

Exotic Follies

Sanderson Miller's Mock Ruins

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Abstract

In 1740, the gentleman architect Sanderson Miller began building sham ruins--new structures built to look as if they were already deteriorating--on the estates of his wealthy patrons. Over the next thirty years, he constructed approximately thirty faux ruins, or follies, in the style of thirteenth and fourteenth-century castles and towers. Various scholars have argued that Miller and his clients wanted to conjure associations with medieval chivalry or political independence. While some contend that Miller's castles stood as nostalgic evocations of politically decentralized feudalism, others assert that his "gothick" ruins represented opposition to Catholicism and the papal power of the past.

In truth, it seems that Miller's follies embody layers of contradictions--old and new, medieval and enlightened, nostalgic and critical. Each structure must be examined as a separate entity, replete with its own style, intentions and associations. Using anthropologist Peter Mason's notion of the exotic as a temporally composite being which is incapable of attribution, this essay problematizes the prevailing reading of Miller's follies as merely picturesque and political to insist upon their indeterminate, itinerant exoticism. In so doing, this paper rereads the follies through an interdisciplinary lens, as subjects of both anthropology and visual culture.

On October 30, 2005, the reconstruction of Dresden's famed Frauenkirche finally reached an end. Originally built between 1726 and 1743 by architect Georg Bähr, the Lutheran church was, for two hundred years, the pride of the German city. With its soaring, 96-meter-tall, 12,000-ton sandstone dome and its Baroque flourishes, it was not only the tallest, most distinctive building in Dresden, but also a worthy rival to Michelangelo's St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. In the final months of the Second World War, the church was nearly demolished by Allied fire-bombing. In ruins, it initially served as an informal monument to the destruction of the war, and in 1967, the East German government declared it an official memorial to civilian victims.¹ In the late 1980s, various groups began lobbying

¹ For more information on destroyed churches as war memorials, see *Bombed*

for the reconstruction of the Frauenkirche, each one proposing a different way of either incorporating the original structure into the new building or leaving it intact as a ruin. After years of fundraising and debate, a decision was reached and construction slowly began. Five and a half years ago, the landmark building was deemed complete, with the charred stones of the ruined Frauenkirche neatly embedded within the overall structure of the shimmering new church.²

The reconstruction of the Frauenkirche raises many questions about authenticity. Many tourists who now visit the church fail to realize that it is not the eighteenth-century structure; for them, it symbolizes only the beauty of Dresden. Yet, for those who know the story of the building, it stands as an inauthentic symbol, what art historian Richard Shiff calls an “original copy,” a hybrid of past and present, lying somewhere in between.³ Shiff argues that, in this age when objects are so easily reproduced, the original idea matters more than the original object. Thus, a replica of an innovative artwork or structure still contains the originality of the first version. This is problematic in the case of the Frauenkirche, where the original building contained layers of history that a copy can never fully encapsulate. But what if a building has no authentic roots or history? What if it is crafted from the start as an artifice? This last line of inquiry leads to the central focus of this paper: Sanderson Miller’s eighteenth-century follies — new structures built to look as if they are already in a state of deterioration — and their status as exotic, temporally displaced objects.

A handful of scholars have explored Miller’s penchant for mimicking ruined thirteenth- and fourteenth-century towers and castles throughout the 1740s-60s. In 1964, a doctoral candidate in architectural history at the University of Cambridge, H.W. Hawkes, wrote his dissertation on Miller. In his lengthy study, Hawkes discusses Miller’s main works and the process-

Churches as War Memorials (Cheam, Surrey: The Architectural Press, 1945).

² To learn more about the Frauenkirche’s reconstruction, see: Christianne Hertel, “Beyond In/Authenticity: The Case of Dresden’s Frauenkirche,” in Joan Ockman and Solomon Frausto, eds., *Architourism: Architecture as a Destination for Tourism* (New York and Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2005), 42-50. In her essay on the reconstruction process, Hertel focuses on authenticity and symbolism. She argues that the manner in which the church was rebuilt ultimately constitutes a destruction of historical consciousness and collective memory. She explains that, though the old stones can currently be distinguished from the shiny new ones, they will eventually all look the same, and the ruin will be subsumed and forgotten completely.

