

70-24,460

COLEMAN, William Emmet, 1942-
ON THE DISCRIMINATION OF GOTHICISMS.

The City University of New York, Ph.D., 1970
Language and Literature, general

University Microfilms, A XEROX Company, Ann Arbor, Michigan

© Copyright by William Emmet Coleman 1970

ON THE DISCRIMINATION OF GOTHICISMS

By

WILLIAM EMMET COLEMAN

A Dissertation submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in English in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
The City University of New York.

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

May 8, 1970
date

Coleman O. Parsons
Chairman, Examining Committee

May 20, 1970
date

Frank Brady
Executive Officer

Coleman O. Parsons
Thomas McGarland
J. Ridenour
Supervisory Committee

May 8, 1970

The City University of New York

HEDVIGÆ UXORI

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. THE CRITICISM	1
II. ENLIGHTENMENT GOTHICISM	48
III. GOTHICISM OF SENSIBILITY	115
IV. ROMANTIC GOTHICISM	228
BIBLIOGRAPHY	264

CHAPTER I: THE CRITICISM

If one were to judge the critics of Gothic literature, many of them must be categorized as trimmers. Their fault has been a refusal to consider Gothic literature seriously. Instead, they have tended to regard it as an example of vulgar popular taste. By neither praising nor blaming the form, they deny it a measure of existence. As a result, Gothic literature is made to suffer those most damaging attitudes; condescension, indifference, and neglect.

These attitudes were strong in Saintsbury's remarks about the classics of Gothic prose. In 1913 Saintsbury described The Castle of Otranto as, "preposterous, desultory, tedious, clumsy, dull. But it made people... shudder: and the shudder was exactly what they wanted..."¹ Saintsbury has even less respect for Clara Reeve's Old English Baron (1777), which he calls boring and without a spark of genius.² In describing Matthew Gregory Lewis's The Monk (1795, he repeats the common Victorian judgment that the novel is indecent.³ He blames Mrs. Radcliffe for plot twisting⁴ and Godwin for "an only too natural dullness and languor of general story"⁵ in St. Leon (1799).

¹George Saintsbury, The English Novel (London, 1913 repr. 1931), p. 156.

²Ibid., p. 157.

³Ibid., p. 159.

⁴Ibid., p. 152.

⁵Ibid., p. 169.

He dismisses Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1818) while he condemns her husband's Zastrozzi and St. Irvyne.⁶ Saintsbury concludes his odd kind of praise for Charles Robert Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer (1820). Maturin is the chief novelist of the Gothic school, "...but it is doubtful whether he had many other gifts as a novelist..."⁷

Saintsbury credits the Gothic novelists with certain minor innovations in the English novel: they were good in creating atmosphere and their plots were characteristically ingenious. But Saintsbury's descriptions of Gothic fiction are shot through with the attitude that the form never achieved more than vulgar appeal, that it never produced more than the "tricks of the trade".⁸ Besides this, lurking in Saintsbury's work is a certain moral disapproval of Gothic fiction. For Saintsbury, its very preoccupation with sex and violence disqualifies the Gothic novel from any consideration as serious literature.

Saintsbury expressed an outmoded and somewhat extreme set of attitudes about Gothic fiction. But his indifference about the form and his glib certainty that it merits no serious critical consideration prevailed long after him. Percy Lubbock and E. M. Forster, for example, expressed the view in negative terms in the 1920s. Lubbock, in The

⁶Ibid., p. 224.

⁷Ibid., p. 186.

⁸Ibid., p. 162.

Craft of Fiction (1922), and Forster, in Aspects of the Novel (1927)⁹, passed judgment on Gothic fiction by ignoring it. Both works considered the novel in its various forms from Defoe and Richardson to Joyce and Gide. Yet neither one referred to a single Gothic novel or novelist.

This implied judgment by neglect is even more apparent in Aspects of the Novel. Forster's seventh chapter, describes the prophetic novel. The novelist's theme "is the universe, or something universal, but he is not necessarily going to 'say' anything about the universe; he proposes to sing, and the strangeness of song arising in the halls of fiction is bound to give us a shock."¹⁰ Forster includes among the prophetic novels Wuthering Heights, Moby Dick, and The Brothers Karamazov. Yet he neglects even to mention The Mysteries of Udolpho, The Monk, or Melmoth the Wanderer, which are the proto-novels of the prophetic tradition.

Other critics have also been less than kind to Gothicism. In Book IV or A Literary History of England, Samuel Chew describes the imitators of Lewis and Mrs. Radcliffe as "...the sub-literary depths of romanticism... into whose noisome fastness we need not descend."¹¹ Elsewhere he remarks that "...the lower levels of romanticism..."

⁹Percy Lubbock, The Craft of Fiction, rev. ed. New York, 1931; E. M. Forster; Aspects of the Novel, New York 1927.

¹⁰Forster, p. 181.

¹¹Samuel Chew, The Nineteenth Century and After, Book IV of A Literary History of England, ed. A. C. Baugh, (New York, 1948), p. 1196.

produced mere spectreballads and 'Gothicism'...¹² The best of the Gothic writers fare not much better in Chew's estimation. Chew's judgments resemble Saintsbury's combination of faint praise and stronger blame. Of Mrs. Radcliffe's Mysteries of Udolpho, he says:

It was beyond her ability, and aside from her purpose, to people her stage with convincing human beings; the dialogue put into the mouths of her characters is of a stiltedness that must be sampled to be imagined. But there is no denying the effectiveness of her tenebrous landscape and atmosphere.¹³

Chew's judgment of Mrs. Radcliffe's next novel, The Italian, is similar. "The contrasting scenes of Neapolitan loveliness and the dark recesses of the great abbey are managed admirably. But the modern reader finds it difficult to stomach the melodrama, crudities of drawing, and incredible complexities of iniquity."¹⁴

Matthew Lewis's Monk demonstrates for Chew, "... a psychopathic condition perhaps inherent in the extremes of the romantic temperament. ... Or (to regard the matter with less gravity), The Monk may be considered the dream of an 'oversexed' adolescent, for Lewis was only twenty when he wrote it."¹⁵ Condescending remarks such as these are unfortunately common in criticism of Gothic fiction.

Chew continues his cursory, breezy tone in discussing Mary Shelley. He merely mentions her work and does not criticize it. Only

¹²Ibid., p. 1127.

¹³Ibid., p. 1194.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 1195.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 1195, n. 11.

Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer merits any of Chew's praise. It is "...the greatest novel of the school of terror... [it] is not imitative, is not a failure, and it has strongly impressed various great writers."¹⁶ But that is all the effort Chew spends on behalf of the greatest of the Gothic novels; it was not a failure and it impressed various great writers. Nowhere has Chew suggested why the novel -- or any Gothic novel, for that matter--should be impressive.

David Daiches's two volume Critical History of English Literature (1960) is the latest exponent of the idea that Gothic literature is sensational, unimportant, and not to be treated seriously. The Gothic novel, says Daiches, "...is the product of a dilettante interest in the potentialities of the Middle Ages for picturesque horror."¹⁷ The Castle of Otranto, he insists, "...is pure, if ingenious, tushery..."¹⁸ In fact he argues that the whole Gothic tradition was important only insofar as it developed into more fruitful channels, such as the medievalism of Keats. With a certain kind of amazement, Daiches notes that the Gothic novels were overvalued in the early nineteenth century. Such was the power of Walpole's "fake medievalism" that it "helped to lead [Scott's] imagination astray, for Scott's medieval novels are his least good and he is at his best in dealing with the recent past of his own country."¹⁹

¹⁶Ibid., p. 1196

¹⁷David Daiches, A Critical History of English Literature, Vol. II (New York, 1960), p. 740.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 741

Daiches's discussion of Mrs. Radcliffe exists as much to praise Jane Austen, as for any other reason:

[Mrs. Radcliffe's] novels, while historically inaccurate and psychologically crude, have a certain verve in the employment of standard Gothic properties--secret passages, vaults, sliding panels, old moldering manuscripts unexpectedly discovered, all the tricks so happily laughed at by Jane Austen in Northanger Abbey.²⁰

Daiches here echoes Saintsbury, who praised Mrs. Radcliffe's mastery of the "tricks of the trade." But this, too can only be described as a rather odd kind of praise.

Daiches ignores Mary Shelley and concludes with a judgment of Maturin. He echoes Chew in praising Melmoth the Wanderer. It is "...the richest of all English terror novels in its combination of the usual Gothic apparatus with a psychological sense of evil and a power of suggestion that earlier practitioners of the genre lacked."²¹ His unkindest cut of all, however, comes with his final, slighting remarks. He first suggests that the novel can reach the level of mature art, only with great difficulty:

But, though the terror novel can in its most sophisticated form generate considerable power and even subtlety, it remains in itself a crude form of fiction, requiring careful blending with and subordination to other elements if it is to reach the level of mature art.²²

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., p. 742.

