

## INTRODUCTION: THE GOTHIC, BELATEDLY

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“I curse my conceited incredulity, my despicable affectation of superiority, my blindness, my obstinacy—all—too late” (“Carmilla”).<sup>2</sup>

'Alas! Father,' she said, waving her head mournfully; 'Your kindness comes too late! My doom is fixed. We must separate for ever (*The Monk*).<sup>3</sup>

'Lady,' cried the girl, sinking to her knees, 'dear, sweet, angel lady, you *are* the first that ever blessed me with such words as these, and if I had heard them years ago, they might have turned me from a life of sin and sorrow; but it is too late, it is too late!' (*Oliver Twist*).<sup>4</sup>

But the stoppage of the bell, and the quiet in the prison, were a warning to depart; and with a few hurried words of kindness he left her gliding back to her father. But he had remained too late. The inner gate was locked, and the Lodge closed. (*Little Dorrit*).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Le Fanu, 2009, p. 272.

<sup>3</sup> Lewis, 1980, p. 85.

<sup>4</sup> Dickens, 2008, *Oliver Twist*, p. 325.

<sup>5</sup> Dickens, 2008, *Little Dorrit*, p. 71.

It might seem that we are destined always to arrive late at the scene of the gothic. To write about the gothic at this belated hour is to have to negotiate a tremendous body of scholarship that has proliferated especially since the 1980s, of which notable works include David Punter's *Literature of Terror* (1980; reissued 1996), Victor Sage's *Horror Fiction in the Gothic Tradition* (1988), Michelle Massé's *In the Name of Love: Women, Masochism, and the Gothic* (1992), Robert Miles's *Gothic Writing, 1750-1820: A Genealogy* (1993, with a new edition in 2002), Vijay Mishra's *The Gothic Sublime* (1994), Terry Castle's *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny* (1995), Judith (Jack) Halberstam's *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (1995) and Diane Long Hoeveler's *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës* (1998) as well as a number of works which, while not explicitly oriented towards the gothic, play a significant role in resituating it in relation to larger literary and cultural currents, including Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), Peter Brooks's *The Melodramatic Imagination* (1976, with a new edition in 1995), and Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (1987).<sup>6</sup> Critics of the gothic over the last thirty years have in turn frequently acknowledged the significance of the legacy of an earlier wave of critical studies, published in the 1920s and 1930s, including *The Gothic Quest* (1938) by Montague Summers, *The Haunted Castle* (1927), by Eino Railo, and *The Tale of Terror* (1921), by Edith Birkhead.

David Punter, discussing the modern ghost story, and contrasting it with what he calls "the original gothic fiction" writes of "themes and styles which, by rights, would seem to be more than a century out of date" (1996, p.3). And indeed, while almost a century separates even the generation of the critics of the 1920s and 1930s from the publication of *Jane Eyre*, one of the novels that has been most richly productive of new perspectives on the gothic in recent years, gothic criticism has generally cast Charlotte Bronte herself as already a latecomer in relation to a genre or mode the classical age of which has typically been identified with the years 1764 to 1820, a period bookended by the publication of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* and Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*. According to this dating, it is surely worth noting, a large proportion of the gothic "canon," insofar as such a phenomenon can be said to have emerged through critical consensus—not only the Brontë sisters but Bram Stoker, Sheridan Le Fanu, Henry James, Wilkie Collins, Arthur Conan Doyle, Daphne du Maurier, and even Edgar Allan Poe—can actually be said to be belated in relation to any putative "original gothic."

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<sup>6</sup> Robert Miles speaks of a recent "flood" of published materials on the gothic in his preface to the 2002 edition of *Gothic Writing, 1750-1820: A Gothic Genealogy*, and provides a helpful overview of the gothic criticism of the 1990s.

On her first attempted journey to that projected locus of the quintessentially gothic, Blaize Castle, Catherine Moreland, in *Northanger Abbey*, is informed that tardiness has thwarted her quest: “It will never do. We set out a great deal too late.” (Austen, 2006, p.78). If a novel such as *Northanger Abbey*—a work, incidentally, the posthumous publication of which (in 1818) was belated by some two decades in relation to its writing—appears chronologically to belong securely within the bounds of the classical era of gothic, this is clearly itself already a text which positively proclaims its own parodically belated and reflexive relation to what it casts as the “horrid novels” of the 1890s (which, in addition to works by Thomas Gray, James Thomson and Shakespeare, have exercised a formative influence on Catherine). It might, admittedly, seem to be a truism that in any literary tradition networks of textual affiliation will necessarily cast the vast majority of the representatives of their “class” or “type” as tardy in relation to their generic predecessors, and yet there is a special sense in which the gothic text has tended loudly to announce its laggardly and anachronistic relation to a textual tradition that it posits as its precursor. Already in the 1778 Preface to Clara Reeve’s *The Old English Baron*, we have a sense of genealogical belatedness in the manner in which the text lays claim to a relation of descent to *The Castle of Otranto*:

This Story is the literary offspring of *The Castle of Otranto*, written upon the same plan, with a design to unite the most attractive and interesting circumstances of the ancient Romance and modern Novel...; it is distinguished by the appellation of a Gothic story... (Reeve, 1778, Preface, para. 1)

Not only, then, does the novel proclaim the status of Walpole as some kind of model and origin, like many gothic texts it announces itself as the inheritor of the entire mode of “Romance,” clearly conceived to exist in an anachronistic relation to the “modern novel.”