³ Richard Shiff, “Original Copy,” *Common Knowledge* 3 (Spring 1994): 88-107.

es behind their designs, including the ongoing correspondence between Miller and his various clients. Interested largely in cataloguing Miller's works, Hawkes concentrates more on the back-and-forth between client and architect than on the final products of Miller's efforts; he does not analyze the structures' connotations or implications in a meaningful way.⁴ In a continued effort to make Miller more well-known, Hawkes went on to decipher and edit the diaries that Miller kept during the late-1740s and 1750s, and they were finally published by the Dugdale Society in 2005. Similarly to Hawkes's dissertation, these diaries say more about Miller's daily activities than his artistic motivations. They chronicle everything from his reading of the Greek Testament in the morning to whom he dined with in the evening, and though Miller passively mentions his ongoing projects, he rarely seems engrossed in his own creations.⁵ The most interesting research on Miller has been done in the last twenty years by various architectural and landscape historians, including Jennifer Meir, David Adshead and David Stewart, all of whom are concerned with the politics of the amateur architect and his clients.

Though the forms and political nature of Miller's mock ruins have been examined, no one has seriously considered the follies as exotic objects. This paper will rectify this oversight by arguing that, though these phony ruins held political significance for a few key figures, many eighteenth-century viewers, and most present-day ones, can view the buildings as the intersection of the picturesque and the exotic in the vein of cultural analyst Victor Segalen's temporal exoticism and anthropologist Peter Mason's notion of the decontextualized hybrid as exotic. As such, this paper is less involved with a formal analysis of Miller's eighteenth-century ruins, the primary project of Hawkes and others, than it is with investigating them from a new vantage-point. In exploring Miller's three most famous ruins — at Radway, Hagley, and Wimpole — within the larger trend for picturesque gardens, as well as within the framework of exoticist literature and theory, this essay offers

⁴ Hawkes's dissertation aims for breadth over depth. His stated goal is to "catalogue the architectural work of Sanderson Miller" and document his correspondence with clients. Over 900 letters to Miller from his friends are kept at the Warwick Record Office, and Hawkes has reproduced many excerpts from them. The dissertation, "Sanderson Miller of Radway, 1716-1780, Architect," is available online at: <http://www.sandersonmiller.com/architectural-work-index.htm>, accessed January 29, 2011.

⁵ See Sanderson Miller and William Hawkes ed., *The Diaries of Sanderson Miller of Radway, Together with His Memoir of James Menteath* (Bristol, UK: The Dugdale Society, 2005). This diary, originally written in 1749-57, is full of numerous abbreviations and symbols, making it somewhat cryptic. It discusses daily interactions more often than artistic intent; however, it still offers valuable insight into Miller's character.

a new lens through which to view these oft-considered structures.

As Peter Mason explains in his book *Infelicities*, “The exotic is produced by a process of decontextualization and recontextualization....To the extent that this fit is infelicitous, the exotic is never at home.”⁶ A structure in the style of a ruined medieval tower built in the mid 1700s has been taken out of its original context and given a new one in a different epoch. In the end, the structure is at home in neither the thirteenth nor the eighteenth century. This itinerant quality affords Miller’s sham ruins their various interpretations, including one that portrays them as exotic in their inability to be neatly slotted into one historical moment. Though the original medieval tower and the “ruined” folly are both British, there remains a temporal gap between the medieval context and the later eighteenth-century sham. It is this distance that creates a degree of exoticism. As Mason explains, “Like a cosmetic, the exotic comes in a variety of thicknesses. Roughly speaking, the distance between the original context and the new context into which the exoticized object is inserted is a measure of its degree of exoticism.”⁷ The distance here may be purely temporal, yet it remains significant, for as Segalen reminds his readers, “exoticism does not only exist in space, but is equally dependent on time.”⁸ Along with this temporal exoticism comes a certain elusiveness; one cannot understand these structures completely just by looking at them. This mysterious quality is exactly what makes them attractive.