²²Ibid., The point to be made here is that Daiches is an utterly typical representative of the attitude that the Gothic novel is a limited form per se. In 1932, J. M. S. Tompkins wrote: "Even in the hands of its finest exponent, the Gothic novel was precariously balanced over the abysses of the ludicrous and disreputable, so that a movement in any

Such a statement can be made of any type of novel--the historical novel, for example--but the strength of his assertion indicates Daiches's aversion to the Gothic novel. Daiches's last sentence about the Gothic novel provides an apt indication of our argument. "Mere sensationalism however," he says, "can always count on a certain amount of popularity, and this form of fiction has never wholly died out."²³ Gothic fiction, in other words, has seldom moved from the realm of the cheap, the vulgar, and the merely sensational.

As recently as 1965 Harrison R. Steeves repeated this kind of disdain for the Gothic novel in Before Jane Austen. For Steeves, Walpole and Clara Reeve deserve no praise and Mrs. Radcliffe and "Monk" Lewis, with their several faults, deserve but little praise. He first disposes of Walpole's efforts through a bad exercise in the biographical fallacy: we all know that Walpole was a dilettante and we all know that dilettantes never persevere in their interests as do serious and sincere artists; therefore Walpole's Castle of Otranto lacks artistic sincerity and seriousness.

Except as a sort of literary landmark, it is impossible to take Walpole's story seriously. In literary charm or grace, it is completely wanting. The dilettante has rarely either the energy or the sincerity of the artist and Walpole's

direction must confound it. It was folly, run up without any consideration of the needs of reasonable beings, a glaring and picturesque facade on the edge of a precipice, uninhabitable by flesh and blood, or even by authentic ghosts. Such as it was, however, it was for the time being immensely stimulating to the cramped fancy of the age. "J. M. S. Tompkins, The Popular Novel in England 1770-1800 (London, 1932, repr. Lincoln, Nebraska, 1961), p. 247.

²³Ibid., p. 742.

dip into fiction was no more than might be expected from a literary dandy and a self-appointed arbiter of taste.²⁴

Poor Clara Reeve also receives short shrift. "She wrote, however, completely without inspiration; so her attempt to improve Gothic effects for the taste of the more literal-minded resulted in mere prosiness."²⁵

As has been the habit of recent criticism, Before Jane Austen finds positive values in the novels of Mrs. Radcliffe. But Steeves first suggests that her work up to The Italian merely specialized in alarms and perturbations, while even that novel makes her only "a novelist of sorts..."²⁶ In The Italian, her "mastery of descriptive effect is one of her significant contributions to the fictions of another century... Yet [the novel] makes a great deal out of very little, and its padding is obvious and inexcusable."²⁷ Steeves finally does argue the importance of Mrs. Radcliffe, however: her influence "is not necessarily expressed in appropriation or explicit imitation of prior art, but in an appreciable debt to the spirit or atmosphere of that art."²⁸ This new "spirit or atmosphere" was Ann Radcliffe's legacy to Poe and to Emily Brontë.

If one group of critics has tended to ignore or to demean the Gothic novel, another has accorded it a certain amount of value. In Cavalcade of the English Novel, Edward Wagenknecht first notes that, although the Gothic novelists contributed to the plot-development of the

²⁴Harrison R. Steeves, Before Jane Austen (New York, 1965), p. 244.

²⁵Ibid., p. 247.

²⁶Ibid., p. 259.

²⁷Ibid., p. 259, 261.

²⁸Ibid., p. 264.

English novel, they failed to connect plot with character. The argument fails to realize that the Gothic novel is generically opposed to strong character-development, for a variety of reasons which we will examine. But Wagenknecht continues:

[The Gothic novelists] contributed to psychology in narrative through their interest in feelings of fear and terror. But their most important contribution was the demonstration they offered that "reason" alone could never control English fiction. They set the novel in the Unseen, fronting squarely that great, impenetrable Mystery which enfolds our little life.²⁹

The description suggests a good deal and might have been the basis of a sensitive study of the Gothic novel. Unfortunately, however, this is Wagenknecht's entire commentary on the form.

Another generally positive critique of the Gothic novel--although one which we must praise with reservations--is in W. L. Renwick's English Literature 1789-1815. Its fault, as far as we are concerned, is its opposition to Lewis, Walpole, and Maturin. Renwick first calls The Monk "mere vulgar ultra-protestant anticlericalism!"³⁰ "The vogue of The Monk, if not its notoriety," Renwick assures us, "was short-lived."³¹ Renwick then offers an explanation for the assertion: "Lewis had exhausted his repertory of horrors in The Monk, and his readers also..."

²⁹Edward Wagenknecht, Cavalcade of the English Novel from Elizabeth to George VI, 2nd ed. (New York, 1950), p. 133.

³⁰W. L. Renwick, English Literature 1789-1815, vol. IX of The Oxford History of English Literature, ed. F. P. Wilson and Bonamy Dobrée (Oxford, 1963), p. 78.

³¹Ibid., p. 79.

It was a personal freak, a game of little imaginative importance even for its author."³²

Renwick's double-barreled attack on Walpole and Maturin is made in the same strong tones. In this case, though, he argues from authority of Scott, whose philosophical bias to deism and rationalism hardly makes him the best critic of Gothic fiction.

Walpole depended, however, on startling his readers, and The Castle of Otranto fails because the shock of alarm occurs at the beginning, and, since acute fear is evanescent, the reader's emotions have subsided long before the end. Lesser writers, and notably Maturin, tried to overcome this basic difficulty by successive attacks on the reader's nerves, but, as Scott remarked, the feelings become hardened, so that more and more powerful shocks are necessary, until the reason, hitherto in willing abeyance, revolts against the extravagance of the images and the whole thing falls to pieces.³³

Now this evaluation contains a variety of questionable assumptions. First it assumes that The Castle of Otranto and Melmoth the Wanderer depend, for their aesthetic value, merely on a "shock" or series of shocks. Renwick's idea is not original, for Sade suggested the same thing in Idée sur les romans (1800). Then it equates such "shock" with a physical shock to the reader's emotions. That is, it does not distinguish between the literary and the aesthetic on one hand and the biological on the other. It assumes that since the body can withstand only a certain number of shocks, the same must be true for the faculties involved in experiencing a novel.

³²Ibid., p. 79.

³³Ibid., p. 88.

Renwick also ridicules the "huddled conclusion" of Melmoth the Wanderer--Melmoth's testament that no one should lose his soul to gain the world.³⁴ Now, this kind of sarcasm seems out of place in serious critical writing. It ridicules art by reducing it to a simplistic theme. Renwick's fault is the same as that of Thomas Rhymer, who described as the moral of Othello that proper Venetian young ladies should avoid elopment with blackamoors and should keep a watchful eye to their linen.

Renwick's real contribution, though, is his description of Ann Radcliffe. Her style was, he says, influenced by contemporary painters of the "picturesque". As a result she tried "to convey from her mind to the reader's a complete concept of the things perceived as they are related in space."³⁵ This application of "painter's style" to prose fiction is particularly evident in The Mysteries of Udolpho. Here, the emotional effect is created "by direct means, without recourse to figures of speech."³⁶

Renwick also defends Mrs. Radcliffe's habit of sprinkling poetry throughout her novels. Mrs. Radcliffe, he argues "captures the reader's attention...by a broad appeal to all his senses, in their

³⁴Ibid., p. 79.

³⁵Ibid., p. 81.

³⁶Ibid., p. 83. See W. Mainwaring's Italian Landscape in 18th Century England (1925), Christopher Hussey's The Picturesque (1927), C. B. Tinker's Painter and Poet (1938), and Sir Kenneth Clark's Landscape into Art (1948) for further discussions of the topic of "painter's style" in prose.

aesthetic extension as well as their primitive being."³⁷ She even tries to appeal to the sense of hearing, by having her heroines compose verse. Finally, Renwick notes a connection between the dramatic form and the Gothic novel--a connection which we will develop. He describes The Italian as:

the dramatic novel which deals with the same stuff as the serious theatre, and appeals to our emotional nature and moral judgment. Her villain Schedoni is a dramatic--or melodramatic--figure presented dramatically; that is, in action and not as a philosophical or psychological or moral demonstration.³⁸

The brief discussions of Gothic fiction that we have considered to this point have been inspired by either of two opinions. The group represented by Saintsbury, Chew, Daiches, and Steeves has either refused to take Gothic fiction seriously or has criticized it as bad literature. The second group, represented by Wagenknecht and Renwick, has no trouble in regarding Gothic fiction as a subject fit for serious study. But it has evaluated that fiction as either limited in its intent or lacking in its accomplishments.

What remains for this survey of critical attitudes, then, is a consideration of those who regard Gothic fiction as having value enough for serious and prolonged study. The first students in this category are the historians of the Gothic novel, Edith Birkhead, Montague Summers, Enio Railo, and Devendra Varma--all of whom have produced book-length studies of Gothic fiction.

³⁷Ibid., p. 88.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 38-39.

The earliest of these histories was Edith Birkhead's The Tale of Terror: A Study of the Gothic Romance (London, 1921).

Although a contemporary critic noticed the lack of concern for aesthetic judgment in the study,³⁹ Miss Birkhead succeeded at least in presenting a comprehensive history of the Gothic. The Tale of Terror succeeded, that is, in describing all of the major and the important minor Gothic classics in historical categories. Chapter II, for example, describes Walpole and Clara Reeve as "The Beginnings of Gothic Romance." Chapter III concerns Mrs. Radcliffe, Chapter IV, Lewis and Maturin, and so on.

