# Studies in Gothic Fiction

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# Contents

# Introduction

The need to place Gothic literature in visual terms is perhaps inevitable. The Gothic is a genre without limits or distinction—it is generally seen as both an incubator for later genres, such as Romance, horror, fantasy, sci-fi, and the detective story, and as a retirement home for ballads and folk tales. Simultaneously spawning and decomposing, the Gothic has, even as a genre, something nightmarish, something unsettled. Placing the Gothic in the visual medium at least binds its metamorphic qualities into a stable and coherent whole. The great Gothic cathedrals of England and France, for example, might seem to some to be a wild tangle of angled stone and glass, but we recognize that there must be a form, some logic that keeps the entire edifice from falling in upon itself.

That same underlying structure is riddled with holes, literally, in Gothic narrative. In the works of Monk Lewis, W.H. Ireland, Bram Stoker, H.P. Lovecraft and countless others, Gothic constructions are a labyrinth of secret stairwells, noisome wells, forgotten dungeons, and dank tunnels drifting into boundless Stygian darkness. All that the writer now requires is an offense against man and god, a confused hero, and, somewhere off in the distance, a deep scream….

The essays in this collection explore that ways in which the Gothic continues to alter even while keeping many of its basic claptappings. Kendra Preston Leonard's article on early filmic versions of *Phantom of the Opera* (1925/1929), for example, concentrates on the visual and aural cues that are suggested but not fully delineated in Gaston Leroux's novel. As Leonard argues, film versions of *Phantom* attempt to ascribe a physical impulse to Erik psychological deformity: "the character's disability is credited with the majority of his motivations and controls the plot, the film introduces elements of supernatural abilities in addition to visually, textually, and musically connecting a disabled individual with innate evil." On the other hand, Vanessa A. Velez's essay argues that it is the physically untethered nature of the Gothic that makes it so apt for animated appropriation. As she argues, it is the physically untethered nature of the Gothic that makes it so apt for animated appropriation. Jeaneen Treichler Kish's article on the adaptation of the Sweeny Todd serial into mainstream culture suggests that ways in which we have reformulated the Gothic's seemly timeless literary themes of human suffering and savagery into contemporary, if often campy, commentary.

<div align="right">---Jeffrey Kahan, 2014.</div>

# The Unwitting Cannibals: Why Contemporary Audiences Consider Sweeney Todd the Less Demonic Barber of Fleet Street

Jeaneen Kish

The character of Sweeney Todd has gone through many forms and adaptations since its inception. He started as either a real criminal or an urban legend, began his literary life as a serial publication in the *People's Periodical and Family Library*, which was then adapted into a play before the work was even complete. This recounting covers just the beginning of the journey, however. The list of adaptations continues in varied forms, including a musical, a film adaptation of that musical, and even a ballet. So what is it about this tale that has captured audiences since 1846, when it was first published? By looking at the original publication of Todd's story, *The String of Pearls: A Romance*, by James Malcolm Rymer, and comparing it to Tim Burton's musical film version of the story, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, we can trace the differences in the backstory as well as how the respective authors present Todd to the audience.

It is likely that that the audience of Burton's film adaptation of the Stephen Sondheim musical reacts more sympathetically to Todd, who is an innately evil character in *The String of Pearls*. The recasting of Todd as an anti-hero is odd. Afterall, he kills many people and allows Mrs. Lovett to bake them into pies, which are then sold to the public. These customers subsequently become unwitting cannibals, also known as "benign cannibals," who have "no knowledge of what kind of meat [they are] eating… or [have] already eaten."[1] More than the murders, this transformation of innocent customer to unwitting cannibal should revolt the audience. After all, the audience members who eat meat could unsuspectingly find themselves in a similar situation, were a real-life Todd among them. In the penny blood, or penny dreadful version, appearing in *People's Periodical and Family Library* from 1846 to 1847, the narrator relates that upon finding out that the pies Mrs. Lovett sold in her shop were made from human flesh "the throng of people recoiled – what a roar of agony and dismay there was! How frightfully sick about forty lawyers' clerks became all at once…"[2] This revulsion is not present in Burton's film. Instead, Burton seeks to justify Todd's actions. This Todd has an honorable motivation, which, in turn, absolves us of any hint of rooting for the criminal.

Assuming that Burton is reacting to our current zeitgeist, what is it about our society that makes us alter Todd and his story? I suggest that Carole A. Travis-Henikoff's *Dinner with a Cannibal: The Complete History of Mankind's Oldest Taboo* might help us to answer this question. Also, critics such as Robert L. Mack reveal the ways in which audiences have responded to the different adaptations of the Todd myth.

From our very first introduction to Sweeney Todd in the penny blood, we realize that while he is the protagonist, he is not the hero. The narrator's portrayal of Todd is our first clue

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[1] Carole A. Travis-Henikoff. *Dinner with a Cannibal: The Complete History of Mankind's Oldest Taboo* (Santa Monica: Santa Monica Press, 2008), 25.

[2] *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, ed. Robert L. Mack (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007), 280.

as to what will occur during the tale.  The narrator describes him as "a long, low-jointed, ill-put-together sort of fellow, with an immense mouth, and such huge hands and feet, that he was, in his way, quite a natural curiosity."[3]  By emphasizing that he looked like a "natural curiosity," the narrator is alluding to a carnival freak, with which the original audience would most probably be familiar.   Freak shows were gaining in popularity at this time, and people of all classes went to them for entertainment.  As Robert Bogdan, author of *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit*, explains, the term "curiosity" is one word of many that indicates a person is a member of a freak show.[4]  It is therefore likely that Sweeney Todd's original readers were familiar with the language used at these shows.

We are further told that because of Todd's wild hair, "he might have been mistaken for some Indian warrior with a very remarkable head-dress."[5]  Nadja Durback explains one significant feature of this quote: "By conflating bodies that were anomalous in relation to the human species and those that merely diverged from the white British 'norm,' these spectacles suggested that racial difference was not merely a natural variation in the human species, but a freakish bodily deformation."[6]  Intriguingly, at freak shows, people of other cultures were often displayed as "missing links," their status decidedly below what Durback terms the "British 'norm.'" Not only does this part of the description further the notion of Todd as other, it is also our first connection with cannibalism.  At the time of the penny blood, many Native American tribes were viewed, correctly or erroneously, as cannibalistic. Daniel Diehl and Mark P. Donnelly explain that the cannibalistic nature of the Aztecs caused all natives of the Americas to be viewed as cannibals.[7]  Lastly, the author emphasizes Sweeney's "hyena-like laugh," which many characters consider even more disturbing than his countenance.[8]  Again, we have another reference to the cannibalism that will occur throughout the novel.  Hyenas are one of the known cannibals in the animal kingdom: a "habitual cannibal from birth."[9]  The image of the hyena carries other significance as well in that the hyena is believed to be a scavenger, of low regard compared to other more majestic animals, such as lions and tigers.

While our society adamantly upholds the ideal that one should not be judged by such matters as appearance, the Victorians would have read Todd's evil nature through the aforementioned animalistic and freakish descriptions.  Rightly or wrongly, they would have assumed that Todd was barbaric and capable of heinous acts.  The popularity of phrenology would have allowed audience members to know that his appearance was a strong indicator of his personality, his criminal behavior reflected in his appearance and demeanor.  However, our society has discounted phrenology as a pseudoscience; so we do not have these markers to help us identify Todd's criminal nature.

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[3]  *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, 4.
[4] Robert Bogdan, *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1990), 5-6.
[5] *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, 4.
[6] Nadia Durbach. "On the Emergence of the Freak Show in Britain." *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History*. Ed. Dino Franco Felluga. Extension of *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net*. Last modified 2014. http://www.branchcollective.org/
?ps_articles=art_emergence_of_the_freak
[7] Daniel Diehl and Mark P. Donnelly, *Eat Thy Neighbor: A History of Cannibalism*.  (Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2008), 22-24
[8] *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, 4.
[9] Travis-Henikoff, *Dinner with a Cannibal*, 64.

Instead, we must adduce Todd's criminality through his class. In the recent Tim Burton film, Todd is portrayed as a run-down character. His dark, somber colored clothes have a disheveled, tattered aspect; the gray streaks in his hair suggest his difficult life experiences. In a flashback, we are given a glimpse of Todd when he was with his wife, and his appearance then is in stark contrast to his later condition. When he was plain "Benjamin Barker," Todd wore a stylish brown suit and lightly colored ascots; his hair was youthful and styled in a more controlled and fashionable manner. The lighting used for the scenes differs as well. When depicted as Barker, the sun seems to be shining down on him. Contrastingly, when he is Todd, a somber lighting often adds to his dreary appearance, his psychological gloom manifest in his gray and pasty face.

Not only does presentation of Todd's appearance differ in the two works, the background of the plotlines vary as well. In Burton's film Todd's past is fully explained. At one time Todd was a loving husband and father until Judge Turpin, a corrupt public official, accuses him of a crime and sends him to a penal colony in Australia. Meanwhile, Turpin steals Todd's wife and child. We later find out that his wife goes insane and that the Judge has raised Johanna, Todd's daughter, as his ward. He now has plans to marry her. Turpin's crimes explain and justify Todd's recent macabre behavior. After all, by killing the judge he can free his daughter, who is in love with Mark Ingestrie. (A pun on digestion, the inevitable result of eating those pies!)