In order to slightly demystify Miller’s follies and the overall trends that encompass them, I will briefly cover the history of sham ruins and their place within picturesque English landscapes. The earliest known faux ruins were built in the classical style in the Duke of Urbino’s park at Pesaro, Italy, in 1530. Unfortunately, these ruins no longer exist, but about one hundred years later, Bernini constructed the earliest surviving mock ruins at Palazzo Barberini, in Rome, where he purposefully assembled a bridge lacking a keystone to create slippage. Though there are other examples throughout Italy, France and Germany, the vogue for sham ruins took off most dramatically in eighteenth-century England, where ruined or imperfect

⁶ Peter Mason, *Infelicities: Representations of the Exotic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 6.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁸ Victor Segalen, *Essay on Exoticism: An Aesthetics of Diversity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 18.

structures were becoming an integral part of the picturesque landscape.⁹

According to British art historian Christopher Woodward, “No one invented the Picturesque. In retrospect, it can be understood as a confluence of philosophers, poets, and painters whose ideas flowed in the same direction.”¹⁰ Beginning in the early eighteenth century, the English landscape was transformed by a new appreciation for controlled wildness, which was associated with the notion of British political freedom (as opposed to French tyranny), and a desire to create physical landscapes that mimicked landscape paintings.¹¹ The term Picturesque, derived from the Italian word *Pittoresco*, literally means “after the manner of painters,” and as Christopher Hussey, an early scholar of English landscapes and vernacular architecture, states, picturesque landscapes were meant to “depict those aspects of nature that painters could see more easily than ordinary men.” Hussey explains that the picturesque developed out of the Grand Tour, which became popular during the late seventeenth-century, taking many British aristocrats to Italy, where they experienced Italian landscape paintings, full of ruins and salient juxtapositions, for the first time. By 1730, according to Hussey, the vogue of the picturesque had taken hold, and thence passed gradually through poetry, painting, gardening and architecture, changing humanity’s aesthetic relation to nature from intellectual to purely visual. For Hussey, the picturesque was a necessary prelude to the Romantic period as it shifted emphasis from reason to emotion; it enabled the viewer to “form the habit of feeling through the eye.”¹² This sentiment led numerous eighteenth-century poets and philosophers to articulate that an open, seemingly unruly landscape was more visually pleasing than a classically ordered one.

There are several precursors to the true picturesque landscape. In 1712, the poet Joseph Addison wrote “The Pleasures of Imagination” for the journal *The Spectator*. There, he

⁹ Christopher Woodward, *In Ruins: A Journey through History, Art and Literature* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 140.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 121

¹¹ In 1712, the third Earl of Shaftesbury wrote his Letter Concerning the Art or Science of Design, in which he called for the creation of a national style based on freedom and Whig oligarchy. This is cited in David Watkin, *The English Vision: The Picturesque in Architecture, Landscape & Garden Design* (New York: Harper & Row: 1982), 5. However, Watkin argues that, “It may be more accurate to see the political interpretation as a rhetorical justification after the event, rather than a guiding inspiration from the start.”(1)

¹² Christopher Hussey, *The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View* (London: Archon Books, 1927), 4-5.

explained his preference for wildness quite clearly: "I would rather look upon a Tree in all its Luxuriancy and Diffusion of Boughs and Branches, than when it is thus cut and trimmed into a Mathematical figure."¹³ Fourteen years later, the poet John Dyer wrote his well-known elegy, "Grongar Hill," which approached an actual landscape as a sequence of framed images for the first time. The opening line of each stanza introduces a successive stage of Dyer's ascent of Grongar Hill in South Wales, so that the reader experiences the sensation of controlled movement:

About his chequer'd sides I wind...
 Now, I gain the mountain's brow,...
 Old castles on the cliffs arise,...
 Below me trees unnumber'd rise...¹⁴

Dyer achieved with language what Italian painters had been doing for centuries and what British landscape gardeners would commence shortly thereafter: he created a landscape that was meant to be experienced in distinct stages, with choreographed surprises scattered throughout. Dyer's long meditation on Grongar Hill is purely descriptive of what he sees and feels; like picturesque landscapes, it lacks analysis or philosophical intent. His pleasure, and thus the pleasure of the reader, is experienced viscerally rather than intellectually, as is the pleasure of exotic times and places.