The next important critic of the Gothic novel was certainly the most prolific and individualistic. Montague Summers (1880-1948) was a self-styled Roman Catholic priest of unknown origin, a raconteur, and an indefatigable student of literature. His two main contributions to the scholarship of Gothic literature were: The Gothic Quest (1938) (repr. London, 1964) and A Gothic Bibliography (1941) (repr. London, 1964). In both Summers amassed a wealth of detailed lore, gossip, and information about Gothic fiction.

This orientation to detail--often to fascinating and little known detail--is characteristic of the work of Summers. But because of it, Summers can act as an aid to understanding only the history of the Gothic

³⁹Devendra P. Varma quotes a review by Prof. Edith J. Morley, who deplored that the book failed to examine "the motive of terror in art and literature with a view to determining the aesthetic effect of the thrill." The Gothic Flame (New York, 1957; reissued, 1966), p. 7.

novel. When he moves out of his self-contented morass of detail into the realm of aesthetic judgment or when he attempts generalities about literature, Summers's value can become questionable. Robert D. Hume has noted an example of this in a recent PMLA article.⁴⁰ Hume objects to Summers's distinction in The Gothic Quest (pp. 17-18) between that literature which is an expression of life and the literature which leads away from life. Summers calls the latter an expression of the romantic spirit. This kind of naive judgment is surprisingly common in the work of Summers; his value as a critic lies in the loving detail he has lavished in writing the history of the Gothic novel.

Another quality of Summer's was his peculiar obsession with the black arts of witchcraft, demonology, and vampirism. To these interests, he devoted a great deal of learning and enthusiasm. He published The History of Witchcraft and Demonology in 1926, The Geography of Witchcraft in 1927, The Vampire: His Kith and Kin in 1928, The Vampire in Europe in 1929, and Witchcraft and Black Magic in 1946. He also brought out editions of the classics of witchcraft: Matthew Hopkins's Discovery of Witches (1647) and the Malleus Maleficarum of Springer and Kramer (Lyons, 1484) in 1928 and Boguet's Examen of Witches (trans. of Discours des Sorciers) (Lyons, 1608) and Guazzo's

⁴⁰"Gothic versus Romantic: A Revaluation of the Gothic Novel" PMLA 2, LXXXIV (March, 1969), 288-289, n. 31. Robert B. Heilman also quarrels with The Gothic Quest, calling it an "incredibly eccentric history" in "Charlotte Brontë's 'New' Gothic," Victorian Literature: Modern Essays in Criticism ed. Austin Wright (New York, 1961), p. 72.

Compendium Maleficarum (Milan, 1608) in 1929.⁴¹

This bibliographical information about Summers is included because it helps to shed some light on his approach to Gothic literature. In an introduction to the 1961 reprint of The Vampire in Europe, Father Brocard Sewell remarks of Summers: "Rumor and legend had it that he was, or had been, something more than an academic historian of the black arts which he chronicled with such learning and gusto."⁴² Now, to any student of literature educated in the new critical abhorrence of the biographical fallacy, such a remark should be considered irrelevant. We only include it here, because it suggests something of the character of the work of Summers. If one were to criticize Montague Summers for anything, it must be for his lack of aesthetic distance. He was a man absolutely fascinated by his work and completely involved in it. But that fascination and involvement become so strong that they affect his critical judgment. As a result, one finds him accepting, without doubt or hesitation, every story of witchcraft or vampirism that he can cram into his histories. His work on Gothic fiction suffers from much the same infirmity. But there it appears as close to unqualified acceptance of every Gothic novel as a superior work of art. Further, Summers becomes so involved in detailing editions, publishing houses, and revisions

⁴¹The History of Witchcraft was first reprinted in 1956, The Geography of Witchcraft in 1958, The Vampire: His Kith and Kin in 1960, and The Vampire in Europe in 1961 (New Hyde Park, New York). For Summer's writings, see Rossell Hope Robbin's Eve of Witchcraft and Demonology (1959), p. 570

⁴²Summers, The Vampire in Europe (New Hyde Park, New York, 1961), p. viii.

of tremendous numbers of Gothic novels, that he seldom makes any attempt at aesthetic judgment.

This same reliance on the historical method is the fault--for our purposes--of Eino Railo's The Haunted Castle (1927, repr. New York, 1964). Railo's concern is a description of Gothic literature in its relationship to the emergent romanticism of the last decades of the eighteenth century. Thus he subtitles his work A Study of the Elements of English Romanticism. Railo's method is to choose a series of themes that characterize both the Gothic novel and English Romanticism. Among his chapters are "The Haunted Castle," "The Criminal Monk," "The Wandering Jew and the Problem of Never-Ending Life," "The Byronic Hero," "Ghosts and Demoniatic Beings," "Incest and Romantic Eroticism," "The Young Hero and Heroine..." and "Suspense and Terror." What Railo does, in other words, is to provide a fascinating set of materials for a study of the relationship of Gothic fiction to English Romanticism. One fault of the study is an almost necessary doubling back and repetition. A more serious one, noted by contemporary critics of the book,⁴³ is a failure to make any judgment about his history. Railo describes in detail the mutations and development of a series of themes between two distinct periods of literature. But he comes to no conclusions about his findings. In other words, he describes what happened,

⁴³Varma, p. 8 quotes a review by Prof. Edith J. Morley which notes that Railo fails to "make any attempt in his final chapter to sum up and to clarify the conclusions to which his wanderings have led him"... Professor W. L. Phelps added that Railo "does not answer what was the nature of the need that 'horror romanticism' attempted to supply." Ibid.

but he does not say what it means.

This weakness also characterizes Ernest A. Baker's monumental History of the English Novel. Baker's ten volume study does contain a chapter on the Gothic novel,⁴⁴ but that chapter relies entirely on the historical method. Like his predecessors, Baker provides much learned fact, but hardly any judgment at all. "Although methodical and painstaking in exposition, he makes it simple and plausible for the reader by the omission of critical controversies and the absence of any new theories on the genesis or influence of the Gothic novel. It remains only a work of reference and a testimony of the author's learning."⁴⁵

In the most recent history of the Gothic novel, The Gothic Flame (New York, 1957, reissued, 1966), Devendra P. Varma has summarized all the important discussions of Gothic fiction in his first chapter, "Footprints and Shadows: The 'Gothic' Spirit". Besides this, his study includes a comprehensive bibliography of studies of Gothic literature. The most striking feature about Varma's work and the criticism it describes is the predominance of the historical approach. True enough, J. M. S. Thompkins, who described Gothic fiction herself in The Popular Novel in England (1932), notes in her introduction to The Gothic Flame

⁴⁴Ernest A. Baker, The History of the English Novel (1934), vol. V, ch. 8.

⁴⁵Varma, p. 9

notes that Varma does argue the importance of the Gothic novel in the development of English literature.⁴⁶ But a reading of Varma's study indicates that his main concern is the historical development of the form.

The end result of this historical approach is an attempt at describing the Gothic novel in terms of categories. Each of the historical critics describes Horace Walpole and perhaps Clara Reeve in a chapter, on the origins of Gothic fiction. (Varma describes them as representing the Gothic-historical type.) Then the rest of the Gothic novelists are placed in the categories of "Terror Gothic" or "Horror Gothic" derived from Edmund Burke's essay, A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas on the Sublime and Beautiful (1757). The implication here is that terror Gothic, since it is more "refined" and psychologically suggestive, is the better form. "Terror" says Varma,

thus creates an intangible atmosphere of spiritual psychic dread, a certain superstitious shudder at the other world. Horror resorts to a cruder presentation of the macabre: by an exact portrayal of the physically horrible and revolting against a far more terrible background of spiritual gloom and despair.⁴⁷

The great representative of the terror school is the much praised Ann Radcliffe, while Matthew Lewis is the most famous practitioner of the horror school. Finally, historical studies of Gothic fiction describe the Gothic fiction of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as "later

⁴⁶Ibid., p. xi.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 130.

developments" of the form. With few variations,⁴⁸ this approach has tended to predominate.

The drawback of this approach to Gothic fiction is that it is too limited. In general, the critic can study literature in three ways. First, he can employ the historical method, with its dependence on dates, biography, and plot summary. In a word, he can approach literature as it is. Such an approach is the basis and beginning of all scholarship, the factual starting point for all other considerations of the work. Next, the critic can approach literature for the sake of its themes. The concerns here are the philosophical implications of the work, the world view it espouses, and what it tells the reader of his own condition. In a word, the critic can approach literature for what it means. Finally, the critic can approach literature from a theoretical point of view. Here, his concern is for literature acting or functioning as a self-contained unit, without concern for history or theme. (The best example of such an approach is Northrop Frye's Anatomy of Criticism.) In a word, the critic is here concerned with what literature does.

