The year 2010 marks a centennial year for *The Phantom of the Opera* by Gaston Leroux. First serialized in the French newspaper *Le Gaulois* from September 1909-January 1910, it was subsequently published in France as a complete novel in February 1910 (Casta-Husson 695). The work received an unenthusiastic critical response and would probably have become completely unknown if not for the 1925 silent movie starring Lon Chaney (Hall 10-21). A few movie remakes after that kept the story in the public consciousness until the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical of the 1980s moved the Phantom front and center. Yet despite the story’s continued remakes and popular success, critical analysis has been slow to follow.

The first listing for Gaston Leroux in the *MLA International Bibliography* did not occur until 1961; this was over thirty years after his death in 1927 (Hall 11). The first entry that focused on *The Phantom of the Opera* was not until 1991. As may be anticipated, critical interest in the story increased dramatically following the success of the Lloyd Webber musical. However, that interest remains heavily focused on the original novel and the 1925 movie. In spite of its popularity, the Lloyd Webber musical remains underrepresented in the critical commentary. Discussion of additional versions of the Phantom story, including other popular movie, theatrical, and literary adaptations, also remains underrepresented.

The following bibliography offers a list of scholarly resources about the original Leroux novel and its successors. The selected sources are in English and French, with one Italian exception. Additional bibliographical research in foreign-language sources needs to be done. The purpose of the list is to allow students and researchers to locate critical commentary on the original novel and its many adaptations. The selected works consist of scholarly journal articles, book chapters, and books published through 2009. In order to keep the bibliography to article length, the following are not included: book reviews; unpublished works, including dissertations and theses; works that were primarily interested in listing the various adaptations without critical commentary (e.g., Flynn’s *Phantoms of the Opera*); works that focus primarily on the history of an adaptation (e.g., Riley’s *The Phantom of the Opera*); and those works produced as companions to the Lloyd Webber productions (e.g., Perry’s *The Complete Phantom of the Opera*). By its nature then, this bibliography is not exhaustive. However, the author welcomes suggestions for addition resources that fit its scope; it is hoped a more complete bibliography will be forthcoming.

Because the different resources refer to the various adaptations—particularly the Chinese and Taiwanese movie remakes—in different ways, this articles uses the following standardized terminology for the most discussed adaptations:
* Lon Chaney movie—1925 Universal Studios movie starring Lon Chaney and directed by Rupert Julien* Song at Midnight—1937 Chinese movie (Ye Ban Ge Sheng) directed by Maxu Weibang* Song at Midnight, Part II—1941 sequel (Ye Ban Ge Sheng Xu Ji) to Song at Midnight, also directed by Maxu Weibang* Claude Rains movie—1943 Universal Studios movie starring Claude Rains and directed by Arthur Lubin* Hammer movie—1962 Hammer Studios movie starring Herbert Lom and directed by Terence Fisher* Midnight Song—1986 Taiwanese remake (Ye Ban Ge Sheng) of Song at Midnight, directed by Yang Yanjin* Lloyd Webber musical—musical opening in London in 1986 and on Broadway in 1988 starring Michael Crawford, with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber* The Phantom Lover—1995 Taiwanese remake (Ye ban ge sheng) of Song at Midnight, directed by Ronny Yu* Lloyd Webber movie musical—2004 film version of the Lloyd Webber musical, directed by Joel Schumacher

Unlike other famous literary and theatrical seducers, the Phantom of the Opera in Leroux’s novel is not a handsome rake. Instead, he embodies the longstanding tradition that links moral corruption with monstrous features.

In many critical works on musical theater, Lloyed Webber is either absent or dismissed as inconsequential, even though he has written the two longest-running shows in Broadway history. When examined, Lloyd Webber continually faces two criticisms. First, he borrows music from other composers without attributing it. Second, he excessively recycles music with his own works. Other composers do the same, if not quite as often as he does. The issue is not so much that he reuses music, but that he often uses the music without regard for its “dramatic meaning” and so loses any meaningful connection between music and character. The Phantom of the Opera, in both its stage version and the movie musical, offers numerous examples of both meaningful and meaningless reusing of music. The popularity of Lloyd Webber’s shows indicate he is a composer whom critics should recognize and examine, not dismiss. Online appendices (available at http://www.oup.com/us/companion.websites/9780195384000/appendices/) provide a synopsis, a discography and filmography, and an outline of musical themes.