Every respectable English gentleman required an expansive landscape to titillate his guests' senses, as travel to one another's estates became more common in the mid-eighteenth century. English garden historian Jennifer Meir explains that slow and strenuous travel conditions required guests to stay for many days at a time, during which time they would explore the estate as a form of rural entertainment.¹⁵ With few available diversions, well-planned, emotive landscapes became near necessities for England's elite, many of whom were familiar with the ideas of philosopher Edmund Burke. As Burke states in his *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, encounters that direct the viewer to thoughts of self-perpetuation are beautiful, while

¹³ Quoted in Woodward, 122. In stating his disdain for the tree "trimmed into a mathematical figure," Addison is rejecting the highly manicured French garden that had previously been in style in England as well.

¹⁴ John Dyer, "Grongar Hill," 1726. The Poem was first published in *Miscellaneous Poems and Translations*, compiled by Richard Savage in 1726. Excerpts of it are now available at: <http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Texts/grongar.html>, accessed February 2, 2011.

¹⁵ Jennifer Meir, "Sanderson Miller and the Landscaping of Wroxton Abbey, Franborough Hall and Honington Hall," *Garden History* 25, no. 1 (Summer 1997): 81.

those that spawn thoughts of self-preservation are sublime.¹⁶ Burke's influential text was important in helping people understand their reactions to natural phenomena, and it guided garden designers in their manipulation of peoples' emotions. Following upon Burke's discoveries, gardeners juxtaposed beauty with the sublime to create landscapes that stimulated feelings of comfortable pleasure followed by awe, and at times, even fear.

An important step in the blending of these two was the replacement of the wall, which had previously separated the man-made garden from raw nature, with the less obtrusive fosse, or ditch. In 1770, Horace Walpole deemed the destruction of the wall the cornerstone of modern gardening, for it led to the free flow of neatly manicured lawn into rustic country, a step so astonishing "that the common people called them 'Ha! Ha's!' to express their surprise at finding a sudden and unperceived check to their walk."¹⁷ The creation of the Ha-Ha led to the popularity of the picturesque landscape, which offered visitors excitement and sparked a desire to explore that which was not fully exposed. As Uvedale Price wrote in his 1794 *Essay on the Picturesque*: "The effect of the picturesque is curiosity...By its variety, its intricacy, its partial concealments, it excites that active curiosity which gives play to the mind..."¹⁸

Like the exotic, the picturesque provokes questions only to deflect them, eventually leaving them unanswered. As Mason

¹⁶ Edmund Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (Menston, England: The Scholar Press Ltd, 1970), 120-1. First published in 1759 by R. and J. Dodsley. Burke connects the "beautiful" with notions of pleasure, attractiveness, gentleness, and self-propagation, while he ties the "sublime" to difficulty, pain, fear and the infinite. Though Burke's book was not published until 1759, it is likely that many of his ideas were circulating previously in the form of essays, and were thus instrumental in the creation of earlier picturesque landscapes.

¹⁷ Horace Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, vol. IV, ed. James Dalway (London: Shakespeare Press, 1828), 263-4. Walpole further elucidates, "How rich, how gay, how picturesque the face of the country! The demolition of the walls laying open each improvement, every journey is made through a succession of pictures." Conversely, in her article "Wildness in the English Garden Tradition," environmental historian, Isis Brook, argues that the ha-ha may also indicate a desire to dominate all of nature as opposed to merely enclosed gardens.

¹⁸ Uvedale Price, *An Essay on the Picturesque: as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful* (London: J. Robson, 1796), 53. Excerpts of Price's essay can be found in Harry Francis Malgrave, *Architectural Theory* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 307-12. Though Price was instrumental in our present-day formation of the picturesque, his writings, like William Gilpin's, fall at the end of the eighteenth century, too late to have affected Miller and his contemporaries. Yet, they may be important to a nineteenth-century or modern interpretation of the ruins.

explains, "The lure of the exotic is...to defer the gaze elsewhere, but to a site which is not a site."¹⁹ This deferred gaze occurs throughout the picturesque landscape, but is perhaps nowhere more potent than in Sanderson Miller's mock ruins. Mason's words can easily be applied to Miller's work: "By assuming the form of a representation, [the object or the site] acts as such without revealing that for which it stands..."²⁰ Representing but not embodying the past, Miller's ruins reveal little about the Gothic era or the passage of time; instead, they are difficult to place within a chronological scheme because of their hybridity, which, as Mason explains, results in the creation of "a composite being which is incapable of attribution. It cannot be placed within any existing scheme."²¹ Miller's sham ruins are complex due to their composite nature, unlike real ruins, which provide clear-cut examples of Segalen's temporal exoticism.

