like we should know who we are – and yet there’s an awful lot of conflict and self-doubt and people trying to figure it out. And in the last 20 years we’ve been on a mad rollercoaster ride. That’s sort of who we are. A lot of Irish plays reflect on that. (“The Ghost Writer”)

What McPherson refers to is that personal traumas are integrated with macro-narratives of the country haunted by the past. In postcolonial Gothic, “[w]hat has been kept hidden as a personal trauma caused by historical events can, in the *unhomely* moment, be brought to the surface to make visible the link between that personal tragedy and a wider political reality” (Rudd 73, italics in orig.). McPherson’s inquiry into the

individuals' past and into history is to investigate the origin of the troubled circumstances of the present for the Irish, as mentioned before. Regarding the correlation between nineteenth-century Ireland and twenty-first-century Ireland, McPherson presents a continuous haunting narrative. Eamonn Jordan emphasises that “the recession-related plays [like *The Veil*] are directly connected to houses and living quarters, belonging, sanctuary, dispossession and eviction” (*The Theatre and Films* 14) all of which were also present in nineteenth-century Ireland. Twenty-first-century Ireland deals with these problems all of which bring back the memories of the past and the economic hardships. Keohane and Kuhling assess twenty-first-century Ireland, especially in 2011, as follows: “[N]ational sovereignty is eclipsed and Ireland becomes a neo-feudal fiefdom, a neo-colony of bonded tax-serfs paying tribute to a global elite of senior bondholders, a new absentee aristocracy of bankers and multinational corporations” (145). Neo-colonialism thus becomes a new overlord of Ireland and the ghosts of the past come back to haunt Ireland once more. The Big House in this sense is incarnated as the neo-colonial economic force in contemporary Ireland.

As observed throughout the play, some of the traditional Gothic tropes continue in the twenty-first century such as the haunted house, the troubled and oppressed heroine, the supernatural events, the ghosts or the return of the dead, incest and madness which are exploited by McPherson. McPherson also utilises the traditional Gothic atmosphere by creating scenes of terror and horror like the abrupt bangs or sounds. The image of the Gothic ruins dominating the play is also significant in portraying the shattered power of the Ascendancy. Considering these, McPherson mostly makes use of the traditional Gothic tropes in the play.

Moreover, McPherson sets his play in the nineteenth century, the period of the Ascendancy, to look into the past traumas of the Irish. Though most of the Big Houses were destroyed in the early twentieth century, their haunting ruins from the past demonstrate the ongoing traumas that exist in the Irish society. McPherson, thus, makes use of the Big House tropes by setting his play in a Big House and employing a powerful mother figure instead of the absentee lord, or the oppressive patriarch of the typical Gothic narratives. Instead of the typical Gothic castle, the Big House, thus, provides the Gothic entrapment and the return of the repressed psyche. Thus, the

playwright turns the Big House into a Gothic mirror to comprehend the past in order to understand the present. In this sense, nineteenth-century Ireland becomes the reflection of the present state of Ireland.

Considering McPherson's place in the twenty-first century Gothic, he creates a portrait of a zombified Ireland and Irish. In the play, the impoverished circumstances of nineteenth-century Ireland turning people into zombified figures and the consequences of the economic decline in the early twenty-first century like the ghost estates and zombie banks are tightly correlated. The destitute, alienated and dispossessed figures of the past still linger in contemporary Ireland, on the land of these ghostly estates. Moreover, as depicted throughout the play, different from the traditional Gothic features and within the scope of the Irish Gothic, Ireland is itself described as a Gothicised entity with its landscape, culture and beliefs. Because of its colonial legacy intertwined with the mystical beliefs of the Irish, the Gothic seems to be naturally embedded in Irish culture and literature. Yet the collapse of the Celtic Tiger economy brought about a literally haunted landscape replete with desolate houses. In this regard, McPherson deploys the contemporary Gothic constituting economic, postcolonial and global problems. In addition, McPherson makes use of the micro-traumas of the individuals to point out the poverty of contemporary Ireland as trauma narratives become an inevitable part of the twenty-first-century Gothic. As argued before, every age has its own Gothic since every age has its particular concerns. McPherson mostly exploits the conventional Gothic tropes, but his zombified vision of Ireland and haunting traumas situate him within the twenty-first-century Gothic.

