

Gothic—Film—Parody¹

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Abstract: Gothic, film, and parody are all erstwhile devalued aesthetic forms recuperated by various late twentieth-century humanities theories, serving in return as proof-texts for these theories in their battles against formalism, high-art humanism, and right-wing politics. Gothic film parodies parody these theories as well as Gothic fiction and films. As they redouble Gothic doubles, refake Gothic fakeries, and critique Gothic criticism, they go beyond simple mockery to reveal inconsistencies, incongruities, and problems in Gothic criticism: boundaries that it has been unwilling or unable to blur, binary oppositions it has refused to deconstruct, like those between left- and right-wing politics, and points at which a radical, innovative, subversive discourse manifests as its own hegemonic, dogmatic, and clichéd double, as in critical manipulations of Gothic (dis)belief. The discussion engages Gothic film parodies spanning a range of decades (from the 1930s to the 2000s) and genres (from feature films to cartoons to pornographic parodies).

Keywords: Gothic; film; parody; literary film adaptation; criticism; theory; psychoanalysis; identity politics; belief;

We laugh at the structures which had in the past formed the appearance of inviolable

truth. Today's laughter is the movement from the laughter of the past.

—Sander L. Gilman (23)

The hyphens in the title are part homage to, part parody of Roland Barthes's *Image—Music—Text*. They indicate this essay's dual concern with Gothic film parodies and with academic discourses on Gothic, film, and parody. Numerous critics have argued that Gothic literature is already parodic and that Gothic films adaptations of it are more so. Gothic film parodies, then, can be read as parodies of parodies of parodies. In 1968, Richard Poirier characterized Gothic as “a literature of self-parody that makes fun of itself as it goes along” (339); in a 1996 discussion of Gothic film and television adaptations, Fred Botting observed how “Stock formulas and themes, when too familiar, are eminently susceptible to parody and self-parody” (168). In a similar vein, this essay shows how, when the “stock formulas and themes” of Gothic criticism become “too familiar,” they too become “eminently susceptible to parody.” It demonstrates further how Gothic film parodies go beyond simple mockery to reveal inconsistencies, incongruities, and problems in Gothic criticism: boundaries that it has been unwilling or unable to blur, binary oppositions it has refused to deconstruct, and points at which a radical, innovative, subversive discourse manifests as its own

hegemonic, dogmatic, and clichéd double.

Most critics identify Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) as a foundational literary triptych for Gothic film adaptations. In a similar vein, most scholars of Gothic film identify James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931), Tod Browning's *Dracula* (1931), and Rouben Mamoulian's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1931²) as a foundational triptych, from which they look back to earlier Gothic films and forward to later ones.³ The film triptych has spawned numerous Anglo-American parodies, from Abbott and Costello films (1948 and 1953) to *The Nutty Professor* films (1963, 1996, and 2000), *Young Frankenstein* (1974), its parody *Old Dracula* (1974), *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975), *Jekyll and Hyde, Together Again* (1982), *Frankenweenie* (1984), *Dr. Jekyll and Ms. Hyde* (1995), *Dracula, Dead and Loving It* (1995), and *Frankenthumb* (2002). Animated parodies include *Mighty Mouse Meets Jekyll and Hyde Cat* (1944), *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Mouse* (1947), *Hyde and Hare* (1955), *Hyde and Go Tweet*, (1960), *Mad Monster Party* (1969), and *Alvin and the Chipmunks Meet Frankenstein* (1999).⁴ Pornographic parodies include *Hollow-my-weenie*, *Dr. Frankenstein* (1969), *Dracula the Dirty Old Man* (1969), *Dr.*

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Sexual and Mr. Hyde (1971), *Dracula Sucks* (1979), *Frankenpenis* (1996), *Mistress Frankenstein* (2000), *Dr. Jekyll and Mistress Hyde* (2003), and *Dracula's Dirty Daughters* (2003). Parodies like *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *Done to a Frazzle* (1914) and Stan Laurel's *Dr. Pyckle and Mr. Pryde* (1925) predate the triptych, as theatrical parodies (like *Frankenstitch*, Surrey Theatre, 1824 and *Dr. Freckle and Mr. Snide*, Dockstader's Minstrel Hall, New York, 1887) predate and inform the film parodies. Gothic film parodies often range outside the triptych: for example, Roman Polanski's *Dance of the Vampires* (1967) parodies Hammer films; Mel Brooks's *Dracula, Dead and Loving It* parodies *Nosferatu* (1922), Abbott and Costello parodies, Hammer films, Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992), and a host of other films and media beyond the scope of this discussion.

Turning to the second concern of this essay, Gothic, film, and parody are all erstwhile devalued aesthetic forms recuperated by various late twentieth-century humanities theories, serving in return as proof-texts for these theories in their battles against formalism, high-art humanism, and right-wing politics. Opposition to formalism led inevitably to rejections of long-standing formal definitions of Gothic, film, and parody. From the late 1960s, studies of parody rejected "standard dictionary

definitions,” so that “parody” no longer necessitates comic low mockery of serious high art, but had, by the mid-1980s, distilled to a more essentialist “repetition with difference” in Linda Hutcheon’s highly influential *A Theory of Parody* (5-6). The newly defined parody came to epitomize, somewhat controversially, both modernism and postmodernism.⁵ More centrally, parody’s slimmed down definition allowed it to encompass the theoretical turn in humanities academia, manifesting variously as a dialogical, deconstructive, commentative, metafictional, problematising, polemical, transformative cultural force (Dentith 3, 15-16; Phiddian 13-14; Rose [30](#)). When Simon Dentith redefined the term in 2000, it foregrounded polemics: “Parody includes any cultural practice which provides a relatively polemical allusive imitation of another cultural production or practice” (9).

Intriguingly for this discussion, in the mid-1980s, Hutcheon’s redefined “parody” became a catchword for the theoretical turn in film studies away from the “ciné-textualism” of the 1960s and 1970s. In 1986, Michael Starenko adduced that the many film essays sporting “parody” in their titles that year were, for the most part, not “expressly concerned with the topic” (that is, with traditional or formal understandings of parody), but rather encompassed “most of what is considered state-

of-the-art in cinema/video studies today.” While the theoretical turn maintained an ongoing ideological commitment to “the dominant ‘radical’ cinema-studies position during the mid- to late ’70s...an amalgam of Lacanian psychoanalysis, Althusserian Marxism, Barthesian poststructuralism and French feminism,” it brought with it a new emphasis on audience response and a shift from the “old Althusserian-Lacanian ‘subject’, who strove only for coherence,” to “a multitude of gendered, class-bound, national, racial, film-experiential and ideological subjects.” Starenko explains “where the various notions and theories of parody fit in”: “The new attention to audience response by film/television theorists has also made them more receptive to the way that film and televisionmakers play with *their* audience” (internet source).