This is a slightly revised version of the 2000 article "Revolution and Revulsion: Ideology, Monstrosity, and Phantasmagoria in Ma-Xu Weibang’s Film Song at Midnight."

Song at Midnight combines the mass appeal of the horror genre with political

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ideology. However, despite the left-wing writers involved with the project, the needs of the horror genre were allowed to confuse the political message. Such deference to popular entertainment over political aims may be seen in two different aspects of the film: the symbolism surrounding Song Danping’s deformity and the advertisements for the film. Danping’s deformity represents his credentials as a revolutionary and the victory of revolutionary ideals. Yet, instead of seeing Danping and his deformity triumph in the end, the movie ends as horror movies often do, with the death of the scarred “monster.” Also, the advertisements for the movie emphasized sensationalism over any political message. The movie then serves as a way for the director to question the ability of cinema to serve as a vehicle for political ideology.

No work of Leroux has captured the imagination of the world quite like Phantom of the Opera. The work’s labyrinthine setting, tragic love story, and universal themes appeal to each new generation, giving rise to countless adaptations and devoted fans, even though few now read the original novel.

In The Phantom of the Opera, Lloyd Webber seeks to expand his audience’s understanding and appreciation of opera and to connect his musical to the high cultural values attached to the operatic tradition. The mini-opera scenes of “Hannibal,” “Il Muto,” and “Don Juan Triumphant” demonstrate to the audience the history of opera. They serve to show that opera isn’t as bad as many think and that, rather than being a crass substitute for opera, contemporary musical theater represents its natural progression

Song at Midnight and its remakes demonstrate the changing concerns of 20th century China. The original Song at Midnight makes use of Western-style horror conventions but the story is strictly Chinese, and it demonstrates a revolutionary zeal, with an emphasis on the role humans play in history. Song at Midnight Part II, created during the Japanese occupation, is purposefully ambiguous in its political sentiments. Such ambiguity is in itself a means of resistance against the occupation. Midnight Song contains numerous anachronisms and betrays a fascination with things outside of China. Finally, The Phantom Lover substitutes the previous revolutionary zeal with a preoccupation with true love and financial achievement.

The original Leroux novel evolved from a tradition that includes horror figures such as Frankenstein and Quasimodo. The novel features by-gone characters, including the helpless, defenseless heroine and the noble antagonist who respects the heroine’s chastity. The storyline is rather convoluted, the love story unconvincing, and the Phantom’s antics unexplained. The Claude Rains movie improved the story
by removing the Phantom’s romantic attachment to Christine and by simplifying his past.

The many personalities and identities of the Phantom of the Opera in Leroux’s novel are reflected in the rooms of his house by the underground lake.

This chapter is an abbreviated and revised version of the 1995 chapter of the same name. It deletes much of the historical information on the development of aesthetic surgery and includes two new examples from popular culture about how facial deformities—particularly of the nose—make individuals outcasts in society.

The horror evoked by the Phantom of the Opera comes mostly from his lack of a nose. To readers of Leroux’s original novel, the lack of a nose signaled that the Phantom suffered from congenital syphilis. Throughout the nineteenth century, syphilis equaled personal, familial, and social degeneration. As a diseased, degenerate, morally failed person, the Phantom of the Opera could never be perceived as attractive or erotic. The novel came about at the time when aesthetic and reconstructive surgery was coming into its own, and many examples from history show that surgeons worked to find socially acceptable means of reconstructing the nose. For the Phantom, however, scars from reconstructive surgery would have signaled his condition as much as his missing nose did.

