‘Christabel’ as Gothic
The Abjection of Instability

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For all the attempts to answer it, the question persists: what does it mean that Samuel Taylor Coleridge uses the popular ‘Gothic’ of the 1790s in his unfinished ‘Christabel’, composed between 1797 and 1800, when he so passionately condemns Gothic fiction as ‘low’, ‘vulgar’, and ‘pernicious’ in reviews and letters of that very time?! To be sure, prompted in part by the popularity and translations of G. A. Burger’s German-Gothic poem Lenore (first Anglicized in 1790), ‘Christabel’ strives mightily to situate its perceived cultural level above what was then termed ‘the terrorist school of writing.’ In the first place, it echoes particular chivalric ballads from Thomas Percy’s Reliques of Ancient English Poetry (1765), the source even of the name ‘Christabel.’ Coleridge thereby advances what James McKusick has aptly described as this poet’s ‘desire to reassemble the surviving fragments of archaic language into an older, more natural mode of poetic discourse [in which] “natural” . . . is equated with the primeval origin of human consciousness and values’4 – the very opposite, it would seem, of what Coleridge regards as the unnatural modern ‘manufacture’ of the tale of horror in his attack on Matthew Lewis’s The Monk in the Critical Review of 1797. Moreover, ‘Christabel’ suggests that the gorgeous, but ominous ‘Geraldine’ is the heroine’s dark alter ego, especially when this ‘stately’ figure all in white disrobes in Christabel’s bedroom to reveal a ‘bosom and half her side’ too horrific for description (ll. 62, 252). At that point this poem is echoing Edmund Spenser’s ‘Duessa’ in Book I of The Faerie Queene, who is stripped of her beauteous surface to reveal her ‘misshaped parts’ by the end of Canto VIII. This allusion, along with his own brand of falsely antiquated diction, allows Coleridge to link this tale both to the ‘high culture’ epic-romance of which The Faerie Queene is the supreme English example and to the long-sanctioned conventions of Christian allegory, in which title characters encounter the duplicity of Original Sin in themselves and others by way of preternatural figures soon rendered as loathsome, rather than lingeringly seductive as they are in The Monk. Even when Coleridge turns to less high-cultural folklore, such as the East European legends about vampires that are subtly invoked when Geraldine awakens with rejuvenated ‘heaving breasts’ after having
'drunken deep' of 'sleep' with Christabel (ll. 380, 375–6), he is drawing, not on Gothic fiction (which in the 1790s had yet to incorporate the vampire significantly), but on respectable learned research such as John Ferrar's 1786 lecture 'Of Popular Illusions' as it was printed in *Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester*, which we know Coleridge read by 1796.⁸

Nonetheless, as much as he raises the pedigree of 'Christabel' by these and other means, he still falls back time and again on the Gothic of Ann Radcliffe and 'Monk' Lewis. As others have documented, Coleridge echoes Volume 3, Chapter 1, of Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (a segment he quotes in his own review of that book) in the stealing of Christabel and Geraldine from the forest where they meet back into the castle of Sir Leoline, Christabel's father.⁹ There, cloaked in a Udolpho-esque darkness, the two women creep in tandem 'as if in stealth' (l. 120) like Emily St Aubert, as though two separate females could behave so like each other – one indication that Geraldine may be an extension of Christabel – that they can both replay what only one heroine does in Radcliffe's widely read romance of 1794. In addition, Christabel's memory of the bosom she has seen, stymied by her fearful inability to speak of it to her father, recalls Emily's frequent holding 'within her own mind the whole horror of the secret that oppressed her',¹⁰ while the observed 'countenance' of 'lady Christabel' sleeping under Geraldine's gaze reworks that moment in Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797) when the menacing Scheloni (a precursor of Geraldine in his penetrating eyes) approaches the sleeping Ellena with intentions, like Geraldine's, finally torn between harming or saving the recumbent object of his voyeurism.¹¹