In such details, Burton's version relies heavily upon theatrical adaptations. As Robert L. Mack, in his introduction to the novel, explains:

> At the very least, the specifics of the many spurious biographical narratives that have adhered to the figure of Todd from the late-nineteenth century onward could go some small way towards explaining just how such a monster could ever have come into being in the first place; they could help us to understand why an 'ordinary' barber such as Todd 'became' the creature that he did. More particularly, readers and audiences could comfort themselves with the knowledge that Sweeney Todd's adult crimes were rooted – as theatre programmes over the centuries have been compelled to insist – in such experiences as his mistreatment and abandonment as a child, in his appalling treatment as a young offender incarcerated amongst hardened criminals in Newgate, and in the justifiable (or explicable) resentment of a persecuted member of the working classes.[10]

As Mack suggests, the working class was often abused at the hands of the middle and upper class, and Todd learns his lesson well. When we get to the song, "A Little Priest," we fully understand that Todd and Lovett are merely talking about doing to those people what has been done to them for years. At the beginning of the song, Todd asks, "For what's the sound of the world out there?" and answers "It's man devouring man, my dear"; he later sings, "the history of the world, my love … is those below serving those up above….How gratifying for once to know … that those above will serve those down below!"[11] It is meaningful to note that while Todd himself never partakes of Lovett's pies and, therefore, is not a literal cannibal in the text; as such, he is more of a figurative cannibal in his behavior towards others. He does, however, encourage the consumption of Mrs. Lovett's pies. Doing so is worse than just using the pie shop as a way to get rid of the evidence of his crime. The public becomes the consumer

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[10] Robert L. Mack, introduction to *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007), xx.

[11] *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, directed by Tim Burton. 2007; Universal City, CA: Dreamworks Pictures, 2007. DVD.

of his products and his immorality. By way of the adage "You are what you eat," everyone shares in Todd's criminal appetite.

Another important difference between novel and film is Todd's backstory. In the original James Malcolm Rymer serialization, *The String of Pearls*, we know nothing of Todd's early life. Never, throughout the work, is mention made of a wife; as for Johanna, she is the daughter of a local spectacle maker, Mr. Oakley. Todd's murders, then, do not have the noble goal of avenging a wife and child. Instead, Todd kills for greed, a purely self-serving motive. Greed is one of the seven deadly sins, and it fuels Todd. In fact, he does very little in the novel without this sin as his motive. In that respect, the work reflects a Gothic fragment, wherein the plot starts in *medias res*. The reader is introduced to Todd's through his abuse of his apprentice, and, of course, through his murders.

In the Burton film, Todd avenges his false imprisonment and the loss of his wife and daughter. While his first kill is not the judge, it is still justifiable in that he is trying to stop his former apprentice from blackmailing him. The difference is momentous, for us morally and, for the Victorians, legally; Todd's crimes might easily fall into the category of "judicial cannibalism" which J. H. Hutton, in his presidential address to the Royal Anthropological Institute in 1943, defined as an "overlap on the one hand with cannibalism which has been instigated by motives of revenge, hatred and fury, and on the other hand with those forms of cannibalism which appear to arise from magical considerations."[12] By supporting Todd's actions, we participate in Todd's revenge as benign cannibals.

As mentioned, the novel highlights Todd's abuse of his apprentice; moreover, we learn that this is not the first apprentice Todd has abused. Once Todd realizes that his servant Tobias has discovered his secret, he confines him to an insane asylum—he is eventually killed. We also learn that Todd has gotten rid of other young boys in like manner.[13] In its use of children, the Sweeney Todd serialization can be likened to Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal." H. L. Malchow explains that Swift uses the cannibalism of children as satirical social critique.[14] While the Todd story goes not deal with seafaring or giants and pigmies, it too demonstrates the power that masters had over servants, particularly young apprentices. In Tobias's case, Todd is able to institutionalize Tobias without anyone disputing his right to do so. Again this is not an example of Todd as a literal cannibal, but it does illustrate the figurative consumption of the people around him.

Further, Todd would have been most terrifying to his Victorian audience because he so easily takes on the trappings of the upper class and is able to pass without detection.[15] He then takes on the persona of a thief and is able to go undetected in the thieves' lair.[16] Todd can be, and, at times, is, a cannibalistic Everyman. When he goes to John Mundel, the money lender, the narrator tells us "John Mundel… became each moment more and more impressed with the fact, as he considered it, that his guest was some person of very great rank and important to society."[17] It is difficult to know if Todd's social mobility would have terrified readers, but that same portability makes compartmentalization of his crimes impossible. Todd's issue is not merely one of class or money. While those with power clearly exert influence over the weak,

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[12] J. H. Hutton. "Presidential Address: The Cannibal Complex." *Folklore* 54, no.2 (1943): 278. *Jstor.*
[13] *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, 165-67.
[14] H. L. Malchow, *Gothic Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996), 60.
[15] *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, 137,
[16] *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, 59-60.
[17] *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, 137.

Todd is both a tyrant to those he abuses and a victim of abuse by his "betters" (read: social superiors). Todd's crime then is not Todd's alone. It is shared by everyone.

The Todd of the novel differs from the character we meet in the film; Mrs. Lovett differs as well: In the novel, she is a secondary character, merely the agent for Todd's disposal of bodies. In the film, however, she is the one who suggests using human flesh as meat filler. In her song "By the Sea" we learn that her reason for baking bodies into the pies is purely economic. The ingredients are free; hence, they will increase their profits, perhaps to the point of economic freedom. She sings "You and me, Mr. T,/ We could be alone/ In a house wot we'd almost own." Later in the song she sings to Todd, "But a seaside wedding/ Could be devised,/ Me rumpled bedding/ Legitimized."[18] In the dog-eat-dog world of Victorian consumerism, profit is the sole means by which this couple can gain social redemption and respectability.

Again, we have to ask ourselves why we are unable to accept that Todd is just inherently evil? Why do we have to blame others like Mrs. Lovett or give him justification? Mack suggests that "Todd had not been born a villain, the story of his 'life' looks to reassure us, he was himself a victim of a society that was guilty of treating an entire class of people as little more than a disposable source of cheap labour-- of treating them as objects rather than individuals[19]"; if the reader views Todd in this way, then Todd is in some ways a poster boy for Victorian industrial and societal reform. As critic Irving Wardle states: "the story is horrible partly because…Sweeney is not a true villain. He starts with all the right on his side."[20]

I disagree with Mack and Wardle. If we explain away Todd's behavior as somehow justified, then we are arguing that his behavior is logical, causal, and defensible. Burton, while offering just such socially-approved pretexts, also suggests that Todd's behavior is a social disease, akin to rabies. When Tobias kills Todd, he takes on many of the personal attributes of his victim. His crazed look illustrates that he has been mentally scarred by the ordeal and will carry on Todd's legacy of crime. I find that concept far more frightening because of the lack of control.

Our fascination with Todd might center on his otherness, but there exists, too, material in the tale that suggests something closer to the beating heart of western culture. Nathan Constantine explains that most cultures have a history of cannibalism.[21] During the writing of *The String of Pearls*, however, Europe's history of cannibalism was not readily acknowledged. Cannibalism was hitherto linked to natives from colonized areas, particularly the Americas and Africa. Brits at the time commonly believed that the natives of these far flung colonies were animalistic. By contrast, Europeans, as members of a much more civilized race, did not partake in such behavior. However, we do find traces of cannibalism within Victorian culture. Jack the Ripper, for example, stated in a note: "I send you half the Kidne I took from one woman prasarved it for you.   tother piece I fried and ate it was very nise."[22] Contemporary examples throughout Europe and America are still more common: Jeffery Dahmer and Ed Gein show us that cannibalism is very much a part of Western culture.

Constantine further explores examples of "survival cannibalism," such as the Donner party. When relating these instances, he notes that it did not take long for most people to become

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[18] *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, directed by Tim Burton. 2007.
[19] Mack, introduction,  xx
[20] Mack, introduction, xxii
[21] Nathan Constantine,  *A History of Cannibalism: From Ancient Cultures to Survival Stories and Modern Psychopaths*, (Edison, NJ: Cartwell, 2006) 51-52.
[22] Stewart P. Evans and Keith Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Companion: An Illustrated Encyclopedia* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2000) 187.

accustomed to the idea of eating human flesh.  Some did abstain and die rather than partaking in human flesh, but most were able to find some justification.  Ultimately, all it took for these people to partake in a taboo behavior was a socially-sanctioned justification.[23]

Constantine's study allows us to understand the transformation of the Sweeney Todd story in two ways: First, the notion of what is termed "survival cannibalism" figures prominently in the film.  The reception of the Donner party illustrates that the "criminality" of cannibalism remarkably flexible. Mrs. Lovett twice in the Burton film mentions the scarcity of meat and the use of cats as a substitute meat source.  While these people are not starving to death, we might describe their conditions as squalid and near-desperate.  Todd's victims are consumed by people who are ready to eat just about anything.   In addition, by giving Todd a daughter who must be saved and a wife who was taken from him, cannibalism is a part of his revenge, so his actions are given a noble purpose.  We can say that while we would never willingly consume the flesh of another human, in this case, we support Todd because we acknowledge the rapacious nature of capitalism.

The next justification is a bit more controversial: a want or desire for us to eat other humans, whether literately or figuratively.  We live in a society that is obsessed with the notion of one human or former human consuming another.  Vampires, werewolves, zombies and other like monsters can be viewed and read about on a daily basis.   Any number of vampire movies or stories reflects a desire to bite flesh or to drink or to consume humans.  In Stephen King's essay, "Why We Crave Horror Movies," he argues that we watch these kinds of pieces in order to fulfill the suppressed need to commit depraved acts:

> The mythic horror movie, … , has a dirty job to do. It deliberately appeals to all that is worst in us. It is morbidity unchained, our most base instincts let free, our nastiest fantasies realized . . . and it all happens, fittingly enough, in the dark. … For myself, I like to see the most aggressive of them – *Dawn of the Dead*, for instance – as lifting a trap door in the civilized forebrain and throwing a basket of raw meat to the hungry alligators swimming around in that subterranean river beneath. Why bother? Because it keeps them from getting out, man.[24]

These beings are the meat that feed our "alligators," and they are particularly safe for that purpose, in that they are fictional, and, therefore, unable to exist in our world.  We can feel these desires without worrying about them actualizing themselves.  Todd is a seemingly "normal" person, which makes it even easier for us to live his story and to become the consumers of his crime.  Providing honorable motives for Todd allows us to make his justification for any dark desires that were might harbor.