In conclusion, as an early twenty-first-century Gothic play, *The Veil* reflects the socio-economic problems and traumas of Ireland after the collapse of the Celtic Tiger economy. As the title and the prevalent mirror imagery refer to, the playwright holds a mirror to the past and discusses how past traumas can still affect the present considering the correlation between nineteenth-century Ireland and twenty-first-century Ireland. Therefore, set in the nineteenth century, *The Veil* is a commentary on the ongoing impacts of colonial legacy in the present. In the post-Celtic Tiger period, as McPherson depicts, globalised and modern Ireland, though it had been expected to be flourishing,

was actually financially waning, thus growing into a zombified country with its Gothicised landscape.

Thus, this chapter evinces that Gothic drama still exists on the contemporary stage. While Gothic drama harnesses the typical Gothic tropes, it also adapts itself to its current context as McPherson, along with the traditional features of the genre, utilises contemporary features of the Gothic in *The Veil* to exhibit an uncanny picture of contemporary Ireland.

## CONCLUSION

This dissertation explores the Gothic in British and Irish drama from the late eighteenth to the early twenty-first centuries. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Gothic was a popular genre on the stage. From the Victorian Period to the mid-twentieth century, there was a decline in Gothic drama though it never disappeared entirely and could be found in various media. Although it proves challenging to find a typical Gothic drama on the contemporary stage, the Gothic exists through its display of horror, terror and the grotesque.

Earlier Gothic plays feature the established Gothic elements that originated in the novel genre as they were mostly inspired by and adapted from the novels, or from German works imported into Britain during the late eighteenth century. These plays constituted enclosed spaces like a castle or convent, the supernatural, the return of the dead, a villain and an oppressed heroine, terror and horror, incest, madness, excessiveness, usurpation, the sensational and a Gothic atmosphere. Because of a formulaic storyline, stereotypical characterisation and cliché themes, the Gothic was mostly criticised during the late eighteenth century. However, towards the turn of the century, the generic formula of the Gothic began to alter, thus paving the way for new forms of the Gothic. Some playwrights like Joanna Baillie and Lord Byron subverted generic features of the Gothic; thus, their distinctive utilisations of the Gothic distinguish them from the earlier Gothic writers. Moreover, the Gothic continued to evolve in the latter half of the twentieth century and early twenty-first century as can be observed in the plays of Snoo Wilson and Conor McPherson. Wilson and McPherson make use of the traditional Gothic while adopting some new Gothic features in their relevant plays. For this reason, this dissertation examines these plays, thus delving into the different expressions of the Gothic exerted by these playwrights.

Joanna Baillie and Lord Byron wrote their plays during the Romantic Period and both were influenced by the Gothic craze and Gothicised socio-political atmosphere of their ages. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were defined by economic, social and political impacts of revolutions, and wars with France as well as subsequent political oppression or sanctions carried out by the British government. Hence, it was a

period of various transitions in the society. Within this environment, Baillie and Byron both experimented with drama and proposed their own dramatic methods. While Baillie focuses on extreme passions and their consequences, Byron desires to appeal to the minds of the people through his “mental theatre.” They both prioritise the psychological and emotional circumstances of their characters and the Gothic becomes the expression of inner turmoil. Hence, it can be argued that Baillie and Byron transform the Gothic effect from the labyrinth of the castles into the labyrinth of the psyche in drama, thus leading to the emergence of the Byronic hero. Baillie lays the groundwork with her proto-Byronic hero, De Monfort while Lord Byron gives the Byronic hero his final form as well as his name.