Critical consensus has tended to agree with *The Old English Baron* that *The Castle of Otranto* constitutes a kind of *Ur-text* of the gothic, an archetype, even, in relation to which all other texts maintain a relation of derivativeness and indebtedness, and yet, far from displaying a confident sense of textual primacy, this gothic text, too, appears anxious to lay bare the legacy of influence received from its precursors.<sup>7</sup> It is a text in which Shakespearean legacies, in particular, are revived in the mode of textual ghosts, so that, for example, Hamlet’s encounter with the spirit of his father

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<sup>7</sup> Carol Margaret Davison (2009) is one of many writers to use the term “Ur-Gothic” in relation to *The Castle of Otranto*.

on the embattlements of Elsinore or the appearance of Banquo's ghost resonate loudly through the text.<sup>8</sup>

One of the problems that links the authors and works under discussion in the articles that follow, I shall argue, is precisely the question of their gothic belatedness. Surely there can be no doubt of the belatedness of Dickens's texts in relation to the gothic. While, as Valerie Kennedy points out, the generic resonances are strong, it is clear that the gothic elements in both *Oliver Twist* and *Little Dorrit* are also attenuated, reworked or tempered in the context of Dickens's seemingly omnivorous stylistic as well as thematic acquisitiveness. There can be no doubt, either, concerning the belatedness of the late twentieth-century lesbian vampire films discussed by Mahinur Akşehir Uygur. Their debts to Sheridan Le Fanu's "Carmilla" are, as Akşehir Uygur points out, overt, and many critics, including Nina Auerbach (1995), have noted that "Carmilla" itself is in turn haunted by the influence of Coleridge's incomplete poem "Christabel." What are we to make, though, of *The Monk*, the subject of Ahmet Süner's article and, published in 1796, surely self-evidently an "early" rather than a "belated" text, a precursor, rather than a descendent and, according to at least one critical account, another candidate for the label of "Ur-Gothic".<sup>9</sup> Süner draws our attention to the anachronistic framing of the text, and it is clear that even this text shows signs of gothic belatedness in ways which are intriguingly entwined with Süner's concerns with "superstition" in the novel.<sup>10</sup>

### Gothic Genealogies

One of the primary sources of my interest in the phenomenon of "gothic belatedness," a term deployed by Robert Miles (2002), is the manner in which it foils traditional literary-historical habits of thought which are embedded in a much broader set of metaphysical presuppositions. Like Miles, I would like to suggest that the notion of "genealogy," as deployed by Michel Foucault, offers a useful approach to the gothic, and one which specifically troubles the practice of defining a genre by seeking some supposed essence which would lie buried yet recoverable, given the exertion of heroic

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<sup>8</sup> Not quite so loudly, however, as the Shakespearean texts announce their presence in Walpole's play *The Mysterious Mother*, in the preface of which we read: "From no French model breathes the muse to-night / The scene she draws is horrid, not polite. / She dips her pen in terror. Will ye shrink? / Shall foreign critics teach you how to think? / Had Shakespeare's magic dignified the stage, / If timid laws had school'd th'insipid age? / Had Hamlet's spectre trod the midnight round? / Or Banquo's issue been in vision crowned? / Free as your country, Britons, be your scene!" A few lines later the preface asks, "Can crimes be punish'd by a bard enchain'd?" furthering the parallels between a putative English poetic freedom (in contrast, of course, with French neo-classicism) and notions of political liberty (Walpole, 2003, pp. 175-176). On the *Hamlet-Otranto* connection, see Robert B. Hamm, Jr (2009).

<sup>9</sup> Edward J. Ingebreetsen (1996, p. 94) uses the term "Ur-Gothic" to refer to *The Monk*.

scholarly efforts, in a projected origin, an *Ur*-text. In practice, literary criticism too often engages in a kind of circular thinking whereby it takes an early or supposedly inaugural instance of an emergent collectivity of texts and extracts from it a set of characteristics that are then by sleight of hand rescued from the vicissitudes of historicity to preside over a genre or category of text as the gestalt of an ideal type against which other less privileged examples of the class can now be measured. Quoting from Nietzsche's *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, Foucault proposes, "The lofty origin is no more than 'a metaphysical extension which arises from the belief that things are most precious and essential at the moment of birth.'" (1977, p. 143). Otherwise stated, literary history has regularly engaged in a quest for origin that strives to elevate the contingent historical precursor to the status of "archetype," betraying a quintessentially Platonic prejudice that projects an ideal singular prototype supposed to reign transcendently over its fallen, belated, secondary and heterogeneous manifestations. A literary genealogy inspired by Nietzsche and Foucault and as proposed by Miles would attempt to undo this surreptitious elision of the contingency of resemblances with the idealist logic of archetypes. "Genealogy," Foucault tells us, "does not oppose itself to history as the lofty and profound gaze of the philosopher might compare to the molelike perspective of the scholar; on the contrary, it rejects the meta-historical deployment of ideal significations and indefinite teleologies. It opposes itself to the search for 'origins'" (1977, p. 140).