Lewis's *Monk*, in its turn, is also echoed repeatedly despite Coleridge's scathing review of it. His critique acknowledges 'the character of Matilda' in *The Monk* as 'the author's master-piece', whatever else might be said.¹² Possibly as a consequence, Geraldine's resemblance to Spenser's Duessa is augmented by features clearly reminiscent of the alluring succubus that Matilda proves to be – and even of the homoerotic first appearance of Lucifer, called forth by Matilda, where 'his silken locks... shone with brilliance far surpassing that of precious stones'¹³ much as the 'gems entangled in [Geraldine's] hair... wildly glittered here and there' (ll. 64–5). Then, as if associations with Matilda and the very Devil were not enough, Coleridge further recalls features of the 'Bleeding Nun' from the subplot recounted in *The Monk* by the character 'Don Raymond'. Several of Geraldine's actions in Christabel's chamber resemble those of the Nun's walking specter as she enters Raymond's room after he has removed her from Castle Lindenberg thinking her to be Agnes de Medina, his virginal beloved, in disguise. The Nun's magical death-in-life qualities even extend to her 'eyes... endowed with the property of the Rattle-snake's',¹⁴ and these reappear in 'Christabel' when Geraldine's pupils 'shr[i]nk in her head... to a serpent's eye' (ll. 584–5). The result is another indication of the well-disguised evil in both of Coleridge's women. On finally seeing this level of Geraldine in a sudden revelation, Christabel reacts by 'Shudder[ing] aloud, with a hissing sound' (l. 591), as if identifying with the snake-like other whom she simultaneously fears and longs to emulate. Christabel as a character, in fact, is taken to
the edge of resembling both Matilda and the Bleeding Nun precisely by starting this poem as more like the completely innocent Antonia and Agnes, the main heroines in Lewis’s novel. Both of these virgins in *The Monk*, it so happens, like Christabel longing for her distant knight in the eyes of her eavesdropping narrator, soon reappear in the dream-like visions of the men who love them as dark figures prophetic of the horrors both women will face. At those moments they both become distorted mirror-images of the bestial longings in all of Lewis’s characters, even the most innocent, as when Agnes effectively turns into the lustful and murderous Bleeding Nun herself before Raymond’s eyes. Hence, as Coleridge extends this doubling, Christabel’s hidden tendencies gradually emerge in the uncanny Geraldine who then seems to mirror back a fiendish anamorphosis onto the title character. It is as if Coleridge were combining the monk Ambrosio’s amorous gaze at the picture of the Virgin Mary in his cell with the much later revelation by Lucifer that he deceptively remolded the succubus called Matilda to be the physical ‘original’ to which that portrait would lead the lustful priest, even as Christabel and Coleridge’s readers are diabolically led to the lovely, yet venomous Geraldine quite soon after the poem has begun.

What explains this curious set of echoes in ‘Christabel’ in the light of Coleridge’s attacks on Gothic fictions, particularly since previous explanations keep raising more questions than they can answer? On the one hand, can we simply say, as many have, that this poem’s uses of high romance, long-standing religious allegory, reconstituted ballads, and antiquarian research lift its Gothic echoes to another level, at which point readers are led to deeper truths about the frailty of innocence, of the threat of ‘imagination severed from the good’, than can be found in Gothic fictions of the 1790s? Is not this claim bedeviled by the fact that the Gothic has incorporated all these discourses itself in its highly unsettling combinations of genres and styles from Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* onwards? Does not this cross-generic multiplicity, famously admitted by Walpole in his Preface to the Second Edition of *Otranto*, come back to haunt ‘Christabel’ in the critical reactions to it? After all, when this poem was finally printed in 1816 after years of private circulation, it was excoriated by reviewers, as Karen Swann has discussed especially well, for hiding ‘something disgusting’ within its ‘imbecility’ of mixed genres, in what is virtually an echo of Coleridge’s response to *The Monk*. On the other hand, is there any greater merit in those alternative readings that see this poem as a *parody* of the Gothic on its way to deeper explorations of human psychology than Radcliffe or Lewis attempted? ‘Christabel’, we must admit, does open with a self-mocking description of its setting that both announces and withdraws some standard Gothic elements, suggesting the emptiness of such conventions, as when one line asking ‘Is the night chilly and dark?’ is answered by its successor: ‘The night is chilly, but not dark’ (ll. 14–15). Yet should we not also acknowledge that the Gothic since *Otranto* has always been parodic of its borrowed ingredients and itself, inclined to regard as empty and antiquated the dark images and hauntings that some of its characters take quite seriously? Is ‘Christabel’ not being *very* Gothic, rather than counter-Gothic, by questioning the attachment of
clear old meanings to virtually all the hackneyed images in it? As I have argued elsewhere, the Gothic is really about the meaning of counterfeiting the past, as in Walpole’s ‘toy Gothic’ Strawberry Hill, and then about showing what primal crimes and unresolved quandaries, such as the long-buried conflicts in The Castle of Otranto, are hidden behind those counterfeits as they outlive and obscure their originals.21 Given all of these complications that put in question the most accepted answers to the role of the Gothic in ‘Christabel’, what can we now say that would provide a more thorough and compelling account of its problematic, though undeniable, presence in this poem? How, too, can we square that account with the most lingering other mystery about ‘Christabel’: its remaining indecisively unfinished over the sixteen years between its composition and publication, so much so that it has prompted many conflicting readings that can usually be justified by the several slightly varied texts of this poem that have come down to us?