In a similar vein, from about 1980, “Gothic” has been redefined, so that it no longer requires inheritance plots and maidens imprisoned by tyrannical patriarchs in Gothic ruins, but has become increasingly abstract, psychological, metaphorical, and ideological. Gothic is for Chris Baldick in 2000 an “effect” combining “a fearful *sense* of inheritance in time with a claustrophobic *sense* of enclosure in space” (xix, emphases added). For Lisa Hopkins in 2005, Gothic is a “spirit” at odds with its formalist “trappings”: “On screen, to court Gothic explicitly is to banish it; to

introduce its trappings is to foreclose on its spirit” (1). As with “parody” and “film,” the abstraction of “Gothic” away from formal definitions has enabled it to serve the theoretical turn. In 1980, Eve Sedgwick’s landmark *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* problematized formalist approaches to Gothic and carried earlier seminal left-wing political readings of Gothic towards a union with deconstructive psychoanalysis.⁶ A majority of Gothic criticism since then has reads psychoanalytic drives, deemed universal and transhistorical, into specific cultural and historical contexts, where they manifest as “cultural anxieties” identified and assessed by leftist politics and deconstructed.⁷ Such readings extend to film adaptations of the Gothic triptych. Misha Kavka views the many film versions of Gothic texts as a “constant reworking of the fears of the past in terms of the cultural fears of the present” (212). Gothic films have been read as manifesting “cultural anxieties” about World War I in the teens; xenophobia and immigration in the 20s; American isolationism and the Great Depression in the 30s; World War II in the 40s; sexual repression, changing gender roles, communism, and the Cold War in the 50s; gay and women’s liberation, civil rights, drugs, nuclear disarmament and the Vietnam War in the 60s and 70s; new wave feminism, alternative sexualities, AIDS, incest, sexual harassment, child abuse, and reproduction technology in the 80s and 90s; and capitalism, consumerism,

science, and technology throughout the twentieth century into the twenty-first.⁸

Gothic criticism routinely joins psychoanalysis to deconstruction to demonstrate that seemingly opposed drives, binarisms, dualisms, structures, and types are in fact doubles, so that Gothic narratives celebrate what they purport to oppose and unleash what they seek to contain. Indeed, deconstructing binary oppositions has become so common in Gothic criticism that Horner and Zlosnik could safely claim in 2005 that “most critics would probably agree that Gothic writing *always* concerns itself with boundaries and their instabilities” (1, emphases added). In the process, as in this phrasing, the boundaries between “Gothic writing” as Gothic literature and as Gothic criticism have themselves become unstable. In consequence, critical claims concerning Gothic literature can apply equally to Gothic criticism. For example, Baldick’s claim that Gothic fiction “usually shows no . . . respect for the wisdom of the past, and indeed tends to portray former ages as prisons of delusion” (xv) applies equally to latter twentieth-century Gothic criticism of the scholarship of former ages.

If recent Gothic criticism has destabilized boundaries between itself and the Gothic texts it addresses, Hopkins has shown that recent Gothic films adapt Gothic critical

texts as well as Gothic fictive texts (xiii). This essay considers further how Gothic film parodies parody Gothic criticism as well as Gothic fiction and films. Robert Phiddian reads parody as an essentially deconstructive force, placing writing under erasure, deconstructing the original (7 ff.). However, in the case of Gothic film parodies, the process is not so much a deconstructive neither/nor, canceling-out-by-rendering-binary-oppositions-equivalent operation as it is an incongruous, layered, excessive both/and operation, simultaneously undermining and bolstering, delimiting and taking to extremes, deflating and exaggerating, reducing and exceeding, delimiting and aggrandizing what it parodies. As they swing wildly and unpredictably from pole to pole, such bipolar incongruities do not operate as the usual deconstructive suspects: they do not cancel each other out, turn out to be doubles, or hold in a dialectic tension any more than do the mania and depression of bipolar disorder.

The redoubling effects of the Gothic film parodies addressed in this essay lie closer to redefinitions of parody by Graeme Stones and Simon Dentith. Stones avers Romantic parody's "simultaneous commitment to exalted vision and to a renegade impulse which mockingly dissolves them" (1: xxi). Dentith adduces that "parody has the

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paradoxical effect of preserving the very text that it seeks to destroy” (36). However, their incongruous, layered excess carries Gothic film parodies beyond simultaneity and paradox to pile-up, piling new layers of fakery on prior “refakings of fakery.” Epitomizing parodic pile-up is Mel Brooks’s *Young Frankenstein*, which parodies both the Whale *Frankenstein* and earlier parodies of that film, parodies its own parodies, and parodies Gothic criticism. *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* (1948) had already parodied Gothic architecture and film sets, ludicrously over-sizing the door handles of Frankenstein’s castle and redoubling their volume as knockers. *Young Frankenstein* parodies that parody, redoubling their size and sound yet again and then redoubling the visual parody with word play: “What a great pair of knockers!” The visual-verbal parody further parodies psychoanalytic symbolism and Freudian readings of Gothic architecture. Elsewhere, the film builds multiple layers in its parody of Boris Karloff’s ambivalent cry of rage, fear, anguish, and desire. Its monster (Peter Boyle) emits a multi-resonant “mmmmm” expressive of rage, fear, anguish, and desire, but also of frustration, peckishness, menace, sexual arousal, assent, rebellion, and more, piled up in an incongruous, layered, parodic excess that simultaneously exaggerates and undercuts psychoanalytic theories of conflated primal drives.

As parody redoubles the doubles of psychoanalytic deconstruction, it can even be figured, somewhat perversely—and certainly blasphemously and impossibly from a poststructuralist standpoint—as the parodic double of deconstruction: the redoubler of that double. It is the monocle worn over the eye patch in *Young Frankenstein*; it is the proliferation of Hydes in *Abbott and Costello Meet Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* reducing the fear of monsters even as it increases the number of monsters. While all things, can certainly be subjected to deconstruction, the incongruous, piled-up layers of Gothic film parodies, shored against the ruins of deconstructive operations, require additional labour to dismantle, always already subjecting any deconstructive operations upon themselves to parody. Serving as both/and to deconstruction's neither/nor (or, more precisely, as both/and/and/and/and, *ad infinitum*, to deconstruction's neither/nor/nor/nor/nor, *ad infinitum*), parody simultaneously exaggerates and undermines deconstructive operations. Parody in such forms functions as the abnormal brain in the critical body.