The Lon Chaney movie demonstrates the shared anxieties of silent films and opera over silence. The movie represents Christine’s quest for her operatic voice and represents a tension between the power of the gaze/vision and the power of voice/sound. As in opera, the quest is ultimately doomed; only, in a break from operatic tradition, the Phantom (representing both the essence of opera and the excessive visualness of films) dies in place of Christine, the prima donna.

This chapter is a slightly revised version of the 1999 journal article of the same title.

Explanations of the continuing interest in the Phantom story tend to approach it as one story and ignore the different variations and adaptations, which change the narrative in one way or another. This ignoring of the differences is ironic, because the original Leroux novel encourages readers to look beyond the surface of things

http://etc.dal.ca/belphegor/vol10_no2/articles/10_02_yelink_phanto_en_cont.html[12/2/2013 12:34:38 PM]
and not to believe everything that they read or see. There is a real uncertainty in the novel about appearances and about making judgments based on them. Those versions that are the most successful use the Leroux story as a jumping-off point to make their own works of art, rather than being mere retellings. The Claude Rains movie, for example, is more successful as a film than the Lon Chaney movie because it reworks the themes in new ways that fit the new narrative. Rather than being a passive victim of a homicidal madman, Christine actively chooses between marriage and a career—and she chooses the career. The Lloyd Webber musical dominates the theater adaptations. While its theme of the need to find an identity and love may be simplistic, it speaks to basic human desires. The novel versions of the Phantom story show how it may adapt to new technologies; self-publishing has resulted in a plethora of spin-off books. In the end, the Phantom’s story persists because it reminds readers that life is not perfect; everyone must make sacrifices and be judged unfairly.

Stories that feature women artists—including The Phantom of the Opera, Trilby, The Red Shoes, The Bostonians, and Daniel Deronda—can be read as female versions of morality plays. The heroine must choose between an “unnatural” life as an artist or a “natural” life as a daughter/wife/mother. In these stories, a second figure—often older and male—serves as an artistic genius or Demon Lover. These figures further the heroines’ careers and serve to make the heroines’ success socially acceptable, because it would be unthinkable for a woman to pursue such a life on her own. Because the heroines so often end up renouncing the artistic life, or are punished for not doing so, the stories may be read as reinforcing the gender stereotypes that put a woman’s proper role in the home. However, by instilling Christine and the other female artists with such remarkable talents, the authors have argued for the value of female artistic expression. And in making the Phantom of the Opera and his counterparts such charismatic and memorable characters, the authors invite the audience into choosing the life that their heroines did not, thereby advocating for the artistic side of women’s lives.

This chapter is a reprint, minimally edited for style, of the 1996 journal article of the same title.

The original Leroux novel, more than any other gothic novel, draws the power of its story from the class and social tensions present at the turn of the twentieth century. Recently, the concept of the Other has been put together with work by Julia Kristeva on “abjection” and “the abject,” terms that describe the process by which individuals create a separate identity by casting off the bodily memory of “betwixt-and-betw eeness” lingering from birth. This feeling is ascribed to an Other, a scapegoat, who embodies this contradictory nature and allows the original subject to create an identity separate from it. The monster of gothic fiction represents the
“betwixt-and-betweenness” by mixing various racial, sexual, class, cultural, religious, and/or political boundaries. The Phantom in Leroux’s novel takes to excess the boundary crossing of gothic monsters. Also, he represents carnivalesque, a lowbrow form of entertainment, which was repressed by the middle-class bourgeoisie in its attempts to define itself. It is this connection to the carnivalesque and the attending class tensions that keep the Leroux novel from succumbing to a straight psychological interpretation.


