Architectural Othering in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*

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Abstract: The importance of architecture in Hugo's work cannot be over-emphasized. The only locations mentioned in detail are those which have some tie to the Gothic; these locations are also where the novel is bound. Hugo does well in personifying buildings such as Notre Dame, giving the cathedral as much of a voice as those who dwell within her. Within the confines of the Gothic cathedral, human depravity at its fullest is displayed through characters such as Frollo, while the same walls showcase the grandeur of human achievement through the beauty of Notre Dame. The cathedral and the Court of Miracles are not bound by the staunch rules of society, choosing rather to shelter those whom the world rejects inside their dark confines. Likewise, characters such as Quasimodo, Frollo and Esmeralda doubtlessly see themselves reflected in the supposedly unfeeling architecture, choosing to live within a realm which ordinary society cannot understand.

KEYWORDS: gothic, other, architecture, sublime, orientalism, forbidden knowledge, insanity.

Since its publication in 1831, Victor Hugo's masterpiece *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* has attracted Medieval enthusiasts as well as general audiences worldwide. The novel's fame has led to multiple studies and film adaptations in the twentieth century, including the Disney film *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* in 1996. Some scholars possibly read Hugo's novel as a depiction of life in medieval Paris; however, not everyone sees *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* in this light. Upon closer examination Hugo's novel is less about depicting life in Medieval Paris than it is about the author's true passion—Gothic architecture. Although Hugo was a member of various committees devoted to saving the medieval buildings of France (Novikoff), his decision to present his love for Notre Dame in novel-form granted him and his cause global fame. Yet Hugo does more in his novel than simply establish the magnificence of Notre Dame: he also includes several Gothic motifs after the traditional Gothic novel was no longer in style. In *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, Victor Hugo connects Gothic architecture with the concept of the "Other" in a way that bolsters a conventional concept of the Other, as well as different aspects of othering, madness, the sublime, and the atmosphere of "carnival."

Gothic is a term used by many, but understood by few. Thankfully, scholars such as David Punter, Nick Groom, Alex Novikoff, Edward Said, Edmund Burke, Valdine Clemens, Julia Kristeva, Mikhail Bakhtin and Christopher Finch have contributed to society's growing understanding of the Gothic. The Gothic deals with anything out-of-the-ordinary—supernatural, horrific and psychological phenomenon—that humans cannot understand; the term also describes an architectural style dating from the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries A.D. According to David Punter, "Gothic fiction frequently depicted, and sometimes appeared to revel in, vice and violence" (8). While neither vice nor violence are Gothic in and of themselves, the two attributes often pave the way for traditional Gothic characteristics. For example, the vice and violence present in both the society and individual characters of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* lead audiences through the dark back streets of Paris to a pursued gypsy, a corrupt clergyman, and a deformed hunchback. Punter also claims that in Gothic fiction: "The worlds portrayed are ones infested with psychic and social decay, and coloured with the heightened hues of putrescence. Violence, rape and breakdown are the key motifs; the crucial tone is one of desensitised acquiescence in the horror of obsession and prevalent insanity" (3).

Hugo depicts the common people of his novel as morally depraved, encouraging the torture and death of the innocent rather than crying out at the injustice of their society. Every major character in the novel suffers from mental, physical, or emotional decay: Phoebus is shown to already be decayed emotionally at the novel's genesis because of his lack of compassion for Esmeralda; Esmeralda decays mentally as well as physically when Phoebus rejects her and she is wrongfully imprisoned for his murder; Frollo progressively decays mentally and emotionally due to his lust for Esmeralda and alchemic pursuits, and both he and Quasimodo are both physically decayed at the start of the novel, one from birth, the other from forbidden knowledge. Punter also argues that "In dealing with terror, Gothic deals with the unadmitted" (18). Hugo's medieval Paris is unwilling to admit it is decrepit, yet Hugo proves it is through the architecture as well as through the characters Frollo and Quasimodo.

While Punter covers certain Gothic characteristics, Nick Groom does a broad overview of the genre in a historical, literary and architectural sense, although only his findings on architecture will be discussed here. Along with giving a specific Gothic architectural timeline, Groom points

out that by the early sixteenth century, “the painter and biographer Giorgio Vasari was explicitly referring to 'Gothic' architecture to distinguish the medieval period from the classical” (13). With Gothic architecture being characteristic of the Middle Ages, it is little wonder Hugo strived to make his audience love the architecture that was his passion. In painting a vivid picture of medieval Paris, Hugo cements the locational Gothic in his audience's mind, validating the idea of the Gothic being architecturally exclusive.

In examining the Gothic, it is necessary to reference Edmund Burke's theory of the sublime. Burke states “Indeed terror is . . . the ruling principle of the sublime” (58). In *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, the sublime is a determining factor of the Gothic: it is a defining characteristic of both the architecture and characters in Hugo's novel, personifying locations such as Notre Dame cathedral as well as breathing life into what could be seen as archetypes such as Quasimodo, Esmeralda and Frollo. In using the sublime, Hugo effectively manipulates his audience's thoughts and emotions through the humanization of architecture as well as through stock characters in the Gothic genre.