Baillie’s *De Monfort* depicts the psychological state of De Monfort for whom adapting himself to a shifting class system is beyond the pale. The changing dynamics of the society push him over the edge. Impulsive and suppressive emotions and thoughts drive him into paranoia, thus creating a more claustrophobic space for him. Unlike the typical enclosed setting, the town is set as an alternative claustrophobic place which also depicts his dwindling aristocratic existence and this effect dominates the play. The terror of losing his social position turns into a horrid scene with his murderous act in the end. Thus, De Monfort’s anxieties and paranoia find expression in his *doppelgänger* Rezenvelt, thus projecting his split identity and mind while trying to hold on to his established order. The Gothic wanders on the edge of sanity and insanity, and reason and irrationality, thereby challenging and dissecting the boundaries of these dichotomies. In this regard, madness is one of the important themes of the Gothic. De Monfort oscillates between the above oppositions while being stifled by the dreadful Gothic atmosphere encircling him even though this atmosphere is created within his own mind. The supernatural emanates from the mind and becomes the reality for De Monfort. His oscillations actually bring De Monfort close to the Byronic hero as his extreme remorse and suffering distinguish him from the typical Gothic villain. Moreover, as a playwright contributing to the evolution of the Gothic, Baillie transforms the Gothic heroine from an oppressed heroine to a liberated one. Through her subversion of the female character, Baillie questions the norms of the day and the position of women in the society. Hence, Baillie’s radical portrayal of her characters makes her a distinguished playwright at the turn of the century. As observed, Baillie

does not employ the formulaic storyline of the earlier Gothics, but her play focuses on the incarceration of a male character. Therefore, Baillie not only subverts the genre but also brings a new perspective to the Gothic in terms of storyline, characterisation and thematisation. Thus, the playwright expands Gothic conventions.

As for Lord Byron, he presents another form of the Gothic in his play, *Manfred*. The play embodies the Byronic hero who evolved from the Gothic villain and became the typical rebellious character of the age who witnessed the impacts of the revolutions and Napoleonic Wars. Within a sublime setting, Byron makes use of the Faustian myth and Manfred tries to become a Promethean figure to be an ‘enlightener,’ thus questioning the limits of human beings. Considering the economic impacts of the Napoleonic Wars dominating this era, the growing demands for social, economic and political reforms concerning the harsh and poor circumstances of the working-class people, and the religious emancipation of the Irish, the ideas of liberty and reform define the early nineteenth century. Taking into consideration the politics in Britain at the time, Lord Byron did not achieve his aspirations to relieve the sufferings and promote the idea of liberation despite his attempts in the House of Lords. Manfred’s constant wanderings throughout the play can be analysed as a symbol of this failure and disillusionment. Besides, in the play, Lord Byron employs the mad scientist trope which differentiates him from the earlier Gothics, and also indicates that Mary Shelley and Lord Byron influenced each other in their ghost story competition as Shelley employs the same trope. This Gothic trope actually manifests the ideas and anxieties related to scientific progress and its consequences during the nineteenth century. Unlike the typical Gothic, science and Faustian achievements become the main sources of the Gothic effect and atmosphere.

These two first chapters show “a deep anxiety about the coherence of the modern subject” and “Gothic writers [like Baillie and Lord Byron] deliberately exploit the fear of the ‘Other’ encroaching upon the apparent safety of the post-Enlightenment world and the stability of the post-Enlightenment subject in order to achieve their effects” (Horner and Zlosnik 1). For the former playwright, the ‘other’ is the shifting class dynamics incarnate in Rezenvelt; for the latter playwright, the ‘other’ refers to a dissatisfaction with oneself and disillusionment with the age which failed to alleviate

the circumstances of people. These two chapters, thus, depict anxiety and fear related to the dichotomies of stability and instability, the traditional and unconventional within a shifting society and political arena.