The story of Sweeney Todd has gone through so many transitions and reinterpretations that it allows us as readers to explore the thematic similarities and differences of each iteration. The different forms of cannibalism present in James Malcolm Rymer's penny dreadful and Tim Burton's film version examine the social customs and motives of crime, and under what circumstances we are willing to excuse even the most gruesome of acts. If the changes in the narrative do indeed reflect a need to satisfy a dark hunger that will not go away, an instinctual

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[23] Constantine, *A History of Cannibalism,* 81-82.
[24] Stephen King, "Why We Crave Horror Movies," in *The Longman Reader*, edited by Judith Nadell, John Langan, and Eliza A. Comodromos.  7th ed. (New York: Longman, 2005), 399.

desire for the flesh of our own species, an understanding and acknowledgment of that  impulse is necessary.

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# From "Angel of Music" to "that Monster": Music for the Human Uncanny in *Phantom of the Opera* (1925/1929)

Kendra Preston Leonard[1]

The 1925 film of *The Phantom of the Opera* contains perhaps the most compelling visual and musical illustrations of Gaston Leroux's novel and its anti-hero, who fits the mold of Gothic literature's tragically disabled man of genius. Subject to several major re-shoots and edits, the film itself exists in multiple versions, and the history of its many musical accompaniments is a convoluted one involving nearly a dozen composers and resulting in several scores, some of which are lost. However, the descriptions of lost scores, in addition to extant scores based on earlier ones, makes it possible to understand to some extent what kinds of music were being used in the film to depict its Gothic horrors. In this article, I examine the history of the music that may have accompanied *The Phantom of the Opera* (henceforth *Phantom*), and demonstrate that the music that used to signify the Phantom's highly visual physical difference is related to earlier film and stage music used for the supernatural or unnatural, suggesting that the Phantom's disfigured visage rendered him inhuman in the eyes of filmmakers and audiences. This visual-musical connection suggests that film composers of the silent film period created a new way of linking physical deformity with the concept that non-normate individuals were also unnatural and could categorized—and thus treated—as non-human. I will further show that this correlation, which became standard for the horror genre involving disabled antagonists, has been preserved in modern scores for *Phantom* through a discussion of a period-style score for the film by Frederick Hodges, one by Gabriel Thibaudeau that combines early twentieth-century cinematic accompaniment styles with avant-garde music of the time, and how, reflecting more modern attitudes towards disability and its depiction, it is rejected in a score more sympathetic to the Opera Ghost by composer Carl Davis.

The histories of the film and music of *Phantom* are convoluted. After an initial public release by Universal Pictures in January 1925, the film was recalled and new scenes were added. This second version was premiered in San Francisco in April 1925, but audience reactions were underwhelming, and the movie was sent back to Universal for still more alterations. The third iteration opened for general release in November 1926. The film was redistributed in the version now known as the "Sound Reissue" in 1929 with significant changes, including the addition of a prologue (featuring the so-called "lantern man," who sets the stage by showing the audience the catacombs beneath the Paris Opera House). The following year saw the release of an "International Version," which also contained numerous editing and title changes. According to horror film historian Philip J. Riley, the 1929 release was two or three reels shorter than the 1925

version, and the 1929 version available today is thus missing some 35 minutes of footage from the 1925 version.[2]

The film significantly changes elements of Leroux's novel. Leroux's novel was written to as a tragic romance and thriller using the trope of the Byronic hero. Leroux's Opera Ghost, Erik, is more of a thwarted lover than a truly diabolical villain, at least until the Opera's new management begins to test him. And although Erik blames his misanthropy on reactions to his appearance, at no time does Leroux insinuate that Erik's obsession with Christine and ultimate madness is a result of or a co-symptom with his physical state. Rather, like the blinded Rochester at the end of *Jane Eyre*, Erik's disability and passion render him sympathetic.

However, early horror cinema relied heavily on the supernatural or pseudo-scientific as its *raison d'être*. The majority of horror films of the silent period, such as *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1920), *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), *The Phantom Carriage* (1921), *Nosferatu* (1922), *Häxan* (1922), *The Hands of Orlac* (1924), and others all employed some kind of magical, pseudo-scientific, mystical, or folkloric element as part of the plot, be it hypnotism, vampirism, or witchcraft. In doing so, these early horror films engaged in the uncanny, defined by Freud as briefly perceiving that an inanimate object is alive or the reverse, that a living being has become an object. Thus these films featured subjects—like Frankenstein's monster—who could be dead and alive at the same time, creating terror due to what Robert Spadoni calls the "innate human abhorrence of certain kinds of category transgression."[3] And although Erik himself declares via intertitle, he is, "just a man of flesh and blood," his skeleton- or corpse-like visage visually associated him with the paradoxical condition of being both alive and dead at the same time or otherwise unnatural.[4] The filmmakers emphasized the uncanniness of his physical body by creating a new backstory for Erik that hints at the supernatural.

In Leroux's book, Erik is a young polymath and the most brilliant of the architects working on the Opera House when he is involved in an accident with acid that irrevocably damages his face. Rejected by those around him because of the extent of the damage, he bitterly retreats into the building he knows so well, but cannot resist the opera performances. Calling himself the Opera Ghost because his extensive knowledge of the Opera House allows him to move about unseen, he attends performances and constructs an elaborate home in the depths of the building's sub-basements. He falls in love with Christine and teaches her to sing, never showing himself to her and allowing her to believe that he is the otherworldly "Angel of Music" her late father once promised to send to her. When he realizes that she does not love him in return and fails to convince her first by persuasion and then threats, he finally tells her to go to her lover Raoul. When she later visits the Opera House, she finds that he has died of a broken heart. In the 1925 film, however, Erik has a more troublesome past: his deformity was present at birth, and he worked as an executioner and torturer in the Far East (a reference created to conjure up mystic and exotic practices and supernatural powers) before landing at Devil's Island, the notorious French penal colony. He has escaped from Devil's Island and is highly dangerous. At the end of the film, he is beaten to death by a mob of Parisians and his body is thrown into the Seine. So while both stories are disability narratives, in which the character's disability is credited with the majority of his motivations and controls the plot, the film introduces elements

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[2] Philip J. Riley, *The Making of The Phantom of the Opera* (Absecon, NJ: Magicimage Filmbooks, 1996), 11.

[3] Robert Spadoni, *Uncanny Bodies: the Coming of Sound Film and the Origins of the Horror Genre* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 7.

[4] http://www.thephantomoftheopera-1925.com/the-phantom-of-the-opera-1925-script-fifth-revision.htm. Accessed 2014-12-13.

of supernatural abilities in addition to visually, textually, and musically connecting a disabled individual with innate evil.

The association of the physically non-normate with witchcraft, divine retribution, and magical curses has a very long history. In the medieval and early modern periods, David M. Turner and Kevin Stagg have further shown that, "[t]he unruly body was viewed as extending beyond the physical form to correspond with the natural order. Thus in the early modern period, the body did not simply constitute the individual self, but was a site for cosmic intervention and divine retribution," often resulting in the conflation of the non-normate with both the supernatural and evil.[5] Other chroniclers of the early modern period believed the same thing. In a 1596 treatise on monsters and monstrosity, Martin Weinrich claimed that, "[all] that is imperfect is ugly, and monsters are full of imperfections."[6] Scholar Thomas Burnett, believing that beauty stemmed from perfect geometrical forms, thought that physical irregularities were "symbols of sin, monstrous excrescences on the original smooth face of Nature."[7] This belief persisted well beyond the early modern period: in the late eighteenth century, Swiss physiognomist Kaspar Lavater was insisting that, "in dwarfs we usually find extremely limited but lively faculties, confined but acute cunning, seldom true penetration and wisdom." To be blunt, he wrote, "the morally worst, the most deformed."[8] Such deformities marked not only interior sin and monstrosity, but were also thought to be the result of misbehavior on the part of parents, an entire village, or even the state as a whole, suggesting that the immorality of the disabled was innate and unchangeable. Turner notes that "monstrous births, physical abnormality, and mental deficiency were commonly seen as divine punishment for incest, bestiality, and adultery" in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[9]

In writing on disability on film, Thomas G. Couser has noted that, "A crippled or scarred character, for example, may be assumed to have been traumatized and embittered in the manner of Ahab. (Not coincidentally, such characters are often put to death in punishment of their villainy, and so the impression that disabled people are doomed, if not cursed, is reinforced.) In film, a visual medium that puts a premium on appearance and the body, disability is, if anything, even more prominent. To use an economic metaphor that is literal truth, disability has been an extremely valuable cultural commodity for thousands of years."[10] Thus the reveal of the Phantom's deformity—created by Lon Chaney using a secret process that manipulated and changed his entire face—is the visual and aural climax of the film. Universal Studios used commodity this in its marketing of the film, advertising that the shock of seeing Chaney unmasked caused women to faint and men to quail. Such claims made the public all the more interested in seeing the Phantom's face; the cinema, above all, was a place where staring at the disabled could be accomplished without guilt or shame. Even co-star Mary Philbin described Chaney's character as "inhuman."[11]

Although *Phantom* was not the first film to musically associate physical Otherness with the supernatural—after all, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1920) and *Nosferatu* (1922) had already

[5] David M Turner, Kevin Stagg, and Society for the Social History of Medicine, *Social Histories of Disability and Deformity* (London; New York: Routledge/SSHM, 2006), 8.