As an especially important aspect of picturesque landscapes, veritable ruins are clearly attributed to the past. In their antique, crumbling status, they not only offer meaningful contrasts to new buildings, but they also generate a strong gut response, immediately causing one to contemplate his or her mortality.²² Upon visiting Rome in 1724, Dyer wrote a letter home to his family in which he commented on the power of ruins to evoke responses that an intact structure simply cannot:

There is a certain charm that follows the sweep of time, and I can't help thinking the triumphal arches more beautiful now than ever they were...something so pleasing in their weeds and tufts of myrtle and something in them altogether so greatly wild, that mingles with art...adds certain beauties that could not be before imagined, which is the cause of surprise no modern building can give.²³

Many eighteenth-century English families had authentic ruins on their estates — Henry VIII had seized the ruins of over 800 medieval abbeys and sold them all over the English countryside only two centuries before. Though these ruined fragments were not approached with curiosity for at least 150 years, by

¹⁹ Mason, 163.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Many writers deal with the power of ruins and their value as *memento mori*. Two excellent texts are: Thomas J. McCormick, *Ruins as Architecture: Architecture as Ruins* (Louisville: Allen R. Hite Art Institute, 1999), and Rose Macaulay, *Pleasure of Ruins* (New York: Walker and Company, 1966).

²³ Quoted in Woodward, 123.

the mid 1700s they were highly valuable, and those people who were not lucky enough to own bona fide ruins opted to erect imitations.

In 1729, the two earliest British artificial ruins were assembled in King Alfred's Hall in Cirencester Park and at Fawley Court, near Henley. By the late eighteenth century, over thirty sham ruins had been constructed in English landscape gardens, most of them in the Gothic idiom, and many of them by Sanderson Miller. Of these sham ruins, travel writer Rose Macaulay says: "Whatever building we see in decay, we naturally contrast its present to its former state, and delight to ruminate on the comparison. It is true that such effects properly belong to real ruins; they are however, [also] produced in a certain degree by those which are fictitious..."²⁴ Such ruminations were supposedly encouraged by Miller and his clients, who expected their follies to work according to the recently popularized "Theory of Association," which stated that architecture could be invested with moral or political significance linked to historical events. According to founder of the Royal Academy, Joshua Reynolds, architecture could trigger "the imagination by means of association of ideas...as we have naturally a veneration for antiquity, whatever building brings to our remembrance ancient customs and manners, ... such as the Castles of the Barons of ancient Chivalry, is sure to give delight."²⁵

Various scholars have argued that sham ruin builders were attempting to conjure these sorts of associations, for, in the mid-eighteenth century, medieval defensive architecture was mentally linked to notions as diverse as political independence, chivalry, and England's Catholic past. Architectural historians David Stewart and David Adshead have differing opinions regarding the political nature of Miller's follies. In Stewart's article about the erection of Gothic sham ruins following the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745, he argues that these ruins were produced as "attacks on England's Catholic and baronial past...they were monuments of ridicule and images of just destruction."²⁶ He describes how the Jacobite rebellions — a series of military campaigns attempting to restore the Catholic Stuart monarchs to the thrones of Scotland and England — prompted a fear of the return of papal power to England, and thus a return to the Gothic past.

²⁴ Macaulay, 29. She goes on to explain that, "...though the impressions are not so strong, they are exactly similar."

²⁵ Joshua Reynolds is quoted in David Adshead, "The Design and Building of the Gothic Folly at Wimpole, Cambridgeshire," *The Burlington Magazine* 140, no. 1139 (February 1998): 76.

²⁶ David Stewart, "Political Ruins: Gothic Sham Ruins and the '45," *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 55, no. 4 (December 1996): 400.