After the 1820s, the Gothic continued mostly in adaptations or permeated into other forms like melodrama and sensation drama. From the mid-nineteenth century, Gothic drama was mostly in decline, unlike the *fin de siècle* Gothic novel. In the 1960s, the political upheavals of the age following two world wars and defined by liberation movements contributed to the revival of the Gothic. Though Gothic fiction flourished more than Gothic drama, the period witnessed the emergence of the Gothic in some plays as well, one of which is Snoo Wilson's *Vampire*. Regarding the fact that in the nineteenth century, vampires were widespread on the stage through adaptations from novels or penny dreadfuls, Wilson's vampire poses a novel vampiric figure that differs from the classical vampire figure – who also bears some features of the Byronic hero like aloofness, superiority complex and a mysterious and captivating attitude. Wilson portrays the vampires as symbolic figures to enforce the theme of continual oppression, as they enter and exit the stage at some specific moments rather than being active characters. At the end of the first act, a vampire comes and goes away taking one of the characters; in the second act, a baby vampire is born out of the chaos of the political and historical turmoil; and lastly, the Vampire as the character speaks up but only to accentuate his perpetual existence as systematic oppression has never ended like the everlasting life of a vampire. Thus, Wilson criticises the ongoing oppression lasting for years through his use of the vampire. Oppressive social, political and religious systems and norms and political figures are represented as vampires feeding off people and their sufferings. Besides, Wilson utilises the Victorian Period as a setting, functioning as a pivotal point for the juxtaposition of the past and the present. From the second half of the century onwards, the nineteenth century is situated as an 'other' to the present in Gothic writings as can be observed in *Vampire*. During this period, neo-Victorian Gothic became predominant and Wilson also made use of this new type of Gothic. The playwright creates claustrophobic bubbles by locating his characters in three historical settings, thereby enhancing their sense of oppression within a continual historical trajectory. His use of surrealism brings him close to the Gothic genre which also blurs the lines between reality and illusion by means of the supernatural or fantastic.

Especially Wilson's penchant for psychology, particularly Freud and Jung, allows him to explore the intricacies of the mind. Thus, his surreal scene intertwined with the Gothic elements creates a scene of confusion, delusion and tension, thus the hallucination or dream of the character further enhances the Gothic atmosphere. A sense of mystery, obscurity, terror and the supernatural can be observed in Wilson's surreal Gothic. Therefore, his surreal approach brings about a new terrain for a Gothicised environment by blurring the boundaries. In this regard, it can be claimed that Wilson introduces a new perspective to the Gothic play. In addition to surrealism and neo-Victorian features, postmodernism becomes the essence of Wilson's Gothic play by breaking apart some metanarratives like religion and history. And through his use of intertextuality, the play provides a commentary on its own subject matter. This actually demonstrates that the Gothic became a more self-conscious genre in the second half of the twentieth century.

Though not different from the twentieth-century Gothic, the early twenty-first-century Gothic is mostly characterised by the impacts of globalisation, postcolonialism and economic problems as well as trauma narratives, and is best exemplified by Conor McPherson's *The Veil*. McPherson sets his play in the past, namely nineteenth-century Ireland when the Ascendancy was the main political and economic force. McPherson's Gothic play distinguishes itself from the abovementioned plays because of its specific colonial historical background. By employing the Big House trope, McPherson sets the play in an obvious colonial past and questions the traumatic past of the Irish. The playwright adopts the concept of the zombie in order to reflect the zombified economy during the post-Celtic Tiger period when the country was shattered by economic decline. The zombie itself is an outcome of colonial history; for this reason, though there is not a literal zombie in the play, the poor conditions of the people and the zombified landscape and cannibalised politics of Ireland find expression in the zombie figure. This figure bespeaks both economic struggles and the enduring colonial legacy in the present. The zombie figure, and the past haunting the present are exploited to produce uncanny encounters and to provide a Gothic atmosphere. The return of the past, that is the Ascendancy Ireland or colonised Ireland, is correlated through the literal ghost estates of the post-Celtic Tiger period. So, in the twenty-first century, the Gothic

becomes a vehicle to cope with historical traumas and conflicts that still affect the present, as in the case of Ireland.

Wilson and McPherson both adopt retrospective attitudes and explore nineteenth-century Britain and Ireland, respectively. Historical points that are used by Wilson and McPherson revoke the earlier Gothics which make use of the ancient or medieval pasts for their settings. Both playwrights employ this specific historical juncture to delve into the conflicting and traumatic circumstances of the society and individuals. For this reason, the past continues to haunt the present for both playwrights and through the haunting past, they try to illustrate the present circumstances and make sense of the present. Furthermore, Wilson and McPherson's plays revolve around different monstrous figures, namely vampires and zombies. Through these figures, both playwrights depict different manifestations of oppressive systems. While Wilson demonstrates repressive social, religious and political structures, McPherson indicates cannibalistic economic and colonial dynamics.