[6] Roger D. Lund, "Laughing at Cripples: Ridicule, Deformity and the Argument from Design," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 39, no. 1 (2005): 94, doi:10.1353/ecs.2005.0051.

[7] Ibid., 100.

[8] Ibid., 101.

[9] Turner, Stagg, and Society for the Social History of Medicine, *Social Histories of Disability and Deformity*, 10.

[10] G. Thomas Couser, "Disability, Life Narrative, and Representation," *PMLA* 120, no. 2 (March 2005): 603.

[11] Riley, *The Making of The Phantom of the Opera*, 16.

shown the ways in which the supernatural can manifest in the human(oid) body—it appears to have been the first film to connect non-supernatural disability with the supernatural as a means of communicating a sense of horror or dread. Ultimately, the composers' choices of music and musical styles for *Phantom* made it the first motion picture outside of one explicitly featuring non-human characters that inextricably bound visible human disability with supernatural evil. As a disability narrative, *Phantom* creates an atmosphere in which the aesthetics of traditional physical and musical beauty are considered normate: the ballet dancers, the singers, the sets, the Opera House itself all contribute to an environment in which physical disability or Otherness without supernatural or inhuman abilities seems impossible. Stagehand Joseph Buquet's stories about the Opera Ghost are all the more frightening to the chorus because he can describe the man's skull-like face, an uncanny face that, to the film's denizens, at least, has no place in the Opera or any locale in the world of the living. Erik's ability to appear and disappear within the Opera House is made to seem supernatural, and in the film remains mostly unexplained, strengthening the association of Erik with unnatural abilities. The music assists in affirming this connection.

The history of the music used to accompany *Phantom*'s various forms is even more complicated than that of the film itself. Scores for films in the silent era could be created in several ways: compilation, composition, or improvisation, or a mixture of all three. Compiled scores, in which editors selected excerpts from extant scores and ordered them to fit a film's narrative, often used the same excerpts or ones with similar musical characteristics to denote certain events or emotions in a film. A composed score was created specifically for an individual film, although parts of it might be later used in compilations for other movies. Improvisation was left up to theatre performers, usually organists or pianists; they too often mixed in or improvised upon pre-existing works from the classical and popular repertoire, and from music compiled or created for other works. An original score by Joseph Carl Breil used for the January 1925 showings of *Phantom* is now lost. On the commentary of the 2011 Blu-ray Image Entertainment release of *Phantom*, film music composer and historian Jon Mirsalis states that the second version was to have had a score either compiled or composed by Gustav Hinrichs, but it wasn't ready in time; therefore, the film was shown with a score by Eugene Conte, said to have used cues from *Faust* and "French airs." Hinrichs's score was eventually published for performance with the film, but it was edited and attributed to Max (Moe) Winkler, who also created a separate compiled score for the film. In 1929, a new score by Sam Perry was commissioned for the film; this too consisted of pre-existing music and original compositions.

The lack of extant copies of the Breil and Conte scores from the time of the film's releases may not matter much. In his history of silent-era cinema, Richard Koszarski estimates that only about 25% of all theatres received cue sheets for specific films, and that the musicians for those theatres relied heavily on photoplay collections and improvisation.[12] Thus theatre performers frequently compiled their own scores or improvised accompaniments for the film, and even those who might have used one of more of the various scores available may have included selections of their own or from other sources. The music used to accompany early horror films was most often created from a confabulation of cues for the grotesque, crime, mystery, and shock. Works from collections of music for cinema accompanists or orchestras— also known as "photoplay" collections—by Sam Fox, Carl Fisher, and Erno Rapée all include pieces for the grotesque that would have been used to accompany early films about monsters and their dark deeds. In *Gordon's Motion Picture Collection for Moving Picture Pianists* from 1914,

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[12] Richard Koszarski, *History of the American Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 90.

music for the "mysterious" and for villains is very similar, frequently using minor keys, oscillating minor seconds, grace notes or three-note runs, syncopation, and dotted rhythms. Minor keys have long been associated with suspense, tragedy, and darkness, while minor seconds (a half-step or the distance between a white key and the black key next to it on the piano) are considered dissonant or unpleasing to the ear and frequently represent conflict, discomfort, and danger. Grace notes, which fall before the beat, or short runs of quick notes leading to a longer one create a sense of anticipation, leading the ear to a resolution. Syncopation and dotted rhythms suggest off-kilter movement, unevenness, or a more even figure that has been distorted into something overdone and thus grotesque. The classic *step-draaag* of the Mummy's footsteps is itself a dotted rhythm that makes abundantly clear that the monster's irregular footfalls stem from his unstable—and supernaturally animated—corpse.

Music for "grotesque" characters is also similar to that for mysterious figures and danger.[13] As Mario Bellano has written, the two constants in music for horror are ambiguity and dissonance, both used frequently to signify shadowy characters, anticipation, terror, and the unknown, collecting the supernatural, unnatural, and simply evil into one set of gestures and sounds.[14] Cues designed for what Philip Hayward calls "proto-horror" films, including those described as "Storm Music," "Mysterious," "Death Scene," and "Hurry," were used to accompany early films depicting malevolent, supernatural horror, such as the vampire film *Le Manoir du diable* (1896), *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, and films featuring Frankenstein's monster and the Golem.[15] In a 1910 Carl Fisher photoplay collection, works by Mayhew Lake, "Essence Grotesque (for depicting mysterious scenes, grotesque, comedy, etc.)" and "Mysterioso (for depicting stealth, gruesome scenes, etc.)" contain the same melodic motifs, accompanying textures, and harmonic structures, closely associating music for scenes of suspense and criminal behavior with the physically non-normate.[16] *The Eclipse Motion Picture Music Folio* (1915) pairs together "Burglar Music" by Arthur Lange with "Mysterious Music" by Schuyler Greene; "Burglar Music" has a tempo of "Misterioso" and both works are in the minor key, use grace notes or runs, and syncopation to create suspenseful atmospheres—and to link the mysterious with villains.[17] And in Erno Rapée's *Motion Picture Moods*, pieces selected to signify "grotesque," gruesome," and "horror" are similar to those for "misterioso" and "sinister."[18] Furthermore, in their 1920 manual on playing for moving pictures, Edith Lang and George West provide a list of repertoire suitable for "Villainous Characters" including the "Smugglers' Chorus" from Bizet's *Carmen*; Grieg's "In the Hall of the Mountain King;" the music of Mephistopheles from Gounod's *Faust*; music associated with Scarpia from Puccini's *Tosca*; and the Introduction and Finale from Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*.[19] In not a few of these, the original characters represented by the music are, like Erik, non-normative: Grieg depicts trolls

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[13] Sol P. Levy, ed.,*Gordon's Motion Picture Collection* (New York: H.S. Gordon, 1914).

[14] Marco Bellano, "I Fear What I Hear: The Expression of Horror in Film Music," in *Fear Within Melting Boundaries*, ed. Lee Baxter and Paula Braescu (Oxford: ID Press, 2011), NA/ebook.

[15] Philip Hayward, *Terror Tracks: Music, Sound and Horror Cinema*, Genre, Music and Sound (London: Equinox, 2009), 5.

[16] Mayhew Lake, *Carl Fischer's Loose Leaf Motion Picture Collection: For Piano Solo* (New York: C. Fischer, 1910).

[17] Arthur Lange, *Eclipse Motion Picture Music Folio, Book I* (Philadelphia: Eclipse Publishing Co., 1915).

[18] Erno Rapee, *Motion Picture Moods, for Pianists and Organists; [a Rapid-Reference Collection of Selected Pieces, Adapted to 52 Moods and Situations.].* (New York: Arno Press, 1970).

[19] It is worth noting that Fritz Lang used Grieg's "In the Hall of the Mountain King" to chilling effect as the tune Peter Lorre whistles in his role as the child-killer in Lang's first "talkie," the 1931 film M..

and goblins, grotesquely altered humanoids; Mephistopheles is of course not human; and *Pagliacci* deals with multiple identities and the masked faces evil may wear. For scenes of "mystery, or suppressed alarm, sinister forebodings, ghost scenes, supernatural apparitions, etc.," Lang and West write, the music should be "Misterioso" in nature, with tremolo and either sudden silence or stingers (sudden loud chords) for the best effect in horror.[20]

That so many of the same musical characteristics were used for the same categories meant that they became inextricably linked for musicians and audiences alike. Music used to indicate a vampire's attack could also be used for the reveal of a deformed body or face; the low, ominous trill associated with the presence of an unnatural wolf-man lurking in the shadows could be repurposed to signify a creepy, hunchbacked laboratory assistant; furious runs up and down a keyboard to suggest the movement of a creature being chased by a mob could be used to depict able-bodied characters running from disabled ones, whose disabilities have surprised, frightened, or even just discomfited them. In hinting at a past that brought Erik into contact with the mysteries of the exotic East, leaving his vast knowledge of the Opera House unexplained, and attaching scores using cues already associated with horror film monsters and unnatural creatures, the filmmakers of the 1925 *Phantom* turned the all-too-human Erik into a supernatural villain. When audiences saw Lon Chaney unmasked, it was the music just as much as the makeup that told them to be horrified.