Valdine Clemens' theory of Repression further humanizes the Gothic. In her novel *The Return of the Repressed*, Clemens states “Gothic fiction arose in periods of heightened social anxiety . . . after the American and during the French and Industrial Revolutions” (24). While Hugo wrote his novel thirty years after the French Revolution, he makes subtle references to the period of social anarchy through his medieval Parisians during the Festival of Fools. Also, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* was written at the end of the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution brought innovations and drastic changes to the daily lives of nineteenth century Americans and Europeans, creating friction between those who desired change and those who advocated for tradition. Hugo addresses this tension by attempting to convince rash intellectuals of medieval architecture's significance while urging traditionalists to acknowledge that some changes need to be made to both the societal and judicial systems.

In short, the Gothic is an investigation of society. The genre contains characteristic elements—Othering, the sublime, obsession, madness, the carnivalesque, architecture, decay, supernatural occurrences, imprisonment and death – but these traits are reflective of the mindset of the age in which the genre was formed. Gothic fiction was conceived during times of social upheaval and turmoil, and the genre gives readers an opportunity to examine their worst fears from a distance and therefore safely confront them (Clemens 31). The supernatural in the Gothic effectively distances readers from personal fears of illegitimacy, powerlessness, physical and emotional pain, and death; yet when the supernatural is stripped from the genre, readers are left with the realization that the angst of former generations is still present within themselves. The Gothic's purpose is to reflect the inherent fears of humanity; however, the genre does not offer solutions to expel mankind's terrors. However, the Gothic as a defined genre offers a sense of unity by readers and authors alike sharing the same anxieties. Therefore, the Gothic forms a community that spans hundreds of years between individuals who will likely never meet, yet are attempting to deal with their personal apprehensions through fiction.

One of the motifs present in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is Othering. In defining the “Other,” Julia Kristeva writes, “he is the hidden face of our identity, the space that wrecks our abode, the time in which understanding and affinity founder” (2). Othering is simply the act of determining

an Other – someone or something which lies outside society's view of normalcy. While traditionally the Other exists in the form of monsters imposing themselves on society (such as in the case of Grendel in the epic Beowulf), Hugo's Other co-exists in society alongside common people and society imposes itself on the grotesque. Hugo adds to the tradition of Othering by giving it a modern twist: Hugo's Others are the criminals of society, the insane, the obsessed, the deformed and the beautiful; in other words, those whom society has chosen to give up for lost and forgotten.

Othering in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* relies heavily on architectural location. Hugo's Other can exist only in areas distinctly Gothic, yet when Gothic places are controlled by society—such as the Palace of Justice and the Place de Grève—these havens become antagonistic towards the Other. An example of this is seen when Gringoire first sees Esmeralda in the Place de Grève the evening following the Feast of Fools. In the crowd watching her dance, Gringoire wonders "Whether this young girl was a human being, a fairy, or an angel . . . Gringoire . . . could not decide . . . so fascinated was he by this dazzling vision" (Hugo). In the night air dancing before the fire, Esmeralda controls the atmosphere of the Place de Grève, dominating the Gothic square with her exotic presence. Yet, when the public have control of the Place de Grève in the light of day, Esmeralda is executed for the very attributes society adored during the night. Also, when Pâquette lives as a recluse in the Tower of Roland, she remains safe from society; however, when the king's troops forcibly remove her from the Tower, she is slain shortly thereafter. Architectural location is so vital to the Gothic in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* that Hugo felt it necessary to devote an entire chapter to describing Paris from atop the cathedral. According to Novikoff: "One of the novel's notable accomplishments is the lively evocation and indeed inclusion of multiple strata of medieval society within a single panorama . . . Hugo was determined to trace current social and political problems back to their medieval roots, and to achieve the maximum effect he must carefully embed his tale within a painstaking reconstruction of medieval Paris, its buildings and its public" (Novikoff).

In the chapter "A Bird's-Eye View of Paris," Hugo reveals an unexpected structure of medieval Paris. Here, he reveals, "In the fifteenth century, Paris was still divided into three wholly distinct and separate towns, each having its own physiognomy, its own specialty, its manners, customs, privileges and history: the City, the University, the Town" (Hugo). Paris in the fifteenth century was essentially three cities in one, with Notre Dame and the Palace of Justice located in the City – the island-mother of Paris – and the Place de Grève, the Tower of Roland and the Court of Miracles situated in the newest portion of the medieval capital, the Town. Interestingly enough, the Gothic is absent from the intellectual district of medieval Paris, yet it thrives in the oldest and poorest parts of France's capital.