While bearing some traditional Gothic features such as claustrophobia, paranoia, madness, taboo, incest, repression, oppression, the 'other' or the 'object,' the uncanny, the return of the past, monstrous figures and the supernatural, all these plays display their own distinctive expressions of the Gothic. Monstrous figures are always inevitable parts of the Gothic whether they may be human or non-human. As the ages change, themes become varied and characters evolve accordingly. While *De Monfort* and *Manfred* revolve around aristocrats and their paranoid and extreme passions, *Vampire* and *The Veil* embody the typical Gothic heroines to project some historical continuities in order to problematise the conditions of women by making use of the nineteenth-century setting. However, these heroines defy the representation of silent and oppressive female figures fleeing from the tyrants of medieval castles though their social and political environments suggest otherwise; they are outspoken and aware of their circumstances and struggle for a better position in the society.

Although the division between the Female Gothic and Male Gothic has been mentioned before, the playwrights in this dissertation are not categorised according to this distinction. It has already been established that though the focus and style of the Female and Male Gothic differ from each other, with the former, in its early stages, dealing with

an orphaned woman oppressed by a villainous tyrant and the latter revolving around male-directed excessive violence and horror, both the Female and Male Gothic essentially present suffering and victimised heroines. However, in this regard, while Baillie, as a female playwright, contributes to the reversion of gender roles in her *De Monfort*, the male playwrights analysed in this dissertation challenge and question the position and restrictions of women in their works. For this reason, rather than examining all these playwrights in terms of the Female or Male Gothic traditions, this dissertation discusses how they – female or male – contribute to the understanding of gender roles and the position and representation of women in the society throughout history. Still, it must be acknowledged that Baillie, as a female playwright, made a very remarkable and liberating inversion in the Gothic tradition by creating an independent and outspoken female character, Jane De Monfort as well as by giving her a name and individuality as opposed to the male protagonist, De Monfort. In such an age when women's voice was expected to be constrained, Baillie spoke out against these gendered norms and expectations through her play.

Taking into consideration that the Gothic was triggered by the political turmoil of the late eighteenth century, it can be argued that the Gothic is a projection of transitions and chaos in society, dealing with and questioning unorthodox themes, as its revival in the 1960s manifests this. Joanna Baillie's *De Monfort* (1798), Lord Byron's *Manfred* (1817), Snoo Wilson's *Vampire* (1973) and Conor McPherson's *The Veil* (2011) demonstrate that the Gothic in drama was and still is a vital mode addressing concerns, anxieties and fears in their relevant ages. Thus, by tracking the Gothic in these dramatic works from the late eighteenth century to the early twenty-first century and investigating its *modus operandi*, this dissertation shows the resilience of the Gothic until the contemporary times. In addition, these plays exhibit distinct approaches to the Gothic, which clearly indicates the evolution of the genre. As illustrated in this dissertation, every period has its Gothic motifs and themes. Through the closer and more detailed examination of the Gothic features in these selected plays, this dissertation, thus, contributes to the Gothic studies in drama which is still lagging behind the studies in Gothic fiction. These plays demonstrate the distinctive qualities of the Gothic genre peculiar to each respective age and socio-political context, illustrating the development of the Gothic throughout the centuries.