Almost all of the contemporary scores for *Phantom* used the music cited by Leroux in his novel: the opera *Faust*. Composed by Charles Gounod in 1859, it is based on Michel Carré's play *Faust et Marguerite*, itself loosely based on Goethe's *Faust, Part I*. In the opera, the old scholar Faust makes a bargain with Mephistopheles: Faust will be young again, and the Devil will have his soul when he dies. As part of his newfound youth, Faust seduces and impregnates Marguerite and abandons her. After giving birth and killing their child, Marguerite stands trial for the murder. The night before her execution, Faust offers to help her escape, but she puts her trust into god; she dies, and her soul is taken to heaven by angels, while Faust is dragged to hell by Mephistopheles. In 1869 Gounod added a ballet to Act V that depicts a Walpurgis Night orgy among Faust, witches, and the most beautiful women Mephistopheles can summon from all of history. Along with the famous "Jewel Song," in which Faust woos Marguerite with gems provided by Mephistopheles, which Christine performs in the film, this ballet music is most often used in *Phantom* scores. With its associations with the supernatural and deviant sexuality, the ballet music—among the first cues heard after the music for the film's opening titles—establishes not only the film's focus on the unnatural in terms of magic and witchcraft, but in terms of sexual behavior as well. Like the connection society made between disability and the supernatural, it was long believed—and the myth still persists—that the disabled are hypersexual or drawn to non-normative sexual practices. Such beliefs—common in the early twentieth century—would have made the Opera Ghost's wooing of Christine, especially after he has been unmasked, even more horrifying that his deformity alone.

Audiences who heard the 1925 Hinrichs/Winkler score would have heard similar music. It too uses selections from *Faust*, and includes cues titled "Mystery Drama," "Sinister Theme," "Majestic Mysterioso," "Creepy Creeps," and "Allegro Infernale."[21] And, like the stock cues the score uses, the original music incorporates elements that indicate the presence of the

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[20] Edith Lang and George West, *Musical Accompaniment of Moving Pictures a Practical Manual for Pianists and Organists and an Exposition of the Principles Underlying the Musical Interpretation of Moving Pictures* (Boston: Boston Music Co., 1920), 55.

[21] Gustav Hinrichs and Max (Moe) Winkler, *Phantom of the Opera* (New York: Belwin, 1925).

supernatural: minor keys, grace notes, syncopation or uneven rhythms, tremolos, and the positioning of motifs in low registers. The cues "Who occupies Box Five?," "When the big chandelier begins to shake," "You! You are the Phantom," and "Christine tears off mask" use all of these to signify the presence of the Opera Ghost. However, the music for Erik's own playing at the organ is far from sinister, but is instead a simple and sad melody, as is the music for his declaration of love and devotion. This juxtaposition, not heard again until Carl Davis's score, suggests a more sympathetic approach to the Opera Ghost's plight than other scores indicate.

Since 1929, various other scores have been compiled from existing classical music or written for the 1925 or 1929 versions of the film; the 2011 Blu-ray, which contains several versions from 1925 and 1929, offers three from late-twentieth century composers alone. Many of these more recent scores, including those by Thibaudeau, Davis, and Hodges, use the same approaches and techniques as the scores from the 1920s, and incorporate music from *Faust* as well as other extant classical works alongside newly composed materials, original transitions, or original improvisation.

Frederick Hodges's score for the 1925 version of the film, compiled for the 2011 Image Entertainment Blu-Ray of *Phantom*, was created with the intention of simulating as closely as possible the process through which a score from 1925 would have been produced. Written for piano and performed by Hodges on the disc, it is perhaps as close as modern audiences can get to a compiled score by a theatre pianist who was knowledgeable about the horror genre but who either did not have or preferred not to use the Hinrichs/Winkler or other commercial scores. Hodges takes great care to create period-appropriate scores for the silent films he accompanies, writing that

> a film that was released in December 1926, for instance, deserves to have a musical accompaniment that is exactly like the accompaniment that a fine cinema pianist or organist would have given it in December 1926. This means that all the music used in compiling the score will have been published prior to December 1926. I find this approach deeply satisfying because it honors the silent film and shows the deepest respect for the era in which the film was produced. This approach enables modern audiences to imagine that they have been transported back in time.

He continues,

> I compile scores for silent films exactly the same way that cinema pianists and organists compiled scores back in the days of silent films. [....] I am very fortunate to have a large collection of original cue sheets for silent films. In those instances where I do not have an original thematic cue sheet for a film that I have been hired to accompany, I create my own cue sheet modeled on the same pattern used for published sheets, using a mixture of classical music, semi-classical, and popular songs.[22]

Hodges' score for *Phantom* makes heavy use of works associated with the supernatural and the uncanny. In addition to Gounod's ballet music from *Faust*, he includes music from Mendelssohn's incidental music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; a "Pizzicato Mysterioso" by Otto Langey, a frequent contributor to photoplay collections; Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz* and the "Inferno" section of the composer's "Dante" Symphony; and Saint-Säens's *Danse Macabre*. These works, used repeatedly in the score, cement the association between Erik and the supernatural. In addition, Hodges uses several works associated with death, stressing Erik's

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[22] http://www.frederickhodges.com/silentfilm.html. Accessed 15 December 2013.

uncanny appearance as a living corpse or skeleton: Gounod's "Funeral March for a Marionette;" the funeral march from Beethoven's piano sonata no. 12; and, for the unmasking, the shrieking chords from the murder scene in the movie *Psycho* (1960). This last is the only anachronistic music used to accompany the film, and has its roots in earlier "shock chords" in stage and silent cinema. Finally, Hodges notes a number of places in the score to play up the supernatural or unnaturalness of the scenario, marking them with descriptors such as "dread," "eerie," "death march," "mystery march," "ominous tension," "haunted house," "scary, slow, mysterious," and "horror." Hodges also uses familiar elements from other horror films, including dissonance and tremolo, to emphasize the supernatural qualities of the film's Opera Ghost.

An audience hearing Hodges's score, with its "sneaky" and "mysterious" cues, could easily take Erik's assumed identity literally in the first part of the film. When the new Opera managers open the door to Box 5 during a performance and see the Ghost, then peek in again seconds later to find him gone, the accompanying music, a mix of quick, minor-key motifs from an "Agitato" by photoplay composer Zamecnik and improvisation on them suggests that he has in fact disappeared magically. Likewise, when Christine hears Erik's voice inside of her dressing room, Hodges often uses Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz*, itself a reference to the devil of *Faust*. Once the mask has been removed, and Christine finds that her suitor and mentor is, in fact, human, Hodges returns to the Liszt. The prolongation of the same music elides any continuing doubt about Erik's supernatural status and smoothly shifts to creating an association with the merely unnatural, stemming from his disability. When Erik kidnaps Christine from her next performance, the music again conflates these descriptors, using Beethoven's funeral march and dissonant chords to associate Erik with the uncanny and the unpleasant, but there are no further musical references to the supernatural except for a reprise of *Danse macabre* during the credits. He becomes represented by pitches that are out of consonant harmonic alignment, a musical rendering of his own disfigurement.

The score by Gabriel Thibaudeau for the 1929 reissue of the film, which appears on the same disc as that by Hodges, is scored for a full orchestra, piano, organ, and solo soprano. In contrast to Hodges's replication of a composite score from the time the film was made, Thibaudeau's score is not dissimilar to today's scores in that it employs a holistic approach. The score includes music from *Faust*, but the original music is built around two motifs: C-B-D-C and C-D-E-flat-D-C, which provide continuity throughout the film. Because Thibaudeau wasn't trying to compose a period-style score, he was free to use anachronistic musical materials, and makes wide use of avant-garde musical language that probably would not have accompanied a silent film in 1925. Thus the score includes musical styles and approaches associated with newer scores for supernatural films as well as highly dissonant and disjointed passages suggestive of Schoenberg and Webern to portray Erik and his disability.

Thibaudeau's score is mostly in the style of the late nineteenth century, using traditional melody and harmony. He creates cues in the mold of photoplay collections, including "hurry music" and music that signifies characters' personalities, such as the use of military-style marches for the character of Carlotta's mother, who might once have been described as a "battleax." During the first part of the film, the Opera Ghost is regularly represented by the second of the two motifs above, usually harmonized according to the rules of traditional harmony and using the full orchestra, sometimes with the primary theme in the violins. This connects well with the music from *Faust* and the other materials Thibaudeau uses to set the film in the nineteenth century. This music is gendered in very traditional ways, recalling period practice: Christine is signified by higher pitched instruments, while the soundscape that is used

when Raoul is present and taking action is lower. Christine's music is light and ornamented, redolent of salon music; music for the stagehands and other male characters is heavier, with more obvious emphasis on the beat and shorter phrases. Until Christine steps through her dressing-room mirror, the music is exactly what one might expect to hear in any period film set at this time. It aptly defines the very traditional romance Raoul desires with Christine, and implies a traditional narrative.

It is the exceptions to Thibaudeau's late-Romantic period accompaniment that are notable in his score. These shifts away from more traditional harmonies signpost the dramatic climaxes of the narrative: an Impressionistic, pointillist texture that appears when Christine meets Erik in person for the first time; and an even sparser, dissonant texture that accompanies Erik after the reveal of his face. Thus the soundscape of Thibaudeau's score moves forward in music history—or at least hints at linear movement in time—as Christine becomes closer to the Opera Ghost and discovers his disability and earns his ire by unmasking him. Christine moves forward from the gentility represented by the frothy and highly melodic music of the nineteenth century Thibaudeau imitates into first a musical landscape of tonal and metrical ambiguity that hints of sensuality and mystery, suggesting that perhaps Christine could find happiness with her "Angel of Music." The music here recalls to a certain extent that of Debussy and Ravel, with sinuous chromatic lines and subtly shifting meter, creating a sense of uncertainty and the potential for unique and personal aesthetics and beauty, which are visually realized in Erik's underground lair. The early scenes that take place show both a frightened and beguiled Christine, and the music captures her curiosity, pleasure, and fear through its constant movement and changes in mode.