Hugo's depicts the Other through three characters, each of whom provide a different view of the complex issue of Othering. Quasimodo is the closest Hugo comes to creating a "traditional Other." The hunchback, deformed from birth, is adopted by both Notre Dame and Frollo, both of whom become his surrogate parents. Society as a whole, however, rejects Quasimodo because of his birth defects, shown when the citizens of Hugo's Paris call him "mask of Antichrist" (Hugo). Hugo, however, offers another view of the hunchback's deformities. In the chapter "*Immanis Pecoris Custos Immanitor Ipse*," Hugo writes that with Quasimodo, "It is thus that, little by little, developing always in sympathy with the cathedral, living there, sleeping there, hardly ever

leaving it, subject every hour to the mysterious impress, he came to resemble it, he incrusted himself in it, so to speak, and became an integral part of it" (Hugo). In writing that Quasimodo's body becomes part of Notre Dame as he lives there, Hugo argues the case of Quasimodo's being the cathedral's son, and his deformities in fact represent of one of the world's most beloved cathedrals—Notre Dame. Hugo's reasoning is also supported by Burke, who claims: "No passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear . . . . Whatever therefore is terrible, with regard to sight, is sublime too, whether this cause of terror be endued with greatness of dimensions or not . . . . And to things of great dimensions, if we annex an adventitious idea of terror, they become without comparison greater" (57).

Aside from his physical deformity, Quasimodo's deafness effectively classifies him as Other. Secluded from society in Notre Dame, Quasimodo becomes deaf providing a service for the public—ringing the cathedral's bells—and his disability only further isolates him from the world. Quasimodo is the only character forced to live a life of solitude, although Frollo willingly lives a solitary life by choosing to pursue alchemy and his lust for Esmeralda, as well as by his status as archdeacon of Notre Dame. The two men's lives reflect Burke's sentiments on solitude when he states, "an entire life of solitude contradicts the purposes of our being, since death itself is scarcely an idea of more terror" (43).While Hugo appears to sympathize with both characters, he presents only Quasimodo in a positive light, bolstering the "traditional Other" by contrasting the hunchback's aching humanity with the inherent evil inside of Frollo, which is deemed acceptable by society. Surprisingly enough, Quasimodo and Esmeralda share two characteristics which classify them as Other—their Oriental appearance as well as their orphan status.

The European fascination with "the Orient" has existed since the Middle Ages. According to Said, "The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences" (1). Both Quasimodo and Esmeralda are referred to as appearing Oriental numerous times in Hugo's novel, although Quasimodo is the only character who is of non-European ethnicity. When Quasimodo is tortured in the Place de Grève, Jehan says the hunchback resembles, "a knave of oriental architecture, who has a back like a dome, and legs like twisted columns" (Hugo). Ironically, Hugo attributes the hunchback with traits of Oriental architecture the Romantics were enamored with in the early nineteenth century while those who are non-European in are treated poorly in the novel. Perhaps Said has this in mind when he writes, "Even the rapport between the Orientalist and the Orient was textual" (52). Quasimodo seems to be Hugo's response to his contemporaries' fascination with the Orient: from a distance the foreign Other can take on any shape or form an individual wishes, yet when viewed closely, the fantasy surrounding Orientalism fades, even though the one deemed a foreign Other is internally good.

While Quasimodo is ostracized for being a foreign Other, Esmeralda is actively pursued by Frollo as well as society because she appears to be an exotic Other. Esmeralda is presented in the Place de Grève as being "swarthy of complexion, but one divined that, by day, her skin must possess that beautiful golden tone of the Andalusians and the Roman women" (Hugo). Esmeralda is intoxicatingly foreign to the Parisians, yet her foreignness as well as her beauty classify her as an Other and eventually lead to her death. Of her beauty, Hugo writes: "All around her, all glances were riveted, all mouths open; and, in fact, when she danced thus, to the humming of the Basque tambourine, which her two pure, rounded arms raised above her head, slender, frail and

vivacious as a wasp, with her corsage of gold without a fold, her variegated gown puffing out, her bare shoulders, her delicate limbs, which her petticoat revealed at times, her black hair, her eyes of flame, she was a supernatural creature” (Hugo).

Hugo describes Esmeralda's beautiful foreignness in a way which sets her apart from women of normal society, yet the two things that classify her as an Other also place her in the position of being the “pursued maiden” in the novel, a trait found in Gothic fiction. The gypsy's establishment as a desired object further classifies her as an Other in that she is the only woman actively pursued by men in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Said could have had Frollo's pursuit of Esmeralda in mind when he writes, “In quite a constant way, Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand” (7). What makes Esmeralda an Other by default of beauty and foreign appearance cements Frollo as being Other as well because of his obsessive lust for her.