Furthermore, it is significant to mark that there has been a burgeoning interest in the study of Gothic drama; however, despite recent studies, there is even more to delve into and explore the Gothic lure in drama. In this regard, albeit limited, there are some recent studies and reviews about some contemporary plays that can be evaluated within the context of the early twenty-first century Gothic. These plays include Mark O’Rowe’s *Our Few and Evil Days* (2014) in which “O’Rowe not only includes a ghost (who appears on stage in the play’s highly disturbing final scene); he also makes ingenious use of ‘Gothic doubling’” (Clare 546); Alistair McDowall’s *Pomona* (2014) is described as “a dystopian Gothic odyssey” (Rabey 37) and deals with monstrosity and horror based on the commodification of human beings in human trafficking, set in a bleak atmosphere and featuring the motif of the double/twins; and Martin McDonagh’s *A Very Very Very Dark Matter* (2018) evokes a sense of “gothic fantasy macabre” (Billington, “Did Hans Christian Andersen Keep a Woman in Cage?”) and revolves around ghosts, a deathly atmosphere, sadism, perverted stories, claustrophobia and the haunting past/future related to the brutality of colonialism. These plays, while the list can be extended more over time, are considered important contributions to Gothic drama and current studies in this field, as they manifest the evolution of this genre on the contemporary stage.

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## APPENDIX 1. ORIGINALITY REPORT

|   |   |                              |            |
|---|---|------------------------------|------------|
|  | <b>HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ</b><br><b>SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ</b>   | Doküman Kodu<br>Form No.     | FRM-DR-21  |
|   |   | Yayın Tarihi<br>Date of Pub. | 04.01.2023 |
|   | <b>FRM-DR-21</b><br><b>Doktora Tezi Orijinallik Raporu</b><br><i>PhD Thesis Dissertation Originality Report</i> | Revizyon No<br>Rev. No.      | 02         |
|   |   | Revizyon Tarihi<br>Rev.Date  | 25.01.2024 |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ</b><br><b>SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ</b><br><b>İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞINA</b>  |  |
| Tarih: 08/07/2024   |  |
| Tez Başlığı: <b>On Sekizinci Yüzyıl Sonlarından Yirmi Birinci Yüzyıl Başlarına Kadar İngiliz ve İrlanda Gotik Tiyatrosunun Sosyo-Politik Bağlamda Gelişimi</b>  |  |
| Tez Başlığı (Almanca/Fransızca)*:.....  |  |
| Yukarıda başlığı verilen tezin a) Kapak sayfası, b) Giriş, c) Ana bölümler ve d) Sonuç kısımlarından oluşan toplam 193 sayfalık kısmına ilişkin, 08/07/2024 tarihinde şahsım/tez danışmanım tarafından Turnitin adlı intihal tespit programından aşağıda işaretlenmiş filtrelemeler uygulanarak alınmış olan orijinallik raporuna göre, tezin benzerlik oranı % 6 'dır.   |  |
| Uygulanan filtrelemeler**:  |  |
| 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kabul/Onay ve Bildirim sayfaları hariç   |  |
| 2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kaynakça hariç   |  |
| 3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alıntılar hariç  |  |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Alıntılar dâhil   |  |
| 5. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 kelimedenden daha az örtüşme içeren metin kısımları hariç  |  |
| Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Çalışması Orijinallik Raporu Alınması ve Kullanılması Uygulama Esasları'nı inceledim ve bu Uygulama Esasları'nda belirtilen azami benzerlik oranlarına göre tezin herhangi bir intihal içermediğini; aksinin tespit edileceği muhtemel durumlarda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim. |  |
| Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.   |  |
| Tuğba Şimşek  |  |

|                          |                       |   |  |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|---|--|
| <b>Öğrenci Bilgileri</b> | Ad-Soyad              | Tuğba Şimşek                                |  |
|                          | Öğrenci No            | N17141999                                   |  |
|                          | Enstitü Anabilim Dalı | İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı                   |  |
|                          | Programı              | İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı                   |  |
|                          | Statüsü               | Doktora <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Lisans Derecesi ile (Bütünleşik) Dr <input type="checkbox"/> |

**DANIŞMAN ONAYI**

UYGUNDUR.  
Prof. Dr. A. Deniz BOZER

\*Tez **Almanca** veya **Fransızca** yazılıyor ise bu kısımda tez başlığı **Tez Yazım Dilinde** yazılmalıdır.