The beginnings of better answers, I believe, lie in what Coleridge himself suggests in his review of The Monk, written the very year he began ‘Christabel’. Though his own religiosity unquestionably leads him to condemn Lewis’s erotic play with Christian images, Coleridge’s chief objections to this book and its type are (first) what he calls the ‘manufactured’ nature of the Gothic by this time and (second) the blurring of once-clear boundaries between genres and kinds of meanings that this ‘manufacture’ seems to encourage. What makes such works low-culture for him is how much they parallel the frightening onset of the industrial revolution by pouring forth across the 1790s in mechanical reproductions of ‘shrieks, murders, and subterranean dungeons’ – too much the same for him each time even in his reviews of the less immoral Radcliffe22 – to the point where they become mere floating signifiers too independent of solidly grounded signifieds, to use the terms of Ferdinand de Saussure.23 That ungrounded symbolic license, Coleridge finds, allows different levels of reality and different literary genres to be ‘levelled into one common mass’ where the differences, including distinctions among social classes of readers, are no longer as definite as they should be. The result for him is a great many mixtures of what is irreconcilable: ‘phrases the most trite and colloquial’ with ‘sternness and solemnity of diction’; an ‘appetite’ in Lewis’s hero joined to ‘other emotions’ with which it would not normally ‘co-exist’; and ‘all that is most awfully true in religion’ placed alongside ‘all that is most ridiculously absurd in superstition’.24 As one product of an explosion in the repetitious printing of texts, where this kind of fiction had really captured thirty eight per cent of the growing British market by 1795,25 Gothic has clearly come to be the oxymoronic textual place where Coleridge can locate many feared contradictions that seem to accompany increased mechanical reproduction and its threat to what he sees as a coherent ‘order of nature’.

Coleridge on The Monk, it turns out, provides a quintessential expression, right alongside Wordsworth’s condemnation of ‘frantic novels’ in the Preface to the 1800 Edition of Lyrical Ballads (from which ‘Christabel’, we now know, was excluded),26 of what Michael Gamer has more fully documented: that ‘Gothic writing in both periodical review and literary essay’ just before and after 1800 was ‘blamed’ for
almost all of 'the various changes in literary production and consumption' in England and therefore helped symbolize the social uncertainties, especially the increasing contradictions, bound up with such rapid transformations.27 This highly conflicted nexus of anxieties, we have come to see, was one product of a robust consumer demand and a concomitant increase in the publication of writing. As Clifford Siskin has shown, such an effulgence of print culture threatened to obliterate disciplinary, as well as generic, distinctions, along with lingering beliefs that particular points of reference could remain firmly attached to their proper symbols in very distinct genres.28 By being so manifestly cross-generic and ozymoronic to an unusual degree, Gothic could both enact these fears of intermingled opposites and floating signifiers and be the locus in which those potentials could be housed – and for Coleridge and others condemned – as outside of the desired cultural norm. These developments, as I and others have argued, allowed the Gothic to be a site of 'abjection' in Julia Kristeva's sense, a 'monstrous other' into which the members of an increasingly uncertain Western culture could 'throw off' (one literal meaning of ab-ject) much that seemed anomalous in themselves and their changing society.29 It was as if the site of contradictions that was the popular Gothic could be a repository, made safe by its quite blatant fictionalization, into which the contradictory could seem 'thrown under' a hegemonic order (another literal meaning of abjection). The desired hegemony could then seem non-contradictory and cohesive as opposed to this disparaged site of 'the abject' harbored within a falsely antiquated, highly artificial, 'low', and appropriately terrifying construct. In that way much that seemed to threaten a coherent sense of order at this time in Western culture could be shunted off onto a mass-produced mode of extreme fiction where it could both be attacked as beyond the proper pale, aptly connected with the mass production that seemed one cause of these problems, and yet remain attractive as the locus of a multiplicity (a 'Duessa') against which an ideological unity (like Spenser's 'Una') could be fashioned by contrast during a period when culture seemed to be falling apart.