⁴⁸Miss Birkhead, for example, describes Radcliffe's work as "The Novel of Suspense" and Lewis's as "The Novel of Terror", but, mutatis mutandis, she is still pioneering the categories accepted by Summers and Varma. She also distinguishes Beckford's "Oriental Tale of Terror" and Godwin's "Rosicrucian Novel". In "Promenade à travers le roman noir," Revue Minotaure 5 (May, 1934), French critic Maurice Heine describes four types of Gothic: le gothique noir (Walpole, Reeve), le fantastique noir (presumably, The Monk), le réalisme noir (Sade), and le burlesque noir (Northanger Abbey), quoted in Summers, The Gothic Quest, p. 397. The latest attempt is Robert D. Hume's categorization: sentimental Gothic (The Old English Baron), terror gothic (The Mysteries of Udolpho), and historical gothic (Sophia Lee's The

All the book-length studies of Gothic fiction to date have been these historical consideration of what the genre is (i. e. first it is Walpole, then it is the terror school, then the horror school, etc.) Thematic considerations of what the genre means began in the 1920s, and 30s, with Michael Sadleir's Northanger Novels (1927) and Mario Praz's Romantic Agony (1932), and with the critic-advocates of Surrealistic art, such as Andre Breton and Bonamy Dobrée. Their approach to the subject has been developed recently in William Axton's introduction to Melmoth the Wanderer (1961), in Francis R. Hart's English Institute essay "The Experience of Character in the English Gothic Novel" and in Robert Hume's PMLA article "Gothic versus Romantic: A Revaluation of the Gothic Novel" (March, 1969). Finally, the theoretical considerations of Gothic fiction are the most recent work of the critics. Northrop Frye's Anatomy of Criticism (1952) and Angus Fletcher's Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode (1964) treat Gothic works within larger literary contexts, while Robert Heilman's essay on Charlotte Bronte's "new" Gothic (1961) and Irving Malin's New American Gothic (1962) are theoretical considerations of the form per se.

Since this study aims at a thematic and theoretical consideration of Gothic fiction, instead of an historical one, a review of these thematic

Recess). But Hume admits the impossibility of categorizing, and attempts instead to create a new rationale for Gothic fiction--one not based on historical categories.

and theoretical studies is in order. The first important thematic study of the Gothic novels was Michael Sadleir's Northanger Novels (1927). Sadleir's was a pioneering attempt at understanding the Gothic novel in terms other than the merely historical. Sadleir's chief concern is an examination of the seven novels--and the entire genre--satirized by Jane Austen in Northanger Abbey (1817).⁴⁹ For our purposes, Sadleir contributes to an extra-historical understanding of Gothic fiction in two ways. First he describes the Gothic novels as a social phenomenon, arguing that they reflect the political upheaval of the revolutionary period, 1775-1815. (Here, he echoes Andre Breton's remark that they act as a perfect adaptation of a certain historical situation. The idea, of course, originated in Sade's Idée sur les romans.)⁵⁰ Thus, Sadleir observes that the vogue of Gothic fiction (roughly) during that forty year period was in its own way "as much an expression of a deep subversive impulse as [was] the French Revolution." One could, of course, argue with Sadleir's claim⁵¹, but here he at least is attempting to expand the basis for understanding Gothic fiction.

Sadleir also describes the reason for the ruin as one of the

⁴⁹It might best be noted here that Northanger Abbey is a rejection of the excesses of Gothic fiction, and not of the genre itself. Cf. A. Walton Litz, Jane Austen: A Study of Her Artistic Development (New York, 1965), p. 14.

⁵⁰Breton and Sadleir, quoted in Summers, The Gothic Quest, p. 398.

⁵¹Summers rightly criticizes such an easy equation: "A revolution in literature, a revolt against a set and ~~shapeless~~ classicism... is a very different thing from a social revolution." The Gothic Quest, p. 398.

staples of Gothic novel. Here he tries to suggest something of the psychology and something of the world-view that inspires Gothic fiction. For Sadleir, the ruin demonstrates more than the collapse of the feudal order in the Age of Revolution. The ruin "expresses the triumph of chaos over order."⁵² The ruin, as Varma was to remark later, acts as "a constant reminder that there is Death as well as Love."⁵³

If Sadleir sees in Gothic fiction the impulse to political and philosophical visions of chaos, Mario Praz views it as a vehicle for the suppressed erotic sensibilities of the age. Praz remarks in the introduction to the first edition of The Romantic Agony that "the aim of the greater part of this book is a study of Romantic literature...under one of its most characteristic aspects, that of erotic sensibility."⁵⁴ Praz's book, a critical tour de force, is especially important for its description of the erotic current underlying much of Gothic fiction. It suggests how the erotic themes of Gothic fiction were closely related to those of emergent Romanticism.

Another champion of Gothic was the Surrealist critic of two generations ago, Andre Breton. Breton's claim, stoutly opposed by Summers in The Gothic Quest, was that Surrealistic art and Gothic fiction arise from a similar artistic perception and inspiration. Bonamy

⁵²Quoted in Summers, The Gothic Quest, p. 406.

⁵³Varma, p. 231.

⁵⁴Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony, trans. Angus Davidson (2nd ed. repr. New York, 1965), p. vii.

Dobrée has championed this claim, while Devendra Varma spends many pages of The Gothic Quest in arguing for it also. Varma argues that Walpole's method in The Castle of Otranto, for example, is surrealistic:

His manner of 'telescoping' different ages, settings, and characters, his strong manipulation of the sense of contrast, his use of dialogue and style, his story as it unfolds swiftly giving a nightmarish sensation: all these are methods of surrealism in particular. The scenes change with a dramatic swiftness, the incidents evoke a nightmarish sensation, and the whole story has a very dream-like insequence⁵⁵

An attempt like this to describe something of the dynamics and appeal of Gothic fiction can, of course, go awry. Thus, Varma seems to be venturing out of his field in evoking Flemish paintings of the burial of Christ and the modern art of Picasso, Chirico, and (of all people) Chagall⁵⁶ to describe the "surrealism" of Gothic fiction. But at least Breton's claim that the two arts share similar inspiration, world-view, and philosophy is both provocative and capable of further development.

The critical groundwork of Sadleir, Praz, and the Surrealists has come to real fruition during the past few years. William Axton's introduction to Melmoth the Wanderer⁵⁷ is a brilliant and concise description of the preoccupations and themes of Gothic fiction. His primary orientation is to the age from which Gothic emerged. That was an age in which "faith in a rationally ordered universe and in the validity

⁵⁵Varma, p. 69.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 70.

⁵⁷Robert Charles Maturin, Melmoth the Wanderer, ed. William F. Axton, (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1961; repr. 1966).

of human reason as a cognitive instrument was undermined."⁵⁸

In the second half of the eighteenth century, a growing respect for intuitive, imaginative insight resulted in "the exultation of irrational mental activities as the supreme mode of knowing."⁵⁹ This was also the age of great political and social turmoil that resulted in the overthrow of much of the traditional, repressive, and antiquated structures and value systems of the Western world.

Axton sees the expression of both these facts in the Gothic novel. The villain of the Gothic novels, who both fascinated and repelled, evoked in the reader "the contradictory play between the judgment offered by the rational understanding and that presented by intuitive sympathy, two fundamentally opposed modes of insight and assessment."⁶⁰ The aesthetics of the day celebrated intuitive appreciation because it circumvents abstract analysis for "a subconscious realization of the totality of its object"⁶¹ (Thus, note Morgann's 1777 essay on Falstaff.) The Gothic hero-villain, however, created a strong sense of ambiguity in the reader's reactions to the work. The villain was both fascinating and repulsive. These conflicting moral estimates of two differing faculties added emotional intensity to the reader's appreciation of the work.

Axton also sees the Gothic villain as an expression of an historical state of mind.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. vii.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. xi.

⁶¹Ibid.

Equally a victim of despotism and an exploiter of it, [the Gothic villain] has been perverted by an authoritarian environment so that he both turns it to the gratification of his will for power and is twisted by his effort to break away from it or to undermine it.⁶²

These conflicting impulses within the same character are the products of his entrapment within a despotic political and religious system. That same sense of entrapment is expressed in his relationship with the pursued heroine of Gothic fiction. Thus, Axton points out that the characteristic metaphors of that fiction are those of imprisonment, with its resultant paranoia.

The figurative texture of the Gothic novel is a projection of the romantic mind's sense of entrapment in an antiquated culture, its struggle to break from it, and its guilty consciousness of both its participation in obsolete attitudes and its transgressions against traditional standards.⁶³

Axton's evaluation of the Gothic novel is a perceptive discussion of the themes that predominate in the genre.

Francis Russel Hart's essay, "The Experience of Character in the English Gothic Novel,"⁶⁴ is another guide to the major themes of the genre. Hart's essay begins as a celebration of "an overdue return to character or characterology as an essential component of fictional Mimesis"⁶⁵ in contemporary fiction. Beginning, like Axton, from an historical standpoint, he insists that "an understanding of the literature

⁶²Ibid., p. 10.

⁶³Ibid., p. 11.