I believe it might be argued that it is precisely the heterogeneity of the gothic—which shares with the notion of the literary "postmodern" the question, even, of what *kind* of category it evokes: is it to be seen as a genre or sub-genre, a historical movement, a trans-generic style or "sensibility", a set of thematic concerns, a mere matter of setting and stage decorations?—that prompts a compensatory search for an elusive quintessence associated with the theological and patriarchal fantasy of a singular point of origin, an ultimate "onlie begetter" which through unbroken, if bifurcating, chains of filiation would ensure the legitimacy of its unruly and heterogeneous progeny.<sup>11</sup> I would go further than this, however, and argue that if there is one element that,

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<sup>11</sup> Kennedy is surely right to question Julian Wolfreys's contention (2002, p. 25) that the gothic in the nineteenth-century moves from "genre" to "trope"; one might point to the insistent return of lists in attempts to account for the characteristics of gothic as an indication that in many ways it has never been anything more than a set of tropes and conventions striving towards that elusive ideal of consolidation that might securely warrant the title "genre." For just one example of the proliferation of lists in gothic criticism see Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick: "You also know that, whether with more or less relevance to the main plot, certain characteristic preoccupations will be aired. These include the priesthood and monastic institutions; sleeplike and deathlike states; subterranean spaces and live burial; doubles; the discovery of obscured family ties; affinities between narrative and pictorial art; possibilities of incest; unnatural echoes or silences, unintelligible writings, and the unspeakable; garrulous retainers; the poisonous effects of guilt and shame; nocturnal landscapes and dreams; apparitions from the past; Faust- and Wandering Jew-like figures; civil insurrections and fires; the charnel house and the madhouse" (1980, pp. 8-9). Sedgwick herself points out that Railo and Summers present similar lists of gothic elements.

paradoxically, has tended to recur in what we have come to know as that singularity “the gothic” it is its parodic relation precisely to such quests for origin, the way in which its flamboyant displays of *non*-originality, or belatedness, simultaneously induce and thwart the anxious quest for the re-establishment of the legitimacy of the *logos*. If there is any *principle* that might be said to preside over, to regulate the gothic, I would like to argue that it is the combination of a retrospective orientation towards a horizon that bespeaks provenance and a concurrent perverse involution of the paths that seemingly lead back to the source, promising the restoration of a prelapsarian relation to the origin. The gothic, in other words, is constitutively and not contingently belated, while its belatedness consistently reveals the contingency that marks its origin and constitution. In what, I would argue, could almost be seen as a description of the “typical” gothic quest, Foucault argues:

What is found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of things. It is disparity... Genealogy does not pretend to go back in time to restore an unbroken continuity that operates beyond the dispersion of things... On the contrary, to follow the complex course of descent is to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations—or, conversely, the complete reversals—the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being do not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents. (1977, pp. 142; 146).

If we follow Miles in identifying gothic belatedness with textual self-reflexivity (“meaning texts which, in their self-consciousness, bespeak both an awareness of the discursive subtext of the Gothic, and an attitude towards it” [2002, p.13]), my argument is that the gothic in many ways offers an allegory and parody of the critical quest for a principle of textual unity and legitimacy and the manner in which that allegory of hermeneutic progress is *necessarily* benighted by the textual withholding of the projected terminus. If it is gothic *writing* that sustains the quest for a withheld horizon of meaning, that writing is itself, of course, the medium of the labyrinthine and subterranean passages wherein this trajectory is doomed to languish in textual involution.<sup>12</sup> From this perspective, Blaize Castle is simply another name for the philosophical *logos*.

If I am not far, here, from suggesting that gothic is the name for an ironic, secular and self-referential reworking of *Pilgrim’s Progress*, this may be an opportune moment both to evoke the

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<sup>12</sup> Sedgwick (1980, p. 8) identifies discontinuity and involution as frequent formal characteristics of the gothic novel.

picaresque novel as one particularly tangled thread within the genealogical web of the gothic, one which would arguably link *Lazarillo de Tormes* (itself often cast as a generic *Ur*-text in literary-historical narratives) with *Tom Jones* (the connections of which to the gothic have been noted by Ian Watt<sup>13</sup>), *Oliver Twist* (subtitled “The Parish-Boy’s Progress”) and *Jane Eyre* (wittily dubbed the narrative of “plain Jane’s progress” by Gilbert and Gubar (1979)). Foucauldian genealogy, though, might well urge caution even about the metaphor of a “thread,” which would suggest unbroken continuity precisely where we should look for disruptions and transformations, the latter at least in part also an effect of irruptions and displacements ensuing from the movements of discursive motifs between the literary and other, contiguous (and occasionally intersecting) fields of discourse, including, notably, the theological, the pedagogical, the medical and the legal. We should also beware of the potential for a notion of belatedness as canny critical self-reflexivity to fall into a “Whiggish” narrative of literary-historical succession in which the pious sincerity of an earlier text would give way, in evolutionary fashion, to the archly parodic critical self-awareness of its “descendant,”<sup>14</sup> even though, or especially since, as Süner points out, gothic’s rhetorical deployments of belatedness may serve to cast its own contemporaneity as the enlightened counterpart of a “retrograde” past. *Lazarillo de Tormes*, it might be useful to remember here—not to mention Cervantes (another clear presence in the constellation of prior texts evoked by *The Castle of Otranto*)—precedes Bunyan. Belatedness cannot be reduced to a question of hereditary precedence; genealogy has no time for literary-historical primogeniture. Consequently, we must also recognize that the resources of parody drawn on by texts like *Northanger Abbey* or Stella Gibbons’s *Cold Comfort Farm* flow from *within* the well-springs of the gothic and are a part of its constitutive belatedness.

