1949

The Gothic Short Story in American Periodicals from 1800-1850 with Especial Reference to the Lady Books

Clarence E. Brown

Loyola University Chicago

Recommended Citation
https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses/740
THE GOTHIC SHORT STORY IN AMERICAN PERIODICALS
FROM 1800-1850 WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO
THE LADY BOOKS

by

CLARENCE E. BROWN, JR.

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN LOYOLA UNIVERSITY

February
1949
VITA

Clarence E. Brown, Jr., was born in Chicago, Illinois, November 11, 1918.

He was graduated from Carl Schurz High School, Chicago, Illinois, February, 1936. The Degree of Bachelor of Education was conferred June, 1942, by Chicago Teacher's College.

After serving three years in the Navy Air Corps., the writer taught high school English from 1946 to 1948 in the Chicago Public School System.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. THE GOTHIC TALES</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puritan background of Lady Books—The almanacs—The Lady Books—Godey's—The Titles—sub-titles—Pre-Romantic poetry—Gothic traditions—purification of emotions—the stock old castle tale—Irish Folklore tales—German superstition—long and short tales—typical fragments—Coleridge echoes—precursor of Poe—Burns' Sportive Tales—the prosaic explanation—Sportive twins—the cheapest tale—Breaks from the past—Science in the tales—the ridiculous tale—second-hand inspiration—Time for Poe.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE GOTHIC CHARACTERS</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byronic heroes described—their dress—the mask—their laugh—the classic hero—Byronic heroines described—classic designs—Fatima the wretch—Noble strains—characteristics of Byronic heroes—Pre-Shakesperian gentlemen—melancholy—cruel—Sir Henry the oddity—Barons hated—feared—Realism in Merry Terry—the stock gloomy men—Enters the rogue—God conspired against them—Puritanism—Melodramaticism—madness—the unhonored grave—characteristics of Byronic heroines—Tender—Suffering—Tears—Music—organs—French horns—guitars—They die melodramatically—DEATH!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE GOTHIC SCENERY</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The study of the Gothic Elements in American Periodicals from 1800-1850, with especial reference to the Lady Books has two purposes. The first of these is to trace the development of the Gothic strain in the short stories to find whether there is a typically American short story form of fiction between the years 1800 to 1850. The years between 1800 and 1850 were chosen for this study, because 1800 was early enough to encompass the English Gothic School in its last phases, and because 1850 was late enough to include the Lady Book era and some of the colorful stories of Edgar Allan Poe.

The select bibliography compiled by the writer of this thesis is a unique contribution to the bibliographies of American periodical literature in the uncharted region of early American magazine studies.

The Newberry Library of Chicago supplied the magazines from which this bibliographical list was compiled; one hundred forty periodicals were used. The magazines the writer used were not catalogued by POOLE'S INDEX nor by the NEW YORK UNIVERSITY LIBRARY INDEX. Both indexes are the best known guides to this vast uncharted magazine field.

The greatest of the Lady Books--Godey's was omitted for two reasons. First, because it does not fall within the dates of the compiled bibliography, and second, because the majority of the tales in the magazine were not of sufficient Gothic merit to make the breaking of the
bibliography worth-while. However, one hundred and forty magazines were found which had many Gothic tales, which made the omission of Godey's insignificant for the purposes of this study.

Because of the complicated jungle of Lady Book literature, the titles of many magazines were re-named in the period under consideration. *Grahams Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine* may be one of this fugitive variety, but a careful re-check with the two standard bibliography indexes does not list *Grahams* with the title *Lady's*, but rather under the title *American Monthly Magazine*.

The story behind this thesis is the story of the bitter struggle of talented American writers who struggled to maintain an artistic sense of values in an America where the vulgar reader's only concession to the development of American Literature was a subscription check to a cheap but decorated Lady Book.

In this milieu of literary poverty it is not strange that Edgar Allan Poe died in debt; Hawthorne retreated from the mob; and Whitman modestly signed himself *WW*. The stories behind their lives, and that of every writer of major importance in American Literature must be interpreted in terms of the American magazine, because American Literature was magazine literature.

The Gothic short story has been held in disrepute since the cheap horror thrillers were shipped to this country in 1802 and even before that year. England shared in the ignoble defeat of American Literature from 1800 to 1850, but so powerful was the attraction of this renegade
form of literature that hardly an American poet, short story writer, or novelist in the period considered was not aware of its selling ability. Charles Brockden Brown, America's first novelist, in Wieland tried to ridicule the Gothic tale out of fashion in America, but America loved the cheap tales. Writers, editors, and publishers all made money from the Gothic vogue and its influence on American Literature in the Lady Books is a study that should bring a renewed interest in early Americana.
Chapter I

THE GOTHIC TALES

Over a century and a half before the Lady Book era in mid-nineteenth century American periodical literature, our forefathers...

...to lighten up their dreary sojourn in the wilderness...tried to interest the children of the forest in the peculiar ideas and traditions which they brought with them in the form of legends and literature.\(^1\)

The remark made by the critic regarding cheerful literature at this time was probably true:

...the word NOVEL was a charm to conjure up evil imaginings with, and the fathers of New England (would) start...back and turn...pale at the sound.

for there was little in those bleak days to suggest what was to come in the 1830's when...

...scarcely a window seat or work table...was not occupied by 3 or 4 of those dapper volumes that the eye recognized in a moment for the offspring of the novel writing muse.\(^2\)

---

3. Ibid.
The only form of literature in the New England witchcraft communities was almanac literature, for almanacs were useful for agrarian Pilgrims. The first of these almanacs was called "an Almanac" and was the first publication of the first printing press in America which was established at Harvard College in 1632.4

In 1726, exactly one hundred years before the start of the Lady Books in American literature, Dr. Nathaniel Ames of Dedham, Massachusetts, measured the taste of Americans in the Astronomical Diary and Almanack which circulated in sixty thousand New England homes where The Bible was a luxury.5 Before many years had passed Ames' hodge-podge became

...an annual cyclopedia of information, of amusement, a vehicle for the conveyance to the public of all sorts of knowledge and nonsense in prose and verse....sparkling with brevity and variety.6

When the Imprimatur censorship was removed by the English Governor, there was a rush in print, and almanac manufacturers increased and multiplied throughout the land.7

Soon after the freedom of the press was assured there was a flurry of "Poor Almanacs" which were climaxed by the monarch of all the Zodiac literature—Benjamin Franklin's Poor Richard's Almanac, first

4. Ibid., p. 466.
7. Ibid., p. 469.
published in 1733 and continued until as late as 1767. 8

About forty more almanacs were published after Poor Richard, but their popularity decreased with the march of the American empire westward, and after 1800 they were almost totally eclipsed by the flood of literature of other classes, 9 namely Lady Book literature.

The part England played during the formative stages of the development of American Literature was stated by the editor of The North American Magazine:

...the press of the United States, like the people, takes its form from the press of England, and because the latter teems with inert masses of shapeless corruption, in the form of obscene novels, or romances of triumphant villany, on the one hand, and of frothy and fanatical tracts on the other; so must we, humble imitators of infallible England, deal in the same trash, and deluge the land with reprints of imported fungi, because they happen to be all the rage, three thousand miles abroad. 10

With American taste inflamed by the 1820 "pocketbooks" that she dumped on the American market, England inspired The Atlantic Souvenir And New Year's Offering which in 1826 began the "age of annuals" in American Literature. 12 This pioneer Lady Book was a high-grade periodical

8. Ibid., p. 469.
9. Ibid., p. 476.
that extracted tears from four thousand Americans, and twelve dollars an issue \(^{13}\) in an age when Sensibility was the vogue.

Soon after many American and British-American publishers became piously concerned with literature that would

...interest the imagination
and improve the mind, without
perverting the one or corrupting
the other, \(^{14}\)

so the annuals degenerated into the "gift-book" variety.

Craftsmanship was neglected in the mad rush to provide holiday gifts for almost every member of the fashionable world, and almost every stable-boy, butcher's apprentice, and strawberry girl in America wanted to be a munificent patron of "cheap literature"; \(^{15}\)

Mary Anne supplied herself clandestinely with a great many cheap books; and was, at the age of fifteen, far deeper in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Romance of the Black Forest* than was her mother.

It was a period of literary "laissez faire," and the critics of American Literature called the sentimental romances in the Lady Books rubbish, \(^{17}\) mental poison, \(^{18}\) immoral; \(^{19}\) and indeed, they accused them of

\(^{13}\) Ibid.
\(^{14}\) *The Young American's Magazine*, (January, 1847), p. 68.
\(^{16}\) "Mary Anne's Hair/A London Love Tale," Littell's Living Age, (March, 1846), p. 743.
being the cause of the ruin of the nation. 20 The stuff in those Lady Books was disgusting, degrading: it was "ostrich food...incapable of digestion," 21 but fourteen million Americans ate the food!

If the titles of those gift-books failed to attract the reader (and there was no reason why they should fail, for the names were such as would delight any blindfolded Botanist from Maine to Florida and the back-lands: The Dahlia, The Moss Rose, The Hyacinth, The Lily, The Magnolia) the publishers would improvise on the already ornate Lady Books by covering them with strips of leather, by draping them with silk, or by inlaying the covers with mother-of-pearl.

Without benefit of conscience or copyright law, publishers stooped to the lowest form of plagiarism to meet deadlines. They stole parts of articles or whole articles from each other; they changed the names on articles; they inserted a poem on the front page of the stolen Lady Book and renamed the articles. If really desperate, and few publishers in that age were not inclined to be desperate, they would re-baptize the complete book of the original publisher. There was no practice of fiendish intent that was not indulged in by every corrupt publisher who was strong enough to hold pen or rifle, for often they would pirate a complete book and substitute their own names under the real

publisher's name which they clumsily obliterated.

With a race of female scribblers already trained by Mrs. Hale, editor of the most famous of the Lady Books Godey's Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine, the greatest names in American Literature soon appeared, such as Hawthorne, Irving, Poe, Emerson, Longfellow, Bryant, Whittier, Lowell, Holmes, Prescott, and even the champion of them all, Whitman, contributed articles to the market which Godey's opened for native American talent.

It is a sad commentary on American literary taste to find in some of those cheap magazines of sentimental twaddlings this embryo group of the greatest writers of American Literature; but the Lady Books were the only means of publication at a time when England brow-beat America's writers, and at a time when American critics frowned at the attempts to produce an independent literature.

Another service which Mrs. Hale, Godey's editor, did for American periodical literature was the changing of the complete publishing policies of Godey's, and future periodicals which followed Godey's example. Having geared Godey's for feminine destinations by making the magazine a household necessity, Mrs. Hale then issued Godey's Magazine monthly instead of annually. Soon it was a national institution; a history of American taste, manners, and costumery.

24. Ibid., p. 393.
The last phase of the Lady Book regime was called the period of old wares, in which the publishing bandits rifled each other's works and issued anthologies of Lady Books that were festered nuisances. The extent of the racketeering is evident in the case of Mr. John Milton Stearn's gift book *The Wreath of Wild Flowers*. Published in New York in 1846, *The Wreath* underwent a slight transformation in the *Amaranth* in 1851, in the *Garland*, in 1852, the *Keepsake of Friendship* in 1853, the *Tokens of Friendship* in 1854. And finally, with an additional poem, Mr. Stearn's work of 1846 was named the *Magnolia* with a preface date of 1855.

Of the one thousand and fifteen Lady Books, Lady Book Annuals, and Lady Book Anthologies a few lasted for more than one year. *The Rose of Sharon* held the American record, having shed perfumery for eighteen years; *The Token* lived three years younger; and *The Odd Fellow's Offering* was accepted for twelve years.

The Lady Books represented one of the most grotesque and interesting period in the history of printing from the time of their publication in 1826 to the time of their passing to second-hand stores and attics in 1870. It is almost impossible to determine in what phase of their development, or circulation, the Lady Books absorbed the infected Gothic "cheap book" romances that were hawked about the streets of London.

26. Ibid., p. 387.
27. Ibid., p. 388.
until 1820 when Mrs. Radcliffe’s Gothic School came into disrepute. But it is a fact that somewhere in that magazine jungle of America are hundreds more of the 1820 variety of Gothic tales than were found in the periodicals selected for this study, because writers lodged their “Blood Pudding” tales in the Lady Books from the years 1800-1850 in America.

These “Blood Pudding” tales, as fashioned by the ladies, were patterned after the longer English novels: The Mysteries of Udolpho by Mrs. Anne Radcliffe, and The Castle of Otranto by Horace Walpole.

When the Lady Book writers apparently keyed their early Gothic short stories to the last phases of Mrs. Radcliffe’s School in 1811, it took a keen-eyed mother in America to know that the “murderous monk” in “Kilverstone Castle” was the same fugitive from “The Monk of The Grotto” who had terrified her daughter nine years before.

However, it was not always the fearful elements in the stories which attracted women readers; many of them were intrigued by the curious titles such as “Lydia Ashbaugh/The Witch”; “The Necromancer”; and the “One-Eyed Monk.”

The profit-mad publishers of the Lady Books often embellished

their Gothic titles as gaudily as they did their book covers, with curious subtitles, such as: "Aletha/From a Celtic Parchment, Anno 3900/ Translated by N. C. Brooks, A.M."; 35 "The Ship of The Dead/Translated from the French of M. De Fossumbroni"; 36 and "Wallingsford Castle/From The Ancient Chronicles." 37 Other eye-catching subtitles camouflaged the heated contents of the tales so that the title words "A True Story," 38 "A Tale of Real Life," 39 and "A Tale of Domestic Life" 40 were employed. Only once in the period between 1800 and 1850 was the old Gothic horror muse recognized as such, and the sub-title "A Gothic Tale" 41 appended.