While Quasimodo and Esmeralda are different in appearance, the orphan statuses mark them as being Other in Hugo's novel. As previously mentioned, Quasimodo is adopted by both Notre Dame and Frollo, yet because of his appearance he is first rejected by his birth mother, his potential adoptive mother, as well as by the worshippers of Notre Dame. When Quasimodo is placed on the orphan's table in the cathedral's entrance, the parishioners as well as most of the clergy scorn the child, calling him a demon and refuse to touch him. Frollo, however, chooses to adopt Quasimodo—albeit it for selfish reasons—and hides the hunchback atop Notre Dame, much like one of the cathedral's gargoyles. Although historians are not entirely sure of the purpose of gargoyles in Gothic cathedrals, many claim the terrifying figures were formed to protect cathedrals from demons. Perhaps Quasimodo's connection with the stone guardians of Notre Dame further endears him to his adoptive mother, making him ever loyal to her. Esmeralda is also set apart from society by her orphan status and is not who society perceives her to be. The gypsy is in fact a native French girl, raised among the gypsies after they steal her from her mother's bed. Esmeralda's orphan status motivates her to guard her chastity because of the magic charm she carries, which ensures she will find her parents. However, the knowledge that she has never known a man motivates both Phoebus and Frollo to pursue Esmeralda, ultimately resulting in her death. Frollo's being an orphan classifies him as an Other as well, although many facets of this character set him apart from society in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

While Frollo is technically a part of normal society, he is also set apart from normalcy in the sense that he is the archdeacon of Notre Dame. Frollo is described as being “a priest, austere, grave, morose; one charged with souls; monsieur the archdeacon of Josas, the bishop’s second acolyte, having charge of the two deaneries of Montlhéry, and Châteaufort, and one hundred and seventy-four country curacies” (Hugo). Frollo begins his service to the clergy with the graveness that comes from being responsible for souls, yet he strays from practicing holiness by delving into alchemy. While a priest using what would have been considered magic in the Middle Ages may astonish readers, Clemens notes that, “In an attempt to assert some individual control over a universe charged with hostile and beneficent supernatural forces, people in the Middle Ages apparently resorted frequently to magic” (19). Frollo's alchemic pursuits are an open secret among Notre Dame's clergy, and while Frollo knows that practicing alchemy is morally suspect (19), he does so anyway out of despair. The archdeacon's alchemic pursuits further classify him

as Other because in studying magic, he is acting outside of accepted priestly behavior. Frollo plots to possess Esmeralda in his laboratory hidden in one of Notre Dame's towers, yet unlike other Gothic authors, Hugo leads readers down the slope of Frollo's moral decay until the archdeacon leads the executioner directly to Esmeralda when she refuses to accept him as her lover.

Frollo's moral decline slips rapidly from alchemy into obsessive lust as he stalks Esmeralda throughout the novel. Frollo's succumbs to his lust inside Notre Dame when Gringoire reveals that “She wears on her neck an amulet which, it is affirmed, will cause her to meet her parents someday, but which will lose its virtue if the young girl loses hers” (Hugo). Knowing Esmeralda is a virgin ripe-for-the-picking is too much for the archdeacon, and he plots to possess her with abandon. Among Hugo's contemporaries and public, “The topic of rape . . . would not in itself have shocked . . . for it occurs often enough in earlier eighteenth-century novels” (Clemens 34). Frollo obviously desires Esmeralda sexually yet restrains himself from raping her, and his continuous repression wears on Frollo's mind, resulting in the archdeacon's insanity.

Insanity is one of the mankind's most gripping terrors, and Hugo does not hesitate to present two cases of it in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Both Frollo and Pâquette, Esmeralda's mother, suffer from madness, and thus each of their maddened states manifests differently. Frollo's decaying mental state is not implemented until after Pâquette is introduced, and he festers in his laboratory in Notre Dame. Interestingly enough, the cell had been built long before Frollo by the Bishop “Hugo de Besançon, who had wrought sorcery there in his day” (Hugo). The laboratory reflects Frollo's mental state as being unsound when it is described from Jehan's perspective as containing, “A large furnace, which he had not at first observed, stood to the left of the arm-chair, beneath the window . . . Upon the furnace were accumulated in disorder, all sorts of vases, earthenware bottles, glass retorts, and mattresses of charcoal” (Hugo). Frollo's laboratory contains a large unlit furnace and unused scientific instruments, both symbolic of his dead passion for forbidden knowledge, slain in the face of previously unexplored lust. The archdeacon does not actively practice alchemy again as his lust for a human being slowly replaces his thirst for knowledge. On madness, Burke states: “The violent effects produced by love, which has sometimes been even wrought up to madness . . . . When men have suffered their imaginations to be long affected with any idea, it so wholly engrosses them as to shut out by degrees almost every other, and to break down every partition of the mind which would confine it” (40–41).

At the peak of his madness Frollo reveals to Esmeralda in the Palace of Justice's prison that “his breast was in fact, mangled as by the claw of a tiger, and on his side he had a large and badly healed wound” (Hugo). When Frollo sees Esmeralda sentenced and tortured for the murder of Phoebus, rather than coming forth and admitting his hand in the attempted murder, he repeatedly stabs himself under his cassock in the Palace of Justice. When Frollo flees to the countryside, he realizes the consequences of his actions: “Then he laughed frightfully, and suddenly became pale again, when he considered the most sinister side of his fatal passion, of that corrosive, venomous malignant, implacable love, which had ended only in the gibbet for one of them and in hell for the other; condemnation for her, damnation for him” (Hugo).