However, with the reveal of Erik's face, this opacity gives way to an aesthetic far less frequently associated with beauty and romance by citing characteristics of early twentieth century music perceived by audiences as "difficult" or even "ugly," and which has also been used in filmic contexts as music for "spooky" scenes. While Thibaudeau's music isn't atonal or serial, it mimics characteristics of many atonal or serial pieces, including frequent or constant melodic and harmonic dissonances, irregular rhythms, disjunctiveness, and wide spacing in tessituras will call to mind this music, suggesting that the visual non-normativity of Erik's face is congruent with such music. This pseudo-modern music accompanies the scenes in which Erik forces Christine to look at his face after she has removed the mask; when Christine describes Erik to Raoul as a "monster—a loathsome beast;" when Erik tells Christine that he has become evil; and when Raoul and Ledoux are trapped in the torture chamber. Indeed, Thibaudeau states that with the unmasking is "a chord that sounds like somebody yelling"—a sound that goes beyond music in expressing horror.[23] While the instrumentation changes from winds and brass to strings and finally to a mixture of both, the primary signifiers of dissonance and irregularity continue, reinforcing the visually discordant nature of Erik's disability.

For modern audiences, highly dissonant scores and those employing serialism or atonal approaches are familiar from horror films, including Benjamin Frankel's score for *Curse of the Werewolf* (1960); Jerry Goldsmith's scores for *Planet of the Apes* (1968) and *The Omen* (1976); Denny Zeitlin's score for *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1978); Ennio Morricone's score for *The Thing* (1980); and others. The long history of such music for monsters preconditions audiences to hear Thibaudeau's music for Erik as similarly monstrous and unnatural.

Carl Davis saw the character as sympathetic, a "frustrated composer," who becomes increasingly unbalanced as his plan for wooing Christine through music alone collapses. In his score, Davis used Perry's original *Phantom* theme, pre-existing music, and his own cues,

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[23] Gabriel Thibaudeau, interview, *Phantom of the Opera* Blu-ray disc, Image Entertainment, 2011.

resulting a score much like the ones by Hinrichs and Winkler created. Like his two predecessors, Davis used material from *Faust* throughout for the opera scenes, taking care to include music from the opera when the action is taking place backstage during performances. Davis has written that, seeing Erik as a musician, he gave him multiple themes and variations thereon, including a "revenge" motif and its inversion, a love motif, as well as a "lurking" theme and a fourth motif just for the Phantom's appearance at the bal masque, which Davis describes as a ground bass that serves as the basis for a sarabande—an old, slow, and erotic dance.[24] Davis's score includes nineteen cues, four of which quote or are excerpted directly from *Faust*.

Davis's score is highly operatic: with its use of repeated themes and motifs, long melodic passages, and Romantic-era harmonies, it could easily be mistaken for a lost work from the period. And much like the opera music of that time, Davis's music is very much in a *verismo* style: there are no stingers or shock chords, no use of the *Dies Irae* motif or extended dissonance, no serial components. His score is the only one that casts the Opera Ghost as a real man, with real emotions and desires. Davis creates a highly sympathetic musical portrait of Erik, exploring his melancholy and his passion for music and Christine. Davis also makes use of motifs that will be somewhat recognizable to audiences acquainted with classical music, hinting at primary motifs from Lalo's Cello Concerto and Dvorak's "New World" Symphony; the dances and operetta arias of Offenbach; Puccini's melodies; and Wagner's extended harmonies. He even tips his hat to Andrew Lloyd Webber's 1989 musical version of the story, offering audiences musical snippets they will find familiar if they have seen the stage show or film version. There are few places in which the music can be read as furthering the disabled as unhuman narrative: Erik's skeletal appearance is suggested only briefly by the use of the marimba in homage to Saint-Säens's *Danse Macabre*. Davis's score is a remarkable composition that alters the directors' intentions for the films without making any changes to the film's material or visual elements.

In the majority of these accompaniments, the composers drew on a large body of musical works and gestures or characteristics that were previously associated with or designed to represent that which is inhuman: the living dead, monsters, devils. In scoring the human anti-hero of *The Phantom of the Opera* with using music coded for the supernatural, compilers and composers have equated disability—and disfiguration in particular—with non-human horrors. I am not suggesting, here, that blame for this correlation falls with these individual composers, or with any present-day composer compiling scores as they would have been created during the era of silent cinema. It appears clear that the filmmakers, too, found it unproblematic in explicitly connecting disability with unnaturalness. And while Davis's score demonstrates that musical treatments of such narratives need not adhere to the social constructs present when such a work was originally created, composers interested in trying to replicate the musical aesthetic and practices of the period are, to at least a certain extent, forced to participate in the dehumanizing of the Opera Ghost.

Both the 1925 and 1929 film versions of *The Phantom of the Opera* and their period or period-style scores confirm that for many audiences and creative agents of the early twentieth century, disability—and particularly the visible disability or disfigurement—was tantamount to monstrosity in a very basic way. Moreover, the use of certain kinds of music to reinforce the conflation of human non-normativity with a non-human status in *Phantom* indicates that specific musical characteristics were widely known and understood as signifiers of the unnatural. The long-term effects of these scoring practices led to the development of standardized sounds and musical materials signifying as unnatural both the supernatural and the non-normative. In doing

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[24] Carl Davis, liner notes to *The Phantom of the Opera* (London, Channel Four: 1997).

so, they established a precedent in the nascent art form of cinema that enabled such connections to be reified through both visual and aural media.

# Inks That Go Bump In the Night: Gothic Visual Narratives in American Golden Age Animation

Vanessa A. Velez

The early 1930s were golden years for Gothic cinema. Not only were classic novels such as *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* being adapted to screen, but Gothic-inspired animated short-films were being created by popular cartoon studios as well. The cartoons created during America's Golden Age of animation took part in the growing trend within twentieth-century pop culture of incorporating Gothic literary themes into visual narratives. The cartoons of this era proved that, as an art form, animation had the capability of shocking and captivating audiences as thoroughly as the more prominent medium of live-action film.

Unlike the more popular live-action horror films of the era, however, cartoon studios such as Disney, The Fleischers, Warner Bros., as well as a flock of lesser known studios, did not rely upon direct adaptations of famous Gothic novels to drive their plots. Instead, they concentrated their efforts on representing situations of Gothic subjectivity, creating new narratives that incorporated traditional attempts at engendering an uncanny response from their audiences. This decided contrast in the interpretation of the Gothic was due in-part because of the differing technological capabilities of both forms of cinema. The American horror classics of the 1930s, such as Tod Browning's *Dracula* or James Whale's *Frankenstein*, were limited by the realism of live-action film, and, therefore, focused on bringing a superficial sense of spectacle to life. They focused on bringing to reality the sensation of the villain, giving the supernatural monsters of Gothic literature tangible, even at times, charismatic personalities. Additionally, the visuality of gore and violence would become part of the pageantry of the horror film. Audiences could visibly see the threat that the supernatural posed to the real world. Live-action films of the early Hollywood horror era also exercised the archetypal hero-versus-antihero narratives, creating simple blank-and-white scenarios of good-versus-evil for their audiences to follow. But, in exercising all of these trademarks of the Gothic genre, these films ended up sacrificing the genre's message concerning the ambiguous nature of human knowledge.

The cartoon, on the other hand, was not subject to the limits of realism, and because of this, artist's were able to channel the more subjective qualities of the Gothic into their visual narratives. Tapping into the more psychological aspects of the Gothic, cartoons such as Disney's *The Skeleton Dance* and The Fleischer Bros. *Swing You Sinners* employed the symbolic language of animation to defamiliarize their audience from reality. Using the images of the haunted house, dancing figures of death, and horrifying depictions of torment and suffering in the afterlife, these cartoon studios capitalized upon animation's extensive capability to adapt surreal or otherwise fantastic scenarios. And, although they did not create enduring and memorable characters such as Legosi's vampire or Karloff's monster, what the cartoonists of the Golden Age of Animation did manage to create was a mode in animation that would have a place in popular culture in the decades to follow.

To recognize the carton as a medium that is predisposed to representing fantastic or Gothic narratives, its comparability to the very essence of the Gothic needs to be explored. Although generally viewed as a déclassé arm of the larger experimental field of animation, the cartoon is an artistic mode of expression that possesses its own complex, symbolic language.