The Americans who were fatigued with the Neo-Classical restraint in literature 42 found release in the Grave Yard School of the Pre-Romantics, and Gothic quotations were jammed into the stories to create suspense:

Splendor in heaven, and horror
on the main
Sunshine and storm at once—a troubled day. 43

Sometimes these Gothic quotations were used at other points in the tales. For fear that the reader's faculty of doubt would not be

---

40. "The Birthday Prophecy," The North American Quarterly Magazine,
42. "Some Phases of the Supernatural in American Literature," PMLA,
paralyzed, the Gothic story-tellers introduced them into the atmosphere of horror at the outset of the tale without flamboyant gesture. The technique was good. The reader knew where he was going after he had begun the journey:

'Tis now the very witching time of night
When Church-yards yawn, and Hell itself
Breathes contagion to the world. 44

Some countenances needed a short rich line: "Foul mouths" were more than foul mouths when they

Grinn'd horribly, a ghastly smile! 45

That meant surfeit, for even the most credulous reader refused the prosaic present after those heights of dramatic power!

In their attempts to measure Gothic-length novels into equal monthly installments, and yet begin and end each installment with horror elements, the novels were broken up:

Madame de Sevrac was no sooner left in darkness and alone...a deep and melancholy voice, pronounced, "Seek no farther." 46

In the next chapter of the same issue without capitalization:

A face was at the window:
"pale and hideous! It frowned upon her with its brow..." 47

46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
If there was not time to conclude the chapter, the dash served a happy purpose:

Ravillon, aghast with horror, let go her arm, and instantly escaped—48

Even conversations were hurriedly terminated to conclude a chapter with a dash:

During their conversation, day declined, and a dusky gloom nearly overspread the surrounding scenery—49

Next month without chapter heading would appear:

The evening air was nipping cold; the turf was sprinkled with half frozen dew, and the thick vapours rising along the skirts of the mountain, rendered their situation comfortless and dreary—50

The apparent awkwardness of making these long novels fit into the format of the Lady Books that were made for short stories, probably accounts for the fact that only one was found in the periodicals reviewed for this study. "The Exile"51 exhausted all the tricks of Mrs. Radcliffe and Horace Walpole for fourteen chapters, and held off the editor's comments until the thirteenth chapter was concluded. The most important character Sir Hubert de Sevrac, the exile, began his itinerary in Lombardy, Italy, in some dim age of superstition. At the end of an indefinite

48. Ibid., p. 70.
49. Ibid., p. 143.
50. Ibid., p. 161.
51. Ibid.
expanse of ground some small cottages were huddled, completely enveloped by the blue haze that crept down from the towering mountains. In this romantic atmosphere a castle, aged and rugged, moulder very far away in the gnarled black forest. Closer to the castle could be seen weed-wild and gloomy cloisters where the Yew branches waved fantastic patterns upon the gray sculptured courtyards. Two fiendish black marble dragons guarded the weirdly carved entrance to the castle proper and the saracenically designed iron knocker echoed deeds of mystery in ages past. Inside the castle the rooms were lofty and dusty, but the library was the gloomiest room, for the grim busts hidden by the cobwebs seemed to speak of the many dead who had visited there. There were false panels in the walls and hollow footsteps shuffled somewhere between the faded walls. Mysterious and untraceable groans, knockings, and scrapings were heard throughout the snaked subterranean passages. Then came the storm outside: the lightning flashed, and then skipped along the cold battlements; the winds sighed like humans in agony; fiends stepped out from some fresh-dug graves, and famished squirrels darted into inky crags. Out of this mist of blackness stalked a stranger. The wind lashed him against the bent oak boughs as he slipped along the cobbled walk groping his way toward the light in the library. He slid back the secret door, threw his black mantle across his face and held out his gloved hand:

Woman of sensibility!

Extinguish your light, touch not the mysterious paper... you are surrounded by peril.

---

52. Ibid.
The term Gothic as applied to literature may have its roots in many sources: it may be derived from the nature of Gothic Architecture; it may have its beginnings in the religion of the middle ages; it may satisfy the human desire for excitement; but whatever the sources of its mysterious conception the Lady Book publishers capitalized on its strong appeal.

Mrs. Radcliffe's Udolpho may have had the greatest influence on the longer novel-length Gothic romances in the Lady Books, but the greatest influence on the shorter tales, aside from that of Byron himself, was Scott's Waverly Novels.

The reason for Scott's influence on the Gothic short story from 1800-1850 must be attributed to the fact that America was trying to make a native literature from legendary material, and legendary material was only marketable in the Lady Books. With the Lady Book writers trained in the art of absorbing materials from foreign sources, and with Lady Book publishers trained in the art of providing material for legend-loving Gothic readers, Scott's influence was accentuated.

There was not a great body of Irish Gothic tales in the Lady Books, but those that were represented fitted into the general definition

of the Gothic short story, dictated by the Lady Books. These tales were symbolic tales of fragmentary length reaching for material into the legendary past or the superstitious present, without being dependent upon horror for their purgative effect.

The weird suggestivity of this timid but colorful body of Irish tales was painted with an exceedingly delicate touch. The story "The Unlucky Birthnight"57 was probably the best for Gothic texture and shows inspiration of the eerie Irish muse. In this tale lame Marion was born to the Mortons of Ireland on Halloween, and grew up with her brother after her parents died. Her brother had a coachman employee. He was a strange coachman for his complexion was of a frightening black color. He had four coal-black horses and livery of the same sable hue. The peasants of the village feared him; they always crossed themselves when he passed. It was said that he had the power of demons. He touched young Marion--this black figure--and when he touched her he left a deep black mark on her breast. Little lame Marion died from his touch, and when she died the be-deviled coachman left the moor. As he left, his carriage went off into the mist and thick black smoke rose from the earth.

There was an interest in German literature in America beginning in 1833 when a new era of material prosperity and intellectual activity began.58 However, the legendary Gothic German tales were in abundance

in the Lady Books before that date:

...there exists, at present, a very large and increasing class of readers, for whom the scattered fragments of olden time, as preserved in popular and traditionary tales, possess a powerful attraction. 59

And again:

The Germans are by no means deficient in the genuine class of Chivalric Romance, which has nearly the same general features in every country. 60

When the American critics of literature began to complain about the abundance of foreign literature in the American Market, thirty-eight 61 of the newspapers and magazines in America in 1839 were in the German language. 62 German legendary stories like "The Blasted Tree" 63 were found in almost every issue. These stories blended superstition and levity: 64

It was a piercing night in mid-winter...It was a night in which the fancy of an honest German could not fail to conjure up a thousand phantoms; his shrieking ghosts cried from the crevices of every sapless tree; his witches rode on the pale moonlight moonbeams, in the distant

60. Ibid., p. 635.
62. Ibid.
and scarcely perceptible mist that spread a thin veil over the beautiful stars; and wandering spirits of departed friends peeped like premature resurrectionists from behind every thicket.65

The most gruesome of the German tales clustered around the watered regions of New England, and if a castle wasn't inspiration the Lady Book contributors manufactured a grotto or a cave like the most beautiful of all the German Gothic tales found in the years between 1800 and 1850—"The Water Lady."66 In this story a strange sprite haunted the miasmic defiles of young Count Albert's estate. Albert had been reared on tales about this woman, and he sought her in her cave one moonlight evening after he had been reading in front of his cheerless fireplace. He met the lady in the cave and returned home speechless and with a pale brow and a carved emerald ring. He vowed he would return to her cave on the rising of the third moon. On the night when the third moon arose, Albert had forgotten his vow, for he had been married that day. When the moon shone through the window of his bedroom he suddenly remembered his vow, but it was too late. The Water Lady had already cast her wicked spell upon him. Albert felt the spell and quickly looked into the mirror. He saw himself fully dressed, but he had no hands or face! He tried to run away. The chamber door knob stuck in his hand. He pulled desperately and then an icy hand clutched his hand and held him fast. The fairy lady

had returned to speak to Albert: "Albert...thou hast broken the compact so solemnly ratified between us..." Albert disappeared that night, and soon the castle became a ruin.

There was something that rang true in the formulae of a good Gothic tale. The fragments were more atmospheric exercises than truly horror tales, but the prose devices as used by the Lady Book writers were not tricks. They were genuine techniques that dissolved into the plot framework of the stories. The fact that the majority of these Gothic tales were fragments was a condition dictated by vulgar readers who demanded that their "classics" be not only short but that they be cramped in form. If the finely spun story threads were woven carefully, the reader sensed it and relaxed into the comfortable regions of credulity, satisfied with the suspension of disbelief.

When reading these Gothic fragments, it is often difficult to determine where the old Radcliffean horror mood is used and where the traditional Gothic legends begin. A typical fragmentary story that embodies both forms is "Love's Last Supper." In this sad story Raymond de Roussillon, one of the species of "Blue-Beard Barons," found his supposedly unfaithful wife, Marguerite, flirting with a troubador in the castle garden. Raymond did not understand how his wife could be carried "...beyond herself by the emotions of the moment" when she had an

irresistible feeling that made her stoop and press her lips upon the forehead of her kneeling lover. Raymond waited until he found him alone one night in the garden, and then killed him, with a stroke of his knife that went deep down into the heart. Unsatisfied with simply having killed him, Raymond then tore away the troubadour’s garments and savagely plunged a knife into the exposed and gory chest. With the chest now open, cruel Raymond stuck his naked hand into the gaping wound and tore out the quivering heart. He then whacked off his head, and with the heart in his hand returned to the castle kitchen where he demanded that the heart be seasoned to suit the taste of the Baroness—Marguerite. That night Raymond, with diabolical happiness, watched Marguerite eat the heart. When she had finished her meal, Raymond raised the ghastly head of the troubadour upon the table and growled to Marguerite: "Behold! This is the head of him whose heart you have eaten!" Quite in keeping with the tragedy, the Baroness Marguerite immediately dispatched herself from the castle window.

At a time when America was trying to make a native literature from the legends brought over from Europe, stories sprang up all over the nation, and were absorbed as purely fiction by the Lady Books. Ambition and gain were the chief aspirations of most American publishers in the period of the Lady Books, and the fact that few magazine publishers wanted to be martyrs for a native literature, the legends became confused or combined with the Gothic tales which was a medium in which legends were able to find correspondence. The Gothic tales, however, from the
New England areas did not show a great propensity for losing their European flavor. The story of "The Victim Bride" is of this variety of Gothic tale. "The Victim Bride" is an exquisite piece of workmanship from the Monadnock regions of America. In the tale, Grinnel Bedford was out pursuing a man named Montague who had married his love, Rosabelle. He rode rapidly through the Monadnock mountains one evening at dusk time when suddenly an overhanging oak bough dashed him to the ground. The throw stunned him. When he became conscious he heard strange whisperings of a woman's voice in the calm that preceded the storm. Soon the storm came in its fury, and the louder it raged the louder became that same voice that pierced the silence between thunder groans and lightning cracklings. His blood chilled and froze with horror. With his soul's eye he searched the forest for the place from which those siren sounds had come; he found nothing but blackness in the forest. Gradually the lightning flashed dimmer and fainter; soon the rain came. It was heart-deadening in that bewitched forest; not a leaf rustled; he lay silently on the soft earth listening for another sound of a weird voice. It came again when the sun sank behind the mountains, and its echo rang along the jagged cliffs and wind-tossed woods. Still there was nothing to be seen but the shadows of far-off lightning flashes. He knew now that the curse was upon him, and too tired to pursue Montague further that night, he lay down to sleep.

At midnight he awoke to see in the distance a waterfall sparkling in the moonlight. The strange fall from his horse; the whispering shrill voice of the Lady; the calm before the storm, all helped to superinduce upon Bedford an undefinable apprehension of evil. At length the lady with the fiendish voice came out of her cave, stood over Bedford and addressed him by name. She told him of her sorrows; that she was once human; loved and was loved by Sir Montague, the very man whom Bedford sought; and who sent her from her home into that mad way of life. She now lived to fulfill one vow; that was to kill Montague. She never asked Bedford the reasons for his strange ride through that romantic country, but she did not need to ask him, for fairy ladies had a way of knowing things that were not known to humans. She led Bedford into her cave, spoke with the snake which was wreathed six times about her arm, stroked it gently off her wrist and called it sweetly her "Son." She then took Bedford to a pit in which there lay another man named Dalcho, and when she saw Bedford look at the bloody form, she forgot her bewitched snake which uncoiled from her arm and bit the benumbed Bedford. Not knowing that Bedford was bitten, the fairy lady permitted Bedford to ride down into the valley to the home of Montague. She waited by her cave, for she knew that Montague would arrive. Soon Montague arrived, but he escaped death because a cross hung from his breast.

Having fled from the cave and from death Montague returned home, only to find the door locked. He knocked, but there was no answer. He
listened. The sounds of deep growls and gnashing teeth made him start back with fear. He threw himself into the door and stood in the doorway—he yelled and fell senseless to the floor:

Gracious God! What a scene! The lovely Rosabella weltering in her gore... her bosom gashed and open with a horrid wound, and Bedford...devouring with wolfish gesture, and appetite, the very heart of his VICTIM BRIDE! 69

Bedford's mother, the fairy lady hurried to save her son, but she arrived too late. The snake bite had done its evil work.