⁶⁴In Selected Papers from the English Institute, ed. Roy Harvey Pearce (New York, 1968), 83-105.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 84.

of the last two hundred years requires a knowledge of the nature of Gothic."⁶⁶ Gothic literature, he continues, "is the reflection in fiction of the counter-enlightenment premise John Stuart Mill located in the Germano-Coleridgeans: the Enlightenment had erred from a totally inadequate conception of human nature."⁶⁷

Coming back to his discussion of the "return to character", Hart argues against critics who explain the characters of the Gothic novels merely in terms of myth, symbol, or archetype and critics such as Leslie Fiedler who fault the characters as mere projections of unconscious guilt and fear. "Rather than representing a flight from novel to romance," he says, "the Gothic represents a naturalizing of myth and romance into the novel."⁶⁸ He asserts that each of the "demons" of Gothic fiction becomes so "only as a result of the perversion of social love; each has a nature distinct from that demonic role."⁶⁹

What gives the point its full and terrifying truth in an enlightenment context is that the demonic is no myth, no superstition, but a reality in human character or relationship, a novelistic reality... Are there really ghosts? asks Carlyle-Teufelsdröckh. We are ghosts.⁷⁰

According to Hart, the Gothic novel therefore broadened and made more complex the concept of character in the English novel.

The most recent thematic commentator on the Gothic novel is

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 88.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 103.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 97.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 99.

Robert D. Hume. Hume's PMLA article attempts to establish a definition of Gothic literature by contrast with Romantic literature. Hume notes Coleridge's description of the imagination as the faculty that reconciles discordant opposites. Romantic writing reconciles the discordance it faces by the imaginative creation of a "higher order."

Gothic writing... has no such answers and can only leave the "opposites" contradictory and paradoxical. In its highest forms romantic writing claims the existence of higher answers where Gothic can find only unresolvable moral and emotional ambiguity.⁷¹

For our purposes, the definition is too inclusive because it describes merely the predominant type of Gothic fiction. But the description serves at least as a guide to the world-view and thematic viewpoint of most Gothic fiction.

The first of the theoretical critics of Gothic is, naturally, Northrop Frye. Frye first discussed Gothic literature in "Towards Defining an Age of Sensibility."⁷² Frye's essay is essentially an argument against the idea of pre-Romanticism, which he considers an illogical category. The literature of the Age of Sensibility which includes the Gothic novel, was a "literature of process". Such literature involves the reader in a new way, exposing him to the workings of the artist's mind as he is in the process of creating the work. (The works of Macpherson, Smart, and Sterne are examples of the school.) Pity and fear in this literature, through not being oriented toward persons or

⁷¹Hume, p. 290.

⁷²ELH, XXIII (June, 1956), 144-152.

objects, become suffusive. Unobjectified pity becomes the heightened sensibility of the Gothic novels, while unobjectified fear creates their atmosphere of Angst.

In The Anatomy of Criticism, Frye expands the discussion of pity and fear. In Gothic fiction, whose historical mode is low mimetic, pity is communicated as pathos and fear is exploited as pathos in reverse, through terrible and ruthless figures such as Mrs. Radcliffe's Schedoni and Lewis's Ambrosio. The type of character involved is technically called the alazon and is characterized by a conflict between inner and outer life or between experience and inflexible morality.

When viewed from the outside, these characters can be the miles gloriosus, the learned crank, or the obsessed philosopher of comedy.

But it is also possible to take the alazon at his own valuation:

this is done for instance by the creators of the inscrutable gloomy heroes in Gothic trillers, with their wild or piercing eyes and their dark hints of interesting sins. The result as a rule is not tragedy as much as the kind of melodrama which may be defined as comedy without humor. When it rises out of this, we have a study of obsession presented in terms of fear instead of pity: that is, obsession takes the form of an unconditioned will that drives its victim beyond the normal limits of humanity.⁷³

Heathcliff is Frye's example of such a character, driven beyond death through vampirism.

Frye also approaches Gothic fiction in his discussion of archetypal criticism. The Gothic romance is an example of the "mythos of

⁷³Northrop Frye, The Anatomy of Criticism (reissued, New York, 1966), p. 40.

Spring" which is comedy. The sixth and final phase of comedy, for Frye, is the collapse and disintegration of the comic society. In such comedy, social units are small, and even confined to a single participant. "Secret and sheltered places, forests in moonlight, secluded valleys, and happy islands become more prominent, as does the penseroso mood of romance, the love of the occult and the marvelous, the sense of individual detachment from routine existence."⁷⁴ In such a world wit changes to its opposite--oracular solemnity. (One is reminded here of Forster's description of the prophetic novel, whose author "proposes to sing.") This is the world, says Frye, "of ghost stories, thrillers, and Gothic romance, and, on a more sophisticated level, the kind of imaginative withdrawal portrayed in Huysmans' À Rebours."⁷⁵ Finally, in this last phase myths connected psychologically with the return to the womb are appropriate. (The castles and caverns and dark forests of Gothic fiction offer a field-day of exploration here.)

Frye's description of the Gothic thrillers and the decadent movement represented by À Rebours is brilliant and suggestive. For it leaves open the possibility of a connection between the two. Or, at least it suggests that the same impulse which created Gothic fiction also created decadent fiction. But Frye's important contribution to our study is his establishment of some of the theoretical basis for Gothic

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 185.

⁷⁵Ibid., pp. 185-186.

fiction: within the Age of Sensibility, as an example of a specific kind of low-mimetic fiction, and as a product of the sixth phase of the comic "mythos of Spring".

After Northrop Frye, the most important theoretical critic of Gothic literature is Angus Fletcher. Fletcher's Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode also resembles The Anatomy of Criticism in its discussion of Gothic literature within a larger theoretical framework. That larger context, of course, is the realm of allegory. In Fletcher's terms, the allegorical hero is possessed by a daemon: "an influence that excludes all other influences while it is operating on him."⁷⁶ Fletcher sees Gothic literature as related to the mode of allegory insofar as it admits the operation of the daemon. The Gothic novel is daemonic, first, as "a means of developing romantic plots by giving miraculous power to heroes and heroines."⁷⁷ Gothic also admits of the demonic in the unadulterated power of its villains.

[The villain] can act free of the usual moral restraints, even when he is acting morally, since he is moral only in the interests of his power over other men. This sort of action has a crude fascination for us all. . . . [It appeals] to our need for unrestrained will and wish.⁷⁸

The collision of these two forces occurs, for example, in The Castle of Otranto, with its theme of retribution to the third and fourth

⁷⁶Angus Fletcher, Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode (Ithaca, N.Y., 1964), p. 49.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 52.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 68.

generation. In the novel, the subject "is perfectly fitted to the means of expression, since the daemonic world is one where supernatural energies and consuming appetites are the sole means to existence."⁷⁹ The same is true, of course, in the conflict of opposing daemons represented in the detective story, the western, and the saga of interplanetary travel. All present a conflict that is also represented in Gothic fiction.

Like Frye, Fletcher creates a theoretical structure full of challenging suggestions. His description of Gothic literature in terms of daemonic agencies explains much of the machinery and characterization of Gothic fiction. In terms of the daemonic, haunted houses, obscure landscapes, and obsessed characters can be understood as having a coherent purpose.

After these studies of Gothic literature in a larger context, we can consider the theoretical criticism of Gothic per se. Robert B. Heilman's essay on Charlotte Brontë's "new" Gothic is the first such noteworthy contribution. From its title, it is apparent that the essay would aim at contrasting "old" and "new" Gothic. The fact that such comparison can tend to be forced is apparent in Heilman's remark about "the relatively single thrill or momentary intensity of feeling sought by primitive Gothic."⁸⁰

But Heilman is particularly strong in establishing a rationale for the Gothic novel:

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 52.

⁸⁰Heilman, p. 74.

In the novel it was the function of Gothic to open horizons beyond social patterns, rational decisions, and institutionally approved emotions; in a word, to enlarge the sense of reality and its impact on the human being.⁸¹

In the same vein, he speaks of "that discovery of passion, that rehabilitation of the extra-rational, which is the historical office of Gothic..."⁸² Heilman also echoes André Breton, when he suggests a link between the Gothic and the surrealist:

The surrealist is, despite Montague Summers, one of the new phases of Gothic, which in its role of liberator of feeling characteristically explores the non-naturalistic: to come up, as here, with a profounder nature, or a nature freshly, even disturbingly seen.⁸³

Perhaps the best contemporary theoretical study of Gothic is Irving Malin's New American Gothic (1962). Unfortunately for our purpose, Malin's study concerns American writers in the Gothic tradition--Truman Capote, Carson McCullers, Flannery O'Connor, and the like. But several of his insights can be quite helpful in our study of earlier Gothic literature. Malin remarks, for example, that the "new" Gothic works of fiction "image the buried life: self-love, the need to destroy community. Until we learn to cope with these terrors, Gothic will continue to mirror and fascinate us."⁸⁴ (Cf. Frye's alazon, characterized in Gothic fiction by a destructive conflict between the

⁸¹Ibid., p. 84.

⁸²Ibid., p. 76.

⁸³Ibid., p. 82.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 161. Irving Malin, New American Gothic (Carbondale, Ill., 1962), p. 161.

inner and the outer life.) The "new" Gothic novelists "do not deal with political tensions; they explore a world in which characters are distracted by private visions. They believe that the psyche is more important than society or, if this is a bit extreme, that the disorder of the buried life must be charted."⁸⁵ This sounds much like the Gothic novel described by Frye as "a study of obsession in terms of fear."