Frollo's laughter signals the final departure of his sanity, a fact which is reinforced by an episode of schizophrenia at the end of the chapter “Delirium.” Thus Frollo's madness, caused by his

uncontrolled lust, is irreversible. Pâquette's madness, on the other hand, is temporary. The location which houses Pâquette's madness is the Tower of Roland, where she and her prison are described, "The cell was small, broader than it was long, with an arched ceiling, and viewed from within, it bore a considerable resemblance to the interior of a huge bishop's mitre . . . It was one of those spectres, half light, half shadow" (Hugo). In her Gothic cell, which is incapable of being opened from the inside, Pâquette is more frightening than Frollo because in his insanity the archdeacon keeps a semblance of humanity. Pâquette, on the other hand, resembles a ghost to passerby, frightening and other-worldly in appearance. The recluse obsesses over an object as well, although unlike Frollo, her object is not a human being. Throughout the novel, Pâquette's affections are fixed on "a tiny shoe of pink satin, embroidered with a thousand fanciful designs in gold and silver" (Hugo). The tiny homemade shoe is all Pâquette has left of her stolen daughter, and throughout the novel she fawns over the little shoe, hugs it, weeps over it, and even kisses the soiled fabric. In fact, Pâquette's obsessive-compulsive tendencies do not end until her daughter is brought back to her in the form of the grown Esmeralda, whom she has blamed for the loss of her child over the course of the novel. It is worth noting that while Pâquette spends years longing for her daughter, she heartlessly rejects the young disabled boy the gypsies left in the girl's place—Quasimodo. Perhaps the reason Pâquette's sanity returns in the final chapters of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is because she is driven mad by true love whereas Frollo's insanity is the result of his lust. Also, in secluding herself to a life of prayer in the Tower or Roland, Pâquette is essentially going to God to deal with her madness and overwhelming loss while Frollo does not, which is interesting considering his position as archdeacon of Notre Dame.

In *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, the sublime is used to characterize Notre Dame as well as make characters classified as Other stand out to readers. The relationship between Hugo and Notre Dame is intriguing in that the cathedral is not only presented as a character but also as an Other. Hugo introduces Notre Dame as being uniquely Other when he writes, "Notre-Dame is not, moreover, what can be called a complete, definite, classified monument. It is no longer a Romanesque church; nor is it a Gothic church . . . It is an edifice of the transition period" (Hugo). Hugo paints Notre Dame as not architecturally definable. The cathedral is neither Romanesque nor Gothic, but rather a marriage of the two different styles, a "Frankenstein's monster," if you will, of the architectural world. In fact, Burke states "The apparent disorder augments the grandeur, for the appearance of care is highly contrary to our ideas of magnificence" (78). Although Notre Dame is an integral part of Hugo's medieval Paris, the cathedral is effectively set apart from society due to its role as a channel between people and God. According to Burke, "Infinity has a tendency to fill the mind with a sort of delightful horror, which is the most genuine effect, and truest test of the sublime" (73). Notre Dame's being an Other makes it the perfect residence for those society considers to be Other in Hugo's novel.

In acting as Quasimodo's sanctuary, Notre Dame both protects the hunchback and contributes to his being seen as an Other by society. One aspect of the sublime is obscurity, of which Burke says, "To make any thing very terrible, obscurity seems in general to be necessary" (58). Hugo's medieval public views Quasimodo as terrifying partly because of his perpetual concealment inside of Notre Dame as the cathedral's bell ringer. Another way in which Quasimodo is obscured to the Parisians is his unknown heritage, something he and Esmeralda have in common. According to Novikoff, "The protagonists' lack of background is relevant" (Novikoff). While

readers eventually discover where both characters' origins lie, this information is never revealed to Hugo's fictional Parisians, and this adds to the public's anxiety towards both Quasimodo and Esmeralda. The public's fear of Quasimodo is assayed somewhat when he rescues Esmeralda from execution in the square before Notre Dame, and they believe that Quasimodo saves her "with the force of God" (Hugo). By linking the feared Other with God, Hugo's medieval Parisians grant Quasimodo a legitimacy he has never before possessed, and this causes their sentiments towards him to change.

In being Quasimodo's sanctuary, Notre Dame also functions as Esmeralda's prison. After rescuing her from certain death, Quasimodo brings Esmeralda to a hidden cell in Notre Dame where he tells her "During the day you will remain here; at night you can walk all over the church. But do not leave the church either by day or by night. You would be lost. They would kill you, and I should die" (Hugo). Quasimodo knows if Esmeralda leaves the sanctuary provided by Notre Dame she will be seized and hanged immediately, yet the hunchback's home is a prison to the young gypsy girl, as it would be to anyone threatened with lifetime confinement. Her cell is described more as a dungeon than a room in a church, a place through which she can see life taking place in the streets of Paris, but cannot participate. When Esmeralda eventually escapes from Notre Dame she is killed shortly thereafter, proving the theory that the Other is safe only in the locational Other – in this case, Notre Dame.