Irving's legendary short stores in the Gothic mood were probably another reason for the American attempt to make the short story the native literature of America. Many of his "Sleepy Hollow" legends include a fantastic body of short stories in the Hudson River region, and Brom Bones can be seen in the Lady Books riding mysteriously throughout Germantown. 70

A good collection of brilliant American Gothic short stories would have resulted from a fusion of the Gothic elements of Irving and Coleridge, but Coleridge was too speculative 71 for the Lady Book reader in mid-nineteenth Century America. Nevertheless, a few Coleridgian tales were found in those periodicals. The story of "The Wanderings of Cain" is elemental in its simplicity and in its biblical rhetoric. In the story Cain was being

69. Ibid.
led by his son down an open moonlit path in a shadowed forest. The path narrowed for awhile, and then broadened as the moonlight shadows reposed upon it. They walked together, father and son; down, down, this path until the sun arose in the morning; but the sun never shone on their path. It was a dark region, dark as a cavern. Soon they stopped walking for Cain saw Abel in a clearing at the end of the woods, and Cain ran after Abel. The shape fled from Cain, "fled shrieking over the sands, and the sands rose like white mists behind the steps of Cain."

There was another tale in the Lady Books from the imaginative mind of Coleridge. It was "The Ship of the Dead." This tale closely resembled Coleridge's "The Rhime of the Ancient Mariner," but the technique was subordinated for a cataloguing of horrible details. Twenty-four wretches were stretched dead on the deck of a galleon. They were nailed there while alive, and now their corpses were putrified and half-eaten by rats, but the most horrible of all these ghastly spectres was the skeleton of the captain which still had some corrupted flesh on the blanched bones.

Though the vogue of sensibility lessened its hold on the better American writers, few in American literature in the Lady Book era were foolish enough to insult the only market available for American short stories, there resulted in the Gothic tales more interest in the effect murder had on the murderer rather than the detailed study of the act.

itself. When the Gothic tales became subjective instead of objective, the trend was toward a psychological horror atmosphere which was Edgar Allan Poe's specialty. The story of the "Iron Shroud"\textsuperscript{74} suggested the form of Poe. This tale is a detailed emotional sketch of a man imprisoned in a dungeon some of which collapsed every day for each of seven days. The passage of time was indicated by the window gratings which decreased in size, one by one every night, until the man was crushed into a coffin which sprung into his presence the last night displacing his iron bed.

The fact that the legends and the Gothic horror mode blend into one another, made the tracing of influences of specific authors on Edgar Allan Poe particularly difficult. If there were any precursors of Poe's Gothic form in the short story, it would probably be "The Shadowy Form."\textsuperscript{75} This child of the German fancy was the most singular of all the Gothic tales examined in over one hundred and forty periodicals, between the years 1800 and 1850.

During the French Revolution a young German student, Gottfried Wolfgang, went to Paris imbued with the speculative philosophies of the University of Gottingen. In Paris he lived in a gloomy street near the monastic walls of the Sorbonne and its close proximity to the guillotine. Gottfried was studious to excess, and spent many hours reading obsolete charnel house literature in the catacombed libraries of Paris. These

readings helped feed his unhealthy appetite, and the only relaxation he had was the dreams of beautiful women. One day after having spent many hours reading and dreaming, Gottfried left the library and passed the freshly be-sprinkled guillotine. A beautiful woman was seated by the guillotine weeping, and he pitied her and took her home with him. They loved each other deeply and neither asked questions of the other. One night, after having spent the day at the library, Gottfried returned home, where he found the woman ill. He tried to comfort her. He took the hand that lay over her head and put her hand into his, but it was cold. Her cold face was ghastly and pallid. He untied the black collar from her neck and lo! The head dangled to the floor. She had been half-guillotined the day he met her.

Distracted, Gottfried died in a mad house.

The Gothic literature using the domestic touches, correctly speaking, did not belong to the Gothic tradition, for that was the realm of The Tale of Sensibility. However, if the domestic touches were combined effectively with gruesome details, the domestic elements became one with the blood-curdling atmosphere, and the domestic elements produced the ghastly facts. It would be inexcusable in a review of the Gothic tale in American periodicals to exclude the individualistic tale of the bloody adventures of Hugo, the executioner, in "The Doomsman's Glee."76 In this

story the horror element predominates, but the manner of its telling determines to what form of literature it belongs.

Hugo addressed his friend Balvado:

Quick...I say! The knife, the glittering knife. The parricide howls, ...groans, but his soul is trampling on the fragments of clay. Quick, while his carcass is all palpitation, all alive with torture, all throe, all agony and pulsation, hand me the knife. 77

Hugo used it mercilessly. He severed the felon’s bones, parted the ribs, and with a blow of his jagged club made an aperture in the flesh. Then he continued to amuse Balvado. He felt the hot blood again, and handled the throbbing heart. It palpitated to his satisfaction. Hugo demanded the knife again, and continued his work:

I hold the heart,...cut it from the carcass; sever each nerve, snap each artery...A deep low trembling heave of the chest, and a rattle in the throat... 78

As if this were not enough to satisfy the nail-gnawing Lady Book reader, happy Hugo really got prodigal in his wickedness. He raised the heart in the air, and watched it gleam in the light of the day. He listened to the warm blood patter on his butchered victim. Then, he spoke again:

Quick, the pincers, the red hot pincers...on that quivering in every

77. Ibid.
78. Ibid.
splintered limb; on that quick tremor
of the lip, ha, ha, that blanching of
the cheek, with the blood oozing from
every pore; that quick gurgling sound
in the throat...79

Hugo then instructed the reader that the felon died, and asked
if he had not done his work well, as he watched the spirit creep from the
shattered clod of the belabored parricide.

Hugo had a competitor in this vein of Gothic chills. This hero
never gave his name,80 but he was unashamed of his deeds. There was
something of Hamlet in his character; he was very sensitive. He was not
a prince, however, for he was extremely poor, forsooth a beggar. People
used to call him "beggar." It was not the fact that he was a beggar that
caused him trouble, it was the fact that people sneered when they called
him beggar. One man called him beggar once too often. The beggar said
that this taunt

...extinguished the last lingering
spark of pity in my breast. I
was now no longer a man, but a demon.

Then Hugo's rhetoric is used:

Do you see me glaring, like a
hungry tiger, on my victim? Do you
see me steal crouching toward him?
Now, now, I am stooping right above
his head. The nail is at his ear!
Hark, do you not hear the fierce,
sudden strokes of the hammer--how
the sharp iron goes crashing and

79. Ibid.
grinding through the skull, right into the very centre of the brain?

The Lady Book reader is again taken into the author's confidence:

'Twas bravely done; was it not?
And how he stared! My God, how he stared! A hideous convulsion shook him from head to foot; the blood surged upwards to his eyes--his lips--his brow--his ears--everywhere but to that one, well concealed little wound that let out life; he heaved a long, thrilling sigh; then lay stretched a corpse before me.

England donated a great many of the Gothic tales to the Lady Books when these magazines took anything they could find to publish. The traditional legends of Scotland were among the stories, especially those in the sportive vein of Gothicism. The tale of "The Haunted Chamber"81 shows the influence of Burns' "Tam O' Shanter" although its setting is American. In "The Haunted Chamber" a solitary traveller, in one of the interior towns of Massachusetts in the middle of the Eighteenth Century, stopped for a rest at an aged inn. This inn was reportedly haunted by the cantankerous ghost of a murdered barber. First, this happy ghost would make strange sounds at the inn windows, and then he would ask to shave the lodgers. Our hero anticipated the sounds of the ghost; ran to the window; threw it open, and the whole mystery was evident. A tall old fruit tree bent when the wind blew, and scratched the window making weird sounds in the process. Now, then, the author rapidly explained the reasons for the frictional sounds. The quick successions of the sharp grating sounds

were easily converted into the words one expected to hear. To the men in those old inns, the words "need a shave" were ever in their minds, and those were the words they heard when the weird sounds hit the window pane. Our hero, to prove to his gambler friends in the inn that there was no such being as a murdered barber's ghost, dressed himself in an antediluvian wig and broad-brimmed hat. He carried a huge pewter porringer and a worn-out paint brush. Logically enough, at his appearance the gamblers fled from the inn and our hero absconded with the money. The neighborhood heard no more of the moaning barber's ghost but the inn-keeper was sad, for he now looked for lodgers.

It was not unusual for the Lady Books to steal whole articles from competitive magazines, but when two stories of dissimilar content were written in the same style, one assumed that the Lady Book writers worked in very close cooperation. Two refreshing examples of the Gothic sportive Tale were "The Drop Scene" and "A Tale of the Marvelous." These two tales defy scientific analyzation. At best, they cluster in vague outlines to the mental weather of folk-lore, superstition, and horror type Gothic tales. In "The Drop Scene" a crazy windlass propelled by an old rusted shaft, wailed like unquiet spirits as it lowered our hero into a coal mine. The grinding sound was like that of spectres who were

Doom'd for a stated time to
walk by night,
When,
Upon the corner of the moon
There hangs a drop profound.

82. The Casket, (1834), p. 312.
A death-like tremor came over the descending hero and he almost lost sensibility in the black darkness on that quivering platform. He thought that spirits had him lashed, until...until the windlass stopped! He dropped...he dropped to the tremendous depth of TWO INCHES! !

The twin of the above tale is the jocular fragment called "A Tale of the Marvelous." In this tale is related the experience of Dourne of Pennsylvania. While riding over some rugged brush in Pennsylvania's coal country Dourne fell from his horse. He dared not look down as he held to the edge of the cliff. His thoughts were dreadful, indeed, as he hung with his hands over a depth of two hundred feet. He shuddered at the thought, but his position was more unhappy than he imagined. Shortly a huge blood-thirsty Panther hungry for fresh meat, sniffed along the edge of the cliff, and pushed his nose toward Dourne. Hope left our hero. He shrieked loud and long. His strength waned and he felt he was losing his grasp on the decayed and withered vines on the cliff's edge. He couldn't hold out much longer as the Panther approached. When the blood streamed from his overstrained fingers, DOWN, DOWN, DOWN fell our man Dourne until...he was dashed to the earth at the enormous depth of SIX INCHES! !

The sportive Gothic fragments left little to the reader's imagination. They depended more upon the surprise ending than upon any technical skill the author could conjure up in the development of suspense elements. The reader was led into a Byronic mood, and then when the mood was created he was jarred back to reality.
In the Lady Book battle to meet deadlines many cheap Gothic tales were thrown on the market for feminine consumption. An obvious cheapening of the Gothic fragment was seen in "The Musician’s Adventure."\(^{84}\)

In this tale, a famous musician went into the organ loft of his church to inspect the newly delivered organ. On his way to the loft a typical Gothic storm arose and the entire stock of demonology came into the story. The hands of the old church clock indexed HALF PAST ELEVEN—the bewitching hour! The musician was not afraid. Oh, no! Anyone’s teeth could chatter from cold, so our hero reached the loft before the clock struck TWELVE.

He laid his lamp aside and worked on the organ:

...but hark! What shriek is that? It is followed by another! And another! L----'s hair stands on end...great drops of perspiration stand on his forehead, and his candle light flickers---flickers in its socket, AND GOES OUT!\(^{85}\)

"L," the musician, got a blow in the face, his skirt was seized, and he felt a soft touch on his hand. He tore himself away from the unseen spirits and fled into the grave-yard, mocked by shouts and wild laughter. Next morning the church sexton reported an attempted robbery of the church. It was a robbery, for there was the broken window, the dead bat and the owl feathers he could not explain, but our hero could explain them! However, he retained the secret of his adventure in the

---

85. Ibid.
organ loft at midnight. He believed the Sexton's story—not really!

Although the women did not want to revive the terror-striking school of Mrs. Radcliffe, they still crowded her stuff in their Lady Books, even misspelling her name with a "Th" in 1835 and misnaming tales such as "The Lunatic/A Prize Tale" when the story had nothing whatever to do with a lunatic, but was about a theatre fire.

From 1828-1850 and beyond, the rage for Lady Books coincided with the popularity of the Gothic tales in those books. The highwater mark, however, for the Gothic tale seems to be the year 1833, until the 1840's when Poe, as literary editor of Grahams made that Lady Book the finest for Gothic literature.

However, charitable we may be toward the lady writers:

---Hail, woman, exalted among thy sex! Eulogy would but tarnish and obscure the honour that is thy due!!

the fact that the ladies wrote fiction at all of the type that mirrored

...those cheap little books hawked about the country by wandering peddlars, such as interpretations of dreams, presentiments, omens, ghost stories, and all the light artillery of superstition...

which even her own kind would talk about in "Love and Gooseberries/A

---

88. Ibid., (1834), p. 112.
Sentimental Story in the following tones:

Well, now for it! Shall we paint you the awful horrors of the tempest, show you the "airy pumps of heaven, sucking up" their fatal draughts, with a forty-thousand-horse power, and take you an inside passenger in the car of the storm-king, as he careers in frantic fury through the shrinking sky? You should "sup full of horror" were we to use our Patent Locomotive Steel-Pen upon the terrific theme.

gave the Lady Book writers not only a chance to make profits from scribbling, but gave them an emotional release from the diary mania which at that time kept women from being destroyed, as Miss Sigger's Agatha was almost destroyed by the "slow poison of disappointed affection."

There must have been in that Lady Book age many good writers who would close their eyes and say with the author of "Queen Easter's Rock"

She---but I cannot---oh!---I cannot describe that most horrid transaction, but I saw it all, all. I tried to close my eyes, but their lids were literally frozen back, and everything seemed magnified to a frightful distinctness...

Aligned with the increased prosperity in America was a cheapening of the Gothic tales. The cheapest type found in the story collection

---

92. Ibid.
from 1800 to 1850 was "The Churchyard."96

At dusk when the moon had shed her uncertain light upon the churchyard, the author (Mr. A. Bachelor) saw a figure gliding among the tombstones. His natural Gothic curiosity made him follow this singular being until it stopped behind a monument. The weeping willow tree seemed to wave its drooping limbs mournfully over the figure. There was a shrill whistle. Mr. Bachelor listened. The whistle was repeated, and then Mr. Bachelor's flesh

...almost crept from his bones,
when...a kind of unearthly figure,
covered with black and white spots,
(moved) in a zig-zag motion before him,
now seen--now hid by the long grass.