\*\*Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Çalışması Orijinallik Raporu Alınması ve Kullanılması Uygulama Esasları İkinci bölüm madde (4)/3'te de belirtildiği üzere: Kaynakça hariç, Alıntılar hariç/dahil, 5 kelimedenden daha az örtüşme içeren metin kısımları hariç (Limit match size to 5 words) filtreleme yapılmalıdır.

|   |   |                                     |            |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|------------|
|  | <b>HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ</b><br><b>SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ</b>   | Doküman Kodu<br><i>Form No.</i>     | FRM-DR-21  |
|   |   | Yayın Tarihi<br><i>Date of Pub.</i> | 04.01.2023 |
|   | <b>FRM-DR-21</b><br><b>Doktora Tezi Orijinallik Raporu</b><br><i>PhD Thesis Dissertation Originality Report</i> | Revizyon No<br><i>Rev. No.</i>      | 02         |
|   |   | Revizyon Tarihi<br><i>Rev.Date</i>  | 25.01.2024 |

**TO HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY**  
**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

Date: 08/07/2024

Thesis Title (In English): **The Evolution of British and Irish Gothic Drama from the Late Eighteenth to the Early Twenty-First Centuries within a Socio-Political Context**

According to the originality report obtained by myself/my thesis advisor by using the Turnitin plagiarism detection software and by applying the filtering options checked below on 08/07/2024 for the total of 193 pages including the a) Title Page, b) Introduction, c) Main Chapters, and d) Conclusion sections of my thesis entitled above, the similarity index of my thesis is 6 %.

Filtering options applied\*\*:

1.  Approval and Declaration sections excluded
2.  References cited excluded
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4.  Quotes included
5.  Match size up to 5 words excluded

I hereby declare that I have carefully read Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences Guidelines for Obtaining and Using Thesis Originality Reports that according to the maximum similarity index values specified in the Guidelines, my thesis does not include any form of plagiarism; that in any future detection of possible infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility; and that all the information I have provided is correct to the best of my knowledge.

I respectfully submit this for approval.

Tuğba Şimşek

|                            |                       |  |   |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|--|---|
| <b>Student Information</b> | <b>Name-Surname</b>   | Tuğba Şimşek                                   |   |
|                            | <b>Student Number</b> | N17141999                                      |   |
|                            | <b>Department</b>     | English Language and Literature                |   |
|                            | <b>Programme</b>      | English Language and Literature                |   |
|                            | <b>Status</b>         | <b>PhD</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>Combined MA/MSc-PhD</b> <input type="checkbox"/> |

**SUPERVISOR'S APPROVAL**

APPROVED  
Prof. Dr. A. Deniz BOZER

\*\*As mentioned in the second part [article (4)/3] of the Thesis Dissertation Originality Report's Codes of Practice of Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences, filtering should be done as following: excluding refence, quotation excluded/included, Match size up to 5 words excluded.

## APPENDIX 2. ETHICS COMMISSION FORM

|   |   |                              |            |
|---|---|------------------------------|------------|
|  | <b>HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ</b><br><b>SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ</b>   | Doküman Kodu<br>Form No.     | FRM-DR-12  |
|   |   | Yayın Tarihi<br>Date of Pub. | 22.11.2023 |
|   | <b>FRM-DR-12</b><br><b>Doktora Tezi Etik Kurul Muafiyeti Formu</b><br><i>Ethics Board Form for PhD Thesis</i> | Revizyon No<br>Rev. No.      | 02         |
|   |   | Revizyon Tarihi<br>Rev.Date  | 25.01.2024 |

**HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ**  
**SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ**  
**İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞINA**

Tarih: 08/07/2024

Tez Başlığı: **On Sekizinci Yüzyıl Sonlarından Yirmi Birinci Yüzyıl Başlarına Kadar İngiliz ve İrlanda Gotik Tiyatrosunun Sosyo-Politik Bağlamda Gelişimi**

Tez Başlığı (Almanca/Fransızca)\*:.....