*Oliver Twist* may be a useful site for reconsidering the quest for origin and its connections to questions of belatedness. Insofar as Oliver’s journey is one towards that signified that is his own identity—of which privileged signifiers are a portrait, a locket, a pawnbroker’s ticket and a will—the persistent renamings and misnamings of Oliver in the text serve constantly to underscore the contingent (“invented,” per Mr. Bumble) and textually overdetermined nature of that identity which serves as the imaginary horizon of his narrative quest. The horizon of the signified recedes beyond a proliferation of elusive signifiers, such that the urban labyrinth identified by Kennedy is reinforced by

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<sup>13</sup> David Punter (1996, p. 40) cites Ian Watt on this connection.

<sup>14</sup> In their somewhat peevish account of gothic criticism, Chris Baldrick and Robert Mighall nevertheless make the very important point that the anti-Catholicism characteristic of the gothic is associated with a Whiggish view of history, shared by some critics of the gothic, as the progressive overcoming of superstition and barbarism by civilization (2001, pp. 219-220). While their dismissal of gothic medievalism is surely overdone, their insistence on the continuities between gothic and the dominant, realist current in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century novel is useful.

a sense of labyrinthine textuality. (On this point, note also Kennedy's comments on the narrative complications of *Little Dorrit*). While the principle of giving orphans surnames in alphabetical order might appear to represent the establishment of a disciplinary (and linguistic) regularity within the workhouse, to propagate the social and discursive order that, as Akşehir Uygur points out, is associated with the imposition of categories, the fact that Oliver is surnamed "Twist" might itself be read as a sly allusion to the involuted nature of his biographical "progress." It is the locating, in the novel, of the origin being pursued within the domains of the personal, familial and psychological that gives us important hints, I believe, for the nature of the interdependency of the gothic, the sentimental and the melodramatic as bourgeois modes of conception in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a generic entanglement dramatically evident in Dickens's works. It is not surprising, therefore, that Peter Brooks, for whom Dickens is an important point of reference, in his investigation of the "melodramatic imagination," elides melodrama—the "moral occult... the repository of the fragmentary and desacralized remnants of sacred myth," with the apparently frustrated occultism of the gothic: "Yet the Gothicists typically discover that this reassertion of spiritual forces and occult issues hidden in the phenomenal world cannot lead to the resacralization of experience" (1995, pp. 5; 17). The textual scraps and fragments such as pawn-shop receipts and initials stitched into handkerchiefs (only to be unpicked, so that the latter can continue to circulate as "improper" names, as contingent signs) that clutter *Oliver Twist*, even as they gesture towards some arcanum of hermeneutic depth beneath the surface of textuality that awaits reconstitution and restoration, bring us to that problematic, inherent in the questions of belatedness and genealogy, that I shall call the gothic archive.

### Gothic Archives<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> It should perhaps be acknowledged that the move from (Foucauldian) genealogy to (Derridean) archives would, according to one received account of Foucault's work, seem perverse and therefore demands justification. Foucault's own account of the archive appears as "The Historical *a priori* and the Archive," Chapter 5 of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: "The archive cannot be described in its totality; and in its presence it is unavoidable... But it deprives us of our continuities; it dissipates that temporal identity in which we are pleased to look at ourselves when we wish to exorcise the discontinuities of history; it breaks the thread of transcendental teleologies... It establishes that we are difference, that our reason is the difference of discourses, our history the difference of times, our selves the difference of masks. That difference, far from being the forgotten and recovered origin, is this dispersion that we are and make" (1972, pp. 130;131). While one common periodization of Foucault's work argues that there is a neat break between his "archeologies" of the late 1960s, often described as "structuralist," and the "genealogical" concern with power/knowledge of the 1970s, surely it is clear that Foucault theorizes the "archive" (in 1969) in substantially similar terms to those (cited above) he uses in relation to "genealogy" in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," first published in 1971. In turn, I would argue that both of these works, far from being examples of either an unrepentant classical structuralism or, alternatively, its decided rejection in favor of power/knowledge, show clear evidence of the influence of Derrida and could reasonably be called "deconstructive" in their privileging not of achieved system but of systematic "difference." Foucault's "dispersions," "dissensions" and "disparities" bear a strong affinity with Derridean "différance" and

“There is no archive without a place of consignment,” argues Derrida, emphasizing both the conservative function of the archive as the architectural shelter of memory—the need for it to be *housed*, domesticated, to find a home—and also the dependency of memory (*contra* Plato) on the physical “substrate,” the material surface of inscription:

To be guarded thus, in the jurisdiction of this *speaking the law*, they needed at once a guardian and a localization. Even in their guardianship or their hermeneutic tradition, the archives could do neither without substrate nor without residence... It is thus, in this *domiciliation*, in this house arrest, that archives take place. (1995, p. 2)