The Abbott and Costello parodies, made in the late 40s and early 50s, parody an older humanities criticism concerned with originals and authentic texts. *Abbott and Costello*

Meet Frankenstein opens with deliverymen Chick (Abbott) and Wilbur (Costello) receiving a shipment, “a coffin containing the remains of the original Count Dracula and the body of the Frankenstein monster.” The film, while mocking and despairing of the search for originals in the wake of numerous Gothic sequels and remakes, manages something remarkable: it casts Bela Lugosi, the original Dracula of the triptych, as its own Dracula some 17 years on. In so doing, it does indeed deliver “the remains of the original Count Dracula.” But the very sequels and remakes that had constructed Lugosi as original had also contaminated him as original. Recast and typecast as Dracula in subsequent films, he was already a parody of himself as original. Imitated relentlessly by other actors in the role, his performance in their wake seems a further parody of himself as original. Equally problematic for “the original Count Dracula,” Lugosi had played the Frankenstein monster in *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* (1943), a character he seeks to revive and master as Dracula in the Abbott and Costello film. Lugosi is a parodic both/and/and: *both original and copy of himself as original and copy of another original.*

Lon Cheney, Jr. also appears as a recast original in this film, parodying himself as the original Wolf Man, a role he inaugurated in *The Wolf Man* (1941) and reprised in

Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man (1943), *House of Frankenstein* (1944), and *House of Dracula* (1945). But he too has sullied his identity as original both by recasting and by playing the Frankenstein monster in *The Ghost of Frankenstein* (1942). Glenn Strange, who plays Frankenstein's monster in the Abbott and Costello film, had also played the role before in *House of Dracula* alongside Cheney's Wolf Man. Even more fusingly and confusingly, Boris Karloff, the original Frankenstein of the triptych, is not cast as Frankenstein, but plays Jekyll in *Abbott and Costello Meet Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. (Hyde was played by stunt man Eddie Parker.) This Jekyll and Hyde is more than a double role. Hyde parodies Mamoulian's Neanderthal man;⁹ he climbs a wall like Dracula; Jekyll is a classic, aging Gothic patriarch seeking to coerce a reluctant young ward into marriage. The multiple, interpenetrating castings of the various originals not only problematize concepts of originals, but also fuse and confuse Gothic monsters, double and redouble the actor as double. And yet, in keeping with the both/and incongruous excesses of parody, these recastings overlap as well as rupture, reinforce as well as undermine, scramble up as well as fragment actor-character bonds and relationships of originals to copies.

Furthermore, the multiplication of Hydes in *Abbott and Costello Meet Jekyll and*

Hyde parodies not only the Hyde of Mamoulian's touchstone film, but also the diluting effects of its many remakes, each of which has served to reduce the fear of the "original" monster. The *New York Times* review of the Mamoulian film pronounces Hyde "repellant" and "thoroughly hideous," the film a "tense and shuddering affair," and adduces that "the producers are not a little too zealous to spread terror among audiences" (Mordaunt Hall, online source). A villager in *Young Frankenstein* makes a similar reference to the Whale *Frankenstein*: "We still have nightmares from five times before." There is no indication that anyone has nightmares from the four times since—the four sequels. In a similar vein, the theoretical turn in Gothic criticism, new and subversive in the early 1980s, mainstream by the latter 1990s, is in 2008 no longer exempt from the charges of hegemony, dogma, and intolerance it levied towards views it opposed and overthrew. Even as the dilutions of sequels increase hegemonic power, at the same time they diminish creative critical power.

Fred Botting's claim, "In the ridiculous artificiality of Gothic figures and rock-and-roll bombast the unnaturalness of all social mores and taboos regarding sexual practices and identities seems to be disclosed" (168) can be extended to consider how

certain Gothic film parodies construct Gothic psychoanalytic criticism as “ridiculous artificiality” and “bombast” and “disclose” the “unnaturalness” of psychoanalytic readings of “sexual practices and identities.” Freud and his concepts of apparent opposites yoked in the unconscious take a parodic drubbing when *Dracula, Dead and Loving It’s* Van Helsing (played by Mel Brooks made up to look like Freud), speaks gibberish and propounds “the theory of yes or no.” When at the end of the film he proclaims Renfield’s liberation from bondage to patriarchy: “You are your own man now. No one will ever control you again. Come, Renfield,” and Renfield replies: “Yes, master,” this not only suggests an equivalence between vampire and vampire-slayer conventional in Gothic criticism by the mid-90s, it further suggests an equivalence between psychoanalyst and patriarch running at odds with psychoanalytic Gothic criticism, which self-identifies as anti-patriarchal. It further gestures to how psychoanalysis functions as “master” narrative in recent Gothic criticism.

Love at First Bite, set in the late 1970s, parodies the union of left-wing politics and psychoanalysis aggressively and didactically. Its Freudian psychoanalyst is a grandson of Van Helsing, Jeffrey Rosenberg, a liberal Jewish New Yorker. A progressive who believes that “By the 21st century, homosexuality will probably be

the normal lifestyle” and who refuses to believe in racial stereotypes, regularly persuading police to place habitual criminals back on the streets, he is portrayed as suffering from a pervasive lack of commitment to anything “definitive,” whether to right-wing politics, to the heroine, or to his own psychoanalytic theory. The last is most significant here. Hesitating to burn Dracula in his coffin, he asks: “Can I really do this? A Freudian wouldn’t do it. A Jungian would do it. A Reichian would do it. But I’m a Freudian.” Nevertheless, he acts against his identity as a Freudian and sets the coffin ablaze. In a society that no longer believes in vampires—indeed, barely remembers the legends of vampires—this and other attempts to destroy Dracula are figured as the crimes of a madman. Society’s ambivalence towards psychoanalysis is manifest when Rosenberg is repeatedly locked up as insane and repeatedly released, alternating incongruously (but also quite congruously in this cultural context) between being an adaptation of Renfield and Van Helsing in Browning’s *Dracula*, and, in excess of redoubling, also as Harker competing with Dracula for Mina.

The film also casts a parodic wink at the psychoanalytic gaze, reduced here to the hypnotic powers of the psychoanalyst. The film pits this against Dracula’s hypnotic gaze, a contest that results in a stale mate. While again, this suggests quite

conventionally an equivalence between vampire and vampire hunter, more pertinent to this discussion, it also suggests the neutralizing effects of psychoanalysis upon the Gothic.

Gothic film parodies further parody criticism that reads Gothic as heralding “the return of the repressed.” John Gianvito is representative of such criticism: “the Gothic experience is about stepping into darkness, into that which is forbidden, repressed” (49). Psychoanalytic Gothic criticism goes after “that which is forbidden,” working deftly, complexly, and assiduously to locate and unleash sexual and political repressions in Gothic texts and to set them in discursive defiance against patriarchy, capitalism, and a host of other —isms. Contemporaneous Gothic films flagrantly main-text the sexual subtexts, re-presenting them as cultural constructions and critical clichés. *Dracula*, *Dead and Loving It*’s sedately waltzing Dracula (Leslie Nielson) and Mina (Amy Yasbeck) incongruously cast dirty dancing shadows on the wall, laughingly dubbed “shadows of the id” in the DVD commentary. The visual-verbal pun renders external, literal, and comical what psychoanalysis constructs as internal, uncanny, and threatening. It returns the repressed not with redoubled psychological force, but as diluted, familiar convention.