Mr. Bachelor cried out: "In the name of heaven!----what do you here?"
There was no answer. Then he heard a squeezed voice: "Who me?... I am only trying to catch Miss Seraphina Quilgee's lap dog that's run away...!"

The definite break from the Gothic past was seen in the fragment "The Fiery Vault."98 The theme is of medieval framework, but the details mark the art of Edgar Allan Poe. The story of "The Fiery Vault" was nucleated by a terrible torture chamber, low-roofed, iron-clad, and small, below which was a fiery furnace. The prisoner in the story was conditioned for this chamber, first by being thrown into a dark room adjoining the vault. In this dark room the air was gradually sucked out, and the

97. Ibid.
prisoner left with the blood pulsating in his head. Then the furnace was ignited and he was escorted to the vault. When he remained in the vault long enough to have his limbs scorched, and he raved from pain, the iron floor was suddenly withdrawn and immediately replaced by a cold slab of marble. The change refreshed the prisoner, for gushes of ice water fell on his burning frame. However, this delightful experience did not last long. Again the marble floor was removed, and the prisoner was once more stretched upon the red-hot floor where he writhed and became withered. Soon his clinkered body was flipped from the fiery cavern and his wretched corpse hurled through a trap door into a Venetian Canal.

Another departure from the old Radcliffean blood-curdlers was told in "The Husband's Ruse." The story plot in this tale was slighted. The narration began with a treatment of silence more forbidding in its implications than the wild torrents and manufactured agonies of the castle tales.

Twelve bongs from the cathedral clock, and then a rustling was heard among the orange trees. A broken bough disturbed the silence and a form was seen atop a wall. There was a heavy sound; a body leaped to the ground. It was still again; a man was seen now, going towards the arbor. He reached it and entered:

Hist! Hist! The gleam of a dagger was seen, followed by the noise of a death struggle; muttered curses were heard, and the dull, heavy sound of stabbing---then issued a groan---another and another---and all was silent as before! 99

The silence was only momentary. See! a man came out of the arbor. He could be seen by the light of the fire-fly that glared upon him. He was DRAGGING A CORPSE! He lifted the corpse upon the wall and dropped it upon the street. All was silent as before!

Generally, the Gothic tale took on the characteristics of the broad regions in which they were placed. This fresh lumber made the Gothic writers conscious of the importance of more lavish colors. The washed-out grays of the older tales were confined to the New England areas. However, this change was not rapid, for it depended upon the migration of Americans westward behind the old frontier landmarks. This meant that there was not a sudden attempt to make a new Gothic form. It was a gradual development, and was associated with the over-all expansion of the country, including the emphasis placed on Science. Logically when Science became a family word, the Lady Books melted Science into the Gothic mould. The settings in this combination of Science and horror were toned down. The killings that had heretofore been done in primitive splendor were now done in the comforts of the home. One of the better tales of the Science Gothic short story is the tale of "The Proscribed."101 The main character, Mr. Boisdale, was a semi-professional clock-maker. He particularly liked to work on Grandfather clocks because he could kill people with them. One night he invited a friend to his home and dragged the man. To make sure the friend was unconscious he then struck several blows on his head. Quite

unconscious now the man was dragged into the grandfather clock, and Mr. Boisdale sat waiting for the clock to strike one o'clock.

The clock was a simple murderous device, ingeniously contrived. The weights inside the clock were adjusted to run down when the clock struck the hour of one, and then the wretch inside the clock would have cause to writhe in agony. When the cords of the clock would descend, the sharp instrument on the end of the cords would plunge downward. They did just then. It was one o'clock, and the brains of Mr. Boisdale's friend were pierced. He died.

Clocks seemed to have had a mysterious charm for many Gothic writers. An unusual treatment of a clock was the story of "The Castle Clock,"102 for this clock was different from ordinary clocks. Its face was painted with gruesome Saracenic devices, and the minute hand represented a mailed fist pointing with a truncheon to the figures that paraded in a circle every hour, and then twirled back inside the mechanism.

This clock was at once an object of fear and superstition to the peasantry in the hamlet, which clustered around the base of the castle, and throughout a few straggling houses along the bank of the stream, and to the rough retainers in the castle itself.103

There was a legend attached to this strange clock. The legend told that it was the work of Sir Hugo D'Alaman of Provence, who had

103. Ibid.
learned necromancy and astrology in the East; that its striking was not produced by mortal machinery, but by the hands of a demon, whom Sir Hugo had, by the power of his art, imprisoned in the work.

A more modern and more wicked example of the scientific fragment found in the Lady Books was the tale of "The Silver Sixpence." In this tale, Mr. Bard, the murderer, did not go to Mrs. Radcliffe's horror apothecary for inspiration. He went to the corner drug store. His reason for murder? He thought his wife faithless. Consequently, Mr. Bard became intoxicated one night, went home, and found his wife in bed. Slowly, slowly he advanced to the bed, and as he advanced he took a small bottle of medicine from his pocket. Carefully he poured a small drop of Prussic acid in each corner of her beautiful eyes that were closed tight in sleep.

Sometimes the scientific devices in the Gothic fragments killed the killer. In "The Bear of Carniola," a wicked servant contrived death for his master in the form of a falconet which guided by a line and lead was to descend through a hole bored in the floor and then proceed to the foot of a tree where it was placed under a rock. The servant knew it was the custom of the master of the castle to stand before that tree. Everything was in readiness for the master's appearance. The servant wanted to try the device once more to make certain that it operated perfectly. While the servant stood by the rock testing the lines, the

104. The Casket, (1832), p. 3.
murderous falconet became dislodged and plunged downward piercing the unfortunate servant's entrails. First, it went through his MAJOR DOMO, mangling it frightfully; then it went into his LUNGS, also shattering them beyond recognition. The story had a very tearful ending for the Lady Book readers:

Some pieces of gold, the fruits of his treachery, which he carried concealed beneath his garments, were buried in the dreadful wound.  

The proximity of the churchyard to the village inspired many tales of ghosts which kept the Puritanically stamped Americans conscious of the powers of death. The grave-yard school of poets was favored early in the period considered, but ghost stories were not part of their Gothic mood as were the ghost stories in the Gothic short stories. The church-yard tombstones were too formidable for the American Gothic writers to be cast aside simply as signifying man's last resting place on earth. The Gothic ghost writer's words that

The Village church-yard--the pine forest, haunted by the headless spectre; the lonely glens of Cedar Creek...were the places...at the mere mention of which, after night-fall, I would almost turn pale with affright...

were not to be taken as the springboard for a Gothic confession, nor were the actions of Nurse Wilmar, who as a professional ghost-chaser found

106. Ibid.
a spectre that confounded her in that he appeared on a bright July afternoon in defiance of everything like order or etiquette. The author of that ghost tale, Mrs. S----, was only voicing a defensive reaction against stories spread by the village peasantry who were often on the gloomy wastes at twilight. Their fears were symbolized by the tombstones down the road just on the outskirts of town:

...—every blast, as it swept
in hollow gusts over the heath,
seemed to team with the sighs of
departed spirits—and the birds, as
they winged their way above his head,
appeared with loud shrill cries, to
warn (them) of approaching danger... 109

Hardly an American poet or short story writer before the frontier broke down was estranged from the omnipresence of the grave. America was a land of small villages, and the church served a moralistic community with more than food for the soul, for the Puritan gloom of Wigglesworth, Edwards, and the Mathers was part of a national character. With this fact in mind, one understands the inserted remarks of the author of "La Fitte/The Batavian Chief," 110 a tale of blood, where the remarks have nothing whatever to do with the progression of the adventures of the Pirate:

...the gloomy church-yard, which
when a truant boy, I had so often
shudderingly passed, when the pale
moon glimmered athwart the marbles
which crowded the sacred enclosure...

to my affrighted imagination... appeared to people the place with the tenants of that world from which no traveler returns... 111

It was no wonder that Edgar Allan Poe should have absorbed this grave-yard tradition, for he need only have chosen a mood that was part of the American tradition, and a form that was suited for Lady Book literature. In those immobile regions in front of the frontier he found a form of literature that was already exhibited by Bryant and Longfellow and Irving before him. In those stagnant American regions along the Atlantic where

...the green verdure withered...
the birds fell dead from the branches--while a noxious vapor that seemed to come from seas of burning sulphur, whirled and eddied... and hard thunder muttered along the air as though it were a response to the wailings of the damned... 112

it was not simply a region of stone and clay; they were regions that held

...the graves of lost spirits...
and from which their bottom spewed...
skull after skull upon the sulphate pavement... and where the cries of orphans and widows (were heard) struggling... 113

There was little literary "high-browism" in those American homes. America was a land of European legends; legends built around a profound respect

111. Ibid.
113. Ibid.
for death which were woven in tales that were told around the great wood
fires during the long winter evenings.

There was grist for the American Gothic story teller in the
Lady Books. These magazines had all the qualities Americans wanted in
fiction, especially in the Gothic short story. The Lady Book tales were
traditional; they were short, and they were filled with sensationalism
that helped a Puritan American mind escape reality.

When the frontier broke down the Gothic tales lost much of their
descriptive wildness. They became refined and suggestive, and often
ridiculous. The ridiculous Gothic tale of "The Thoasts, or Nocturnal
Phantoms"\textsuperscript{114} shows the ridiculous extent to which the Lady Book publi­
sher went to get Gothic short story fiction. In this tale the Duke of
Villars was chasing phantoms one mid-night in the deserted yard of an inn,
located in a savage area of Italy. Suddenly, (it was always suddenly!)
there was a confusion of howls and clashes of chains. Petrified, Villars
stood until the floor sank under him and he fell into a cob-webbed cellar.
The Duke was a man of mettle. He inspected the surroundings and found that
the horrid howls and clashes he had heard were the voices of money counter­
feitters. Now the mystery was simplified. The mathematically minded
Villars knew that the counterfeiters had sent him to the basement. The
trap was simply one of the traps used by petty tyrants in the years of the
INTESTINE WARS. Our hero was promised release by the counterfeiters if he
promised not to disclose their hiding place.

When a reader of Lady Book fiction found that the old Radcliffean castle-Gothic tale was being led into foreign realms of fiction, the art of Poe became more acceptable. The most decadent type of Gothic tale found in the periodicals was found in The Columbian Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine for 1846, a year when Poe was still writing for Grahams Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine. When this 1846 style of Gothic story depended upon a picture for inspiration it showed the last phases of the symbolized Gothic form. In the story of "Zelie," the hero was seated in his comfortable study dreaming, when his imagination was stimulated by a freak picture of some mad artist's fancy. The picture depicted a bleak and wind-barren piece of ground where a white gnarled old and leafless tree of spectral appearance shone in the moonlight. In this grotesque atmosphere there was painted a horseman whose mantle was partially falling back from his shoulders, and whose locks were streaming in the wind. This solitary rider was trying to urge his frightened steed forward, but the horse was reared in terror. Below the horse's upraised hoofs was the head of a woman nestled in a scooped out hollow. It seemed to grow out of the ground "so closely was it wrapped by the soil." It was a pale, lovely face around which hung clustered hair. Its eyes were raised in anguish toward heaven as if still capable of prayer and suffering.

Edgar Allan Poe's hand can be seen shaping the literary policy of Grahams. A rapid glance at the color of the Gothic tales that followed his pattern showed the respect that his followers in the Gothic form had for the master. Although Poe wrote sixty-eight short stories in the Gothic
tradition,\textsuperscript{115} the tale of "The Mask of the Red Death\textsuperscript{116}" best marks the departure from the older Gothic stories. Americans know well the spectral image of the Red Death with "his vesture...dabbled with blood...and the broad brows, with all the features of the face...besprinkled with the scarlet horror." Nor can Americans forget the untimely chimes of the clock during the dance in Prospero's Palace when the

...giddiest grew pale, and...
the more sedate passed their hands
over their brows as if in confused reverie, or meditation.\textsuperscript{117}

Those strokes powder Poe's tales with exotic genius.

Poe's concern over death in all its ramifications was an extension of the Gothic tale in the traditional form while the American population was stagnated before the Frontier became of literary prominence. The fact that he wrote in an accepted mode of supernaturalism, and the fact that he chose the short story form, was as much dictated by the demands of the Lady Books as it was dictated by his own personal type of genius accentuated by his wife's illness. However, it is unfair to underestimate a man who was probably America's most original writer. He brought the Gothic art to the epitome of perfection. There is evidence in his stories that the detective fiction which he later embraced, will, when his supporters have finished with their detective "fazadrines," form another

\textsuperscript{115} "Some Phases of the Supernatural in American Literature," \textit{PMLA} p. 115.

\textsuperscript{116} \textit{Grahams}, Vol. XX, (1842), p. 257.
phase in the art of printing that was started in the Lady Books of the mid-nineteenth Century in America.
Chapter II

THE GOTHIC CHARACTERS

The greatest single influence on the Gothic characters in the American periodicals from 1800 to 1850 was the personality of the English poet Byron. The American spirit found in him a prototype befitting the restless and gloomy times in America. In him was found the age-old attractiveness of a great leader—beautiful, romantic, and eccentric. The villainous "Byronic hero" who stalked throughout the Gothic tales from 1800 to 1850 was the same Byronic hero who was popular from 1815 to 1830 in American Literature, and who reached the height of his popularity between the years 1835 and 1837.

With the growth of large cities in America, the fiction expanded to include the characters who roamed about the sordid city streets. These types of characters were perfect for the Gothic pattern of horror. In the course of time, the Rogue tale was to predominate over the Gothic tale, and during the period 1800 to 1850 this struggle was apparent in the Lady Books. However, in the fusion between the Rogue tale and the Gothic Tale, the Byronic hero assumed a new glamor in the hands of the Lady Book writers.