As mentioned previously, Notre Dame houses Frollo's alchemic laboratory. Frollo's hideout is concealed in the tower of Notre Dame, and the description of his laboratory combined with that of Esmeralda's cell momentarily transforms Notre Dame into a Gothic castle. Frollo's repression spawns Esmeralda's imprisonment, first in the dungeon of the Palace of Justice and again in her cell in Notre Dame, a chain reaction that leads to both of their deaths. In this sense, Frollo is perhaps based on a character found earlier in the Gothic tradition—Matthew Lewis' Ambrosio in *The Monk*. On *The Monk*, Clemens mentions the novel's "pervading argument, which concerns the dangers of excessive repression in both the individual and the social spheres" (59). Frollo and Esmeralda can also be examined through the depictions of what Burke calls the "individual" and the "generation." Burke states that, "The passions belonging to the preservation of the individual, turn wholly on pain and danger; those which belong to *generation*, have their origin in gratification and *pleasures*" (40). Esmeralda's constant flight from Frollo is due to her preservation of self, from her rightly perceiving the archdeacon as a threat to her well-being. Frollo, on the other hand, is driven by the passions of the generation, which come from his overwhelming lust for the gypsy girl and lead him to pursue her literally to death.

Quasimodo, Notre Dame, and Esmeralda can be examined through the sublime lens by contrasting beauty and ugliness. In order for something to be beautiful, Burke claims the object must possess "An appearance of *delicacy*, and even fragility" (116). Esmeralda's petite frame is mentioned throughout *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, yet Burke's definition of beauty contradicts Notre Dame being beautiful because of its grandiose size. In fact, Burke also states that for women "First, the colours of beautiful bodies must not be dusky or muddy, but clean and fair" (117). In contrast to Burke's statement, Esmeralda is described as being dark on multiple occasions, as is Notre Dame. An example of this is seen when in describing Notre Dame, Hugo says, "it is time which has spread over the façade that sombre hue of the centuries which makes the old age of monuments the period of their beauty" (Hugo). There is the possibility of Hugo

imposing his personal infatuation with foreign women (or at least with the actresses who play them: I am thinking of his affair with Juliette Drouet, whom he met while she was playing the role of an “oriental princess”) on both his readers and Notre Dame, yet that seems unlikely because millions of people see Notre Dame as beautiful. Quasimodo is described as being dark as well, yet his apparent Oriental lineage does nothing to make him handsome. Furthering his discussion on appearances, Burke says, “But I would by no means insinuate that ugliness of itself is a sublime idea unless united with such qualities as to excite a strong terror” (119). Throughout the novel Quasimodo is classified as being “ugly,” and while ugliness is not sublime in itself, Quasimodo's facial features are indeed sublime because all except Frollo are afraid to look upon him. Thus, in writing *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, Hugo makes four of his main characters, including Notre Dame, both sublime and the Gothic Other, creating an unexpected depth which makes his novel memorable.

Another unexpected aspect of Hugo's work is the inclusion of carnival. The Middle Ages is definable partly by the presence of carnival, which forms “A boundless world of humorous forms and manifestations opposed the official and serious tone of medieval ecclesiastical and feudal culture” (4). The society described by Hugo's medieval Paris is a tense environment, a world in which the honest are abused and all people have unrealistic expectations forced upon them. The strained state of humanity in Hugo's novel—much like the time period it strives to represent—could explain why Hugo's medieval public laughs frequently, even in socially unacceptable situations. Bakhtin theorizes, “Laughter and its forms represent, as we have said, the least scrutinized sphere of the people's creation” (4). The need for comedic relief in Hugo's novel eagerly paves the way for the atmosphere of carnival, enchanting Hugo's characters and audience alike.

À la Bakhtin (1984, 5–10), the carnivalesque present in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is centered in two locations—the Palace of Justice and the Court of Miracles. Hugo introduces his medieval world to modern readers through the Feast of Fools, implemented traditionally by the Church. Bakhtin writes, “Besides carnivals proper . . . there was the “feast of fools” . . . consecrated by tradition” (5). The Feast of Fools and other amusements were initially allowed by the Church in order for a purge to take place in stratified medieval society. Hugo sets the Feast of Fools both inside of and in the shadow of the Palace of Justice, creating parallel worlds of fantasy and reality which medieval commoners dually occupied. The locational Gothic of the Feast of Fools also reflects the social unrest in both Hugo's society and his perception of medieval France. Tensions between the nobility and French public are evident in the novel when, after becoming impatient waiting for Gringoire's mystery to begin, the crowd muses on how to entertain themselves, shouting “let us begin the hanging with his sergeants” (Hugo). Although the crowd does not really hang members of the military, the soldiers momentarily fear for their lives in the face of the angry mob; yet the scene is written in such a way that the reader does not consider the seriousness of social tensions in the Middle Ages.