In a similar vein, many late twentieth-century Gothic films, non-parodic as well as parodic, literalize psychoanalytic readings of vampirism and monstrosity as metaphors for sexual drives, showing young people awakening to sexuality in didactically sexual activities with Gothic monsters. Pornographic parodies do so most blatantly across a range of sexualities, from the heterosexual bestiality of the Jackal man (Billy Whitton) in *Dracula the Dirty Old Man* and of Hyde in *Dr. Sexual and Mr. Hyde* to the lesbian ravishings of *Lust for Frankenstein*, *Mistress Frankenstein*, and *Dr. Jekyll and Mistress Hyde*, to the homosexual encounters of *Hollow-my-weenie*, *Dr. Frankenstein*. By literalizing psychoanalytic symbolism, these films render what has been figured as abstract, unconscious, and universal concrete, didactic, and local. The Dracula of *Dracula Sucks* (Jamie Gillis) bites breasts and penises rather than necks, reducing complex psychoanalytic explications of vampires to blatant, conventional, sado-masochistic porn. *Frankenpenis* literalizes castration anxiety when John Wayne Bobbitt's penis is severed by an undersexed wife (Veronica Brazil, as Lorena Bobbitt), surgically restored and enhanced, only to fail in satisfying the hyper-sexed Bride of Frankenpenis (Nina Cherry). *Dr. Jekyll and Ms. Hyde* (a mainstream rather than pornographic film) also literalizes Freudian theories

of castration anxiety, but goes further to conflate them with Freudian theories of phallic women when its Dr. Jacks (the Jekyll character, played by Timothy Daly) watches in horror as his penis vanishes beneath his clothes, while alter ego Ms. Hyde (Sean Young) is dubbed “a woman with balls.” Elizabeth (Madelaine Kahn) in *Young Frankenstein* (another mainstream film) parodies Freudian connotations of phobia and desire when she bursts from terror and revulsion into rhapsodic song after being mounted by the film’s well-endowed monster (Peter Boyle). It is the size of his penis rather than any psychological mechanism that determines her sudden shift. These parodies render blatant, conventional, clichéd, and ludicrous what Gothic critics represent as hidden, complex, counter-cultural, and immensely serious. While Botting and others have identified “the capacity of gothic formulae to produce laughter as abundantly as emotions of terror or horror” (168), while psychoanalytic critics have pathologized laughter “as the hysterical laughter of comic relief,” and while Horner and Zlosnik have argued that “the comic Gothic turn is the Gothic’s own *doppelgänger*” (3-4), no one has yet considered how Gothic film parody laughs at critical formulae and at the very psychoanalytic criticism that seeks to contain and co-opt it as hysteria.

As Gothic film parodies undermine the power of the returning repressed, they also identify and return things that Gothic literature and Gothic criticism have repressed. Gothic literature supernaturalizes, abstracts, and metaphorizes sexual drives not so much to prudishly repress them as to grant them a freer and more potent cultural circulation. Abstraction enables them to infuse not only psyches, but also cultural narratives and ideologies. Gothic critics have followed suit, harnessing Gothic abstractions of sexual drives in support of ideologies and professional identities. Recent Gothic criticism has enabled the reconstruction of academic identities often perceived to be dated, dull, and fusty as cutting-edge, exciting, and counter-cultural. But as Tania Modeleski argues, even as Gothic critics have challenged the authority of high-art humanists arbitrating and opposing mass cultural tastes, they have reified that role in new ways. Citing readings of mass culture as monster and as inducing mass zombieism, she observes “the tendency of critics and theorists to make mass culture into the ‘other’ of whatever, at any given moment, they happen to be championing” (285-7). Parodic operations do not return the psychoanalytic repressed as forceful, surprising truth, but rather as the always already clichéd.

By reattaching abstracted Gothic sex to audio-visual representations of bodies

engaging in conventional, familiar pornography or soft-core mainstream sexual activity, mass culture in the form of Gothic film parodies cannily returns what Gothic literature and criticism have repressed: the explicit and the mundane. Unlike the psychoanalytic repressed, which returns with redoubled force precisely because it has been repressed, the parodic repressed returns disempowered. Parodic literalizations incarnate and carnalize Gothic abstractions and collapse potent theoretical discourses into impotent cultural clichés. In this way, they redouble the uncanny, defined by Freud as “that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar” (121), not only, as Botting has argued, by making the unfamiliar too familiar and thus producing “laughter as abundantly as emotions of terror or horror” (168), but also by rendering “old and long familiar” critical arguments comically unfamiliar, reopening them to critical scrutiny.

Its commitment to both/and presses parodic play on literal and metaphorical resonances in both directions. Just as they diminish the power of Gothic abstractions, so too Gothic film parodies diminish the power of literal manifestations of the Gothic supernatural to terrorize and horrify, representing them as mere metaphors—and clichéd metaphors at that—in phrases, like “You’ve gone bats,” and exchanges like:

“In half an hour the moon will rise and I’ll turn into a wolf.”

“You and 20 million other guys.”¹⁰

If going bats and turning into a wolf are simply figures of speech applicable to most human beings (which is, to an extent, what psychoanalytic Gothic criticism already argues), then they are nothing extraordinary and pose no exceptional threat. The effect here is a both/and redoubled one: such metaphors both dissipate literal monsters to abstractions and parody lofty claims made for metaphors by bringing making them into conventional clichés.

The both/and principle of parody extends further to unions of psychoanalytic symbolism and literalization. The *Dracula of Love at First Bite* (George Hamilton) *both* has sexual intercourse with a reincarnated Mina Harker (Cindy Sondheim, played by Susan Saint James) *and* bites her neck. But rather than intensifying power and significance, the both/and symbolic-literal articulation undercuts them. The literalization undercuts the symbolism, so that the bite features simply as a “kinky” accessory to sex, leaving behind a “hickie.” Concomitantly, the symbolism undercuts the literalization in that Dracula bites her neck only once, but has intercourse with her “two-and-a-half times.” (The score: symbolism: 1; literalization: 2.5.) However, the

literalization is undercut by the impotence implied in the “half,” the incomplete third copulation. Parodic excess (“two”) here joins parodic undercutting of excess (“and-a-half”) in a bipolar expression of exaggerated undermining and undermined exaggeration. These incongruous, deflating excesses are neither equivalents, nor do they cancel each other out.

Parodic literalizations of psychoanalytic principles not only parody, they also problematize criticism that reads Gothic films as unfolding transhistorical psychoanalytic dynamics manifesting as “cultural anxieties” in local historical contexts. While to an extent, *Dr. Jekyll and Ms. Hyde* (1995) is hospitable to such readings, as parody, it lies in excess of and opposition to them. The film can certainly be read as representative of male anxieties surrounding changing gender roles in the 1990s. Dr. Jacks’s recurring castrations as he transforms to Ms. Hyde reflect rather than alter his social status and psychological state before he creates Helen Hyde. Dr. Jacks, a grandson of the literary Dr. Jekyll, is, like many filmic Jekylls before him, more preoccupied with his work than with his fiancée.¹¹ But unlike his predecessors, he is flailingly impotent to fulfill his scientific aspirations because of subordination to a powerful woman at work. Jacks longs to conduct independent scientific research,

but the exigencies of economic survival have required him to take a job as a perfume designer, where he must please female consumers and a female boss. When he creates Ms. Hyde, she only accentuates his failures when she outdoes him in every area of his life, professional and private. The overt moral of the film, proclaimed in a didactic speech by Jacks at the end of the film, is a pop-psychological narrative of Jungian anima. “There’s a woman in all of us,” insists Jacks and men can only please women by “getting in touch with the feminine side.” However, Jacks only makes this speech after Helen Hyde has been destroyed by testosterone injection and his penis has been restored publicly and visibly on stage as an erection poking beneath his cocktail dress.