Says Malin, this orientation to a world of private visions produces a narcissism characteristic of the novel:

The concern with narcissism accounts in great part for the quality of Gothic. Gothic is plot, stylized, almost inhuman because it severely limits personality. Characters cannot be "well-rounded" while they are obsessed with themselves.⁸⁶

Malin thus effectively answers Wagenknecht's criticism of Gothic fiction for not fitting plot to character. As Malin rightly suggests, Gothic cannot emphasize character since its strongest characters are obsessives. The result of this obsessive vision is that the weaklings and the grotesques (the descendants of the grotesques and villains of "old" Gothic fiction and the modern representatives of chaos and disorder) "read meanings into matter, meanings that reflect their own preoccupations. Reality becomes a distorted mirror."⁸⁷ This resembles the Gothic world of "unresolvable emotional ambiguity" described by Hume. "In Gothic, order often breaks down, chronology is confused,

⁸⁵Ibid., pp. 3, 5

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 6.

⁸⁷Ibid.

identity is blurred, sex is twisted, the buried life erupts. The total effect is that of a dream."⁸⁸ Malin's suggestion here is provocative and offers a good deal of material for consideration in the later description of Gothic fiction.

Serious criticism of the Gothic novel, then, has developed in three general areas: the historical, the thematic, and the theoretical. The past several years especially have seen an increase in articles, dissertations, and full-length published studies of Gothic fiction.⁸⁹ The older attitude that Gothic is something of a sub-literature, not worthy of serious consideration, still tends to persist, however. An example of this is Peter Quennell's surprisingly cavalier article about Horace Walpole and the Gothic novel in a recent issue of Horizon.⁹⁰ But the trend of contemporary criticism has been a contrary movement to serious consideration of the genre. This trend must be related to other twentieth century interests--psychology and surrealism, for example--which see the human mind and personality as complex structures often

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 11.

⁸⁹Varma's bibliography in The Gothic Quest is a thorough and carefully cross-referenced guide; Mary Ellen Park Gilpatric's unpublished dissertation, Gothic Elements in English Romantic Poetry (Kent State University, 1965), provides a more recent survey of relevant criticism.

⁹⁰Peter Quennell, "The Moon Stood Still on Strawberry Hill," Horizon, XI, 3 (Summer, 1969), 112-119; Gary Jennings's "Heathcliff Doesn't Smoke L & M's" The New York Times Book Review (July 27, 1969) is a tongue-in-cheek estimation of the mass-produced and generally repetitious and poorly written modern "Gothics." In this case Jennings's tone is deservedly cavalier.

influenced by irrational and uncontrollable forces. Certainly growing critical interest in Gothic literature can be related to the contemporary cult of the Marquis de Sade. That cult sees in the preoccupations of the "divine" Marquis a plea for the recognition of the dark or under side of human nature, instead of its suppression. As the Marquis' prurient fancies do, Gothic literature forces its readers to an awareness of the frightening irrationalities--both internal and external--of human existence. Gothic as Devendra Varma says, forces one to admit that there is death, as well as love. But Gothic also leads us, as Francis R. Hart points out, to a grander, more subtle, and more complex concept of human character.

Now that we have charted the critical groundwork of the subject, we can profitably proceed to more theoretical and thematic criticism. The first of these theoretical aims should be an all-inclusive definition of Gothic. To appropriate Irving Malin's description, the essential characteristics of Gothic literature are the haunted castle, the voyage into the forest, and the reflection.⁹¹ Without these three characteristics, or their equivalents in setting, plot, and significance, literature cannot be called Gothic.

The haunted castle of Gothic literature can appear in a wide variety of forms: the old crone's cabin in Ferdinand, Count Fathom, ch. XX, the castle in The Castle of Otranto, The Mysteries of Udolpho, and The Bride of Lammermoor, the abandoned wing of the manor house

⁹¹Malin, p. 79.

in The Old English Baron, the monastery in The Italian, The Monk. In later Gothic it becomes the ship of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and the "elfin grot" of "La Belle Dame sans Merci". "New" Gothic--which is beyond our concern here--changes the haunted castle into the foreboding laboratory on the Rue Morgue in Poe's short story, Wuthering Heights itself, the Pequod in Moby Dick, and Dr. Rappuccini's poisoned garden in Hawthorne's short story. Later versions are the earth-filled coffins from Transylvania, which are a home away from home for Bram Stoker's Count Dracula, and the crumbling house in Faulkner's Sanctuary. In Gothic cinema it is the opera house in Phantom of the Opera (1925), which starred Lon Chaney, and the castles and laboratories of the Frankenstein films. In recent Gothic cinema it is the Victorian mansion in Alfred Hitchcock's Psycho (1960) and the pseudo-medieval, New York apartment house in Roman Polanski's Rosemary's Baby (1968).

No matter what form it takes, though, the Gothic castle underlines the passage of time. The contrast of time between the past and the present operates in Gothic literature in two ways. Contemporary figures are placed in medieval settings, as in The Castle of Otranto,⁹² or contemporary figures are placed in ruins which suggest old or medieval settings, as in The Mysteries of Udolpho.

The contemporary character trapped within this strange landscape, with its juxtaposition of past and present, is exposed to the unknown and the uncertain. The normal human reactions are fear and terror.

⁹²Varma, p. 55.

Uprooted from her proper society with contemporary emotional and intellectual pattern intact, thrust into a barbarous and primitive age, subjected to the various menaces of the Dark Ages, [Walpole's *Isabella*] serves as a projection of the nervous system of her own time, as a sensitive barometer of emotional reaction to horrors and clearly, as transmitter of the thrills of their exposure.⁹³

Clearly, in the earlier products of the Gothic school the past is itself an object of terror. For its reputed cruelty and superstition, for its association with the Inquisition and the political power of southern Europe,⁹⁴ but especially because it was largely an unknown and therefore fearful blank, the historical past could be evoked to arouse terror.

But these earlier works, such as The Castle of Otranto and Clara Reeve's Old English Baron evoke the fearful past to contrast it with the ordered, reasonable present. Later products of the school, however, such as Mrs. Radcliffe's Italian and Lewis's Monk, see as much to fear in the present world order. Mrs. Radcliffe's Ellena and Lewis's Ambrosio are, thus, contemporary figures in contemporary settings related to the fearful, superstitious past. In a political or historical context, they represent the sense of entrapment within antiquated systems and structures. In a philosophical context, they can represent a world without order, or justice, or even concepts of good and evil. Says William Axton, "...the Gothic novel's locale amid the crumbling ruins of archaic and obsolete institutions of secular and ecclesiastical authority

⁹³Varma, p. 70.

⁹⁴Cf. Roderick Marshall, Italy in English Literature (1755-1815) (1934), for some indication of the effect of Italy on the English imagination.

is itself representative of the futility of the old order."⁹⁵ Yet entrapment within that old, if crumbling, order can produce paranoia akin to that evoked by Agnes's frightening description of her sepulchral imprisonment amid moldering corpses in The Monk.

The castle, in this case, is associated with a terrifying past; but it is also made to function as a labyrinth, the monstrously complex maze from which there is no exit. With this image of the castle as labyrinth we associate most of the "machinery" of the Gothic novels: the secret passageways, the sliding panels, the pictures which come alive, the ghosts, and the apparitions. These hindrances and complications serve to deepen the strangeness and the mystery of the castle. Because of its physical complexity and lack of symmetry--because, in other words, of its labyrinthine nature--the castle is unknowable and therefore threatening and terrifying. Mrs. Radcliffe, "Monk" Lewis, and the Romantics thus use the castle as an object of terror both for its historical associations and for its undecipherable complexity.

After 1820, Gothic writing began to be influenced by the scientific approach to the study of history. Henry Hallam's View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages (1818) and The Constitutional History of England from the Accession of Henry VII to the Death of George II (1827) spanned the period from the fall of Rome to the eighteenth century and revolutionized the study of the past. Once the past came to be known, it could no longer threaten because of its supposed terrifying

⁹⁵Axton, p. x.

possibilities. As a result, modern Gothicism after Wuthering Heights and The House of the Seven Gables experiments with the castle merely as labyrinth. The sad cafe in Carson McCuller's Ballad of the Sad Cafe, the decadent boarding house in John Hawke's The Cannibal, and the foreboding house of Norman Bates in Alfred Hitchcock's film Psycho each represents the "'other room'...where the 'furies' lie, and... 'the final door' through which the ghost-like forces march."⁹⁶

But even these "labyrinths" have extensions into the past. No matter what its form, the Gothic castle is old and suffering from some form of disuse, disrepair, or decay. The reason for the concentration, both in "old" and in "new" Gothic, on the image of the castle as a ruin is because, as Michael Sadleir has remarked, a ruin expresses the triumph of chaos over order. The triumph of chaos suggests man's inability to impose his intelligence as a principle of order. It can even question the assumption that man is a rational creature and that the universe is capable of order. The ruined castle can thus be made to symbolize ruined minds and blasted universes.

