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The Gothic Other: Racial and Social Constructions in the Literary Imagination. Edited by Ruth Bienstock Anolik and Douglas L. Howard. (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, 2004. 310 pages, \$39.95). ISBN 978-0-7864-1858-9

The Other has long been a key concept to the Gothic since its eighteenth-century inception. Whether manifesting as a brooding Italian, a sadistic abbot, or a vampiric aristocrat, the Other has maintained a haunting presence within the darkened hallways of Gothic fiction, often allowing each of its specimens to reflect on the psychological and sociological forces from the periods and minds that produced them. This insightful and fresh collection of fifteen essays allows further analysis into this recurring theme, while also exploring an eclectic and multicultural selection of film and written texts.

In her introduction, Ruth Bienstock Anolik explains that traditionally “the Gothic represents the fearful unknown as the inhuman Other: the supernatural or monstrous manifestation, inhabiting mysterious space, that symbolizes all that is irrational, uncontrollable and incomprehensible” (1). By laying out this conventional understanding of the Other’s role in Gothic fiction, Anolik goes on to note that this early supernatural and monstrous Other eventually gave way to a more realistic Other rooted in racial and social fears. She strongly asserts that the “writers from many canons and cultures are attracted to the always anxious and transgressive Gothic as a ready medium for expression of racial and social anxieties, and are drawn to the horrifying and monstrous figure of the Gothic Other as a ready code for the figuration of these anxieties” (2). This work thus establishes itself as a lofty and valuable project for the twenty-first-century Gothic critic.

At first glance, this collection treats a dizzying assortment of subjects that range from Charlotte Dacre’s *Zofloya* to the blaxploitation film *Blacula*. To assist the reader with what could quickly become an overwhelming task, the essays are subsequently divided into five groups, designated by subtopics such as ethnicity, religion, and social class. These divisions allow the anthology a more coherent and orderly structure, ultimately eliminating any confusion that could easily accompany a work that is as extensive as this in terms of the variety of materials scrutinized and the diverse approaches taken by the contributors. More importantly, the essays all brilliantly expound on Anolik’s general thesis, with many examining exciting texts that are new to Gothic criticism. Remarking that the “discussions in this collection indicate the pervasiveness of the Gothic mode, haunting texts not generally associated with this traditionally marginalized tradition,” (5) Anolik rightfully identifies a definitive feature of this exceptional collection. Yet it is the racial and social examination of the Gothic Other that is the highpoint of this work; the treatment of a familiar trapping is given refreshing new life by the scholars that have collaborated here.

The essays themselves will be extremely useful to critics and deserve some brief individual discussion. Steven Jay Schneider has crafted a thorough analysis of the Gothic hero-villain in late twentieth century films concerned with race issues, particularly that of the mixed couple. Examining titles such as *Candyman* and *The Serpent and the Rainbow*, Schneider focuses on the ambiguity embedded within the theme of seductive villainy in these racial horror films. Karen Kingsbury’s essay is a fascinating exploration of Sax Rohmer’s infamous Fu Manchu. The dastardly criminal mastermind is looked at in context of Yellow Peril mistrust, which, according to Kingsbury, creates a “Gothic fantasy [that] magnifies, undermines, sweetens, and destabilizes racist content, till the whole narrative fairly writhes with unresolved tension” (106). Writing on France Calderon de la Barca’s *Life in Mexico*, Soledad Caballero explores depictions of the Roman Catholic Church that have seemingly been inspired by Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis. Arguing that de la Barca’s travel narrative “combines the styles of Radcliffe’s female Gothic and Lewis’s male Gothic,” (158) Caballero explores the Catholic Other from a Protestant viewpoint. Anolik examines the

demonic nature of the Jewish Svengali from George Du Maurier's *Trilby*, ultimately arguing that the "demonization of the Other represents an early step in the relentless drift of modern history towards Gothic horror, to the Gothic nightmare of history in the twentieth century and, seemingly, in the twenty-first century as well" (187). In terms of the social Other, Gavin Budge writes on John Polidori's "The Vampyre," exploring Lord Ruthven as an ambivalent aristocrat that confuses and mystifies both character and reader alike. Budge explains that the Gothic nature of this text primarily derives from the social dissolution of aristocratic and bourgeois principles that are at the forefront of Ruthven's character. Sherry R. Truffin finds the Gothic Other within the school teacher of Stephen King, most notably in his *The Shining*, *Rage*, and "Suffer the Little Children." Truffin looks at King's use of modern horror and its effect on the reader against the backdrop of institutions such as schools, noting this as a significant revision for the genre.

The remaining essays of this anthology – Eugenia DeLamotte on the development of the racial Other in Radcliffe's *The Italian* and Dacre's *Zolfoya*, Katherine Henry on nineteenth-century American slavery in Theodore Dwight Weld's pamphlet "American Slavery As It Is" and Walt Whitman's *Franklin Evans*, Daphne Lamothe on interracial union in Jean Toomer's *Cane*, Renee L. Bergland on the Otherness of Native Americans in Charles Brockden Brown's *Edgar Huntly* and Washington Irving's *Sketchbook*, Douglas L. Howard on misguided Western perception of Indian culture in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, Stephanie Burley on the demonized servant in Dacre's *Zolfoya*, Joseph Bodzioc on the demonic slaveholder of a decadent South in Frederick Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom*, John Stone on Anglo-Indian relations in the film *Black Narcissus*, and Erik Marshall on the deconstruction of the Other in Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* – all diligently approach the concept of the racially and socially constructed Other within a Gothic context.

The Gothic Other: Racial and Social Constructions in the Literary Imagination stands out as a superb investment for those interested in the continued development of Gothic studies. The general direction taken by its editors and the varying approaches used by its contributors mark this as a volume whose value is undeniably significant, especially with the ever increasing trend towards multicultural studies. Reasonably priced, it can be acquired via McFarland & Company; for a full list of their available titles, please contact them at either 960 NC Hwy 88 W, Jefferson NC 28640, USA or www.mcfarlandpub.com.

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