But as parody, this film lies in excess of such a reading and parodies the theories that would produce that reading. The film does not simply serve as feminist, psychoanalytic, cultural studies proof-text: it also manifests cultural anxieties about feminist psychoanalytic theory and offers a mass cultural parody of that theory. Here, mass culture talks back to academic theory rather than simply serving as its hapless subject matter. Exaggerating and parodying psychoanalytic theories of doubles, the film presses castration anxiety into its double, castration desire, and then further conflates castration anxiety with its opposed, gendered counterpart, penis envy and

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what would be for Freud a heretical double of penis envy: penis rejection. The transformation from Daniel Jacks to Helen Hyde is represented as a heterosexual orgasm conflating all of the above, with the cries of a orgasming/castrated male giving way to the cries of an orgasming/phallic female. The castrated penis does not vanish, but rather enters Helen Hyde and is possessed by her. In the reverse transformation, phallic female penetrates castrated male, giving him back his penis, creating a full circle of conflated doubles: castration anxiety/desire and penis envy/rejection. But when Jacks later laments, “The biggest thorn in my butt is Helen,” this is not simply a joke about the androgynous aspects of reverse transformation. It equates woman with penis: “the biggest thorn in my butt *is* Helen.” Indeed, in Jacks’s climactic public speech, both Helen and penis are identified as “me.” Gratefully clutching his restored penis, he exclaims jubilantly: “It’s me!” But he also says of Helen Hyde, “She is me.” The “woman inside all of us” turns out—impossibly for psychoanalysis but deliciously for parody—to be (or not to be) a penis.

Conversely, Gothic film parodies expose points at which some Gothic criticism has maintained binarisms against its official poststructuralist credo. Much recent Gothic criticism has been committed to breaking down binarisms, crossing boundaries,

embracing overlooked and excoriated diversities, and rejecting moral judgments.

However, there is one binarism it has steadfastly refused to deconstruct, one boundary line it has declined to blur, one kind of diversity it does not tolerate, and one place where it levies stringent moral judgments and establishes new polarities of good and evil. Gothic criticism's unilaterally left-wing political stance precludes it from breaking down the binarisms between left- and right-wing politics. Gothic criticism subjects right-wing ideologies to left-wing critiques, but neither deconstructs their differences nor its own critiques. Here, it exempts itself from its own methodologies.

Gianvito is representative:

With the drawing to a close of the 1990s now at hand, the signposts marking the degeneration of the value of what has been classified as Western civilization are abundant and easy to read: the dominant and virtually unfettered concentration of power and capital in multinational corporations, the literally daily extinction of animal and insect species, shifts in climate, the devaluation of learning the numbing/dumbing of society through insipid pop culture, increased nationalism, increased xenophobia, and so on. (41)

These are degenerations of left-wing values, not right-wing values. Right-wing groups would identify such things as communism, immigration, terrorism, abortion, women's

rights, gay rights, sex apart from marriage, drugs, pornography, and multiculturalism, as degenerations of its values.

Dentith has delineated the ongoing debate as to whether parody is essentially a conservative force, mocking innovation and policing the boundaries of the sayable, or a subversive force, attacking the official word, authoritative discourse, and undermining seriousness (20). Merging politics with rhetoric in his theory of dialogics, parody is for Mikhail Bakhtin a carnivalesque force calling into question the univocal language of authority. By contrast, for Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, and Dan Harries, parody is a conservative, mainstream affair that works to reinforce the status quo. Rose, reminding readers that parody's root term, "para," conveys both nearness and opposition to, figures it as both destructive and reconstructive, independent and dependent (33, 30, 34). Hutcheon concurs and expands: "Parody is fundamentally double and divided; its ambivalence stems from the dual drives of conservative and revolutionary forces that are inherent in its nature as authorized transgressions" (26). For Jean Baudrillard, parody operates deconstructively: "parody makes obedience and transgression equivalent, and that is the most serious crime, since it cancels out the difference upon which the law is based" (40).

If Gothic film parodies hold conservatism and subversion in tension or make obedience and transgression equivalent, they do not always do so according to prevalent left-wing readings of that tension. Rather, they frequently present the radical as hegemonic and the conservative as subversive. They further dramatize how the revolutionary turns authoritarian at the moment it comes to power and how authority refigure itself as rebel at the moment it begins to lose power. *Abbott and Costello Meet Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1953) avers that authority and subversion can co-exist when it depicts policemen turning *en masse* into Hydes. It further demonstrates that connections of psychoanalysis and politics need not necessarily be left-wing, when it critiques pacifists for repressing and curbing natural instincts. It further manifests an incongruous parodic both/and of feminism and sexism when suffragettes by day become chorus girls by night, to whom “equal rights” means not only political and professional equality, but also returning a heterosexual kiss.

Love at First Bite (1979) reverses the usual assignation of “good guys” and “bad guys” in vampire narratives to present right-wing values as subversive. The film sends patriarchy to the rescue after the anti-patriarchal travesties of the 60s and 70s. Its

Dracula is an ageing, romanticized patriarch ousted from his castle and the centre of society by Soviet gymnasts in the late 1970s to wrestle on and with its vilified margins: feminists, sexually liberated women, homosexuals, youth culture, blacks, Hispanics, Jews, Catholics, psychologists, criminals, the police, and New York traffic, all of which oppress and are oppressed by the has-been, would-be-again patriarch. As Vlad the Impaler seeking a former love reincarnate, Dracula manifests a historical patriarchal prerogative: he has dominated the female before and will again, against her aspirations to live as a liberated woman. The battle here is more ideological than physical: a battle of sound bites more than neck bites. The heroine agonizes discursively rather than erotically: "Part of me still wants to be independent; part of me wants to be taken care of. Part of me would like to be a wife and mother; part of me thinks I am just like an expensive whore." In the end, she cedes her will to Dracula's word: "I just don't know what to do. You have to tell me what to do." In the end, this liberated professional woman concludes: "I think a career to a woman is like fooling around to a man. It's a lot of fun until the right person comes along." The chase scene at the end of the film represents her willing capitulation to patriarchal dominance as rescue. Similarly, when Dracula takes control of a taxi, its working-class driver (Ralph Manza) figures patriarchal usurpation as rescue. Renfield (Arte

Johnson) terrorizes assertive professional women with a cobra and a mouse, all the while insisting, “In this case, we [himself and Dracula] are the good guys.” The “bad guy” is left-wing, socially tolerant, Jewish psychiatrist Jeffrey Rosenberg, whose refusal to judge according to right-wing values corresponds, as we have seen, to a refusal to commit to anything besides self-interest. But although Dracula wins the heroine away from him, there is no place for him on the margins of or at the centre of society, so he and the heroine turn to bats and fly from it. Victory here consists of successful flight. The film figures the left-wing psychiatrist as the mainstream social power, the new patriarch who has usurped if not entirely defeated the superannuated one, a position that Rosenberg’s alliance with the police substantiates.