Works of gothic literature have, of course, in critical discourse, long been associated with the home or domicile—as testified by the insistent recurrence of the Freudian term “Unheimlich” in gothic criticism—and by the problematic of architectural housings more generally. The texts studied by the contributors to this edition of the *Journal of Yaşar University* are certainly no exception to this. In *The Monk*, castles and convents both become haunted places of sequestration for young women, the carceral qualities of the convent being concentrated especially upon the subterranean vaults that conceal the religious establishment’s horrific secrets. The chateaus and castles of *Carmilla* reappear in films discussed by Akşehir Uygur, such as *Lust for a Vampire* (Sangster, 1971), *Daughters of Darkness* (Kümel, 1971) and *Vampyres* (Larraz, 1974), although they do so to some extent intriguingly transformed into institutions such as schools and hotels. In terms of the carceral imaginary of the gothic, however (and Giovanni Battista Piranesi’s series of drawings *Carceri d’Invenzione*, too, occupy an important site within any genealogy of the gothic, as noted, for example, by Anthony Vidler, 1994), nothing, perhaps, can surpass *Little Dorrit*. The novel at one level traces a comic trajectory of liberation from its opening paragraphs set in the Marseilles prison to the final triumphant exit of Amy Dorrit and Arthur Clennam from the church in which they have been married into the sunny streets of London, a story of progressive liberation seemingly reinforced by the collapse of the foreboding Clennam House and the associated yielding up of its secrets, (the importance of which is discussed by Kennedy). Yet, especially through the recounting of the enduring connection between the Dorrits and the Marshalsea Prison, but also in its details of the labyrinthine structure and functioning of the Circumlocution Office (“containing,” as the title of Chapter Ten would have it, “the whole science of government”), the text, as Kennedy’s reading suggests, simultaneously traces the logic of

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“dissemination”. Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* (published in 1975) will, however, I believe, set out, even mockingly (for example in its deployment of the terms “sign” and “trace”), to mark a clear distance from both structuralism and deconstruction.

imprisonment in such persistent, widespread and disseminated forms that it becomes to all intents and purposes co-extensive with both the realms of the domestic, familial and sentimental and of the state, an account of “capillarization” and proliferation of discipline and surveillance that is a match for the Foucauldian view of power.

What interests me most in these texts, however, and what I would argue can be seen as another regular feature of the gothic, is the manner in which architectural structures become specifically associated with that domiciliation of the word that Derrida identifies with the archive. Archiving, for Derrida, represents a challenge to the privileging of *logos*, the spoken word (which is at the same time *mneme*, “true” memory) in opposition to what, according to Plato’s logic, is its “illegitimate brother,” writing, that form of remembering that is no memory at all but mere “recollection” (*hypomnema*). For Plato (or Plato’s Socrates, at least), writing is not just the usurper of speech’s metaphysical privileges but the material prison of the spiritual essence of the word. In the larger scheme of the *Phaedrus*, writing is the material prison of the living word as the body is the house and prison of the soul and as the shell is the domicile and cage of the oyster. I would argue, then, that the recurrence of “archives” not just as privileged architectural loci of memory but specifically as the repositories (domiciles and dungeons, safehouses and oubliettes) of texts, as the material substrate of the word, is of the utmost significance.

In the bosom of this little Grove stood a rustic Grotto, formed in imitation of an Hermitage. The walls were constructed in roots of trees, and the interstices filled up with Moss and Ivy... [Rosario] pointed to a marble Tablet fixed against the opposite Wall: On it were engraved the following lines... (Lewis, 1980, p. 51)

The scriptural presence of a previous penitent here in *The Monk* is surely once again the reminder of a belatedness whereby characters (and indeed readers, insofar as at such moments they encounter themselves in and as characters that model and refract the readerly function) are compelled to recognize that the world in which they dwell is already deeply overinscribed, that they are constrained to life within a library of gothic conventions:

Donna Rodolpha’s Library was principally composed of old Spanish Romances: These were her favourite studies, and once a day one of these unmerciful Volumes was put regularly into my hands. I read the wearisome adventures of ‘Perceforest,’ ‘Tirante the White,’ ‘Palmerin of England,’ and ‘the Knight of the Sun.’ till the Book was on the point of falling from my hands through Ennui. (Lewis, 1980, pp. 133-134)

One possible charge that could be made regarding this reflection of the world as a place already domiciled in textuality—and one that I believe to a large extent characterizes Nancy Armstrong's reading of the function of the textual archive in *Jane Eyre* when she says that "Jane finds the inside of the house to be thoroughly lettered... colonized by the conduct books as well as by novels like those Austen wrote" (1987, p.205)—would be to say that it represents a formalization of the novelistic universe that attempts to shut it off from the world of politics. In line once again with Miles' reading of the gothic, however, we might also point out the paradoxical way in which in such passages the archive is revealed precisely to be a repository of power, the site for the inscription of what Foucault would term "discourse." "There is no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory," asserts Derrida (1995, p. 4, n.1), and we might say, in partial agreement with Armstrong, that that archive is the place in which power (as discourse) both preserves and attempts to conceal the traces of its political history:

[H]er eyes directly fell on a roll of paper pushed back into the further part of the cavity, apparently for concealment, and her feelings at that moment were indescribable... She seized, with an unsteady hand. The precious manuscript, for half a glance sufficed to ascertain written characters...(Austen, 2006, p. 159)

As this passage suggests, however, alongside its archival concealments, gothic thrives on a series of elaborately staged unveilings, a point which for Süner lies at the very crux of the poetics of *The Monk*.