In this chapter, Hogle builds on his 1996 article "The Gothic and the ‘Othering’ of Ascendant Culture: The Original Phantom of the Opera." Leroux created his novel out of strands of the English Gothic and of the French variation known as conte fantastique. In The Phantom of the Opera, the low culture foundations of rising middle- and high-class Parisian culture are made ever more explicit. Some unique French additions to the Gothic seen in the novel include the Phantom’s connection to the Danse Macabre; his representation of the lower working classes who were driven from central Paris by Baron Haussmann’s construction; his conflicted embracing of and distancing himself from the memory of the Paris Commune; and his state of being “both semi-Jewish and entirely Aryan” in the wake of the Dreyfuss affair. By means of these contradictions, Leroux uses the Phantom to embody what the European middle class at the turn of the twentieth century wanted most to deny: that its very identity is so based on distancing itself from its perceived “Others” that it cannot exist without the blurring of categories it so resists. The story of the Phantom remains popular and continues to produce new adaptations because it allows its readers and viewers to both confront and to resist the process by which they—as members of the middle class—construct a class consciousness.


This book builds on Hogle’s 1996 article and 2002 book chapter. The story of the Phantom of the Opera in all of its adaptations, but most especially in the original Leroux novel, is an unexpectedly good vehicle for probing the ways contemporary Anglo-European bourgeois society builds its own identity by distancing itself from its “low brow” origins. This story carries out a technique, common to Gothic stories, of exposing yet hiding the contradictions inherent in middle-class society identities, contradictions that are relegated to “other” than the accepted cultural norm. In particular, the story displays the rising conflict between “high culture” and “low culture” and the “othering” that occurs through the process of fashioning a middle-class identity. The many adaptations that have emerged since Leroux’s novel all arose at times when the middle-class felt particularly threatened, and each one displays unique cultural fears.

The Phantom in Leroux’s novel depicts more than just an “other.” He represents the foreign present within middle-class society that society attempts to deny. As such, he blurs such basic distinctions as child/adult, animal/human, and low culture/high culture, while also representing turn-of-the-twentieth-century fears about such things as de-evolution, class struggles, rising middle-class debt, and the increasing inability to distinguish between reality and fiction. While the Phantom story may be read using psychoanalytical means, psychoanalysis itself is a social construct, and the almost too obvious Freudian motifs in the novel have their roots in deep social
fears and yearnings.
Each subsequent adaptation struggles with some of the anxieties present in the original novel, while also introducing new fears that have arisen since the previous version. The Lon Chaney movie, for example, reflects cultural aftershocks from World War I, anxieties over women working outside the home, and tensions from a turbulent labor movie in Hollywood. The Claude Rains movie combines continuing anxieties over women entering the workforces with the American perplexity over the emergence of fascism in Europe. Starting in the 1960s, the adaptations begin to reflect a growing culture of adolescence, in which the characters display Baby Boomer anxieties over their inability to grow up, where they remain forever in a state of unfulfilled and frustrated immaturity. This wave of Phantom adaptations crested with the Lloyd Webber musical.


Leroux’s novel is filled with oppositions, enigmas, and unresolved tensions, so much so that it even defies traditional genre categories. It is a Gothic romantic detective story about unsolved crime, thwarted love, and a human monster. Space and characters become intertwined, with Erik often indistinguishable from the Opera House. Desire is displaced into places and objects, particularly Christine’s dressing room and Erik’s scorpion figurine. Even though the romance remains chase, almost courtly, the threat of violence from Erik towards Christine creates tension for the reader. Erik himself is the ultimate enigma: living death, bodiless voice, only masked may he look like everyone else. The foreword is an abbreviated version of the 1996 article "'Ils M’Ont Appelé l’Obscur’..." and much of the rest of the article is threaded throughout the remainder of the book.


The Lloyd Webber musical contains many symbols and themes in common with the works of E.T.A. Hoffmann.


The character of Christine in the Lloyd Webber movie musical differs from the prima ballerina in the movie The Red Shoes and from the real-life ballerina Suzanne Farrell in how she ultimately triumphs over the man who once served as her artistic muse. All three women had male muses who became “demon lovers,” dominating and jealous men who attempted to keep the women under their power within their artistic domains. Only Christine is able to both break free from the control of her demon lover, the Phantom, and to take the additional step of freeing the Phantom...
from his own unconscious prison of shame and narcissism.

The attraction of the original novel comes about through Leroux’s ability to skillfully and humorously blend rational explanations with fantastic stories.