It would be as erroneous and reactionary to argue that one ounce of right-wing politics makes a film “right-wing” as to argue that one drop of black blood makes one definitively black. This is the preoccupation of *Vampira*, which parodies white obsessions with racial purity. When Dracula’s (David Niven’s) love (Teresa Graves) dies from anemia contracted from peasant blood, he resurrects her with a blood transfusion that (con)fuses blood and racial (stereo)types. Although only one of four donors is black, *Vampira* is, according to the racist tenet that one drop of black blood

makes one black, resurrected black. Likened to white laundry stained by a blue sock, she requires further washings with other whites (white blood transfusions) to restore racial purity. But the film mocks such idea(l)s even as it showcases them. Laughing simultaneously at sexism and racism *and* their critiques effects the unthinkable for today's mainstream Gothic criticism: a parodic merger of left- and right-wing ideologies that dismantles their binary opposition.

Other Gothic film parodies also blur the ethics and values of left and right. In *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, murder, incest, and cannibalism become camp sing-along affairs, politically incorrect from both left and right political stances. The explosion of straight-laced, middle-American teen sweethearts (Susan Sarandon and Barry Bostwick) into rampant, variegated sexualities queries the strength of values deemed human, religious, and natural apart from social context, a reading completely in accordance with recent left-wing criticism. Yet the film equally challenges its subversive, countercultural Dr. Frank N Furter (Tim Curry). Simultaneously a sexually liberated, bisexual transvestite and a rapacious, murderous cannibal, he needs overthrowing as much as any conservative heterosexual patriarch. But parody quells outrage with outrageousness, turning horror to humor.

Elsewhere, parodied patriarchs are not the tyrants that Gothic texts and criticism figure them to be: rather, they are comical, romantic, superannuated, entertaining, fallible, even loveable. *Frankenthumb*'s monster dances amiably in chains. Hyde (Mark Blankfield) is a harmless party "dude" in *Jekyll and Hyde, Together Again*. *Dracula, Dead and Loving It*'s Dracula is a slapstick figure, who slips on bat droppings and whose hypnotic powers regularly miss their targets. *Love at First Bite*'s Dracula laments, "I'm a has-been...I'm out of date...I'm finished...I'm through." Complaining of having "been dressed like a head-waiter for the last 700 years," he longs to wear conventional clothes and eat conventional food. He tells his heroine, "I am Dracula, a great power, but I am humble before you." These representations say: patriarchs are fun; patriarchs are funny; patriarchs need your sympathy; patriarchs need your love. But even the most parodied patriarchs do not completely cede their power. This is neither patriarchy as figured by left-wing nor by right-wing discourses: rather, it is an incongruous parodic both/and. A left-wing reading might argue that such parodies aim to break down cultural defenses against patriarchs in order to gain consent from those they seek to subordinate. A right-wing reading might counter that these parodies show the exaggerations and paranoia of left-wing attacks on patriarchy.

Cartoon parodies also resist settling in polarized political camps. They never definitively overthrow or cede victory to patriarchs, but endlessly reverse and recycle hierarchies of predator and prey, as when *Hyde and Go Tweet's* Tweety Pie turns into a bird of prey menacing Sylvester Cat or when Jerry morphs into a giant rodent while Tom shrinks to fly size in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Mouse*. The cartoon cycles do not so much deconstruct hierarchical binarisms as cycle and recycle who is predator and who is prey: the relationship between predator and prey remains constant. This equivalence suggests that oppression and the abuse of power are not essentialist qualities that inhere in political ideologies or individual beings, but rather fluctuate according to the level of power any party has at any given moment. In a similar vein, the Abbott and Costello parodies make use of revolving doors and buildings that can be circled to allow characters to shift rapidly between seeking monsters and hiding from monsters, between pursuing monsters and fleeing monsters, between comic bravado and comic cowardice. In so doing, they play havoc with audience responses and identifications, parodying audience investment in Gothic horror and humor alike. The effect is accentuated by *Meet Frankenstein's* musical score (by Frank Skinner), which combines the laughing “wahk wahk wahk” of comic film tracks with the

beating-heart “doom de doom doom dooooo” of horror film tracks. The alternations extend to being a monster and not being a monster. In *Meet Jekyll and Hyde*, Tubby (Lou Costello) turns first into a giant mouse and later into a second Hyde. When the second Hyde meets the first Hyde, each terrifies and flees the other. Like the battle of psychoanalyst and vampire gazes, the redoubled terror here neutralizes itself. Such both/and of redoubling extends at the end of the film to a both/and/and/and in a proliferation of Hydes.

Further continuities between left- and right-wing uses of Gothic emerge when one considers how Gothic film parodies inform Gothic critical uses of belief and disbelief. Gothic, film, and parody have all been read as pseudo-supernatural forms responding to declining religious belief. For Peter Brooks, Gothic is “a form for a post-sacred era” (viii); for Botting, it is “an attempt to reconstruct the divine mysteries that [Enlightenment] reason had begun to dismantle” (23). Terry Castle has argued that “phantasmagoria was invented...at precisely that moment when traditional credulity had begun to give way, more or less definitively, to the arguments of scientific rationalism” (52). For Friedrich Nietzsche in *The Gay Science* (1882-87), parody is the only possible aesthetic response to the death of the gods. Since the gods can no

longer rescue or cause tragedy, parody is the only recourse (Gilman 19-20). If Gothic, film, and parody respond separately to the loss of the supernatural, Gothic film intensifies the effect. Ken Gelder likens the operations of vampires to nomadic cinema, links film's technologies of animation to Gothic concerns with the "reanimation of dead tissue," and ponders how questions of belief and disbelief and distinctions between the illusory and the real are problematized by cinematic technology (86-107).

What, then, to unions of Gothic, film, and parody in Gothic film parodies bring to the table? Horner and Zlosnik argue that the incongruity of "a comic turn in the presence of horror and terror...makes possible a mixed response to the loss of transcendence that characterizes the modern condition...a position of detachment and skepticism towards...cultural nostalgia" for lost transcendence (3). Gothic film parodies allow for "a position of detachment and skepticism towards" the ways in which mainstream Gothic criticism has manipulated Gothic narratives of belief and disbelief to coerce belief in its own ideologies and disbelief in, fear of, and moral judgment of opposing ideologies.