Granted that the images, much like those of the Gothic, may appear to the viewer as simplistic, stereotypical, low-brow caricatures of reality, in both substance and form, however, the cartoon possess its own semiotic vocabulary[1], whose intention is to free the "imagination of the audience... from the restrictions of the physical world."[2] Furthermore, in addition to the cartoon's aim of enhancing the audience's sense of the surreal, the cartoon also acts as a critical discourse of reality. "Animation," Paul Wells explains, "in all of its production contexts has the capacity to subvert, critically comment upon, and re-determine views of culture and social practice."[3]

From this angle, the Gothic cartooned functioned like traditional Gothics, which rely, in the words of Linda Bayer-Berenbaum, on "an expansion of consciousness and reality."[4] This Gothic perspective is one that subverts the readers' knowledge of their own physical and socio-cultural worlds, revealing to them, through the employment of fantastic scenarios, subjective issues of consciousness. Therefore, both the cartoon and Gothic literature share the similar quality of speaking to the subjective realities of the audience, transporting them into situations where they experience "intellectual uncertainty."[5] When incorporated into one distinct visual narrative, the characters of the cartoon become more than just bulbous bodies with winsome dispositions. Much like the characters of a traditional Gothic novel, they transform into critical simulacra of their real life constituents and the socially-conditioned mindsets they possess. Furthermore, also akin to the anthropomorphized environments of the Gothic, the background objects (broom, coffee pots and the like) of these early cartoon may sing, dance, and participate in the narrative scenarios. Seemingly possessing a life and purpose of their own, these cartoon objects seek to defy the viewer's conventional sense of reality. For this reason, the cartoon is inherently adept at portraying fantastic, surreal, and psychologically unsettling story lines.[6]

Artists of the Golden Age of American cartoons were well aware of the experimental nature of animated narratives. This is due to the fact that even before the creation of German expressionist Gothic masterpieces *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *Nosferatu*, attempts at expressing the Gothic aesthetic within an animated form were already taking place in American cinema. However, because of the still experimental nature of animation, these attempts fell into a niche of pop culture obscurity, where they were overshadowed, once again, by the spectacle of live-action film. Yet, artists were experimenting with works of "proto-animation," which were fully realized in moving film in 1900, with J. Stuart Blackton's initial work *The Enchanted Drawing*, later incorporated into his 1906 project, *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces*.[7] These early attempts by Blackton displayed, albeit in a rudimentary way, animation's capability of suspending the audiences' sense of disbelief.

In *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces*, the camera is set before a chalkboard, the hand of Blackton appears and begins to a live-action drawing of a balding and bewhiskered Victorian gentleman. Yet, the hand then disappears from sight after the drawing is completed. The visage of a typical, slope-shouldered, Gibson Girl haired, Edwardian woman then materializes, line-by-line, on the cel. A pair of spectacles appear on the man's face, and he begins to ogle the woman,

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[1] Paul Wells, *Animation and America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2002), 5.

[2] Esther Leslie, *Hollywood Flatlands: Animation, Critical Theory and the Avant-Garde* (New York: Verso, 2002), 30.

[3] Wells, *Animation and America*, 16.

[4] Linda Bayer-Berenbaum, *The Gothic Imagination: Expansion in Gothic Literature and Art* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1982), 21.

[5] Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, accessed February 28, 2014. http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/freud1.pdf

[6] Wells, *Animation and America*, 5.

[7] Paul Wells, *Understanding Animation* (London: Routledge, 1998), 13.

who smirks demurely back at him. As he smiles, hair begins to grow on his head, which is quickly replaced by the development of a top hat and, in addition to his growing array of fashionable adornments, a cigar. He blows a puff of smoke into the woman's face, and she frowns and is consumed by the cloud exhaust. The hand of the artist reappears again to erase the previous scene and then begins the process again of portraying other figures in a similar style.

After this initial experiment with moving illustration, Blackton incorporated other Gothic motifs into his works, especially in his 1907 production of *The Haunted Hotel*. Wells explains that this work "serves as a bridge between the gothic sensibilities of late Romanticism and the effects of Modernist re-configuration."[8] Mainly a work of stop-motion, in which the accoutrements of a breakfast table, ostensibly by their own volition, go through the motions of serving provisions to an absent party, *The Haunted Hotel* further proved that animation could effectively blur the lines between reality and the supernatural.

However rudimentary Blackton's early attempts in animation may seem in comparison to the horror films that were produced roughly twenty years later, what he managed to demonstrate to audiences in the early 1900s was animation's inherent capability to create fantastic and uncanny scenarios. Wells explains that, because animation in itself is a practice of illustrating the surreal, "the magical agendas of Gothic and Romantic fiction found some basis in the technological possibilities of the newly industrialized Modernist age."[9] In a statement that provokes thought on how the process of animation may have influenced the development of the special effects in early horror films, Wells adds:

> Hermann Warm, designer on the German expressionistic classic, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919), and key figure in the Berlin Sturm group promoting expressionism in all art forms, suggested that 'films must be drawings brought to life,' while earlier in 1916, director Paul Wegener unconsciously anticipates the evolution and importance of the animated film when he says, 'I can imagine a kind of cinema which would use nothing but moving surfaces, against which there would impinge events that would participate in the natural world but transcend the lines and volumes of the natural.'[10]

Blending both the visual and narrative arts, animation breathed vitality into once-static modes of expression. Animation not only brought a definitive purpose to the once-stationary artistic image, providing for it the dynamism of an active consciousness, but it also lent to it an uncanny awareness of its own surroundings. An invisible hand with an agenda unknown creates a scene in which the laws of the physical world are defied. Therefore, it seems safe to say that early animation itself emerged as a distinctly visually Gothic art form.

Following the developments made in animation in the early years of the twentieth century, short animated films within the decidedly American "cartoonal" form would pick up on the medium's well-suited ability to incorporate the tropes of the Gothic.[11] Gaining popularity with the efforts of studios such as Disney, the Fleischers, and Warner Bros., the early American cartoonal form was usually known for its signature characters, with their high-pitched voices and curvilinear bodies; yet, animators from these studios would use the comedic presence of their

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[8] Wells, *Animation and America*, 29.
[9] Wells, *Understanding Animation*, 14.
[10] Wells, *Animation and America*, 8.
[11] Ibid., 98.

lovable characters to introduce new, potentially frightening narratives that would tamper with the subjective consciousness of their viewers.

Of the Gothic-inspired works of early animation, the most popular and recognizable today is *The Skeleton Dance*, produced in 1929 as part of Disney's series, *Silly Symphonies*. This roughly five and a half minute short was drawn by Ub Iwerks, Walt Disney's partner in the early days of the legendary studio. (The music was produced by Carl Stalling.) The piece itself, which Leonard Maltin refers to as "one of the best short cartoons ever made," shares similarities with the fifteenth century European art movement known as *Danse Macabre*, an artistic style which is usually defined by the dancing and mocking presence of the dead in scenes of everyday human life.[12] Much like the *Danse Macabre*, *The Skeleton Dance* blends the audience's knowledge of the perceivable mortal world and that of the dead to creative a visual dialogue that speaks to their own apprehensions.

The cartoon begins with a lightening flashing on a black sky. It then suddenly cuts to a close up of the dilating and fluttering lamp-like eyes of an owl, whose horned head and oblong body is perched forebodingly on an arthritic and gnarled branch of a dead tree. A full moon in the background accentuates the sinister nature of the scene. The musical soundtrack of wind instruments adds to the atmospheric illusion of sharp gusts ruffling the feathers of the now bewildered and scared owl. The scene now cuts to a church graveyard. The clock of the church's bell tower strikes midnight, and bats disperse out of the belfry. A spider descends from a foregrounded tree. The scene then shifts to the howling silhouette of an emaciated dog and then switches over to two black cats hissing at each other atop a group of three tombstones. However, they are frightened away by the appearance of a skeleton, which is perched on one of the slabs; it crosses its arms across its ribcage to form the skull-and-crossbones symbol of death. The lone skeleton begins to frolic across the graveyard, every movement emphasized by the sound of a wood block being struck. Three more skeletons emerge from behind gravestones and begin dancing to the bellowing tune of an oboe, all the while their bony structures rattle like castanets. Their bodies stretch and contort as they dance, and they mimic the child's game of "Ring Around the Rosie." The rattling bodies use each other as pogo sticks and xylophones; they do the Charleston dance and force one of the hissing cats to act as a bass. Yet, as daybreak is signaled by the crowing of the cock, the skeletons hasten back to their grave. The scene fades out, and the cartoon closes abruptly with the words "The End."

The cartoon seems more silly than sinister. However, underneath the guise of macabre comedy, *The Skeleton Dance* is participating in an artistic dialogue that deals with the audience's own nagging trepidation of what awaits them at the end of their own lives. In her discussion of the Danse Macabre, Ashby Kinch explains:

> The form stunningly reverses the valence of the communities of the living and the dead: the dead rejoice in an active life--playing musical instruments, dancing, making conversation--while the living grow stiff, as their bodies rigidify and lose their corporal identity. The alteration between dead and living creates a rhythm of animation and stillness, of white and color, of life and death, a visual rhythm evocative of human culture itself. [13]

The "living" creatures in *The Skeleton Dance* function as symbolic substitutes, life beyond the seemingly lifeless. Iwerks emphasizes the subjective impact, or as Kinch describes, "rhythms" of the uncanny presence of the dead on the living. The anthropomorphized animals

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[12] Leonard Maltin, *Of Mice and Magic: A History of American Animated Cartoons* (London: Penguin, 1987), 35.
[13] Ashby Kinch, *Imago Mortis: Mediating Images of Death in Late Medieval Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 185-86.

are, quite literally, scared out of their skins. Additionally, Stalling's musical soundtrack adds to the effect of the dead rejoicing in the delights of the living. This animated short set the high watermark for all other cartoons to follow.  As Matlin explains: "the success of *The Skeleton Dance* inspired a continuing series of noncharacter cartoons that evoked settings, seasons, and events," its ambitious nature creating inspiration for the advancement of the cartoon genre in the coming years.[14]

Similar to *The Skeleton Dance*, the 1930 animated short by Fleischer Studios, *Swing You Sinners*, is another Golden Age cartoon that demonstrates, in a highly bizarre and surreal fashion, how early cartoons incorporated Gothic images. Max Fleischer, the creative mind behind the studio's productions, was the inventor of the rotoscope, a mechanism that "enabled the artist to trace live-action movement onto animation paper and achieve completely realistic results. Thus, a cartoon character could move and gesture just like a live actor."[15] The visual effect of Fleischer's new form of animation was akin to what is now recognized as the "Uncanny Valley," a theory developed by Masahiro Mori, which explains a human's tendency to empathize and "enjoy some sense of familiarity" with the "humanlike movements" of a virtual representation of itself.[16] However, Mori also asserts in his study that this emphatic response can only go so far, and that once the portrayal becomes too humanlike, people will often become repulsed by this uncanny supernormal resemblance to themselves. Because of the verisimilitude of the characters movements as well as the uncanny nature of the plot, Mori's theory is applicable to *Swing You Sinners*.