The *Mystery of the Wax Museum* and *The Phantom of the Opera* (the Lon Chaney, Claude Rains, and Hammer versions) demonstrate ways in which masks have been used for emotional effect in films since the dawn of cinema, by bringing together in unsettling ways such opposites as normal and monstrous, real and unreal, and hidden and hidden.

The burial of a time capsule within the Paris Opera in 1907 was one inspiration for Leroux’s novel. His novel concerns itself with the representation of music on the written page and with how opera was received in Parisian society. Though he possessed limited musical knowledge, Leroux uses opera—especially *Faust*—to mark time in his novel, to reflect his characters, and to add authenticity to his story. Only through his Phantom’s unfinished opera *Don Juan Triumphant* does he offer musical criticism. No adaptation of the novel ever successfully represents the phantom’s music. That music—just like the phantom’s horrific ugliness—is best left buried in the reader’s imagination.

Christine’s relationship with the Phantom in the Lloyd Webber musical may be read as an example of a spiritual journey, in which a Christian struggles with and ultimately faces the forces of evil. The Phantom then is a shadow, a Jungian component of the unconscious, which represents both destructive tendencies and unrealized good potential. By facing the Phantom, Christine successfully acknowledges her own “spiritual deformity” and moves on to a place of greater spiritual strength.

*Song at Midnight* is perhaps the “most fascinating and creative” adaptation of the Leroux novel. In this movie, the disfigured opera singer Song Danping serves as the sympathetic hero and romantic lead. He is not a marginalized monster that must be destroyed as in the Western versions of the story. Not much is known about director Maxu Weibang.

The original novel may be read as Leroux’s indictment of the French literary establishment, with the character of the Phantom standing in for Leroux and the
Paris Opera standing in for the recognized literary canon.


Certain types of actions made by actors onstage influence how an audience understands a performance. These types of actions include exhibitory actions (how an actor presents himself), encoded actions (how an actor displays artistic conventions), and performative actions (how an actor creates a character and develops the fiction of the world onstage). All three actions must be in balance in order to create a satisfactory theatrical experience. An analysis of Lloyd Webber’s musical, as seen in Stockholm, Sweden in 1990, shows that the first act and most of the second act consist mostly of exhibitory and encoded actions, creating a tedious, emotionally distancing performance. Starting with the song “Past the Point of No Return,” however, the actors began displaying a better balance of actions, which heightened the character development, highlighted the archetypical/mythical overtones of the show, and allowed the show to come to a satisfying conclusion. Comparisons with performances in Melbourne, Los Angeles, and London emphasize how individual actors may change both the visual and acoustical aspects of a performance as well as the underlying message of its story.


The Phantom of the Opera in the original Leroux novel resembles Dracula in many ways, but the story of the Phantom surpasses that of Dracula in creating four experiences in the reader: descent, entrapment, bewilderment, and deterioration. Erik serves as a stand in for the secret part of ourselves that we keep repressed, and the underground area that he commands is a place both to feel powerless and also to exercise fantasies.


The Lon Chaney movie derives much of its power from the use of archetypal characters and storylines, many of which are developed in operas such as Faust, Les Contes d’Hoffmann, Lehengrin, and The Masked Ball. Because the Chaney movie was so successful, and because opera plays such a pivotal role in it, opera can be said to have contributed to the development of the horror film. An analysis of allusions to the myth of Orpheus in the movie takes place separately later in the book, on pages 313-314.


The popularity of the Lloyd Webber musical stems from its brilliant stagecraft and familiar story, but mostly from its use of musical motifs and themes. Through the manipulation and juxtaposition of the motifs and themes, Lloyd Webber allows the music to mirror the onstage tensions.