118. Ibid.
121. Ibid., p. 80.
The Gothic hero demanded darkness for his roguish deeds:

Night! Solemn night!—whose realms are peopled with visions and apparitions formless and undefiled. Night! whose habiliments are shadows, and whose robes are shades. Night! whose pavilion is spread in the regions of darkness, and whose throne is erected in the dominions of gloom. Aye, silent, mysterious night, well I love thy region, whether placid or convulsed—in calm or tempest, in storm or tranquillity, it matters not; for thou art grand, and holy, and sublime and religious; and 'tis still through thy mute syllables, O night! that the great I AM speaks to the universe! 122

Night sets the atmosphere

There is something awfully indefinite at all times in the thick impenetrable gloom of night:—but when that gloom is armed with terrors, and big with dangers, to which the very impossibility of ascertaining their extent adds tenfold in the imagination, then it is that we truly feel the full amount of its awfulness. 123

This dark atmosphere required by the Gothic hero made him suffer from exposure to light. This dark atmosphere is charged with nervousness. The hero in "The Dark Monk of Al Pendurada"124 was wrapped in a black coat and black hat and paced in agitation as he waited for the drowsy-eyed...

castle sexton to answer his strange knock on the door. Not all Gothic heroes rode like that Gothic hero; some rode in magnificence with their horses bedecked in scarlet flowing ribbons. It was usually stormy when they rode, and they rode hard and fast to avoid or to negotiate desperate actions.

The titles of the Gothic tales show the kind of persons who were considered by the Lady Book writers as proper subjects, for Gothic tales:


The Gothic heroes were so shaded into the atmosphere of the tales that the reader could not distinguish them from the scenery in which they strode. They generally had singular aspects, walked strangely and wildly, had finely formed majestic faces, flashed fiery eyes, and bore themselves with fearful mien. They may have had wounded spirits, which were the gasping outbreathing of sensitive but desolate hearts. The author of "The Birthday Prophecy" 135 was more condescending than most.

130. Ibid., p. 334.
Gothic authors in that she spotlighted her hero. He had

...long, black and neglected
hair (that) hung in clusters around
a brow of death's own hue; his dark
and severe eyes look forth on heaven
and earth...his sallow cheek...the
history of a tired and forsaken but
still haughty spirit was written there...
Every feature of his wrought, pale and
most intellectual countenance...inspired
by centuries of thought, and feeling,
and agony...136

The man was like a shattered rock. He had a broken heart, coupled with
fierce passions. There was nothing in his noble nature to brighten up
the future that promised destruction. There was beauty of RUIN upon lip,
eye, cheek, and brow. Besides his Byronic dress, he had a singular
object which identified him from other Byronic heroes. He had a pilgrim's
polished staff—though not to aid his gait, for he had strength in his
limbs. He had a mission to perform and

...ere the twilight had deepened
into darkness, he stood upon the last
cliff of Warwick Mountain, and paused
and gazed upon the hamlet that lay
scattered along the valley beneath.137

The bleak-black coloring of the Gothic artists suited the dark
acts the heroes performed. The hero Ugolino138 had locks of dark chestnut
hue that flowed in dark ringlets. His face was chiseled in the finest

136. Ibid.
P. 294.
and most classical shape, and was rendered highly expressive by his rolling sparkling eyes. His eyes had a peculiar quality of mirroring Vesuvius before its eruption. However, some Gothic authors were more lavish with their colors. The hero Colonna, in "Colonna The Painter" had a livid yellow face, and black eyes set in a death stare.

All of the mysterious Gothic heroes were poured from the same Gothic flask. They all had the erect form, the dark eye, and the noble forehead. The Greek character in the Gothic-Oriental tale "The City of the Sultan" was quite characteristic of the general group of Byronic heroes. When he finally abandoned self-exile from a dungeon in a dark minaret, he was pale and haggard, his locks dank with moisture.

Another Eastern hero was found in a Casbah-like cafe. Some question arose in the author's mind whether he was Greek or Mussulman. The author was certain, however, that in this character there was something above the common because he had nobility stamped on his high forehead.

The costumery of the Byronic hero was incomplete without the mask. It was one of the most important garments of stock Gothic dress. Instead of wasting descriptive powers on the character's physiognomy, the authors simply dressed them in masks. About one hundred smugglers

140. The Casket, (1838), p. 32.
in the story of "The Smugglers" were more individualistically festooned. They were draped in black CREPE masks.

Some of the Gothic characters were not slim of figure and possessed agility of the panther. Some were of very formidable framework. One was found who had Herculean shoulders and fists as large as a FORTY-TWO POUND BALE; his chest and arms were as strong as bronze; his eye brows resembled the WINGS OF THE RAVEN.

They could be very unpleasant fellows—these Gothic characters. They were rude when disturbed, and insolent when thwarted. They bred fierce passions in their breasts. When aroused, they were like sulking but ferocious beasts. They laughed loud fiendish laughs, and they smiled soul-crushing smiles.

The classic description of a Gothic hero in the periodicals examined was the forlorn romantic hero who sat under a gnarled old oak tree. He had a pale lean hand and thin white locks that trembled in the breeze. He was aged and furrowed

...with deep lines upon his brow. He resembled an ancient tower, whose discolored stones, creeping ivy, and mouldered wall, marked the stealthy footsteps of gradual decay; but the wide breach, and shattered battlements...gave demonstration strong that the hand of violence...had been busy.

143. Ibid.
The Byronic male characters had about them more suggestion of Gothic art than did the women. The women were built according to classic lines of art. Just as there was no compromise in the American Puritan mind, there was no compromise in the texture of the Gothic tales. The black characterizations of the men were opposed to the gentle white characterizations of the women. The women were more virtuous than the men were wicked, but the contrast was evidently an artistic device to emphasize the contrast.

The ladies in the Lady Book Gothic tales were also Byronic. They were saturated with sensibility, and addicted to fainting illnesses. They had high and lofty brows, dark brown hair, and soft blue eyes; they spoke in musical tones, and carried themselves with majestic mien. The paleness of their brows was in keeping with the frigid castle atmosphere in which the authors usually placed them. These beautiful castle women kept to the shades of moonlight and often became grotesquely white from moon-burn. With their long black silk-fringed eyelashes,\(^{145}\) they were as lovely as ever a Byronic man would wish his gaze to dwell and to linger upon. However, not all Gothic women were designed along classical lines. Some Nordic women were found in the Lady Books who had golden strands of hair in addition to their dazzling complexions. One was fit model for a Raphael Madonna.\(^{146}\) Although all the Gothic women used the same beauty treatments,

some went to extremes. They would let their hair grow until it almost SWEPT the ground, but they often neglected to medicate their eyes.

Their eyes were usually blue-black, and flashed in strangeness because they had sweetness in their souls. One lady had a most devastating look in her eyes. She knocked out her poor male partner with that look!

...on a low mat, lay a poor, emaciated form, apparently groaning in a troubled sleep. I drew near, and as the women reentered with a lamp, I was struck with astonishment. The face was pale, but interesting; the eye-lids were of a dark purple, and the cheek hollow. Pressing his lips as if to nerve him to some imaginary conflict, he opened his eyes full upon me, as the light shone over his lowly pallet. Never shall I forget that look! The blood rushed rapidly to his high forehead—it retreated again to his heart, and left him deadly pale.

There were two features of Gothic women that were little mentioned in the tales. Undoubtedly they had dainty hands, for Byron would have none of them if they did not; however, when the reader got a close picture of these hands they were quite unusual, especially if they had TAPERED FAN-LIKE FINGERS. The other feature of the Gothic Byronic women seldom described was their dress. They always wore white

dresses, and because these women were always in distress, they were wrinkled and disordered.\textsuperscript{151}

If ever they spoke—they were strange sort of women—they spoke in low tones. Exceptions always occurred in the Gothic tales, and these low tones often became shrill and discordant if the ladies were alarmed, terrified, or horrified.

A Gothic woman was seldom indelicate, but one named Fatima was a wretch! She was faithless to her Turkish husband. He hired two executioners to kill her, but even then she was not easily subdued. More men were called to do the job. When she finally capitulated she gurgled in a frightful spasm that sent the men hurling into space!\textsuperscript{152}

Generally, the Gothic women were of noble birth:

\begin{quote}
It was night, and Isabel was alone in her dungeon. The gloomy stone wall looked still more dismal by the dim light of a single lamp hung from the ceiling, and the rude bench on which the prisoner was seated contrasted strongly with the luxury by which she had from infancy been surrounded.\textsuperscript{152}
\end{quote}

They were all trained in social graces and aspired to marry into nobility. The Barons preferred it that way. Examples were found where these Barons wanted bourgeoisie ladies. Nevertheless, even those bourgeoisie ladies

from the Lady Books were well educated and spoke intelligently. Some enthusiastic Lady Book writers made the Gothic ladies with SERAPHIC intelligence. However, the "Blue Beard Barons" reigned supreme in the castles and they talked only to the women when the barons were manufacturing knavery to injure their ladies.

The Lady Book writers riveted attention on those cruel men. They were very temperamental men: they were well-behaved when things went well in the castles, but when things went wrong, they became knotted with wrath. Their personalities fitted them into the Pre-Shakesperean category of the "humors" characters.

A good baron like old Sir Henry in "The Baronet's Bride" was hard to find in the Lady Books. In this tale Sir Henry entertained a guest who went mad one afternoon and ran wildly from the guests and out of Sir Henry's garden. Sir Henry, agile for his years, leaped after him. He bounded along...

...over a high fence, and sped across a field, amidst the almost impervious gloom of evening, with steps such as those of the monster Frankenstein.

Sir Henry's studious life should have knocked more common sense into his head, but he continued hot in chase after the mad fugitive. 'Twas a

155. Clara F. McIntyre, PHIL., (December, 1921), "Were the Gothic Novels 'Gothic'," p. 646.
157. Ibid., p. 258.
dreadful evening for Sir Henry! When he had trailed the mad-man for two miles over the most dreadful kind of terrain, the mad-man suddenly turned and brought Sir Henry to his knees with a wild knuckling blow. However, Sir Henry was of courageous parts. He recovered his dignity, and scampere up into the great Elm Tree after the mad-man. A crashing sound was soon heard among the branches and the heavy body of Sir Henry was sent bleeding to the ground.

Most noblemen would disdain to exhaust their valor upon such trifles. They had done momentous deeds of chivalry on battlefields or in "damned chambers" once they retired from active life. It was a hard world for these spirited men, for the world seldom recognized their heroics. Many became embittered because of this misunderstanding world and nurtured cruelty in their heart. Weird legends spread among the peasants about their returned castle lords. The peasants echoed the tales among the gray walls and the black forests. This mysterious quality that was built around the nobles was encouraged by the nobles themselves, for they kept their vassals at a distance and they were made to quail beneath the nobleman's fierce eyes. The vassals trembled when the master of the castle spoke with a deep voice that caromed off the vaulted walls. They were so cruel, that many of those with whom they dealt wished to bury their daggers in their blood, but the mantle of superstition around them kept even the most daring hand withered from the murderous thought.

The vast legends of Pagan antiquity and medieval romance enfeebled the powers of realism in the reader's mind. When the Lady Book writers treated realism, it was shockingly realistic. In the tale of "Merry Terry," the author impressed the gruesome details of Merry Terry's butchering of a poor wretch. When Merry Terry was finished with the man his face was a shapeless mass. The man's black tongue...lolled out of his mouth like a dog's; his eyes, blood-shot and glassy, protruded a full inch from their sockets...

The stories of old Sir Henry and cruel Merry Terry were extremes in characterization. The Gothic tales usually just had "gloomy characters. This type of character languished in love:

Maude's love dawned in his bosom, and every sombre idea was eclipsed by its dazzling rays. Nicole, the beautiful Nicole--She haunted him in his dreams, in his meditations, even in his prayers; and if he could only catch a glimpse of her as she crossed like a spirit before him, it was for him a day of happiness. He then thought himself delivered, and oh! how dearly he loved the object who had dissipated the horrid phantoms and gloomy terrors of his imagination; often did he steal toward her and bless her in the soft language of love.