Nearly all the allusions I noted earlier in which 'Christabel' echoes specific Gothic texts, we should recall, are connected with the womanhood of either the title character or Geraldine and the ways in which each increasingly resembles the other. The Gothic makes all of this possible because of unresolved struggles between its practitioners and within itself in the 1790s. To begin with, there is the ambiguity of Geraldine's basic nature when 'The lady sprang up suddenly' in the forest and that 'lovely lady' could be 'Christabel' or one who separately moaned as near, as near can be' in the diction of lines 37–8 in virtually every version of this poem. The suggestion that the other 'she' is so near as to be the heroine's psychological projection is encouraged by Radcliffe's 'explained supernatural', given all of Emily's projections of her psychological states in The Mysteries of Udolpho, many of which she does not admit as such, thereby anticipating Christabel in this way as well as others. At the same time, the 'damsel bright' that Christabel soon sees before her is licensed by Matilda's truly supernatural otherness in The Monk to be a really distinct succubus or a resurrected corpse like the snake-eyed Bleeding Nun –
although Lewis leaves open the potential of psychological projection by having Matilda start to appear only after Ambrosio clearly lusts after the image of the Virgin. This Gothic undecidability, in addition, is intensified by the concurrent suggestion that Christabel can become what Geraldine manifests and that all of this can begin to happen in the blink of an eye, here the transition between one short line of poetry and another. This possibility of course recalls Agnes's apparent turning into the Bleeding Nun, whose features are then reflected back on her as she is forced into a nun's condition and subjected to a bloody punishment for having Raymond's child out of wedlock. But the same sort of 'turning on a dime' is also a threat in The Mysteries of Udolpho, where we learn that Emily and her dead aunt (like Christabel and her dead mother) have all come very close to – and thus could easily enact – the destructive behavior of Laurentini de Udolpho, long hidden in the guise of a nun called 'Agnes', whose 'indulgence of the passions' that all women share, as she says herself, can end up 'possessing us like a fiend' and thus 'lead[ing] us on to the actions of a fiend', such as those of a Geraldine.34 Even Radcliffe, then, here in agreement with the more ironic and explicit Lewis, makes her Gothic fiction turn on the question of whether a woman's 'sensibility' can (as Laurentini says) govern itself without patriarchal guidance and restrictions on her rights to property. These are the constraints facing Emily St Aubert, especially when her benevolent father is replaced as her guardian by the acquisitive Montoni (an embodiment of the dark side of rising middle-class male entrepreneurs), who tries to limit Emily's options using a logic that both recalls her father's and anticipates Laurentini's, leaving us uncertain about what is 'right' and 'wrong' about the controlling (and self-control) of women. The proper range and possibilities for a woman are clearly in question and quite unresolved in both Radcliffe and Lewis; a 'good' woman can turn into a 'bad' for them almost instantaneously and vice-versa. Hence, when Coleridge quite deliberately employs such figures in his Christabel and Geraldine, he brings this irresolution about women in the Gothic vividly forward, keeping it active (albeit abjected) within his other contexts, without being any more decisive about this matter than Radcliffe or Lewis.