From narrative point-of-view, *Swing You Sinners* combines themes of immorality, crime, and social transgression. The cartoon also taps into the heart of the pop culture of the time, using the popular 1930 jazz song, similarly titled "Sing, You Sinners," as its musical soundtrack. The performance of the song creates a visual narrative riddled with sexual innuendo and deviant excitement.

The scene begins with the doglike character of Bimbo, a reoccurring actor of the Fleischer pantheon, loitering suspiciously in a rundown yard. He begins stalking a scrawny hen, whose constantly contorting and warping body eludes the grasp of its would be assailant. As the hen escapes to its coop, she and Bimbo engage in a series of whirling tussles. The scene spins and the two characters begin to exchange body parts and clothing, adding to the audience's confusion. Eventually Bimbo is caught by a bulldog-faced police officer.  In the officer's badge, Bimbo envisions himself hammering rocks in the token striped uniform of a jailed prisoner. This vision quickly transforms into one of an electric chair. Repulsed by the idea of his own death, Bimbo hastily escapes from the situation, but not without first delicately placing the neck of the chicken in the hand of the police officer, effectively signaling to the audience that the officer can go "choke his chicken." Bimbo quickly flees the scene in a comical chase and finds himself in a cemetery.

The cartoon at this point becomes incredibly complicated and even psychedelic in nature. Bimbo finds himself locked into the graveyard; the gate of the grounds uncannily close; the gate's keyhole transforms into an elastic mouth, which soon devours the key. The tombstones then come to life, swinging back and forth in time to a jazz tune. Sinister faces sing to Bimbo the story of his own demise. In a moment of trepidation, Bimbo tries to escape the scene, but the

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[14] Maltin, *Of Mice and Magic*, 36.
[15] Maltin, 84.
[16] Masahiro Mori, "The Uncanny Valley," *Energy* 7.4 (1970): 33-35. Dublin Institute of Technology, accessed February 28, 2014, http://www.comp.dit.ie/dgordon/Courses/CaseStudies/CaseStudy3d.pdf.

anthropomorphized environment is not about to let that happen. Grave plots, socially stereotyped specters, and skeletons all take part in taunting Bimbo in the oncoming acts. In a ridiculous, yet hilarious, gag, a skeleton emerges from its resting place and posts a "For Rent" sign on the neighboring vacant plot. As the background music begins to speed up, the scene becomes still more psychologically charged. Grave markers and trees start physically assaulting Bimbo.

To symbolize Bimbo's growing sense of guilt and anxiety, the walls of the cemetery close in on him, eventually constricting against him like a strait jacket. He flees to a barn, whose windows and door form the appearance of an angry sneer. Inside the barn, an entirely new environment comes alive to torment the poor character. Bales of hay, scythes, and sacks of feed all begin singing along to the lyrics of the original jazz song. The entire edifice comes alive to a ludicrous song-and-dance scene, wherein ghosts and demons start threatening Bimbo with a sharp razor, telling him, "Brother, you're sure gonna get your face lifted and a permanent shave!"

The final act of this lengthy eight minute cartoon commences with the barn literally spewing Bimbo out and chasing him down the road. Grotesque and monstrous faces emerge from the windows of the barn. Breathing heavily, Bimbo struggles to flee from his supernatural tormentors, yet the efforts appear useless, as he is followed by a train of specters. The film ends with Bimbo being chased into Hell, where he is eventually consumed by a gigantic floating skull. The viewer is left disturbed by the psychological implications, speechless in response and strangely unsettled.

In *Swing You Sinners*, Fleischer Studios successfully exhibited how psychologically alarming a cartoon could be. The penalties Bimbo faces, as well as the creatures he encounters, are beyond even the most tormented soul's imagination. Akin to the literary Gothic works of Edgar Allen Poe, specifically in *The Tell-Tale Heart*, or even Matthew Lewis' imaginings of damnation in *The Monk*, the nightmarish creatures in this cartoon transcend both physical and psychological space, entering into a phase of psychological reaction that Mori calls "negative familiarity."[17]

*The Skeleton Dance* and *Swing You Sinners* are prime examples of the Gothic connections animators sought to forge in their cartoons. Additionally, they display the deeper, more cerebral impact the cartoon could generate through its technical capacity to mimic believable, humanlike movement. Further, as the development of the Gothic environments and story lines became prominent in Hollywood, there were cartoons that, like the live-action "monster movie," would make use of the monster motif. As an example of this, in 1935, four years following the debut of Universal horror blockbusters *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*, Warner Bros. Studios created a cartoon short titled *The Cartoonist's Nightmare*, wherein a group of villains created by one cartoonist seek revenge for their scripted torments. The artist is pulled from his drafting table into that of the cartoon cel. He then confronts his angry creations. It is up to the benevolent Beans the Cat, an early star of the Warner Bros. character list, to free his creator from the torment of his vengeful cartoon counterparts. *The Cartoonist's Nightmare* is a typical *Frankenstein* narrative, whereby the creator is forced by his creation to acknowledge his responsibility. The difference between this rendition and that of its live-action equivalent is that there is no resolution. In fact, the surrounding environs suggest that this interplay between artist and creation is an everyday occurrence.

The cartoon begins with the iris of the camera opening onto a sign that reads in uneven script "Animated Cartoon Studio," and then continues to pan out to show a ramshackle building,

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[17] Mori, 1970.

whose various structural additions are held together by jerry-rigged beams as support. Silhouettes of busy figures parade back and forth between the windows of the building, and, as an anthropomorphous whistle checks its watch, it quickly sounds off that it is closing time. The lights within the building quickly dim, and its employees begin to evacuate en masse through the front entrance. A night watchman begins his rounds of closing up the studio, when he comes upon a cartoonist still laboring on completing the cels of his latest work. The cartoonist begins to pen a sinister, apelike creature that is hovering over Beans the Cat.  The artist muses, "Well, Beans, I guess I'll have to save you from the villain again." Yet, before the artist can save Beans from this the beast, he falls asleep at his desk. From here on in the roles of creator and creation are reversed.

Each villain takes his turn at physically abusing the creator, verbally deriding him all the while for the actions he has had them commit. They hand him a pencil and make him draw himself into a dark pit that will act as his eternal prison. After a series of comedic gags, Beans eludes the grasp of the villains and throws a pencil down into the pit, wherein the cartoonist then uses free-hand drawing to liberate himself. The cartoonist and Beans shake hands on a job well done. In the next scene, the artist wakes, clasps his face and says to the camera "What a dream!" But the rules of traditional time and space and still not yet in place: The apelike creature that the cartoonist drew is sucked back into his fountain pen.

*The Cartoonist's Nightmare* is an example of the artist's capability to adapt narrative themes from Gothic literature (in this case, *Frankenstein*) and to transmute them into a scenario that is exclusive to the cartoon. Like Victor Frankenstein, the animator is not shielded from the negative consequences of his experiment gone awry. Writing on that novel, David Punter asserts that the creator and the created are "locked in a perpetual mutual pursuit and conflict." Punter continues to claim that the creator is the individual who is accountable for the monster's negative actions, as the monster is "a fundamentally morally neutral creature who is made evil by circumstances." This observation can be applied to the adversarial relationship of creator and created in *The Cartoonist's Nightmare*.  As the villainous character tell the artist: "In every picture we are the goat. We got you now. It's our turn to gloat." The cartoon villains force their creator to realize that, because they are reflections of the cartoonist's own imagination, the sins of the created are rightly visited on the creator.[18]

The former descriptions of how Disney, the Fleischers, and Warner Bros. exercised the classic tenets of Gothic visual narratives are but exemplary representations: What they affirm is that, during this era, the cartoon established itself as a distinctive genre of subjective cinematic expression that was able to translate and adapt themes of the Gothic not yet achievable in live-action film. The cartoon was not restricted to the limitations of an objective reality. Instead, it surpassed the known boundaries of the perceivable world and create for its audience a new medium.

That new medium, however, would continue to real upon the Gothic. The monster of Shelley's seminal *Frankenstein*, for example, would later appear in Hanna-Barbera's *Frankenstein Jr. and the Impossibles* and in Hal Seeger's *Milton the Monster Show*, albeit in both instances with comedic inflection. Likewise, Hanna-Barbera would also go on to create shows such as *Scooby Doo, Where Are You!*, *The Groovie Goolies* as well as *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, cartoons which would explore the monsterous and the supernatural. Popular cartoon shows such as *The Simpsons* continue to capitalize upon Gothic themes, particularly in

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[18] On this same them in *Frankenstein*, see David Punter, The Literature of Terror: Volume I (Harlow: Longman, 1996), 107-11.

the annual "Treehouse of Horror" episode, wherein the works of Edgar Allan Poe and others are commonly parodied. Additionally, in recent years, the Gothic has found its way into early childhood cartoon programming, to whit: the Cartoon Network's *The Grim Adventures of Billy and Mandy*, created by Maxwell Atoms, as well as the Discovery Channel's *Growing Up Creepie*. In sum, cartoons have always relied heavily upon Gothic convention. Under the deceptive guise of a childlike art form, cartoons continue to breach the boundaries between the reality and fantasy.

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