*Carmilla* will bring us back to the coincidence between gothic belatedness and textual involution. Like numerous other gothic texts, it stages its debts to a broader textual/discursive authority in rather an ambiguous way. In common with many Sherlock Holmes stories (in which the question of whether the "archives" or case notes from which the narrative is belatedly reconstructed are those of Holmes—and therefore criminological—or the good doctor—and therefore medical—is always a matter of some uncertainty), the text begins by evoking a textual or discursive authority which is thus posited as simultaneously extra- and intradiegetic, framed in and framed out of the narrative:

Upon a paper attached to the Narrative which follows, Doctor Hesselius has written a rather elaborate note, which he accompanies with a reference to his Essay on the strange subject which the MS. illuminates. This mysterious subject he treats, in that Essay, with his

usual learning and acumen, and with remarkable directness and condensation. It will form but one volume of the series of that extraordinary man's collected papers. (2009, p.265)

In the course of the narrative, the presumed hermeneutic acumen of a medical doctor is displayed, we should not be surprised to note, in that domicile of the written word, the library:

Madame accompanied me to the library; and there the grave little doctor, with white hair and spectacles, whom I mentioned before, was waiting to receive me. I told him my story, and as I proceeded he grew graver and graver. We were standing, he and I, in the recess of one of the windows, facing one another. (2009, p. 317)

It seems there is a whole genealogy within the gothic specific not just to libraries but to libraries *with recesses* (of which the library that figures in Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Japanned Box" is one other example which springs to mind; effective use of the trope is also made in Karl Freund's film *The Mummy*), and it will be extremely significant (especially in relation to what Akşehir Uygur tells us about lesbian vampires) that this recess becomes associated with both the exposition and the withholding of what is clearly staged as patriarchal knowledge:

[My father] and the doctor talked for some time in the same recess where I had just conferred with the physician... The room is very large, and I and Madame stood together, burning with curiosity, at the farther end. Not a word could we hear, however, for they spoke in a very low tone, and the deep recess of the window quite concealed the doctor from view, and very nearly my father, whose foot, arm, and shoulder only could we see; and the voices were, I suppose, all the less audible for the sort of closet which the thick wall and window formed. (2009, p. 317)

It is not simply that every archive has a "closet," but that the principles of archiving and closeting, as Derrida would argue, operate simultaneously and are inalienable from each other:

The concept of the archive shelters in itself, of course, this memory of the name *arkhe*. But it also shelters itself from this memory that it shelters: which comes down to saying also that it forgets it. (1995, p. 2)

Akşehir Uygur is, of course, absolutely correct to remind us constantly of the normalizing (and hence, also, "monstrosizing") power of discourse and of gothic's complicity in those discourses (especially

medical and juridical) on which, as we have seen, it is dependent. But it is equally important, in considering scenes in libraries (or other archival settings) that, as Akşehir Uygur also suggests, power is made visible, “exposed,” its staging dramatically re-staged, its recesses remarked, its domiciles investigated, its substrates deployed against its idealization. This is surely connected in turn not only with Süner’s concern with “unveiling” but also with his tracing of “circular” movements within the text whereby spectatorship is, in his words, “spectacularized.” Meanwhile, even as the text reveals the patriarchal principles of the archive, it strives to shelter the paternal body from any archival gaze: it is the body of the female victim (in the vampire text very clearly a body that exists as the material bearer of marks and signs) that is to be subjected to the hermeneutic gaze of fathers and doctors. In *Lust for a Vampire* (Sangster, 1971), it is the male novelist, Richard Lestrangle, who inherits and deciphers the textual archive compiled by a now-deceased male teacher and becomes the representative of male juridico-medical and pedagogical expertise in the midst of a girls’ school run by a female head.

To turn briefly to another text which might be argued to play a key role in something like a genealogy of “lesbian gothic,” in Radcliffe Hall’s celebrated *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), we see the way in which the “invert” discovers herself to have been born into a discursive world in which her textual conception coincides with what Akşehir Uygur might call a “monstrosizing.” Unlike Armstrong’s *Jane Eyre*, Stephen Gordon steps out, not from traditional conduct manuals but from the texts of nineteenth-century sexology. As in *Carmilla*, the encounter with the self is mediated not only through medical but also “patriarchival” authority (as embodied by the library in Stephen’s father’s study), and this renders the quest for self-discovery in the text doubly belated:

A queer mixture, Sir Philip, part sportsman, part student. He had one of the finest libraries in England, and just lately he had taken to reading half the night, which had not hitherto been his custom. Alone in that grave-looking, quiet study, he would unlock a drawer in his ample desk, and would get out a slim volume recently acquired, and would read and re-read it in the silence. The author was a German, Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, and reading, Sir Philip's eyes would grow puzzled; then groping for a pencil he would make little notes all along the immaculate margins.