Supernatural Gothic works generally undertake narratives of belief and disbelief. In novels by authors like Ann Radcliffe and their parodies by Jane Austen and others, characters journey from terrified belief in the Gothic supernatural to rational disbelief. In novels by authors like Matthew Lewis, in the Gothic triptych, its film adaptations, and their parodies, characters journey in the opposite direction: from scoffing disbelief to awestruck belief. In Shelley's novel, *Frankenstein* avers: "You will hear of powers and occurrences, such as you have been accustomed to believe impossible: but I do not doubt that my tale conveys in its series internal evidence of the truth" (24). Stevenson's Lanyon dies from an unbearable rupture between belief and disbelief after he witnesses Hyde change into Jekyll:

I saw what I saw, I heard what I heard, and my soul sickened at it; and yet now when that sight has faded from my eyes, I ask myself if I believe it, and I cannot answer. My life is shaken to its roots; sleep has left me; the deadliest terror sits by me at all hours of the day and night; I feel that my days are numbered and that I must die; and yet I shall die incredulous. (75)

In Stoker's *Dracula*, Van Helsing declares: "My thesis is this: I want you to believe...To believe in things that you cannot" (206). Whale's *Frankenstein* (Colin Clive) forces disbelieving friends to believe when he brings the monster (Boris

Karloff) to life before their eyes. Mamoulian's Jekyll (Frederic March) insists that fog "has penetrated our minds and set boundaries for our visions" and tells his patients, "Believe me, or I can't do anything for you." Browning's Renfield (Dwight Frye) admonishes disbelievers in vampires to "Be guided by what [Van Helsing, a believer in vampires] says," adding: "It's your only hope."

Supernatural belief has since the Enlightenment been figured as something outgrown with age, education, and historical progress. Costello, playing believer to Abbott's unbeliever in both of their Gothic film parodies, turns regressively into infant and mouse. The recurring play on the word "dummy" in these films forges a continuum between ignorance and belief: a dummy is someone stupid enough to believe in monsters who are in fact only dummies. When Rosenberg in *Love at First Bite* comes before an African-American female judge (Isabel Sanford) seeking a search warrant for Dracula's room, she tirades: "Didn't you see *Roots*? Our people have come a long way for you to be scaring us here with that voodoo scary Dracula shit." In the end, however, in Gothic literary and filmic triptychs and in the parodies under discussion, pathologized, regressive, criminalized, and even dead believers guide unbelievers to credence in, combat with, and victory over Gothic supernatural monsters.

Audience investment in the Gothic supernatural requires a willing suspension of disbelief, to borrow Samuel Taylor Coleridge's phrase. Supernatural writing for Coleridge requires "a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith" (314). The "willing suspension of disbelief" is not the same thing as belief, nor is it a permanent state. By contrast, much recent Gothic criticism marshals unstable Gothic belief and disbelief to advance permanent belief in specific ideologies. Academic Gothic criticism is predicated on disbelief in the Gothic supernatural and a belief that it must be representative of something else. It takes something that it does not believe in (the Gothic supernatural) and uses it to press belief in something that it does (psychoanalysis, left-wing politics, poststructuralism, discursive construction, etc.). As sublime and maddening mysteries constrict to didactic ideologies, the criticism makes didacticism the double of the sublime and dogma the double of mystery. Gothic narratives of belief and disbelief unfold not as blurrings of opposites, but rather as linear narratives, as tempo-spatial journeys from one to the other. Gothic stories and films use temporal delay and spatial dislocation to construct discrete spaces of belief and disbelief, which in the end resolve. Gothic

criticism uses linear argumentation and logic to turn disbelief to new beliefs.

To an extent, Gothic film parodies unfold similar processes. But in the end, they restore the ridiculous as the double of the sublime and remystification as the redoubler of mystery. In both Abbott and Costello parodies, Costello plays terrified believer in the midst of a dangerously rational, disbelieving world. He is set in opposition to Abbott's scoffing, incredulous disbeliever: "Dracula was just a legendary character. He never existed."¹² Abbott occupies the prevalent rational position, which holds that Gothic monsters have no existence and must be representative of something else. For Abbott, as for thinkers from the eighteenth century on, Gothic monsters have no existence apart from fictive social constructions (legends, costumes, waxworks) and altered states of consciousness (dreams, imagination, intoxication, hallucinations). When Costello claims to have seen supernatural monsters, Abbott insists that the monsters must be representative of something else—of something other than physical reality, of something other than the supernatural, of something other than themselves. In his scolding, shoving, and buffeting of Costello, Abbott becomes a parody of those menacing monsters, their rational, quotidian, bullying, delimiting double.

Costello's quest to prove the existence of Gothic monsters apart from social construction and imagination is, like the quest for authentic original monsters beneath layers of sequels and remakes, complicated by juxtapositions of Gothic monsters with waxwork monsters and with ordinary folk clad in monster costumes. Waxwork monsters and costumed party-goers simultaneously show how the originals were constructed and construct the monsters as more real than themselves. Paradoxically, the "additional layers of fakery" here draw attention to the real costumes, actors, make-up, etc. used to create the original fakes. All monsters are constructed, but some are more constructed than others. Costello first confuses a waxwork with a live policeman and then a live policeman with a waxwork one. Since there is little visible difference between real monsters and fancy-dress and waxwork ones, Hyde can hide by posing as a waxwork or by donning a second, less authentic monkey mask. Similarly, when the Wolf Man (Lon Cheney, Jr.) names Dracula, who is posing under a false name, Dracula (Bela Lugosi) posits, "My costume, perhaps?" Costello counters, "No. Talbot [the Wolf Man] here thinks you're the real thing." Conversely, when Costello mimics Dracula, he is able to hypnotize Abbott as if he were "the real thing." Similarly, when Abbott attends a costume ball wearing a Wolf Man mask, he is charged with a violent attack committed by the real Wolf Man. The identification of

fake monsters as real, then, threatens characters as much [as](#) the identification of real monsters as fake.

Yet, for all their oppositions at the ends of a continuum of (dis)belief, neither eponymous antihero is able to distinguish between real and fake monsters, even when they are juxtaposed. Once he has been terrified by real monsters, Costello perceives all monsters, including fake ones, to be real. Conversely, once he has encountered fake monsters, when real monsters appear, Abbott continues to see them as illusory and constructed. Costello's reiterated "I saw what I saw what I saw what I saw" serves as slogan for how what one sees at first continues to construct what one sees thereafter. This critiques pervasive tendencies to see only what one has seen before, to discover only what one always already knows, and to affirm only what one always already believes.

But if Gothic scholars have been keen to reaffirm faith through repeated acts of similar criticism, they have been equally concerned with creating disbelief in the creeds of their ideological opponents. When Horner and Zlosnik aver that most critics would probably agree that Gothic writing always concerns itself with

boundaries and their instabilities, whether between the quick/the dead, eros/thanatos, pain/pleasure, “real”/“unreal,” “natural”/“supernatural,” material/transcendent, man/machine, human/vampire, or “masculine”/“feminine,” their inverted commas indicate targets of contemporary critical disbelief (1). These represent ideological rather than scientific disbeliefs (they do not encapsulate “vampire”).