When time came for noblemen to live in houses and not in castles, every renegade noble from the middle ages changed costume and stomped the

159. Ibid.
160. Ibid.
city streets in competition with every potential Rogue\textsuperscript{162} that the cities had made. Every rake on the road\textsuperscript{163} and every swaggering gob\textsuperscript{164} fitted into the furniture of the Gothic tale. The tales were still sentimental, but they were sentimentally splashed with sulphur and lavendar, hot pitch and\textit{eau de Cologne}\textsuperscript{165}. The tales had become sentimentally Satanic. This mixture of horror and stupidity awakened the Anglo-Saxon race.\textsuperscript{167}

For the Lady Book writers these new characters symbolized a type that was useful in the Gothic tales, and the Rogues and the Barons vied among the Gothic tales for popularity. The Tales were glutted with foot-pads, and wind-pipe slitters\textsuperscript{168} robbers, thieves, pirates, lunatics, smugglers, and housebreakers of sundry descriptions. It was refreshing to meet a pure Byronic hero, like the Indian in "The Birthday Prophecy\textsuperscript{169} who wandered alone in America's forgotten Gothic hills. This particular Byronic Indian would have none of the ugly business of sordid city life. He wanted solitude,

...to be remote from men...like a shipwrecked mariner on the ocean rock, beholding the billows and hearing the rush and fury of their vast approach, without the power to flee

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{162}{"The Romance of Rascalfty," \textit{The Young Americans Magazine}, Vol. I, (1847), p. 257.}
\footnote{163}{"The Literature of Humbug," \textit{Ibid.}, p. 317.}
\footnote{164}{\textit{Ibid.}}
\footnote{165}{\textit{Op. Cit.}, p. 259.}
\footnote{166}{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 258.}
\footnote{167}{\textit{Ibid.}}
\footnote{168}{\textit{Ibid.}}
\footnote{169}{\textit{The North American Quarterly Magazine}, (1838), p. 295.}
\end{footnotes}
from the destruction, though conscious that when they broke, his corse (would) float and welter in the boundless and unfathomed deep.\textsuperscript{170}

He felt he was not justified to leave his tepee, but the urge to be a mystic was too great to be repulsed by practical thoughts. The mysteries of ages past brooded in his breast. He would peer into the future; he would call God from his high bluff in the hills:

\begin{quote}
O ye irresistible decrees of incomprehensible destiny! Why do ye hold before my shrinking gaze a genius that might command the world's applause—a mind capacious to receive all knowledge not forbidden by our nature...\textsuperscript{171}
\end{quote}

It was the Indian's Calvinist judgment, he could not escape his fate. It was an irrevocable decree, a decree that was

\begin{quote}
...the judgement of the Holy One upon all who dared to search out the mysteries of His Kingdom, and desired to comprehend the Incomprehensible.\textsuperscript{172}
\end{quote}

Sermonizing throughout American literature was popular since the days when the Puritans heard the thundering opinions of Wigglesworth, Edwards, and the Mathers. The Lady Book writers were also concerned with instructing American souls, for numerous introductory paragraphs in the Gothic tales showed this tendency. Notwithstanding their obvious moral

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{170} Ibid., p. 296.
\item \textsuperscript{171} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{172} Ibid., p. 295.
\end{itemize}
intention, it is more than conjecture that these prefatory remarks in
the Gothic tales were designed to sustain an interest in the Gothic
Romance literature, at a time when sympathetic publishers flooded the
literary market with the ever-popular novels of Sensibility and short
stories of Sensibility that were taken to the bosoms of thousands of
Americans who exhausted energy looking for an object upon which to dissipate
tears.

Another Indian was found in the Lady Books who was good compe-
tition for the previously mentioned Byronic Indian who stood on the
mountain. This other Indian in "St. Herbert/Or the Victims of Prejudice/A
Tale" 173 stepped out from nowhere to tell the reader that the sky was
blackened; the lightning crooked and shone among the bursting clouds;
that the winds howled over the lake. Then he spoke:

...I clambered to the top of
the highest rocks, and called to
the heavy rains to beat me off...
The tempest passed...and the last
voice of the thunder groaned among
the mountains. 174

More sympathy was felt for this Indian because he was mad:

...I ran into the woods; "I
will let the wild beast devour
me,"...but I terrified them with
my fierceness, and even the HUNGRY

174. Ibid.
bear and the blood drinking PANThER
fled affrighted from my presence; I
rushed like a whirlwind from place to
place, and before one moon had faded away,
I had drunk of the waters of the NIAGARA,
and been drenched in the mists that hover
over the COHOES... I had eaten herbs upon
the blue mountains of TOKANOE, and had
slept upon the ALLEGHAMAN ridges. 175

Soliloquizing was characteristic of many dramatic Byronic heroes.

They moved throughout the tales like puppets on strings. They were stiff
creatures who spoke grandiloquently. The atmosphere made these speeches
even more dramatic:

... ...You and I, sir, have
crossed each other's path, 176

said the hero in a gloomy part of the forest where creatures moved the
leafy foliage but where they could not be seen

... in what manner... when or
where is of no consequence... my
name and character are of still
less concern... one of us must die.
This will tell the rest, take
your choice. 177

he said to his astonished visitor as he lifted the lid of a dish, uncover-
ing a pair of pistols.

The Lady writers found some actions too terrible for words.

They could dispense with words under certain conditions, however, for who

175. Ibid.
177. Ibid.
could speak if he were awakened from sound sleep embraced by a gruesome stranger? But, Gothic heroes had epitomized bravery. The Gothic hero who was locked in the arms of the stranger had presence of mind and he would have plunged his disk

...into the heart of the stranger, who perceiving his intentions hastily withdrew back, and displaying his bosom already weltering in gore. 178

The Byronic heroes kept the horror situations well under control in the Gothic tales. They held the keys to the secret closets, and the formulae for the false panels. Yet, life was hollow for some, for fate eluded them. They cursed their fate:

...with him abided the curse of a prophetic spirit...of a spirit which knew every coming evil, and terror; the agony of men who gathered the wormwood and gall of the maddening cup. 179

But, they must drink from the maddening cup for

...uncertainty brooded like the angel of death, over an unknown and uncomprehended fate. 180

A satisfied servant like Hugo in "Blanche Neville" 181 was hard to find. Everyone in the Gothic tales found something to complain about. Few characters were faithful to their bond, but Hugo watched over his

180. Ibid.
master like a watch-dog, especially at the palace dances when he would station himself in the garden in full view of the dance. He loved his lordship:

...when his master's form flitted by in the dance, he suddenly unfolded his arms and stretched them out with a sort of wild eagerness, as if prompted to withdraw that beloved object from some impending danger. 182

There was always danger somewhere in the air for the Gothic heroes, but the greatest dangers were madness or excessive drinking. Some of the Lady Books crusaded for temperance, pointing to the effects of liquor on the human mind:

His mind is a chaos of darkness, his intellect is disordered... and the deep, the impenetrable gloom of insanity rests upon his benighted mind. 183

The heroes had overwhelming passions which they were never able to control. However, they were noblemen, and when they died, they died nobly. Few died for love:

...the young man grasped a lance and kneeling before a picture of the Virgin vowed to redeem his honor. As he pronounced the vow he fell back exhausted by the excess of passionate emotion. Carefully and affectionately he was raised by a faithful serviter, who, as he bent

182. Ibid.
over his lord with cheeks blanched
and hair frosted by many winters,
was no unfit representative of the
King of Terror claiming a new subject
for his shadowy realm.184

None of the old castle lords would die like a modern Gothic hero.

...matted by the damps of
death, having hair that fell heavily
over a low, ridged and quivering
brow which coiled like wreathing
serpents; eyes maniacal in...
horrible expression...thick sensual
lips worked over into ghastly smiles
and sardonic sneer...185

It was unthinkable for a lord of the castle to die in an un­
honored grave. Herman, in "The Fatal Wager,"186 unhonored a nobleman's
tomb one night in an attempt to get the money with which the nobleman had
been buried. When the churchyard bell tolled, he felt the hand of justice
on his shoulders, and quickly drawing his dagger he rushed down the vault
steps where he pounced on a mouldering coffin. The echo of his dagger
upon the coffin sounded as if a skeleton in the vault had fallen asunder.
When the side of the coffin rattled, he tried to flee, but he could not
flee. He was pinned to the coffin by the point of his own dagger.
Herman felt he was in the power of demons. His hair bristled on his
head. Death came with horror to his countenance: his eyes started
from their sockets; his lips were firmly compressed. There were no

184. "The Knight of Lori," The Columbian Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine,
doubts in the minds of the peasants that Herman deserved his death for no human in a Gothic story had the prerogative of stealing from a nobleman's tomb.

The modern Gothic rogue demanded more genteel treatment from the authors of the tales. An idealized rogue in the Gothic tales was a rogue who wore kid gloves, for daggers were outmoded. Why should a wizened rogue knock out one's brains with a cudgel when the ladies could be bamboozled with heated words or legal scripts? Blarney did the office of swords, daggers, stilettos, and rocks. Bludgeons were outmoded weapons. They did not have to kill a woman with horror chains; a raised eye brow at a lady of sensibility sent her stumbling for the castle dungeons.

The type of woman who was the Gothic heroine in the Rogue tale was not easily distinguishable from the heroine in the Tale of Sensibility. The women made by the Lady Book writers always paraded in an atmosphere charged with sensibility. Eloine Abbess in "The Fatal Wager" was an exception to the timid lady fictionalized by the Lady Book writers, for she was the cruelest lady in the body of Gothic tales examined between the years 1800 and 1850. When Eloine Abbess was a young maid she saw her father die in a dungeon. The cruel Lord Gelvin knew the father's weakness for gold and fed the father gold until he had nothing to eat but gems and...
golden sand. Years later Eloine Abbess met Lord Gelvin who had accidentally lost his way in the woods near her convent. He begged for food and lodgings and Eloine Abbess lodged him in a dungeon from which there was no escape. This was sweet revenge for Eloine. She treated Lord Gelvin the same as he had treated her father when she was a child. She lowered his food to him in a basket filled with rich red wines and rich smoked foods. Lord Gelvin went made, but Eloine Abbess kept feeding him the rich drinks until in desperation Gelvin drank the blood of toads and other bloated and crawling things. Eloine Abbess' revenge was complete when the scorpion poisoned him.

Gothic women were usually not as cruel as Eloine Abbess. They were melancholy and sensitive; they adorned moods of melancholy artistically. The picture of a woman sitting alone in a garden did not make a Gothic picture, but with the added details of winds that moaned around her the picture became a Gothic picture. The best Gothic stories were well-knit tapestries and the threads of medieval romance found communication by virtue of their fancied appeal. The story-telling techniques were expository, but the color of the whole Gothic panorama was rich in suggestion. If the mood in the Gothic tales was destroyed, the tapestries were blurred.

The Gothic women could hardly be analyzed. They were myopically feminine, and often went mad by turning into witches, fairies, or miasmic

creatures. Heartbreak could often send them to an early grave. They were tender; they dampened their pillows with crocodile tears. Pathos on their account was jerked into the stories too often. Only a real Gothic Juliette was justified in throwing herself into a stream. In the story of "The Spectre Knight," a masked boatman was rowing Juliette down an Italian stream that glimmered in the romantic moonlight. The masked boatman standing in the prow of the boat cast a commanding shadow far into the water. Juliette loved this black-mantled gentleman, and acting under impulse, rushed forward to his arms. Suddenly the mantle faded away from the stranger's face, and his mask rolled away. Frail Juliette found herself clasped by a hideous ghastly skeleton who pulled her into his bony embrace.

The reader could not doubt the sincere suffering of the Gothic women. They had trials and misfortunes. They suffered so crielly that some stepped out of the Gothic stories and wrote short stories. The good woman who wrote "Isabel L----" hid her own identity behind the signature (a) because she felt that her heroine's sufferings approximated her own sufferings. She wanted to sketch her heroine's sufferings, but her story was too

...gloomy to enlarge on. There (was) too much truth in the history of this unfortunate female, to permit

---

the writer to be very eloquent in describing her troubles.193

Blooming-cheeked and rosy-mouthed, clear-eyed and soft eye-lashed Sophie of "The Royal Marriage,"194 sat in her huge Gothic chair, a very unpleasant sight. She wept in the faint purple twilight. She was unhappy about her pre-arranged marriage and she did not care whether her eyelashes were SOAKED or not.195 The frenzied heroine of "The Exile"196 was less demure than Sophie, for she shed tears in TORMENTS. Lady Anne's tears flowed in copious FLOODS in "The Baronet's Bride."197 Sabina's heart was agonized in the extreme, her whole frame shook, and the COLD drops FACED down her forehead. So important were tears to the progress of the Gothic tales that the old tales around the years 1812 provided special wings in the superstructures of the castles199 where the ladies could die with sensibility or with fright. Those tears were induced by several methods throughout the tales, but ORGAN music had the greatest tear-producing capability. The organ loft was situated somewhere between the third and fourth sub-basements. Its strategic position would cause one throaty chord to vibrate throughout the entire castle. If a wandering castle lady was caught in the mouldering snake-like passageways of the castle and some mysterious stranger struck a chord on the organ, it would

193. Ibid.
195. Ibid.
vibrate through the lady's bodies and penetrate the lachrymal tissues. Tears would flow in abundance.

In fair weather the wealthy Gothic ladies planned garden festivals. During some of these lavish festivals it was not extraordinary to find French horns blending melancholy music at the unstrung ladies who sobbed with frightful fluidity. In the story of "The Baronet's Bride" the plaintive melodies which floated on the breeze befitted the gloomy surroundings and the gloomy guests. Before the heroine realized what was happening, she sobbed aloud, and then the tears fell in numerical sequence: "...another and another forced its way." With the refinement brought about by improved conditions in America, the ladies in the Gothic tales found more comfortable places in which to shed tears. The music-loving maiden in one of the tales heard the strains of music coming from the garden; she raised her NOBLE head from her piles of velvet cushions; threw back her clustered hair, and suspended her breathing while she listened.

When the Lady Book writers reached out to the warmer climates for material for their Gothic tales, the heroines they found in Spain and Latin America formed with the women of the colder climates in the Northlands, a woman who was a mixture of the courtesan and the noble. The women in the torrid Gothic tales liked music as well as the castle women, but they brought an innovation in the Gothic tale in their taste for

201. Ibid.
There is a great difference between guitar music and French horn music as previously mentioned, but there is a resemblance between the guitar and the troubador harps that were played in the old Gothic tales.

Death from shock should have been a common occurrence in the Gothic tales, but the Lady Book writers showed a respect for death that was in conformity with the hardships the people in America endured in the years when the wild country presented problems to stoic pioneers who needed courage in order to preserve life. A few Gothic ladies in the tales died dramatically by jumping into open graves or into caverns, but the majority of the tales either dismiss death entirely or treat of their deaths in romantic yet realistic ways.

She was found seated in the ancient burial ground, with her back against a broken grave stone, her locks white with frost rime, seemingly watching with intensity the road to the Kirk-yard, but the spirit which gave life to the fairest of all the maids of Annandale was fled forever.