Stephen Gordon, clearly, is a palimpsestic site of interpretative anxiety. In this case, however, the text is careful to make the female gothic hero the rightful heir of the hermeneutic key to her own secret, in ways which subvert any purely pessimistic reading of the novel as representing simple submission to a tragic vision of an essentialized view of gender inversion and/or lesbianism.

Stephen's "essence" may at one level be conceived in physiological terms (and indeed her body itself functions, I would argue, as a kind of archival repository), but the uncanny moment of self-revelation, while framed in sensuous tactility, is rendered in strictly textual terms:

Getting up, she wandered about the room, touching its kind and familiar objects; stroking the desk, examining a pen, grown rusty from long disuse as it lay there; then she opened a little drawer in the desk and took out the key of her father's locked book-case. Her mother had told her to take what she pleased--she would take one or two of her father's books. She had never examined this special book-case, and she could not have told why she suddenly did so. As she slipped the key into the lock and turned it, the action seemed curiously automatic.

The marked female body is the object—or, more radically, the very substrate—of what Derrida has termed the "patriarchive" even as the gothic privileging and staging of acts of female readership (in *The Well of Loneliness*, *Northanger Abbey* and *Jane Eyre* but also, as we shall see, in *The Monk*) threatens constantly to usurp and reframe the textual authority it domiciles. Furthermore, much of the (supposed) horror of *Carmilla*, and perhaps the source of its greatest subversiveness in linking lesbian erotics to the inscription of the body in what demands at one level to be read in terms of a form of *écriture féminine*, stems from the fact that, if the female body is at one level the archive as passive substrate for the inscription of visible marks and signs, the inscriber, the authorial function, has at one level been usurped by the female "writer." Again, however, the text will attempt to reframe the female vampire in such a manner that ultimately she *becomes* the archive that is rendered legible to male hermeneutic authority:

With the assistance of the woodman, who soon returned, a monumental inscription, and carved escutcheon, were disclosed. They proved to be those of the long lost monument of Mircalla, Countess Karnstein. (2009, p. 346)

If the grave has retained and closeted the secret of the Countess, this female repository must be disclosed so that, dispossessed of her archive, Mircalla can be reconstituted as the material substrate on which are inscribed the signs and proofs of "patriarchival" authority:

The two medical men, one officially present, the other on the part of the promoter of the inquiry, attested the marvelous fact that there was a faint but appreciable respiration, and a corresponding action of the heart. The limbs were perfectly flexible,

the flesh elastic; and the leaden coffin floated with blood, in which to a depth of seven inches, the body lay immersed... Here, then, were all the admitted signs and proofs of vampirism. (2009, pp. 348-349)

“They shut me up in Prose,” writes the poetic gothicist Emily Dickinson (1999), and clearly, as many critics have argued, there is strong evidence of the manner in which, from the Julia of *A Sicilian Romance* and the Emily of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, both readers of books and hearts alike, and from Catherine Moreland to Jane Eyre to Carmilla/Mircalla, the problem of gothic belatedness is connected with struggles to reframe an archive that has inscribed and circumscribed the feminine in patriarchal terms.

It would, of course, be the utmost idealism to imagine that there is a purely extra-textual realm beyond Dickinson’s “Prose” in which the soul would soar, free and uncloseted. The two novels of Dickens discussed by Kennedy are particularly canny on the processes of a form of literary *Bildung* in which characters are latecomers to literary scenes in which they find themselves already inscribed, with all the ambivalence that this carries of simultaneous recognition, interpellation and constraint. It is at the site of the literary archive that Oliver is to find the secret of his family and place in the world:

[...] Oliver tapped at the study-door. On Mr. Brownlow calling to him to come in, he found himself in a little back room, quite full of books: with a window, looking into some pleasant little gardens. There was a table drawn up before the window, at which Mr. Brownlow was seated reading... (Dickens, 2008, *Oliver Twist*, pp. 102-103).

When Mr. Brownlow asks Oliver how he would like to grow up to be a writer of books, the boy replies, “I think I would rather read them, sir” (Dickens, p. 103), and there is indeed a strong sense in which Oliver is seen to have to find himself in a world of pre-inscribed signs, even as, once again, the ability of Fagin’s boys to unpick the names from purloined handkerchiefs militates against any association between the circulating scraps of textuality throughout the text and a metaphysical notion of an achieved totality that one might call “Fate.” Rather, if there is any sense in which Oliver is encouraged to accept a textual fate, this is associated with Fagin’s attempt to frame him, and indeed to interpellate him, within the recognizable literary codes of the Newgate novel:

He remained lost in thought for some minutes; and then, with a heavy sigh, snuffed the candle: and taking up the book which the Jew had left with him, began to read.