For enlightened Whigs, a reversion to feudalism and a faith-based government was not only antithetical to their belief system, but a reactionary move that threatened to extinguish centuries of progress. Thus, after the final Jacobite uprising was quashed in 1745, Stewart asserts, "Gothic sham ruins stood, not in praise of medieval culture, but as a warning to those who might attempt to rebuild a culture of abbeys and divine right kings."²⁷ By showing it in ruins, present leaders were proving their own triumph over and opposition to the past. Conversely, David Adshead argues that medieval defensive architecture was appropriated partially out of an admiration for the baronial past. He contends that faux castles were meant to "evoke the freedoms...of a chivalrous, provincial nobility whose struggle for political liberty had resulted in the signing of the Magna Carta."²⁸

In truth, it seems that each of Miller's follies needs to be examined as a separate entity, replete with its own style, intentions, and associations. Miller's first ruin of note is the tower that he built on his own Edgehill Estate in Radway Grange, Warwickshire, which he inherited at the age of 20. Raised by a prosperous Branbury wool merchant, Miller was fortunate enough to attend Oxford University, where he was afforded access to the upper crust of British society, individuals who would later become his friends and patrons.²⁹ It was at Oxford that Miller acquired a romantic nostalgia for the medieval period and the seventeenth century after studying under the Jacobite William King at St. Mary Hall. He knew that King Charles I and his royalist troops had passed through Radway on their way to victory in the 1642 battle of Edgehill, and as an antiquarian, he was eager to bring out the historical associations of his land. When Miller was twenty-two, he built a viewing platform from which to survey the field of battle, and in 1743, he built Egge Cottage, which resembles the remains of a great fortress with round corner bastions and small gothic windows.³⁰ Yet, the most significant improvement that Miller made to his estate was the construction of his tower, begun in 1745, which stands on the exact place where King Charles I is reputed to have raised his sword, charging his men on in the name of absolute monarchy.³¹

²⁷ Ibid., 400.

²⁸ Adshead, 76.

²⁹ Mier, "Sanderson Miller," 81.

³⁰ Hawkes, 26. Hawkes mentions that Miller would have built more had he not been hampered by a lack of funds early on.

³¹ Watkin, 50.

Completed in 1747, Edgehill Tower is octagonal with Gothic niches and associated ruins.³² Modeled upon the fourteenth-century Guy's Tower of nearby Warwick Castle, Miller's version was interiorly decorated with the heraldry of the old Saxon heptarchy and shields of local noble families.³³ Originally, the tower stood alone, but in 1749, a ruinous wall, shattered and punctuated with a variety of medievalized windows, was erected alongside it. The wall is praised by Reverend Richard Jago in his laudatory poem, "Edge Hill:" the "mould'ring wall, well taught to counterfeit the waste of time, to solemn thought excite, and crown with graceful pomp the shaggy hill."³⁴ It was also well-received by the many guests that Miller entertained at his home in formal and informal gatherings throughout the early 1750s.³⁵

On September 3, 1750, Miller held a grand ball to celebrate the opening of his tower. This date is significant for it marked the anniversary of Oliver Cromwell's death, which occurred in a victorious battle against the Stuart King, Charles I. Sir Edward Turner acknowledged Miller's diplomacy in selecting this date, which suited people of all political persuasions, for "on that day Cromwell gloriously carried his two most important victories and did his country the pleasure to quit this life in a storm."³⁶ The ambiguity inherent in Miller's choice of date has caused many scholars to question Miller's motivation and political leanings. While Hawkes, Meir and Adshead assert that Miller was a royalist-sympathizer, filled with a deep veneration for Britain's past, Stewart argues that the tower stands for Cromwell's victory over Catholic rule. Based on his background at Oxford and upon his daily diary entries, it is clear that Miller was a religious man who read the bible every morning, and as such, it seems likely that he would have seen little problem with the notion of papal authority.³⁷ Furthermore, his respect, as opposed to contempt, for the past is evidenced in the fact that the intact tower was constructed before the ru-

³² Edgehill Tower still stands today. Photographs of it and other follies discussed in this article are available on Google Images.

³³ Mier, "Sanderson Miller," 84.

³⁴ Jago's poem is quoted in Hawkes, 28.

³⁵ Miller's many visitors are mentioned in his numerous diary entries.

³⁶ Turner is quoted in Hawkes, 27.

³⁷ Miller, *Diaries*. At the beginning of nearly every diary entry, Miller writes, "Read Greek testament." Though daily bible reading may have been a regular occurrence for men of various political leanings, the fact that Miller mentions his religious observance more often than his architecture is telling. However, Miller never clarifies whether he is Protestant or Catholic, a distinction that certainly would have affected his views on papal power.

ined wall, suggesting that his nostalgia for medievalism took precedence over his desire to show it in shambles. However, it is also possible that Miller lacked strong political inclinations, and his inclusion of both intact and ruined medieval structures was a playful attempt to appeal to all visitors.