It was strange that the Lady book writers should have become so sentimental about death when they wrote in a vein of literature that stressed sensationalism, and few of the heroes or heroines in the Gothic tales died sensationally. Death was a symbol of SOOH and not an event

that was improbable for TODAY, for the America of early nineteenth Century was an America in which the people were tied realistically to their familiar earth. 205

205. Main Currents in American Thought, p. 190.
CHAPTER III

THE GOTHIC SCENERY

The wild romantic scenery of America symbolized to the Gothic writers in the Lady Books a kind of pictorial panorama that moved them into horror situations which they knew from personal experience. The early Americans knew the significance of the terrifying word FRONTIER, and were inclined to speak reverently of American scenery. The Gothic writers symbolized the wicked power of Nature, and the better Gothic tales were filled with emotion. Generally speaking, when the American frontier broke down and local color regions developed along the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, those Gothic short story writers who persisted in Mrs. Radcliffe's mode wrote stories that betrayed their genuine feelings:

The gloomy forests around which the branches of the ancient trees waved mournfully to the blast, the deep glen and lofty mountains we passed, at the foot of which, the river rushes with its thundering sound, forming a grand and magnificent spectacle... 207

There was no legitimate reason why the American Gothic writers needed to rely upon Mrs. Radcliffe's Gothic School for material. America

206. The Early Writings of Frederick Jackson Turner: The Significance of the Frontier on American History, 1938, p. 196.
was filled with traditions. Every plain had its own wild story of border trouble, and every headland had its aboriginal legends. Even patriotic American editors pleaded for a native literature to glorify America's shaggy cliffs and haunted streams. The Gothic short story writers in the Lady Books sought profit and not an American literature. The traditions that were everywhere in America were not considered by these lady writers as traditions that some American writer could develop into a native American literature. They were traditions that needed the pen of a Scott to immortalize. A few Gothic writers used the local American scenery to advantage in their tales, but these, too, were cluttered with old world Gothic decay. There were not fifteen men of talent in America who could live from their pens, and the general body of American Gothic literature was traitorous to the nationalistic American literary movement. Gothic tales were crammed with descriptions that only the pen of Radcliffe could describe, or the pencil of Claude could depict.

When the frontier crumbled the American landscapes tottered and the American Gothic tales became obfuscated in a fable-lore literature of old world origin and sentiment. A few Gothic writers who objected

to the pageantry of the Arabic household and the fantasy of the Radcliffean castle were unable to compete against the majority who remained faithful to the foreign themes. The writers who chose medieval themes were less exposed to criticism, and had more chance to use their imaginations than if they had chosen the themes of every-day reality.

A great American Literature was expected from a people lavished with nature's gifts. Strange energies of thought were expected to be aroused. There was grandeur in American mountains and beauty in its rivers. America was a paradise on earth, and the Gothic writers were conscious of America's literary descriptive wealth: The Monongahela range was rugged as the Alps; the Mississippi was the sublimest river in the world; the southern swamps were dismal as any gulf in Europe; and the New England forests were black as Germany's, but the European bondage was manifest in the Gothic details. Instead of the English castle or French "chateau" the American Gothic writers called

---

218. Ibid.
The mansions became "summerhouses" and later only the "house" remained. A haunted house in Georgia was eerie as a haunted castle, but Georgia was American and perhaps more terrible from its proximity.

These denatured Gothic tales, which sprung from the frontier settlements, were branded by the European stamp of Gothic tradition. The fundamental structure of the American Gothic tale sacrificed its Puritan wildness and the terror-striking elements when the scenery was localized. The dramatic power of the Gothic tale depended upon the sublimity of wildness mixed with the luxuriance and horror of life and death. They held the secret of life.

It was in the boldest descriptions of nature that the pre-frontier Gothic writers found freedom for the genius of man. They would have none of the puny descriptions of domestic writers. The God of nature to the Gothic writers was the old Puritan God who was looked upon as an Awful power. Nature was a symbol of God's wrath and His works viewed with the feeling of transcendental glory and fear.

---

230. Ibid.
231. Ibid.
235. Ibid.
characters were either good or bad and if they were bad nature punished them, 236 or testified against them. 237 The black and white religious character of the Puritan mind found correspondence in the Gothic tales. 238

When it was dark in a Gothic tale it was black; 239 when it was cold, it was Artic cold; 240 when it was a bad night, it was the worst of nights; 241 when it was a bad night in a bad season, it was the worst night in the worst of seasons; 242 and when it was a bad night in November, it was the worst month of the worst year 243 that man or beast had ever encountered.

There was no affection in the Gothic concept of nature. The stern Puritan Cod of Nature meted out retributive justice for sin, and judging from Michael Wigglesworth's "Day of Doom," the majority of Puritans were assigned a hot eternity before they rocked out of their cradles. Nature reacted Puritanically when George Cameron in "The Brother's Cameron," 244 puzzled by an open grave, called out to nature to tell him the doer of that foul deed. There was no answer, but George knew, for when he looked up the heavens were black with flying clouds. 245 Edmunds,

---

240. Ibid.
241. Ibid.
242. Ibid.
243. Ibid.
245. Ibid.
too, in "The Conscience Stricken Man" felt the hand of the Wrathful God when he felt the storm's fury was being spent on him alone. Edward, the Gothic killer, in "A Legend of Galway," overtook Gomez in a garden and buried his dagger into Gomez ONE HUNDRED times; he knew his fate when the moon showed his horrible crime. Nature testified against Ogier's companion in "Eleanora De Montheville" in the garden one moonlit night when the moon watched the companion place one hand on a noble knight's head, and with the other plunge a short rapier into his heart. An alchymist who would steal a miser's gold would feel the terrible hand of God when the storm burst forth with renewed vigor. Even a HESSIAN soldier as in "Retribution" would not escape unscathed if he killed a praying maiden. The mighty whip of nature would rend a tree asunder and kill the soldier in anger. Nature could get over-angered, however, and send quivering shafts of lightning to kill a woman about to be seduced but the bad man would know the lightning was meant for him.

Perhaps the Puritan strain in the Gothic tale was best shown in the appended morals. Just as there was no compromise in the Puritan mind, there was no compromise in the Gothic writer's view of nature. The young ladies could not miss the obvious moral tone of the tale of "Wild Frank's

246. The Literary Port Folio, (1830), p. 137.
249. Ibid.
252. Ibid.
Wild Frank lay sleeping with the reins of Black Nell, his spirited steed, still in his hands. A Gothically manufactured storm arose and Black Nell dashed swift as an arrow madly down a hill dragging the unfortunate wretch behind. The editor of "Al-Mohdi" was not so imaginative. Al-Mohdi court-confined wandered into a flowered dell where he pounced upon every shrub and flower as if they had sprung up by enchantment. Occupied in his rapture, Al-Mohdi did not see the storm brewing. Beside himself and bereft of shelter he suffered for his pre-occupation with nature. Then the moral was added to the story:

Never let the love of novelty counteract reason; while we survey the works of nature, which are curious and new, we should act the part of a rational observer, and not that of the idiotic novice.

Gothic writers had little use of Wordsworthian ideas of nature. They would rather have their Byronic heroes blasted by cold New England winds or whirled by a Midwestern cyclone than have them in the balmy woods plucking wild flowers.

The Gothic legacy that ruined American letters from 1800 to 1850

---

255. Ibid.
257. Ibid., p. 139.
is fairly well-defined. Wordsworth was too subtle for the American business man. 261 Scott's reputation was in the subliterary novel class of authors who followed him. 262 Charles Broden Brown, working through Godwin's luridly picturesque, produced America's first novels Edgar Huntley and Wieland, both of which were Gothic. 263 Rousseau was considered a dangerous writer. 264 Coleridge's supernatural philosophic tales did not develop into a clear-cut American species. 265 Mrs. Radcliffe and the English train of Gothic machinists were mentioned lovingly by the Gothic writers. 266 The Puritan's love of nature was manifest after the Revolution. 267 Legends were considered stuff from which a native American literature was to be made. 268 Irving was popular, and a traitor to legend-lore of America, and Lord Byron was the Gothic Champion of a democratic-loving people. 269.

The America of 1800-1850 was an age of ambition and gain. 270 The million American periodical readers wanted highly seasoned food. 271

262. William Racman, Some German Imitators of Walter Scott: An Attempt to Evaluate the Influence of Scott on the Subliterary Novel of the Early Nineteenth Century in Germany, p. 2-12.
263. Main Currents in American Thought, p. 190.
265. Ibid.
As early as 1803, the Gothic tales were classed with cheap romances272 that inflamed the heart273 and corrupted the morals;274 there was too much trash in them.275 Romantic interludes by 1833 were too sentimental for practical America.

The Gothic writers clung to the shores of Greece,277 and Rome's dust was hallowed.278 Asia was a land of gorgeous grandeur;279 and Italy:

Venice! ...the echo of a hundred tales rings in the ear—gondolas, red masks, daggers, cowls, tortures, and poison, float in an undistinguished mass before the eyes.280

There were cultural reactions against the Gothic tale in America281 but protests were futile because the American reading public would read anything282 and the American and British publishers283 would publish anything the Americans would read. They had no wish for martyrdom for the sake of a native literature.284 Edgar Allan Poe believed that by 1842 America was ready for a native literature,285 and his editorship

273. Ibid.
274. Ibid.
ushered into fiction a new type of psychological horror tale; but even in 1842 his "Descent of the Maelstrom" was too tame and the pen of Mrs. Radcliffe earned more praise.287

It was hoped that the American Indian and the American border warfare would inspire the Gothic writers,288 but American Gothic talent had

...too long lingered with interest around the shores of 'classic Greece,' and 'lovely Italy;' too long wandered on the banks of the Arno, and gazed in wonder on the lofty Alps.289

Mrs. Radcliffe and England had done their work well!290

There were no radical changes made in the Gothic descriptions when the Gothic tales became Byronically democratized on the American scene. The greater body of Gothic tales still were as wild as Byron's works. American name places were tagged on the tales and community renegades stomped throughout city dwellings.291 When a conscious artistic effort was made to identify the locale it was done with the suggestion of apology. The only innovation made on Byron's technique was the element of decay harkening back to medievalism.

This decadent type of American Gothic tale is illustrated in "St. Herbert." This tale tells of a New England cottage, rank with weeds, yet romantic regardless of the lowliness of its occupants. The cottage had fretted away into RUINS of grandeur; evergreens clung on the roof; an old blue damask sofa rested against one side of the building and a harpsichord, gray with dust, stood on the porch. Rose bushes lined the periphery of the garden and only the clamor of quail disturbed the mournful gloom. When a Gothic writer chains his Gothic artillery the charm is lost and other types of fiction become evident.

Camouflaged European scenery in American settings was not an improvement on the Radcliffean formula. Terror-striking elements of nature: thunder that would roar like a thousand unchained lions; wind that would whine as wild as a troop of malignant fiends: this was the essence of the atmosphere of the American Gothic tale. The placing of detailed objects in American settings was somewhat of a fad in the periodicals. The old Gothic phraseology was modernized with negative results. Owls cried from castle battlements in the old tales, but American pigeons clamored from chimneys. Wolves stalked in fear in the old tales, but American Otters slid by in fear. Women slept in dark old

---

293. Ibid.
castle wings in the old tales, but American women slept in modern gabled attics in the new tales.

The atmosphere of decay enshrouded both the American and the Castle tales, but the American decay was modernized. Old apple trees in the front yard of gloomy houses in America were no different in Gothic substance from fantastic Yew trees in Gothic gardens of hazy castles in England.

The American Southland had Gothic elements for a native Gothic literature, but they were relegated to atmospheric exercises and the difference between their tales and those of the old dominion was one of degree of Gothic texture. The mood of deadness created in a typical Southern Gothic tale was like that of "George Maynor" where the trees were heavy with gray hanging moss situated near a dismal swamp where slimy reptiles lived and where

...the sunbeams never penetrate;
the lizard and snake wind through the mire, and the twanging melodies of frogs alone disturbed the silence.

This suggested little difference to the Gothic reader from the German tale of "Falkenstein," where the mists curled up from low grounds until they rose like a sea of fog, smoke and

...the trees showed like islands
and islets in the pale light of the rising moon...it chilled all nature like a shroud, and the flowers folded up their petals as they shrunk from the deadly influence.

305. Ibid.
307. Ibid.
The Gothic mood of loneliness and wildness in a Tennessee story was typical of the tales where a Mid-western atmosphere was used—the mood was Gothic, and the setting was American: Along a sun-baked clay wagon road, blackened stumps stood like charred tombstones around a desolate clearing, in the center of which a decayed cabin projected in relief against the fast falling mauve twilight. Evidence of death was seen for acres around the cabin, and off to one side of the cabin path, a mossy bucket dangled from a long pole in a well. On a naked knoll, was a picture that was dreary

...comfortless, monotonous—almost heart-depressing! A scene of wildness without beauty; of solitude without dignity...an abode in the wilderness utterly destitute of forest shelter and security. 308

But it was a Gothic picture that had the elements that showed detailed difference from any Gothic picture of the old dominion. 309 In these old dominion pictures, neither time nor place was mentioned, so the reader had to supply the details. The ruins in these old tales were atmospherically medievalized, with no modern details mentioned:

...it was a wild and lonely place, the wild beasts visited it not; and owls were afraid to make their nests there! ...there was nought...but a grim pile of gray, mouldering ruins, rusty and chunky, with wild cold winds

of the ocean howling around it.

The American scene was soon forgotten, if ever it was consciously remembered by the Gothic writers for purposes of making Gothic literature into American literature.

The breakdown of the Frontier was not so formidable as it could have been for the creation of a new type of Gothic tale. Americanized Gothic writers followed the formal pattern of the Revolutionary War nature cults and the stereotyped Radcliffean descriptions. The Gothic elements lost their original intensity and showed Nature still gloomy, but poisoned with metaphors from the classic Gothic School. On the whole, an Americanized winter in the Gothic tales was not an American winter but excursion time in imagery:

...stern-browed winter had breathed over the scene, and the gnarled oak forest stood out like an army of skeletons against the stormy sky.