The Phantom of the Opera was a turning point in Lloyd Webber’s career; for the
first time, he created a mature composition focused on adult themes. The discrete musical numbers are held together by traditional reprises, musical themes, and more flexible motifs. The flexible motifs are less obvious than the reprises and themes, but they do the lion’s share of musical work in the show. Reviews of the show were mostly positive in London and somewhat positive in New York. Even if Lloyd Webber failed to win over his critics, his show has gone on to become the longest-running show in Broadway history and will influence Broadway composers far into the future. Two appendices outline the plot summary and list the recurring musical motifs.

The Charnas novella "Beauty and the Opera, or the Phantom Beast" can be used as a case study for two therapist tools: the shame compartment and the marriage box. The shame compartment is used with patients suffering from post traumatic stress syndrome; it allows a person to experience sexual feelings but not to feel shame. Christine and Erik both live lives filled with shame, he especially on account of his face. Christine’s time with Erik allows her to conquer some of her shameful feelings and to emerge stronger for it. The marriage box is a therapy tool that allows people who share close physical spaces to reshape dysfunctional behaviors into more constructive partnerships. Christine continually renegotiates the relationship between Erik and her in order to create a marriage that works, despite its violent beginnings. Of course, such a relationship can only work in fiction, not the real world.

In the Lon Chaney movie, Christine unmask the Phantom. This bold action by a woman is punished by the terrifying sight of Erik’s face, and her forwardness is contained by safely marrying her off to Raoul. In the three Chinese remakes, the women the phantom loves never see his face. This raises the question: What does the phantom’s face represent, which is so horrible that it cannot be viewed? Each movie gives a response unique to its socio-historical time period. For the Chaney movie, that which cannot be viewed is the monstrous sexual excessiveness of the monster. In Song at Midnight, it is leftist radical politics. In Midnight Song, it is the residual upheavals and legacy of the Cultural Revolution. Finally, in The Phantom Lover, it is Hong Kong’s imminent identity confusion brought on by the end of British rule.

The Lon Chaney movie, its Shanghai remake Song at Midnight, and the Hong Kong remake of the Shanghai remake The Phantom Lover prove an opportunity to examine how underprivileged groups remake films from groups that are culturally, socially, and/or politically dominant over them. When this happens, the remakes acquire political, historical, and social overtones not present in the original. The Lon Chaney movie concerns itself with the reestablishment of white, male sexual
authority and the removal of the monstrous. *Song at Midnight*, however, focuses instead on galvanizing Chinese audiences into resisting Japanese invasion. In *The Phantom Lover*, the student gradually becomes dominant over the teacher/phantom, using techniques that a colonized people might use to gain power over their colonizers.


Williams, Andrew P. "The Silent Threat: A (Re)Viewing of the 'Sexual Other' in The Phantom of the Opera and Nosferatu." *Midwest Quarterly* 38.1 (1996): 90-101. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 18 Nov. 2004. Both the Lon Chaney movie and the 1922 film *Nosferatu* posit their title characters as sexual others, who must be destroyed in order to reestablish traditional male sexual authority. Faced with threats to their masculinity, Raoul and Hutter become ineffectual—one could say emasculated—and are unable to save the women whom they consider their own. Christine and Ellen must assume responsibility for their own sexual fates, thereby stepping outside the bounds of male-dominated sexuality. Both the Phantom and Orlock die in order to see traditional patriarchal control of sexuality restored.

Žižek, Slavoj. "Grimaces of the Real, or When the Phallus Appears." *October* 58 (1991): 45-68. Print. High art and theory may be used to interpret popular culture, and vice versa. The Phantom—as well as other fictional "monsters"—then may be read as the disruption of the workaday world by a primal "otherness" that Lacan calls "the Real," as well as the middle-class horror of such a disruption. It is possible for the phantom to represent more than one thing. Monsters often act as blank slates on which meanings are projected.

---. "Why Does the Phallus Appear?" *Enjoy Your Symptom: Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out*. New York: Routledge, 1992. 113-146. This chapter is a slightly revised version of the 1991 journal article "Grimaces of the Real, or When the Phallus Appears." Additional paragraphs spell out the differences between modernism and postmodernism, posit the role of monsters in the Enlightenment, and clarify the role of "object" in Lacanian theory.