The result in 'Christabel' is a genuine tug-of-war between views about women, so much so that this furthering of the Gothic exposes a larger cultural quandary of the time that underlies both the Gothic and this poem's use of it.35 When Geraldine tells the story (maybe true, maybe false) of how she was left in the forest, on the one hand, she claims that several male 'warriors seized me yestermorn' and dragged her from her home for their own mysterious purposes (l. 81), much as Emily, Antonia, and Agnes are captured and transported by secretive and power-hungry men in the Gothic that Coleridge knew best. At this point 'Christabel' echoes the definite attacks in Radcliffe and Lewis on the oppressive subjection of women by several different versions of old-style male power, not surprising when we note that Coleridge in his Watchman No. 3 in 1796 did advocate more 'free and equal' relations among the sexes36 and continued the suggestion of male oppression in Part Two of 'Christabel' by making Geraldine what Eve Sedgwick would emphasize: an object of exchange 'between men',37 here Sir Leoline and Geraldine's
father, Lord Roland of Tryermaine. On the other hand, Geraldine's apparent con-
niving in her grand 'stateliness' to become a substitute mother to Christabel (ll. 300–1); to sleep with her homoerotically (ll. 260–4), thereby violating 'normal' sexual boundaries like Lucifer in *The Monk*; and to worm her way into Sir Leoline's affections to the point of becoming this widower's lover and alienating his feelings from his daughter, exploiting patriarchy to undermine it (ll. 636–55): all of this potentially makes her, like Matilda and Laurentini, an overweening quasi-Amazon too destructively challenging all good social relations, a power-mad woman subtly threatening the very order of nature – which Christabel, like all Gothic heroines, might herself become unless she retreats from identifying with Geraldine, which she starts to do as the poem breaks off. Coleridge's ballad thus poses the query also plaguing its Gothic precursors: does believing a Geraldine about male oppression lead us to open the way for excessive and boundary-crossing female power, as when the French Revolution the poet once supported (widely known to include calls for the equality of women) went too far by the mid-1790s and came to resemble 'the malignant spirit' that is also a 'nameless female' threatening the entire 'kingdom of souls' in Coleridge's fragments of around this time that he grouped under the title 'The Destiny of Nations'?

This whole complex of anomalous hopes and doubts, we must remember, is abjected in the Gothic of the 1790s, and consequently in the most Gothic elements of 'Christabel', because of a particular concatenation of events in that decade. These range from the Reign of Terror, of course, to Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* – or, more precisely, to its being reassessed after its author's unconventional life was exposed by William Godwin's posthumous edition of her writings and his introduction to it in 1798. This last revelation especially led many of the potential readers of Radcliffe, Lewis, and Coleridge to wonder, in words from the *British Critic* that year, if a 'woman who has broken through all religious restraints, will commonly be found ripe for every species of licentiousness' from, say, adultery to homoeroticism to power grabs within and outside the home (at least in Geraldine's case). The conflict around this issue at the time of 'Christabel' was continuous and many-faceted. Vaguely greater education and property rights for women, while both initially gained support in England near the beginning of the 1790s, seemed more and more to turn, like Christabel's thoughts, into the 'gloomy representations' of a 'wounded mind', according to an 1801 review of Mary Robinson, whose poems Coleridge admired and with whom he corresponded. Building on what is revealed by Mary Poovey in *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer*, itself concerned with the conflicting pulls on women authors of the 1790s, G. J. Barker-Benfield has therefore argued – I think convincingly – that women in most of the discourse in this decade came to be seen as torn between 'the approved vision of a mindless sensibility' more passive than active and thus receptive control and protection (which we can certainly see in Christabel) and 'the outlawing bogey of the strong-minded Amazon' (transported from Laurentini and Matilda into Coleridge's Geraldine, among others). By the late 1790s, Barker-Benfield shows, this ideological deployment of the feminine, already at war with ongoing argu-
ments even in Radcliffe for valuing 'WOMAN [as] a thinking and enlightened being' (to quote Robinson's Letter to the Women of England of 1799), became widely absorbed 'both within women, and between women and the surrounding male and female authorities, telling them what it was to be female' in a highly contentious dialogue with all Vindications that offered contrary views. This tangle of conflicts was exacerbated, too, as Craciun has recently shown, by those women writers of this era such as Robinson who used the violent female body to foreground, sometimes in Gothic images, the 'dangerous choice between, on the one hand, the agency and specificity granted through sexual difference, with its often crippling sacrifices and exclusions, and, on the other hand, the untried promises of liberty and equality' that were beckoning to women at the same time. One of Craciun's examples was on Coleridge's mind, we know, shortly before he began work on 'Christabel': Mary Lamb, the sister of his good friend Charles, who suddenly killed her mother with a knife in September of 1796, prompting extensive correspondence between Coleridge and her brother. Given the wider cultural setting, this striking figure (despite, or even because of, her escape from legal peril) clearly announced, as Craciun puts it, 'the precariousness of women's status as reservoirs of bourgeois benevolence and sympathy', especially by contrast to a contested ideal of female 'sensibility' that kept trying to stay its course in very conflicted cultural waters that engulfed Coleridge, Radcliffe, Lewis, the Lambs, and all their contemporaries.