The second characteristic of Gothic fiction is the voyage into the forest. Like the castle, the forest can take a variety of forms. The forest is an important symbol in that it suggests opposite qualities: the journey into the forest can represent the comforting return to the womb or the voyage into the frightening forest of folklore.

The journey into the forest in Hawthorne's House of the Seven

⁹⁶Malin, p. 11.

Gables and in Henry James's "The Jolly Corner" is, first, a voyage to the terrors of the haunted castle of Gothic fiction. But the story does not end there. Having brought his characters to these terrors, James provides them with the means of escape. The journey thus becomes a "flight... into new directions of strength or love."⁹⁷ This is also the pattern of The Castle of Otranto, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," "The Eve of St. Agnes," and Frankenstein. But the predominant journey in Gothic fiction is the ironic and terrifying trip to nowhere. Here the haunted castle and the journey are not opposed to one another, but are correlatives. Such fiction creates moral and emotional ambiguities and is acted out against an unfathomable and threatening cosmos. This is the journey in The Mysteries of Udolpho, The Monk, Wuthering Heights, Browning's "Childe Roland", Moby Dick, Sanctuary, and Carson McCuller's Reflections in a Golden Eye. This kind of Gothicism describes futile and destructive voyages to imprisonment. "Thus the voyage is as horrifying as staying at home."⁹⁸

The reflection is the third characteristic of Gothic fiction and the most difficult to describe because of the many forms it takes. The choice of the word reflection has its basis in the dictum of Aristotelian and of Renaissance poetics, that literature holds the mirror up to nature. Criticism has advanced a variety of theories about the nature of the

⁹⁷Malin, p. 79.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 127.

reality to be reflected, and this is a major concern in the criticism of Gothic fiction. In fact, the differences in "the nature of the reality to be reflected" are the major concern of this dissertation. In Gothic fiction, as we shall see, two distinct views are represented: The Castle of Otranto, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", and Frankenstein suggests worlds of ultimate order. The Monk, Melmoth the Wanderer, Moby Dick and most of the modern Gothic posit worlds of ultimate frustration, chaos, and disorder. But these differences can be determined by considering the nature of the castle and the result of the journey into the forest--either in frustration or in fulfillment.

The concern in Gothic fiction is not only the nature of the cosmos to be reflected, but also the nature of the reflecting device. In Gothic fiction, the mirror itself produces distortions. The mirror of Gothic fiction, "in which reality is double, cracked, or wavy"⁹⁹ is first represented in the figures of obsessed villains, grotesques and recluses. The earliest representatives of the type are the villains of the Gothic novels, from Walpole on. These villains are not merely exaggerated versions of the evil figure. They are victims of an all-consuming monomania. Walpole's Manfred will further his line at any cost. The Mariner's pride drives him to kill the albatross. Melville's Ahab would destroy Moby Dick, even if it costs his crew, his ship, and his own life to do so. In more recent Gothic, the villain is that obsessed crank, the mad scientist, who has been most often represented on film by Boris

⁹⁹Ibid.

Karloff.

The Gothic villain and, later, the Gothic hero are also victims of a consuming narcissism. Thus they interpret the world as an image of themselves and are forever in the process of manipulating others for their own ends. Manfred, Lara, and all the other remorseful Byronic heroes are guilty of this. Ambrosio in The Monk and Maturin's Melmoth both bargain with the devil. Victor Frankenstein conceives himself to be the modern Prometheus, Heathcliff tries physically to transcend the limitations of the grave, and Hawthorne's Rappuccini turns his daughter into a beautiful monster whose touch is death. In modern Gothicism the narcissism is directed within to create madmen, grotesques, and recluses. Ahab in Moby Dick, Popeye in Faulkner's Sanctuary and Arthur Radley in Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird are examples of each type.

This definition of Gothic literature effectively avoids a critical problem that has complicated serious work on the subject. The problem is the vague use and application of the term "Gothic". Because critics are not clear about what the term means, they have described as Gothic everything from Beowulf to Macbeth, from the Faerie Queene to the graveyard poetry of the 18th century. An art historian as eminent as Kenneth Clark has argued that the Gothic style in literature originated long before Smollett's Ferdinand, Count Fathom.¹⁰⁰ Clark has noted in

¹⁰⁰Kenneth Clark, The Gothic Revival-An Essay in the History of Taste, (rev. ed. New York, 1950) ch. II, "Literary Influences"; Varma, ch. II, "The Background: Origins and Cross Currents."

the cave scene of Book I of the Faerie Queene and in Milton's Il Penseroso "all the stage properties of Gothicism which were to furnish the scenery of later poets."¹⁰¹ Clara F. McIntyre has described the villains of the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage as ancestors of the villains of the Gothic novel.¹⁰² Northrop Frye has even suggested Beowulf as an antecedent of the tradition.¹⁰³

The temptation to this easy categorizing is strong. Critics have related the melancholy and sepulchral poetry of the eighteenth century to the mood and setting of Gothic literature. Pope's "Eloisa to Abelard" (1717), David Mallet's "The Excursion" (1726), Dyer's "Grongar Hill" (1727), Edward Young's "Night Thoughts" (1742-45), Robert Blair's "The Grave" (1743), and Joseph Warton's "The Enthusiast" (1744), Thomas Warton's "Pleasures of Melancholy" (1745), and Thomas Gray's "Fatal Sisters" and "Descent of Odin" (1761) and his "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (1751, 1768) are further convenient examples.

The eighteenth century cult of sensibility has also been wrongly called Gothic. It would certainly not be difficult to note in Richardson's Clarissa Harlowe (1748), Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield (1762), Sterne's Sentimental Journey (1768), and Mackenzie's Man of Feeling (1771) an aesthetic taste also evident in many of the Gothic novels. Nor would one,

¹⁰¹Clark, pp. 36-37.

¹⁰²Clara F. McIntyre, "Were the Gothic Novels Gothic?" PMLA, XXXVI (1921).

¹⁰³Frye, Anatomy, p. 186.

if one were so minded, ignore the vogue of chinoiserie and of oriental tales in describing the background of Gothic literature. Galland's Arabian Nights (French, 1704-17), Montesquieu's Lettres Persanes (1721), Johnson's Rasselas (1759), and Goldsmith's Citizen of the World (1762) all appeal to that taste for the exotic and the unusual to which Gothic literature also appeals. (Beckford's Vathek, 1784, a Gothic novel in an oriental setting, is an indication of this appeal.) But to call this taste Gothic only confuses the meaning of the term.

What is therefore necessary at this point is a distinction. Eighteenth century chinoiserie and sham ruins, the oriental tale, the interest in the picturesque, the novel of sensibility, the stage villain, and the melancholy mood in poetry--all contributed to the Gothic literature which we are describing. Yet they were not the essentials of Gothic. The castle, the journey into the forest, and the reflection--no matter what forms they take--are the pre-requisites for Gothic fiction. We can therefore describe the villains of the Elizabethan stage as the antecedent of the Gothic villain and the craze for architectural ruins as one of the sources of the crumbling piles in the Gothic novels. Certainly the morbid mood of graveyard poetry added something to the brew. But none of these separately constitutes the Gothic style of literature which was first created in three chapters of Ferdinand Count Fathom. Once we understand these uses of the term "Gothic" as misguided, the problem need cause no further difficulty.

Once we have defined the Gothic literary style, the next

theoretical concern should be the extent of that style. The dissertation will first contend that Gothic is a complex style, embracing prose, poetry, and drama. Further, the style was a developing one, capable of experimentation and of subtle variations.

That the style was a complex one should be evident from the detailed definition of Gothic literature. The discussion of the points of the definition included several examples that are not generally described as Gothic. Critics have not discussed "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", The Bride of Lammermoor, and "La Belle Dame sans Merci" in terms of the tradition of the Gothic novels. True enough, critics have been aware of the relationship between the Gothic novels and the theater. In Gothic Drama from Walpole to Shelley (Berkeley, 1947), Bertrand Evans describes the large body of Gothic drama that was produced at the time of the first Gothic novels. Many of these dramas were adaptations of currently fashionable Gothic novels, while others were written just for the stage. Critics have also suggested a Gothic poetry. Thus, Reinhard Haferkorn's Gotik und Ruine in der Englische Dichtung des Achtzehnten Jahrhunderts (Leipzig, 1924) traces the Gothic themes in late 18th century poetry.

Yet what is needed is a clear statement of the relationship among Gothic fiction, Gothic drama, and Gothic poetry. In the first place, it seems to me that all three Gothics are expressions of a similar literary impulse. In this view, Gothic is a complex literature that can assume a variety of forms. Such an explanation can clarify our understanding of

a poem such as "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner". The poem has too often been described as an unique expression of Coleridge's sensibility. In describing it within the tradition of Gothic literature, however, we can provide a new frame of reference for the poem. Coleridge's poem is Gothic in its technique and in its attempt to explore guilt, fear, and irrational workings of human motivation.