Yukarıda başlığı verilen tez çalışmam:

1. İnsan ve hayvan üzerinde deney niteliği taşımamaktadır.
2. Biyolojik materyal (kan, idrar vb. biyolojik sıvılar ve numuneler) kullanılmasını gerektirmemektedir.
3. Beden bütünlüğüne veya ruh sağlığına müdahale içermemektedir.
4. Anket, ölçek (test), mülakat, odak grup çalışması, gözlem, deney, görüşme gibi teknikler kullanılarak katılımcılardan veri toplanmasını gerektiren nitel ya da nicel yaklaşımlarla yürütülen araştırma niteliğinde değildir.
5. Diğer kişi ve kurumlardan temin edilen veri kullanımını (kitap, belge vs.) gerektirmektedir. Ancak bu kullanım, diğer kişi ve kurumların izin verdiği ölçüde Kişisel Bilgilerin Korunması Kanuna riayet edilerek gerçekleştirilecektir.

Hacettepe Üniversitesi Etik Kurullarının Yönergelerini inceledim ve bunlara göre çalışmamın yürütülebilmesi için herhangi bir Etik Kuruldan izin alınmasına gerek olmadığını; aksi durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.

Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

Tuğba Şimşek

|                   |                       |   |  |
|-------------------|-----------------------|---|--|
| Öğrenci Bilgileri | Ad-Soyad              | Tuğba Şimşek                                |  |
|                   | Öğrenci No            | N17141999                                   |  |
|                   | Enstitü Anabilim Dalı | İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı                   |  |
|                   | Programı              | İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı                   |  |
|                   | Statüsü               | Doktora <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Lisans Derecesi ile (Bütünleşik) Dr <input type="checkbox"/> |

**DANIŞMAN ONAYI**

UYGUNDUR.  
Prof. Dr. A. Deniz BOZER

\* Tez Almanca veya Fransızca yazılıyor ise bu kısımda tez başlığı **Tez Yazım Dilinde** yazılmalıdır.

|   |   |                              |            |
|---|---|------------------------------|------------|
|  | <b>HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ</b><br><b>SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ</b>   | Doküman Kodu<br>Form No.     | FRM-DR-12  |
|   |   | Yayın Tarihi<br>Date of Pub. | 22.11.2023 |
|   | <b>FRM-DR-12</b><br><b>Doktora Tezi Etik Kurul Muafiyeti Formu</b><br><i>Ethics Board Form for PhD Thesis</i> | Revizyon No<br>Rev. No.      | 02         |
|   |   | Revizyon Tarihi<br>Rev.Date  | 25.01.2024 |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY</b><br><b>GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES</b><br><b>DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE</b>  |  |
| Date: 08/07/2024  |  |
| Thesis Title(In English): <b>The Evolution of British and Irish Gothic Drama from the Late Eighteenth to the Early Twenty-First Centuries within a Socio-Political Context</b>  |  |
| My thesis work with the title given above:  |  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not perform experimentation on people or animals.</li> <li>Does not necessitate the use of biological material (blood, urine, biological fluids and samples, etc.).</li> <li>Does not involve any interference of the body's integrity.</li> <li>Is not a research conducted with qualitative or quantitative approaches that require data collection from the participants by using techniques such as survey, scale (test), interview, focus group work, observation, experiment, interview.</li> <li>Requires the use of data (books, documents, etc.) obtained from other people and institutions. However, this use will be carried out in accordance with the Personal Information Protection Law to the extent permitted by other persons and institutions.</li> </ol> |  |
| I hereby declare that I reviewed the Directives of Ethics Boards of Hacettepe University and in regard to these directives it is not necessary to obtain permission from any Ethics Board in order to carry out my thesis study; I accept all legal responsibilities that may arise in any infringement of the directives and that the information I have given above is correct.   |  |
| I respectfully submit this for approval.  |  |
| Tuğba Şimşek  |  |

|                            |                |   |  |
|----------------------------|----------------|---|--|
| <b>Student Information</b> | Name-Surname   | Tuğba Şimşek                            |  |
|                            | Student Number | N17141999                               |  |
|                            | Department     | English Language and Literature         |  |
|                            | Programme      | English Language and Literature         |  |
|                            | Status         | PhD <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Combined MA/MSc-PhD <input type="checkbox"/> |

**SUPERVISOR'S APPROVAL**

APPROVED  
Prof. Dr. A. Deniz BOZER