Indeed, Miller's contemporaries read his construction as they saw fit, and most interpreted it as a political, rather than a picturesque, object. After attending Miller's opening gala, Sir Edward Turner, a Whig, wrote to Miller propositioning him to build a folly. "May there be no repetition of the storm which attended Cromwell's departure," he exclaimed. "Down is fallen, fallen, fallen the Gothic! ... If you are not too deeply engaged, come and deplore the ruin of my Ruins."³⁸ Miller obliged, free of charge. When Richard Jago wrote "Edge Hill" in 1767, he praised the ruined wall, as mentioned above, but condemned the Gothic age for its "tyranny, intemperance, and warfare of its barons."³⁹ The fact that he arrived at this outrage after looking at Miller's creation is telling: for Jago, Turner, and presumably others, the structure symbolized a denunciation of the Gothic era, yet, as already discussed above, the architectural object sends a mixed message.

This contradictory double-meaning lends Miller's structure its appeal; it prevents viewers from neatly aligning the building with one end of the political spectrum or with a certain way of life. It is a hybrid not only of two time periods, but also of differing political beliefs, which clash to create a deferral of understanding. While Miller's contemporaries read the building either as eulogizing or disparaging the past, the twenty-first century observer, who lacks an investment in Whig or Jacobite ideology, has more trouble classifying it tidily. The tower and its wall become a mysterious, incongruous pair; in line with Mason's notion of the exotic, Miller's hybrid is at home in neither political camp, nor in a specific historical period.

Other sham ruins constructed by Miller are more politically didactic, both because of their form and what we know about their patrons' beliefs. George Lyttleton, who commissioned Miller to design a baronial style Gothic sham ruin, vocally reproached England's gothic era and frequently called for the "destruction of feudal tyranny."⁴⁰ The castle ruin that Miller erected at Lyttleton's Hagley estate, in 1749, included a round, rather than octagonal tower, with special gothic chairs in its interior and a spectacular view from the top. Incidentally, many of the stones used to build the new tower came

³⁸ Turner is quoted in Stewart, 403.

³⁹ Quoted in Stewart, 403.

⁴⁰ Stewart, 403.

from real Gothic ruins nearby, making Lyttleton's contempt for the past all the more palpable and creating a literal amalgam of new and old. Mason writes that in situations of disavowal, "the trace of what is disavowed is not repressed but repeated as something different — a mutation, a hybrid."⁴¹ This is true of Lyttleton's folly, which, when read through the eyes of its owner, seems to openly disavow England's past by appropriating and challenging it through an early use of *détournement*.⁴²

Though the castle is a reiteration of a medieval structure, due to deferral in time and elements of intentional deterioration, it takes on a very different connotation from the type of building it mimics. Formally a piece of England's feudal past, the folly's meaning belongs to the eighteenth century, making it a strange cross-breed that can be read in many ways, depending upon what its viewers choose to notice. Horace Walpole, a fan of the Gothic style, praised the tower for its aesthetic appeal, writing that he "wore out [his] eyes with gazing, [his] feet with climbing, and [his] tongue and [his] vocabulary with commending."⁴³ Yet Lord Hardwicke, who played a direct role in punishing the Jacobites after the uprising of '45 by signing the Acts of Parliament, which abolished all baronial institutions, saw the castle for only its political associations. Upon seeing the Hagley castle, Hardwicke immediately contacted Miller (via Lyttleton) and asked for his own version to be built at his estate in Wimpole. In his letter, Hardwicke requested: "No house or even a room in it, but merely the walls and semblance of an old castle to make an object from [his] house."⁴⁴ Thus, he established the ruin's status as a decorative, symbolic piece rather than a useful structure. Lacking a practical purpose, the Wimpole folly is most interesting today as a picturesque object, acting as a pure visual stimulant.

Though Miller enthusiastically drew up plans for the Wimpole castle in the early 1750s, by the time Hardwicke was ready for construction in 1767, Miller was mentally unstable, leaving the construction of the folly to the family's landscape architect, Lancelot "Capability" Brown, and the architect James Es-

⁴¹ Mason, 161.