Another aspect of the carnivalesque present in Hugo's Feast of Fools is the crowning of the Pope of Fools. According to Bakhtin, “Minor occasions were also marked by comic protocol, as for instance the election of a king . . . to preside at a banquet ‘for laughter's sake’ (*roi pour rire*)” (5). While the Festival of Fools is a feast day, Hugo uses the carnival tradition for his own purposes in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. When the time comes to select the Pope of Fools, the Flemish

ambassador suggests the Parisians choose their Pope as the Flemish do, “we collect a crowd like this one here, then each person in turn passes his head through a hole, and makes a grimace at the rest; the one who makes the ugliest, is elected pope by general acclamation” (Hugo). In this way, Quasimodo is chosen as the Pope of Fools because he has the ugliest face, and in the atmosphere of carnival he is able to become part of the society which normally rejects him.

The Court of Miracles is brimming with the spirit of carnival as well, although unlike the Festival of Fools, only criminals and vagabonds are allowed to dwell in this section of the Town. The Court of Miracles as a carnivalesque location is supported by Bakhtin: Carnival is not a spectacle to be seen by people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom (7).

Criminals in the Court of Miracles guard their home by executing any Bourgeois person who invades their territory and is unable to become a Truand. Hugo describes the Court of Miracles: “It was a vast place, irregular and badly paved, like all the squares of Paris at that date. Fires, around which swarmed strange groups, blazed here and there. Everyone was going, coming, and shouting. Shrill laughter was to be heard, the wailing of children, the voices of women. The hands and heads of this throng, black against the luminous background, outlined against it a thousand eccentric gestures” (Hugo).

This vast Gothic square surrounded by decayed houses and filled with morally decayed people is more Gothic than the Feast of Fools, and it is here that the atmosphere of Carnival flourishes. However, the Truands' multifaceted society cannot exist outside of their square in the Town or in the light of day. Hugo demonstrates the fragility of the locational Gothic by showing the Truands and their topsy-turvy world only by night, as well as by including the Truands' failed raid on Notre Dame in the City, during which many of their numbers died. Much as in Notre Dame, in the Court of Miracles those born of different social ranks are on level ground. Also, in the decayed Gothic square the Truands can truly be anything they want to be, such as when Jehan is recorded there as “The individual who had thus screwed a whole outfit upon his body, was so hidden by his warlike accoutrements that nothing was to be seen of his person save an impertinent, red, snub nose, a rosy mouth, and bold eyes. His belt was full of daggers and poniards, a huge sword on his hip, a rusted cross-bow at his left” (Hugo).

The Court of Miracles is truly a place where anything can happen: a literal wonderland in which a scholar steps into thievery and consequently knighthood, a poet transforms into a street-performer, miscreants of society attempt heroic deeds, and a common criminal rules over all as king. The absurdity of society's filth fulfilling roles such as these in a Gothic text is nothing short of extraordinary, yet Hugo allows his readers to revel in the carnivalesque along with his characters in the Court of Miracles.

Another aspect of carnival in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is the use of oaths by Hugo's characters. In the Middle Ages, “Profanities and oaths were not initially related to laughter, but they were excluded from the sphere of official speech because they broke its norms . . . Here in the carnival atmosphere they acquired the nature of laughter and became ambivalent” (Bakhtin 17).

Oaths are used regularly by multiple characters in the novel, although only two instances will be mentioned here. When Phoebus saves Esmeralda somewhere between the City and the Town and she gets away from him, he uses the oath “nombrill of the Pope” (Hugo). This phrase translates to “the Pope's navel” in English, although what Phoebus means by it is uncertain. Likewise, Clopin king of the Truands uses an oath when he shouts “by the devil's claws” (Hugo). While the origins of these oaths remain unknown, they allow their speakers to vent their frustration as well as add to the comedic aspect of the novel.

Since the invention of film in the late nineteenth century, several adaptations of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* have been made, although only Disney's version will be examined here. While Disney's perception of Hugo's novel has been criticized for taking certain liberties, the company's version of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* corrects some of the mistakes made by earlier film adaptations. For instance, in earlier film versions Quasimodo appears to be older than he is in the novel because the actors playing him were all middle-aged; yet in the Disney version, the producers present Quasimodo, “as a troubled adolescent fascinated by a world he could only experience from a distance” (Finch 345). While Disney's Quasimodo pines after medieval Paris in a way that Hugo's does not, viewers are able to relate to the “new” Quasimodo on a personal level because he is able to take center-stage in a way he cannot in the novel because of Hugo's use of Pierre Gringoire as a Romantic filter of the Gothic.

Disney visually reproduces many of the aesthetics from Hugo's novel. Finch notes this when he states, “*The Hunchback of Notre Dame* derives from its strong sense of place, and its use of architecture as a way of symbolically describing different aspects of the human condition” (348). Disney achieves architectural characterization through the use of talking gargoyles, the warm colors of Notre Dame, and musical numbers such as “God Help the Outcasts,” where Esmeralda relates her “Other” status to Jesus Christ. Also, the song “The Court of Miracles” sets the putrescent hideout of the gypsies in the crypts below Paris rather than in plain sight, reflecting the moral and social state of the “Other” group. Disney went to great pains to understand Hugo and the world he lived in by sending teams to study Notre Dame in person: “Concept artists, and layout artists . . . began to research this world, studying photographs, as well as the works of many artists, including those of Victor Hugo . . . they began to set down on paper a very concrete image of the city that would appear on screen. The square in front of the cathedral . . . was established in great detail so that . . . every shop, every tavern, every home, every warehouse facing into the square was delineated with as much detail as the facade of the cathedral itself” (345–347).