He turned over the leaves. Carelessly at first; but, lighting on a passage which attracted his attention, he soon became intent upon the volume. It was a history of the lives and trials of great criminals; and the pages were soiled and thumbed with use. Here, he read of dreadful crimes that made the blood run cold; of secret murders that had been committed by the lonely wayside; of bodies hidden from the eye of man in deep pits and wells: which would not keep them down, deep as they were, but had yielded them up at last, after many years, and so maddened the murderers with the sight, that in their horror they had confessed their guilt, and yelled for the gibbet to end their agony. Here, too, he read of men who, lying in their beds at dead of night, had been tempted (so they said) and led on, by their own bad thoughts, to such dreadful bloodshed as it made the flesh creep, and the limbs quail, to think of. The terrible descriptions were so real and vivid, that the sallow pages seemed to turn red with gore; and the words upon them, to be sounded in his ears, as if they were whispered, in hollow murmers, by the spirits of the dead. (Dickens, 2008, *Oliver Twist*, p. 157)

When Amy Dorrit wanders into a church, she too is presented with what is actually termed the “sealed book of fate,” although this refers to the “Burial volume” and not the register in which she finds herself inscribed according to the logic of demographic accounting: “Here you’ll find yourself, as large as life. Amy, daughter of William and Fanny Dorrit. Born, Marshalsea Prison, Parish of Saint George” (Dickens, 2008, *Little Dorrit*, p. 150) While she, like Oliver, is presented with the textual signs that validate her existence, the register of burials, the text that would ostensibly seal her final fate and which she takes as her pillow, retains “mysterious blank leaves” (Dickens, p. 150) which would belie any sense of an achieved archive that would transcend the contingencies of a secular writing.

Amy does encounter her textual avatar within a church, but one which, as the domicile of the registry of births and deaths, now seems much closer to the functions of governmentality than to any sense of a religious accounting. In *The Monk* we do have a representation of the sacred book which is, however, subjected to a textual practice which Coleridge, for one, deemed impious and blasphemous:

Yet this is the Book, which young Women are recommended to Study; which is put into the hands of Children, able to comprehend little more than those passages of which they had better remain ignorant; and which but too frequently inculcates the

first rudiments of vice, and gives the first alarm to the still sleeping passions. Of this was Elvira so fully convinced, that She would have preferred putting into her Daughter's hands '*Amadis de Gaul,*' or '*The Valiant Champion,*' '*Tirante the White;*' and would sooner have authorised her studying the lewd exploits of '*Don Galaor,*' or the lascivious jokes of the '*Damsel Plazer di mi vida.*' (Lewis, 1980, p. 259).

So the Bible finds itself archived amid secular romances and, indeed, treated as morally more suspect than those texts with which it is compared.

Let us remember the association that Brooks makes between the modes of melodrama—“the repository of the fragmentary and desacralized remnants of sacred myth” (Brooks, 1995, p. 5)—and the gothic. Brooks, as we have seen, hints that the gothic displays the pathos of disappointed hopes for the “resacralization of experience” (1995, p. 17). This is an insight which can help us to recast hoary debates about the dialectic of reason and unreason, of superstition and demystification, of the quest for the spiritual and its descent into bathos within gothic texts. The libraries that figure in *Northanger Abbey*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, *Carmilla* and *The Monk*, along with Mr. Brownlow's study and the archive kept in the basement of the Clennam house, are all, I would suggest, repositories of, precisely, “remnants” of the sacred, and all, at one level, sustain the idea of the metaphysical Arcanum, and yet the textual archive as a gathering place of multiple and heterogeneous material volumes enacts the very dissemination it simultaneously strives to overcome: “*Consignation* aims to coordinate a single corpus, in a system or a synchrony in which all the elements articulate the unity of an ideal configuration” (Derrida, 1995, p. 3). Libraries and archives are the last refuge, one might say, of the notion of the sacred text (and can serve in turn, as we have seen, to elevate the discourse of doctors and fathers to sacerdotal status or even, as Kennedy points out, function as agents of a seemingly divine justice), but they are also in a sense the last resting place of *logos*, a site in which the sacred is subject to a persistent secularization, where the word is reminded of its debts to the material world. The gothic archive acts as the index of the ideal, while all the time it draws attention to the materiality of its own signs, and the gothic at times almost becomes another name for “grammatology,” a science of the literary substrate:

[T]hey ascertained the existence of a broad marble tablet, with letters carved in relief upon it. (Le Fanu, 2009, p. 346).

Upon a paper attached to the Narrative which follows, Doctor Hesselius has written a rather elaborate note, which he accompanies with a reference to his Essay on the strange subject which the MS. illuminates. (Le Fanu, 2009, p. 265).

The following work was found in the library of an ancient Catholic family in the north of England. It was printed at Naples, in the black letter, in the year 1529. (Walpole, 1764, Preface, Para. 1).

“On the blade, which was then partly out, of the scabbard, though since closed by our efforts in removing it, were written the following lines—” (Walpole, 1764, Chapter IV, Para. 6).

To return, at last, to the problem of belatedness, I would like to end the introduction to this special edition of the *Journal of Yaşar University* with a quotation from *Northanger Abbey* which surely functions as yet another reminder of the gothic insistence on archives and substrates, and which also stages the act of close reading in ways which suggest that the gothic has anticipated our efforts to assert our critical and hermeneutic authority over it. I offer this final fragment of the gothic as a kind of frame narrative for the hermeneutic and critical enterprises of Süner, Akşehir Uygur and Kennedy that follow:

The lock was silver, though tarnished from age; at each end were the imperfect remains of handles also of silver, broken perhaps prematurely by some strange violence; and, on the centre of the lid, was a mysterious cipher, in the same metal. Catherine bent over it intently, but without being able to distinguish anything with certainty. She could not, in whatever direction she took it, believe the last letter to be a T...(Austen, 2006, p. 153)

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