I am not arguing, I should note at once, that 'Christabel' is based primarily on the case of Mary Lamb or any particular woman or set of women. As others have long demonstrated, this poem could just as easily look back to Coleridge's mixed feelings over a mother who first warmly loved him and then cold-shouldered him or to his inner conflicts over a Sara Fricker Coleridge (his wife) who both attracted him with her once-innocent beauty and appalled him with what he came to see, fairly or not, as a domineering duplicity. What these multiple examples call forth for this writer -- and what he inevitably confronts by importing particular cultural anxieties that come with the Gothic figures he has chosen for 'Christabel' -- is the cacophonous debate of many voices, unusually intensified by the late 1790s, on how woman, whether as mother or lover or daughter or sister, was to be defined and either vindicated or regulated. In 'Christabel' itself and The Mysteries of Udolpho or The Monk, as in the culture at large, this contest of symbolic schemes is not at all settled and remains a struggle between positions on women. If Coleridge's fake ballad is even to seem to have one allegorical thrust about innocence admitting sin to itself (which I still think it attempts at times), that entire, other, anomalous multiplicity has to be abjected throughout this poem in figures borrowed from a Gothic fiction where that set of tensions, so basic yet so threatening to cultural unity, is already cathedected onto an abjecting set of terrifying, though also attractive, disguises. Even the highly counterfeit quality of 'Christabel', partly reminiscent of that aspect of Percy's Reliques, helps this 'throwing off' occur. That fakery reminds readers of the purely fictive nature of the already-counterfeit Gothic, whereby this very mixed mode, like the terrific sublime of Edmund Burke.
it so often employs, is able to combine, recast, harbor, and distance the many anxieties it reflects, allowing those readers who wish it to see 'nothing there' behind a surface of mere signifiers. This peculiar process must have been enacted if 'Christabel' was even to be possible as we have it today. Because this poem's Gothic abjections also announce the very instabilities and irresolutions they contain, whether about women or other subjects, this text could not have been finished with any kind of tight resolution and had to remain the fragment it is, unless it were going to deny, as Coleridge finally did not, the principal quandaries in both the Gothic and Western culture out of which 'Christabel' grew at the turn of the eighteenth into the nineteenth century.

Notes

1  See the multiple statements by Coleridge reprinted in Gothic Documents: A Sourcebook, 1700–1820, eds E. J. Clery and Robert Miles (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 185–9 and 276–7. See also Tim Fulford, Romanticism and Masculinity: Gender, Politics and Poetics in the Writings of Burke, Coleridge, Cobbett, Wordsworth, DeQuincey and Hazlitt (New York: St Martin's Press/Macmillan, 1999), pp. 86–96.

2  See 'Gottfried August Burger (1747–94), Lenore', trans. William Taylor, in Clery and Miles, eds, Gothic Documents, pp. 146–54, where several prefigurations of 'Christabel' are easy to see.


5  '[R]evi[ew of The Monk (1797)]' in Clery and Miles, eds, Gothic Documents, p. 185.


9  See Tuttle, 'Christabel Sources', pp. 453–56, which recounts virtually all of 'Christabel's debts to Radcliffe. Note also Coleridge's reviews of The Mysteries of Udolpho and The Italian, both for The Critical Review, In a Wiltshire Parson and his Friends: The Correspondence of William Lisle Bowles, together with four hitherto unidentified reviews by Coleridge, ed. Garland Greener (Boston Houghton Mifflin, 1926), pp. 168–89.


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15 See Lewis, The Monk, pp. 154–64.
16 Compare Lewis, The Monk, pp. 40–1, with pp. 440–1 at the end of that novel.
34 Radcliffe, Mysteries of Udolpho, p. 646.
39 On Coleridge's knowledge of Wollstonecraft, including the castigation of her after William Godwin published his 1798 Memoirs about her, see Fulford, Romanticism and Masculinity, pp. 71–7.
50 See Burke's Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1757), particularly as reprinted in Clery and Miles, eds, Gothic Documents, pp. 112–21, where the sublime as ‘delightful terror’ in fictions depends on the distancing of symbols from realities to such an extent that ‘the pain and the terror are so modified as not to be actually noxious’ (p. 121).

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