Disney effectively recreates Hugo's view of medieval Paris in the film *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* while giving his characters a life of their own. Aside from Quasimodo, the character who receives the most attention in the film is Frollo. While Hugo informs readers of Frollo's past and therefore makes his audience sympathetic to the antagonist, Disney feels no inclination to do so, and thus transforms Frollo into a more Gothic character than Hugo depicts. An example of this is seen in “Hellfire,” a song which begins with Frollo praying to the Virgin Mary but quickly turns sinister when he realizes the state of his own soul. Disney's artists present Frollo's reaction to his lust in great detail, tracking the judge's expression and body language as they shift from open supplication to definite horror. This scene is also an example of how Disney took a story meant

for a Catholic audience and told it through a Protestant lens. Frollo's apparel more closely resembles that of a Protestant preacher than a Catholic official, and Disney's Frollo also blames Esmeralda for his lust while Hugo's Frollo does not.

Another scene made more Gothic because of Disney's visualization and music is "Sanctuary," where Quasimodo saves Esmeralda from being burned at the stake as a witch. Based loosely on Quasimodo's saving the gypsy in the novel, this scene's Gothic presence is reached because it combines two scenes from Hugo's work: the first where Quasimodo descends Notre Dame's bell tower to save Esmeralda from hanging, and the second scene in which Quasimodo defends Notre Dame from the Truand invasion. Through its presentation of Frollo as a Gothic villain similar to Walpole's Manfred from *The Castle of Otranto*, as well as its use of visual and auditory aids to present Quasimodo without a Romantic filter, Disney succeeds in making their film more Gothic than Hugo's novel.

The Hunchback of Notre Dame is a multifaceted work overflowing with the Gothic. While Victor Hugo presents many elements pertaining to the Gothic in his novel, he remains true to his original love of architecture through basing the Gothic in specific locations. In having the Gothic occur in Notre Dame, the Place de Grève, the Palace of Justice, the Tower of Roland, and the Court of Miracles, Hugo separates the Gothic as well as the Carnivalesque from normal medieval society; however, this does not stop the Gothic from invading different parts of Paris. Hugo effectively presents Quasimodo as a "traditional Other" worth defending, making the hunchback a valiant hero in a world full of men with selfish ambitions. Through Quasimodo, Hugo opens a door to the world of the Other, a world which before his time was relatively unexplored. In Esmeralda, Hugo portrays a self-sufficient Oriental Other who refuses to remain the helpless "pursued maiden" of Gothic fiction. Although she has her moments of giving into despair, Esmeralda fights her fate until her last breath, unlike former Gothic heroines such as Walpole's Isabella and Hippolita from *The Castle of Otranto* who place themselves at the mercy of their oppressors. Frollo provides a new perception of the Other that exists within society because of his alchemic practices and overwhelming lust for Esmeralda while under the guise of priesthood. Frollo is both part of and apart from society, although unlike Notre Dame he is a sinister Other with only his self-interests in mind. Hugo surprises readers by his depiction of Notre Dame as both a character and an Other, a point which the author defends through the cathedral's unique melding of architectural styles and its providing a haven for the Other, regardless of his or her intentions. Criminals' classifications as being Other in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is astonishing, but as Burke points out, "The passion caused by the great and sublime in nature, when those causes operate most powerfully, is astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror" (57).

Hugo astonishes through his perception of the sublime and the role it plays in both architecture and the shaping of his characters. Only in a Gothic novel can the simultaneous operations of beauty and ugliness, love and madness, and pain and death be seen along with the terror that plays in the background of daily life. Terror is exemplified in Hugo's novel by two characters who succumb to madness, although while Pâquette overcomes her insanity when she sees her grown daughter alive, Frollo's sanity never fully returns, possibly as punishment for plotting rape and committing murder because of his lust. The carnivalesque in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is Gothic because it creates a society separate from the normal society of medieval Paris. Hugo's

use of the carnivalesque aligns with Bakhtin's later work, seen when the literary theorist states, "Thus carnival is the people's second life, organized on the basis of laughter" (8). Whereas not all of Hugo's persecuted characters are able to enjoy the atmosphere of carnival, thankfully this hidden world is shared with readers. In presenting an alternate and seemingly unlimited world, however, Hugo creates a type of medieval "Neverland" which readers can see yet not partake in, but at least the Truand sanctuary can be appreciated for what it is: the decayed, stinking slums of the Town where the impossible becomes possible and social equality exists regardless of deformity, birth, race, or age. Through *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, Hugo presents a Gothic story that is uniquely tangible because of the characters declared Other by society and the architectural structures that house them. Ultimately, Hugo's tale leaves the impression that the Gothic is just as relevant today as it was in times past, and the genre is as indomitable as the stone walls of Notre Dame.

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