⁴² Here, I use the twentieth-century definition of "detourn," meaning to use an element with an established connotation in a way that contradicts that meaning. As per Lyttleton's suggestions, Miller took the meaning of the medieval castle, and 'detourned' it by showing it in a ruined state.

⁴³ Walpole is quoted in Watkin, 51.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Adshead, 77. These letters are also mentioned in Hawkes's dissertation and in Miller's own diary, yet Miller's mention of them is rather difficult to follow, and Adshead's translation is the clearest.

sex.⁴⁵ When the folly was complete, Lady Grey, Hardwicke's wife, complained to her daughter about Brown's alterations to Miller's original plan:

The tower is better for being raised, but with the additions Mr. Brown has quite changed our plan...That is, he has 'Unpicturesqued' it by making it a mere continuous solid object, instead of a Broken one.⁴⁶

Other family and friends were pleased with the folly; two years after its completion, Agneta Yorke wrote to Lady Grey: "Though I saw them begun and finished, I can scarce persuade myself that they are artificial."⁴⁷ These remarks shed light on the true nature of the Wimpole folly. Though it may have held important political associations for Hardwicke, for his wife and her friends, the ruin was purely a picturesque object, aimed at provoking the imagination, creating a sense of surprise and possibly even fear of one's own impending decline. Though its contrived nature was documented and openly admitted, the structure was still meant to be experienced as an authentic ruin.⁴⁸

In hindsight, Wimpole's folly might be the most clear-cut of Miller's main works. By the time of its completion in 1772, the fear of Jacobite uprisings had faded into the past and Whig ideology — a belief that parliament should control the king and not vice versa — was fully entrenched. A romanticized vision of England's past was already beginning to surface and the true Gothic revival was on the horizon. As such, follies did not need to carry political weight; it was enough for them to be created simply as picturesque objects to be gazed upon from afar. Devoid of its political associations, the Wimpole folly acts most like a true ruin, embodying Segalen's notion

⁴⁵ For more information on Miller's mental and physical illness, see the introduction to his diaries. Hawkes places Miller's first severe mental collapse in 1759, after which Miller was sent to a private insane asylum in Hoxton (41).

⁴⁶ Quoted in Adshead, 81.

⁴⁷ Quoted in Adshead, 83.

⁴⁸ This raises the possibility that the ruin was built as a means of adding pedigree to Hardwicke's estate, which lacked real ruins. Hardwicke, who had risen through the governmental ranks rather quickly, had little familial status, and ruins were sure to add a sheen of patina to his new money. Though this motivation is certainly plausible, it does not seem probable, given the fact that the ruin's inauthenticity was frequently mentioned by Hardwicke's own family members. Instead, it seems more likely that Hardwicke and his wife wanted to create a picturesque object that also carried political associations for some of his political allies.

of temporal exoticism, even if it does so through fabricated means.

In his thought-provoking work, *In Ruins: A Journey Through History, Art, and Literature*, Woodward notes that ruins are generally more interesting for the puzzles they present than the truths they unveil. Even if he is correct, there seems to be something particularly disingenuous about Miller's structures, which, as a whole, attempted to capitalize upon their own hybridity. The faux ruins played on viewers' knowledge of their newness and the political associations it carried, while still wanting to evoke a reverence that is generally reserved for authentic antiquities. Towards the end of his book, Woodward muses: "a ruin is placed in juxtaposition with a new building in order to tell a story, a dynamic version of 'before and after.'"⁴⁹ Yet, in Miller's ruins the dialogue is internal, the juxtaposition is self-contained.

Like the Frauenkirche, the sham ruins of Radway, Hagley and Wimpole exist as exotic crossbreeds, embodying two distinct time periods and varying ideologies. As Mason aptly states, the exotic "is not something that exists prior to its 'discovery.' It is the very act of discovery which produces the exotic as such."⁵⁰ This is particularly true of Miller's eighteenth-century British follies, which only become exotic when one learns of their confounding counterfeit nature. The deeper one digs, the more he or she learns of the ruins' ability to embody multiple contradictions--old and new, medieval and enlightened, nostalgic and critical. For the twenty-first-century viewer especially, it is this paradoxical nature that makes Miller's work both unsettling and enticing.

⁴⁹ Woodward, 140.

⁵⁰ Mason, 1.