The Indians who rode in whirls of dust like ghost riders were never identified. The negro was mentioned once in the period in a Gothic setting, and it was his color that made him Gothic. The American River Matchitches was not a meandering tributary of the Red River, but the River Styx. European rivers could groan like Typhon, Encelodus,

---

310. Ibid.
or Ephialtes in their immortal agony, but the European river of Louis Quinze's times could well have been the river running through Thyatire, Kentucky, as well as the Kentucky river could have been the French Seine.

The American Honeysuckles and Yellow Jassamines were not called native American flowers. They were vestiges of human culture. Lovers still met in Gothic gardens when they could well have met in American gardens. There was seldom an American moon; it was a Classical moon. All old American architecture was a grand pile of ruins. All American cemeteries were behind creepy churches. All the storms were tremendous, and all the rains fell in torrents.

The American Gothic writers went to extremes to absorb the American scene, but descriptively embellished tales moved the machinery of horror away from its milieu of superstition where tales

...would wither the rose upon your cheek, and drive the warm blood in frozen icicles to your heart.

They moved them into local regions beyond the frontier where the outstretched plains and the blazing sun flitted more the American character. It would seem logical that as the frontier expanded, new scientific and

319. Ibid.
320. Ibid.
321. Ibid.
commercial elements were poured into the old Gothic formula. Again it would seem logical that the American short story writers would include local scenery and crush the Witchcraft Tale, the Medieval Tale, the Radcliffean Tale, the Oriental Tale, the Indian Tale, and the Rogue Tale into the general flask of the Sensibility Tale and experiment with a new form of literature. The American Gothic Tale included all the forms and had the ingredients, but the elements were residual. The Castle, the Mosque, and the Tepee were transplanted and artificial gardens fenced them in. The American Buffalo never stomped in the West lands, but slimy American things crept along oozy river banks and splashing things slid along the willow lands. Their American labels would make them more accidental than incidental to the development of a robust American Gothic literature. American descriptions were cultish and sickly when Edgar Allan Poe infused new spirit into Gothic literature and brought the Gothic tale to the apogee of exotic art. Of his sixty-eight short stories, twenty-two deal with supernatural themes that re-echo the legendary type of medievalism of the Pre-Frontier Gothic writers of America.

If wildness of imagery without detail would be the savage type

326. Ibid.
329. Ibid.
of nature description, and if the minute descriptions of nature is progress, then it was well that America left as its attempt at a native American literature, a mark of the black mask and the red rose in the East, and the sullen Negro shuffling to his cabin in the South.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The present study indicates that when the vogue for Gothic Literature was over in England in 1820, the American Lady Books absorbed the English stories and made a strain of Gothic short stories that persisted between the years 1800 and 1850 and after. The fact that the cheap thrillers of the last phases of the English Gothic School of Fiction were re-published in such stories as "The Monk" in the Literary Port Folio of 1830, and "The Monk" in The Philadelphia Monthly Album of 1840, did not prove that there was a deliberate effort in the American Lady Books to revive the discarded English Gothic School in America. The eclectic character of the Lady Books accounted for the great variety of those cheap Gothic tales of England; there was every reason to believe that the rage for the English Blue-Book literature was over simultaneously in America, although tales were often found in reprints of old "backnumbers" and some original Blue-Book type tales are present throughout the 1800-1850 period.

The extremely complicated study of the Lady Books, brought about by the re-publication of annuals with changed names and make-up, has made the assignment of a Gothic strain in the American periodicals more involved. The fact that Americans read anything in the period 1800 to 1850 does not indicate that Americans bought Lady Books primarily because of their Gothic content. However, the fact that these Gothic tales were shortened for
magazine conditions, and sentimentalized for American readers, does account for the fact that they were embodied in those Lady Books. There were probably two reasons for the 1933 high-water mark of the Gothic Tales in the Lady Books. First, the English Drawing Room Annuals sent Gothic material to the American magazines in abundance in 1832 when the English Annuals were at a peak in England; and secondly, the year 1833 brought a wave of material prosperity to America, which increased the purchasing power of American publishers who were now able to import Gothic material from those English Annuals.

When the Lady Books broke the English magazine monopoly in America, the English refused to export popular magazine fiction to the Lady Books. However, the presence of Gothic Tales in the Lady Books suggested that England was not extremely concerned with establishing the boycott. There must have been considerable illegitimate business transacted between the Lady Book publishers in America and England. If the "patriotic" Lady Book publishers were unable to obtain material directly from England, they were able to obtain it from the British Lady Book publishers in America.

Lady Books were a vast business in America from 1826 onward, and the definite efforts of Lady Book publishers to make an American Literature from the legendary framework of the Gothic Tales was a publisher's method of advertising. The duplication of many Gothic Tales in the Lady Books was a hoax to keep Americans conscious of a high literary purpose, and the inclusion of the Gothic Tales in the Lady Books was an accident during the Lady Book debauch of 1826 to 1870.
America's great contribution to the literature of the world was the short story, but if it were not for American magazines there would not have been an American short story. Hardly an American writer was oblivious of the power of the magazine. America had the writers when the magazines gave them a chance to market their works, but the fact that Irving, Hawthorne, and Poe, in one form or another, chose the Gothic short story form for the magazines, shows the tremendous influence Gothic fiction had on the American mind. These men wrote for an audience who would buy their stories; yet even then it is impossible to say that they deliberately chose the Gothic short story form because they felt they were contributing to a native literature.

Irving, who was popular both at home and abroad, after his initial successes, became involved in the Sensibility Tale more than in the Gothic Tale. Hawthorne was aware of legendary material, but it was New England Witchcraft legendary material and not American legendary material that he garnered from regions where the influence of England did not dominate. There was no attempt on his part to fuse the European traditional literature of Europe, and to solidify those traditions with the touches of individual genius that were his American heritage. In the case of Poe, his morbid preoccupation with the grotesque was a perfect response to magazine demands, and his originality in the short story form was a worthy contribution to an American literary art. However, when one considers the desire of America to develop an American literature from its own traditional elements—the unadulterated Indian and Negro Literature—Poe can be said to have failed the American cause, such as it was.
Nevertheless, the fact that many Lady Book publishers were traitors to their own country, makes the assumption dubious whether the publishers earnestly devoted energy to break the bondage of England. Then a reconsideration of the genius of Poe brings his art into a new sphere of art that is American art; makes the English colored Gothic tales become subordinated to a profitable publishing device, and makes Poe's Gothic strain one of the most beautiful strains in American and world literature.

American Literature cannot be interpreted without considering the influence of the American Magazine. Not all the great names of American literature had their works published in Lady books, but the extent of the importance of the magazine was revealed by a rapid glance through the magazines compiled for this study. The contributions were as follows: Poe, 17; Longfellow, 10; Whittier, 10; Lowell, 9; Bryant, 9; Irving, 7; Cooper, 7; Hawthorne, 3; em Emerson and Thoreau, 1 each. The list probably would have been expanded if the female writers did not virtually have a monopoly on the writing done in the Lady Books, but American literature was enriched by the opportunity these magazines gave to American talent. The literary market was ruled by these lady writers from 1826 to 1850. These dates mark one of the most crucial periods of the development of American Literature. With regard to the vogue for Gothic tales which coincided with the great rush in print, the American writers who tried their hands at the Gothic mood must be praised or blamed in the light of the Lady monopolists. These lady writers are responsible for making Longfellow the poet of the sentimental past; Cooper a somniferous idealist; Bryant a moralistic Wordsworthian; Whittier an Autumnal megalomaniac; and Hawthorne a romantic recluse.
Horror was usually the chief factor in the Gothic tales, but the element of sensibility was ever present. The age of the Lady Books was an age of Sensibility, an age of excessive gentility. In those Lady Books were sown the seeds of sentimentality and gentility garbed with hypocrisy which have infected the literature of America from 1800 to the present day. With the gangrenous roots of cheap literature firmly embedded in the American soil, the harvest distorted the succeeding years in the development of American Art.

There was another influence the Lady Books had on the development of American Literature. The preponderance of female writers impressed the American mind with the thought that writing was primarily a lady's function. The American man was not considered properly suited for a writing career when there were fishing boats in the wharves, virgin fields to be plowed, and giant forests to be felled. It was a man's Puritan inheritance to yoke oxen in the rain, for America was forged by sturdy pioneers who built a hardy nation.

Still another influence Lady Books had on American fiction was the fact that they provided an insipid mode for the exaggeration of the virtues of women which became infused into the Gothic tale. The moral projection of this distorted view of humanity betrayed the literary art and penetrated into the Gothic fibre of the short stories. This Lady Book literature was marked for propagandistic consumption, and the literary art was often neglected for the cause of women. There is no doubt that many male publishers of Lady Books were afraid of Mary Wollstonecraft's feminine emancipation program in America, but they extolled the virtues...
of women simply to get every mermaid in the country interested in sympa-
thetic trash crammed into the sensational Gothic short stories.

What might have been the normal development of American Literature
without the Lady Books is understandable from a consideration of the
part England played during the literary suicide in American Literature from
1826 to 1850.

With a host of British publishers undermining any attempt of
American publishers to make an American literature, the English King
subsidized American authors; the English reviewers frowned on American
works, and the English publishers discountenanced an international copy-
right law. A few American publishers who crusaded against the imported
English Gothic material were endangered with bankruptcy. Every work of
importance was first sanctioned by the English Press, and then recognized
by the American publishers. The English had a literary empire built in
America, and they were not idle when their trade was being interrupted by
the advent of the Lady Books. It would not be uncharitable to assume that
the English deliberately glutted the cheap Gothic tales upon the American
market to confuse the American publisher’s attempts to consolidate the Le-
gendary and the Gothic forms of literature.

The two forms had all the elements of a native literature.
Regional tales sprang up all along the American rivers, the mountain ranges,
the swamps, in every section of the land where the cry for nationalized
literature was heard. The sincere Gothic writers supplied the localized
American details so far as they could within the Gothic structure, but
the fundamental structure was obfuscated by the English Radcliffean
School of horror. Instead of dropping the horror element they were retained and the American landmarks were worked into a grotesquely modernized form of denatured Gothic tale. If the sublime aspects of the American scenery were not subdued into a sickly imitation of the English Gothic tale scenery, the result would have been bizarre, but still American.

The literary ties with the Mother country were too great to be broken. There was no rebellious effort to make the Gothic tales Americanized fiction, its practicability was seen in its sentimentality, its horror, and its shortness. The tales were fiction suited for American magazine publication. The Midwest produced a few Gothic tales worthy of the American label, but those few tales made the effort accidental rather than incidental. The Southland was utilized as a mossy exercise for Lady Book writers. It did not show any spirited direction toward a new American Gothic tale. The West was particularly sparse in periodical circulation, and nothing came from that source to show the shaping of a Tall Gothic tale, or any other form of legendary material of the West. The American Indian was either brutalized, sentimentalized, or over-romanticized. The Negro literature along the Mississippi River was woefully neglected, and a sense of national guilt was assuaged by its comfortable rejection.

The Gothic tale had too many possibilities of being made American. Every form of fiction that could possibly be included within its framework was tried, but the essential ingredients were English. The Gothic writers tried to draw out the Gothic tales to meet the heterogeneous Lady Book demands for cheap literature, but every pile of broken concrete, every blackened stump, and every reposed cemetery reminded the Gothic
authors of some other land but America, but the whole overcast to the
tales was English. When the Frontier was pushed back beyond the Wisconsin
line, the tomahawk was buried, but a new source of horror was found in every
hamlet which harbored psychological misfits who were made Byronic and
twisted into the Gothic Tale. The fiercer aspects of nature that terrified
the Pilgrims were now harnessed, and sickly descriptions from the pens of
sentimental women displaced them. The delicate was urbanized, the
fierceness was domesticated, and the Gothic characters were made unctuous.

The America of 1800 to 1850 was an America of profit-mad
generations; it was haughty with national pride having fought two wars
within a half century; it was an independent America, secure in its
resources, arrogant because of its conquest of the Indians, the French,
the English; an America crazed with the adventures of the gold-rush
country; lavish of its sinews to unyoke itself from New England. America
was a new land, wide open, gullible, nervous, with populations of millions
who had leisure from the hostile elements their forefathers pacified.
It was an America intellectually conscious, but artistically impoverished,
an America ready to make amends in 1842, ready to flaunt a native litera-
ture in the face of England; but in their mad rush to carve out an empire
of lumber, steel and fur, they gave some time to the Gothic Tales during
the Lady Bork mania, but a native American Literature became a far-off
dream.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Turner, Frederick Jackson. The Early Writings of Frederick Jackson Turner. Madison, Wis.: The University Press, 1936.

Periodicals


THE NEWBERRY COLLECTION OF PERIODICALS NOT ENTERED IN

POOLE'S INDEX TO PERIODICALS

American Journal of Science, Vols. I-XXXXX Series 1, (1819-1845);
Casket, The, (1828-1827).

* These magazines are not exclusive of the Poole's Index.


Golden Book or Gazette of Union, Vols. II-VI, (1845-1850).


Spirit of the Times, Vols. IX-XII, (1829-1842).
Stryker's American Register, Vol. VI, (1851).
World We Live In, Vol. II, (1845).
Youth's Companion, Vols. I, (1832), XIV, (1845), XI, (1837), XV, (1842),
Vol. XVIII, (1844-1845), XIX, (1845).
The thesis submitted by Clarence Ellsworth Brown, Jr. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of English.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

Oct. 2, 1948

James J. Young
Signature of Adviser