Abbott informs only one side of critical uses of Gothic (dis)belief; Costello informs the other. Although the disbelieving Abbott and the believing Costello are at epistemological odds, they serve a unified ideological purpose. Made during the Cold War, both films reflect and feed the national obsession with invisible, discursively constructed, political enemies. The political undertow encourages belief in invisible enemies and urges the dangers and vulnerabilities of disbelief. Much recent Gothic criticism has also urged belief in invisible, discursively constructed, political enemies presented as immensely dangerous, and all the more so because mass culture does not believe in them or see them as enemies. Discussing his *Dance of the Vampires*, Polanski describes the double effect that makes audiences feel the fear that would accompany belief in monsters even as they maintain intellectual disbelief in them.

Gothic criticism inserts its ideologies into ruptures between visceral emotion and rational intellect. It channels the fear, loathing, and judgment aroused by the Gothic supernatural towards the “real” dangers of its enemies: the evils of capitalism, patriarchy, and right-wing politics, and the perils and corruptions of mass consumerism and commodification. This is mainstream humanities academia’s cold war.

Many critics have discussed the problems of locating and battling with enemies that are power structures rather than persons. As one tyrannical patriarch is destroyed; another rises to take his place. As one Dracula is staked through the heart, another opens his coffin lid. As one Frankenstein immolates, another resurfaces in a sequel or remake. At the end of *Meet Frankenstein*, the Wolf Man, Dracula, and Frankenstein are all destroyed and Abbott and Costello heave a sigh of relief. But they are immediately joined by the Invisible Man. Terrified, they plunge into the water where the monsters have plunged to their deaths. But invisible enemies keep legends alive, guarantee sequels and remakes, and require and enable the continual (re)construction of academics as cultural watchdogs and heroes. The power of symbols over Dracula epitomizes such critical uses. Critical manipulations of Gothic (dis)belief are the new

cross and garlic, the new stake through the heart of the vampire. In Browning's *Dracula*, Van Helsing (Edward Van Sloan) warns: "The strength of the vampire is that people will *not* believe in him." But this is also the strength of Professor Van Helsing and of professorial uses of Gothic.

In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche suggests parody as a response to "those supreme things that the people naturally accept as their value standards, signify danger, decay, debasement, or at least recreation, blindness, and temporary self-oblivion" (157). Gothic film parodies expose points at which Gothic criticism violates its own value standards. Jerrold E. Hogle avers that "The Gothic refaking of fakery becomes a major repository of the newest contradictions and anxieties in western life that most need to be abjected by those who face them so that middle-class westerners can keep constructing a distinct sense of identity" (297). This essay has shown that the further layers of fakery added by parody stretch to encompass the "newest contradictions" in the repository of Gothic criticism and to unsettle the identities of those "middle-class westerners," myself included, who undertake Gothic criticism.

But Gothic film parodies do more than this. When Abbott insists, "I know there's no

such person as Dracula. You know there's no such person as Dracula," Costello queries: "But does Dracula know it?" Costello raises a Dracula beyond belief or disbelief in him and beyond ideological uses of belief or disbelief in him. At the end of *Dracula, Dead and Loving It*, Professor Van Helsing shouts "Putsa!" at Dracula's ashes. He thinks he has had the last word. But at the end of the credits, the final typographic words of the film, Dracula retorts, "Sylvania!" and laughs. These incidents remind that Gothic, film, and parody remain in excess of prior ideological uses, ready for new uses, ready for new narratives, new films, and, of course, new parodies.

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Hyde and Hare. Dir. Friz Frelang. Perf. Mel Blanc, 1955.

Hyde and Go Tweet. Dir. Fritz Freleng, 1960.

Jekyll and Hyde, Together Again. Dir. Jerry Belsen. Perfs. Mark Blankfield, Krista Armstrong, and Bess Errikson, 1982.

Love at First Bite. Dir. Stan Dragoti. Perfs. George Hamilton, Susan Saint James, Richard Benjamin, Arte Johnson, Isabel Sanford, and Ralph Manza, 1979.

Lust for Frankenstein. Dir. Jess Franco. Perfs. Lina Romay and Michelle Bauer, 1998.

Mad Monster Party. Dir. Jules Bass, 1969.

Mickey's Gala Premiere. Dir. Burt Gillett, 1933.

Mighty Mouse Meets Jekyll and Hyde Cat. Dir. Mannie Davis, 1944.

Mistress Frankenstein. Dir. John Bacchus, 2000.

Nosferatu. Dir. F. W. Murnau, 1922.

The Nutty Professor. Dir. Jerry Lewis. Perf. Jerry Lewis, 1963.

The Nutty Professor. Dir. Tom Shadyac. Perf. Eddie Murphy, 1996.

The Nutty Professor II: The Klumps. Dir. Peter Segal. Perfs. Eddie Murphy and Janet Jackson, 2000.

Old Dracula. Dir. Clive Donner. Perfs. David Niven and Teresa Graves, 1974.

The Rocky Horror Picture Show. Dir. Jim Sharman. Perfs. Tim Curry, Susan

Sarandon, Richard O'Brien, and Meat Loaf, 1975.

Young Frankenstein. Dir. Mel Brooks. Perfs. Gene Wilder, Peter Boyle, Marty

Feldman, and Madeline Kahn, 1974.

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¹ Portions of this article appeared in an essay of the same title published in *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, eds. Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy (London and New York: Routledge, 2007): 361-78. I gratefully acknowledge the publisher's permission to expand that essay here.

² The release date of this film is listed variably as 1931 and 1932. The film premiered in New York on December 31, 1931.

³ See Botting, Horner and Zlosnik, Kavka, Kaye, Punter, and Punter and Byron.

⁴ Cartoon figures of Frederic March, Bela Lugosi, and Boris Karloff appeared in their monster personae as early as 1933 in *Mickey's Gala Premiere*, but as celebrities attending the premiere rather

than in any dramatization of their Gothic narratives.

⁵ Jameson argued the former; Hutcheon argued the latter. Hutcheon's position has gained more support than Jameson's: for example, from Horner and Zlosnik and from Docker.

⁶ The first edition of David Punter's *The Literature of Terror* was published in 1978.

⁷ Recent overviews by Hopkins and Horner and Zlosnik delineate these trends. See also Baldick.

⁸ See, for example, Punter and Byron, Kafka, Kaye, and Botting.

⁹ Bud Westmore, brother of Wally Westmore, who did the makeup for Mamoulian's Hyde, parodies his brother's makeup.

¹⁰ Both quotations are from *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* (1948).

¹¹ Both 1920 films of the novella, the 1931 film, and its 1941 remake dramatize this tension between work and romance.

¹² In *Meet Frankenstein*, Abbott plays Chick and Costello plays Wilbur; in *Meet Jekyll and Hyde*, Abbott plays Slim and Costello plays Tubby. Since the characters are similar in both films, for purposes of concision and clarity of argumentation, I refer henceforth to the actor names.