

Re-imagining the Gothic in Contemporary Serialised Media: An Intertextual and Intermedial Study of Neo-Victorian Monstrous Afterlives

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From its eighteenth-century literary origins to its twenty-first-century cultural manifestations, Gothic fiction continues to address issues of otherness and psychological duplicity, gender anxieties and social phobias. The Gothic revival in literature, cinema, television, comics and visual arts in general, proves that Gothic literary classics are still meaningful and influential in contemporary popular culture. This research aims to explore how the Gothic mode crosses genres, media and centuries, by examining the appropriation and mashup of Gothic literary classics—Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), among others—in the contemporary work of Alan Moore's graphic novel *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (1999-2012) and in Showtime/Sky Atlantic TV series *Penny Dreadful* (2014-), created by John Logan. The primary objective of this thesis is to retrace the evolution of the Gothic, both as a literary genre and as a liminal mode of artistic expression and cultural production, in contemporary serialised media. This study will therefore situate the works under investigation alongside the postmodern theories of intertextuality and intermediality. Connections will be drawn between nineteenth-century Gothic strategies of popular consumption and postmodern serial aesthetics through a comparative analysis of Victorian Gothic low-brow forms of serialised fiction, the so-called "penny dreadfuls," and today's cultural products. By combining the study of Gothic popular narratives with their adaptations in different media, this research will expose the aesthetics and conventions behind Moore's and Logan's series. It will address their dominant ideologies in relation to the representations of grotesque excess and gendered monstrosity, and revisit the fictional development of iconic Gothic characters that determine the creation of new plotlines and new generic hybrids.