If Gothic is a complex phenomenon, it is also a developing one. Again, the work of the critics seems deficient here. Too often they have accepted the cliché that Gothic declined as a literary form after Mrs. Radcliffe and Lewis. Too many critics are willing to describe Gothic as a form that, with the exception of Mrs. Shelley and Maturin, degenerated after 1800 into the mass-produced popular Gothic novels. True enough, the popularizers of the form produced thousands of fifth-rate imitations of Gothic, replete with clichés and borrowed plots. In fact, they are doing it again in our own day, which has seen a resurgence of interest in the form and the consequent production of thousands of Gothic novels written to the time-worn formulae.

But while its poor practitioners were cranking out weak imitations of Mrs. Radcliffe, the form developed, after 1800, into more subtilized forms in the hands of first-rate artists. In Northanger Abbey, Jane Austen rightly satirized Castle of Wolfenbach, Mysterious Warning, Horrid Mysteries and all the other poorly written Gothic novels. But while the authors of these novels exploited stock situations and characters, the best writers of the age were developing and expanding

the possibilities of the Gothic. Wordsworth's "Peele Castle", Byron's Manfred, and Keats's "Eve of St. Agnes" demonstrate the best developments of the form during the period. Their work in expanding the potentialities of Gothicism made that literature a genre fit for Gothic masterpieces like Melmoth the Wanderer and, later, Wuthering Heights and Moby Dick.

Each of the following three chapters will examine representative Gothic fiction, poetry, and drama. The concern here will be to describe the forms that the haunted castle, the journey into the forest, and the reflection assume in each work. The dissertation will also describe the development of the form and the expansion of its aesthetic, psychological, and philosophical possibilities. But this is not the rationale or organizing principle behind the three chapters. The rest of the dissertation will, instead, expand the theoretical discussion of the Gothic literary style.

The theorizing about literary Gothic to this point has concerned its outlines--that is, its definition, its complexity, and its development. The theorizing of the last three chapters will describe its divisions. Gothic literature, as we shall see, can be categorized as three types: Enlightenment Gothicism, Gothicism of sensibility, and romantic Gothicism. These categories are not historical ones. (Indeed, we shall see that contemporaries such as Byron and Keats created different types of Gothic.) Instead, they represent three distinct world views, three distinct attitudes about justice and order in the cosmos.

CHAPTER II: ENLIGHTENMENT GOTHICISM

The first of the three Gothicisms that this dissertation will discriminate is Enlightenment Gothicism. The word "Enlightenment" has been chosen, instead of "neo-classical" or "rationalistic," for a purpose. "Neo-classical" describes a revival of interest in things Greek and Roman and "rationalistic" suggests an emphasis on reason, instead of intuition or emotion. They merely express two qualities of an extraordinarily complex period--one which could better be described with a less restrictive term such as the "Enlightenment".¹

The world-view of the Enlightenment originates in the philosophical currents of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and especially, as has so often been indicated, in the ideas of Bacon, Descartes, and Newton. The scientific methodology of Francis Bacon contributed to the perception of Descartes, that mathematics constitutes the fundamental basis of physical science. These, in turn, contributed to Newton's thesis that by means of relatively few laws the movement of

¹The complexity of the problem of naming the period is suggested in the trend to question the previously accepted dichotomy between neo-classicism and romanticism in art. Art critics, like literary critics, have begun to insist that the old description of neo-classicism "has become ambiguous and provocative." Times Literary Supplement (May 22, 1969), 560.

every particle in the universe can be charted.

Newton's apparent success in the physical sciences soon led men to assume that laws which governed man's mind and his social institutions could also be discovered through scientific investigation.

Men were objects in nature no less than trees and stones; their interaction could be studied as that of atoms or plants. Once the laws governing human behavior were discovered and incorporated in a science of rational sociology, analogous to physics or zoology, men's real wishes could be investigated and brought to light, and satisfied by the most efficient means compatible with the nature of the physical and mental facts.²

The product of this was the Empiricism of English philosophers like Locke, Hume, and Berkeley, which dominated the thinking of the Enlightenment.

The result of Empiricism was an optimism inspired by the idea of the natural perfectibility of man. ("The eighteenth century," notes Sir Isaiah Berlin, "is perhaps the last period in the history of Western Europe when human omniscience was thought to be an attainable goal."³ Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690) assumes "that society, by the regulation of material conditions, could promote the moral improvement of its members."⁴ The same attitude is present in Shaftesbury's Characteristics and in Pope's Essay on Man.⁵ The Jesuit,

²The Age of Enlightenment, ed. Isaiah Berlin (New York, 1956), p. 27.

³Ibid., p. 14.

⁴Norman Hampson, A Cultural History of the Enlightenment, (New York, 1968), p. 146.

⁵A.O. Lovejoy insists, however, that the argument is not a

Father Hooke, could well be speaking for his age when he wrote, in 1752: "There is in all men a general benevolence and freely given goodness... thus there is no duty that is not commended to us, not only by reason, but even by appetite."⁶

This emphasis on the accomplishments and perfectability of man strongly influenced the literature of the Enlightenment. One important influence was an ambiguous response to the supernatural. The attitude about the supernatural is best described as ambiguous, because the men of the Enlightenment did not usually deny the existence of a God; nor, as Patricia Meyer Spacks has indicated in The Insistence of Horror (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), did the tradition of supernaturalism in literature die during the eighteenth-century. Rather, the literature of the Enlightenment merely tended to avoid discussion of supernatural influence on human affairs.

One origin of the attitude is Descartes' Discours de la méthode (1637). Descartes avowed at the beginning of his work that he would accept nothing as true unless he himself had a clear perception of its truth. This intellectual self-reliance tended to undermine all authority--especially that of the Church and the scriptures. The same trend was at work one hundred years later, in Bishop Butler's Analogy of Religion,

naive denial of the fact of human evil: "To assert that this is the best of possible worlds implies nothing as to the absolute goodness of this world; it implies only that any other world which is metaphysically capable of existence would be worse." The Great Chain of Being: (1936; repr. New York, 1960) p. 208.

⁶Quoted in Hampson, p. 155.

Natural and Revealed (1737). By making the supernatural meet the test of reason, Butler implied that man and his reason are the measure of all things. The emphasis on the power of man, instead of the power of the supernatural, progressed to the point that Hume's Essay on Miracles (1748) argues against the supernatural by appealing to the "law" of nature:

Upon the whole, then, it appears, that no testimony for any kind of a miracle has even amounted to a probability, much less than a proof and that, even supposing that it amounted to a proof, it would be opposed by another proof; derived from the very nature of the fact, which it would endeavor to establish. It is experience only, which gives authority to human testimony; and it is the same experience, which assures us of the laws of nature.⁷

The Enlightenment attitude about the supernatural, and about the possibility of miracles in particular, can only be described as ambiguous or even sceptical.

On the whole... the educated men of Europe were convinced by this time that natural phenomena were determined by natural laws, and many of them, like Barbier, extended their disbelief in contemporary miracles to those on which the Christian church had based its claim to be the only true religion.⁸

Another characteristic of the literature of the age is also the product of the Enlightenment emphasis on the perfectability of man. That is the tendency to exteriorize characterization, to develop

⁷Quoted in Louis L. Snyder, The Age of Reason (Princeton, 1955), p. 43.

⁸Hampson, p. 152.

characters from without.⁹ The habit of developing characters exteriorly is rooted in the neo-classic concern with the types and generalities that prove the rules, instead of the tulip streaks that distract from the usual by concentrating on the particular and the peculiar. "I describe not men, but manners; not an individual, but a species," declares Fielding,¹⁰ and this seems to describe much of the characterization of the age. Certainly, this is the characterization of Enlightenment Gothicism.

Like the literature of the age, Enlightenment Gothicism suggests that man is in control of his environment and his destiny. The world of this Gothicism is an eminently knowable one, in which the relationship between cause and effect can be discerned through the instrument of human reason. One senses, in this literature, the attitude that man is capable of an absolute knowledge of the cosmos, of others, and of himself. Enlightenment Gothicism assumes a homocentric world that is comprehensible and, ideally at least, capable of benevolent human governance.

One point should be emphasized, though: Enlightenment Gothicism describes an attitude and a world view, and not necessarily an historical circumstance. ("The Enlightenment was an attitude of mind rather than a course in science and philosophy," remarks Norman

⁹Richardson is, of course, an exception, but, as Walter Allen has pointed out, Fielding's technique of characterization, and not Richardson's influenced the literature of the age. The English Novel, (New York, 1954), pp. 43-44.

¹⁰Henry Fielding, Joseph Andrews, intro. Maynard Mack (New York, 1948), p. 180.

Hampson.¹¹⁾ A work of Gothic literature cannot be called "Enlightenment" merely because it was written after 1754, when Smollett published Ferdinand Count Fathom, and before 1791, when Mrs. Radcliffe published The Romance of the Forest. Enlightenment Gothicism is, rather, the result of a like habit of mind or a similar set of attitudes. Thus, some of Scott's poetry and prose can be called Enlightenment Gothicism although it was created some years after the bulk of Gothic literature moved in new directions.

Just as it expresses the world view of the age, Enlightenment Gothicism also implies the attitudes about the supernatural and employs the techniques of characterization that are typical of the age. One kind of Enlightenment Gothicism creates stories whose supernaturalism is ultimately irrelevant. The Castle of Otranto and The Old English Baron are the most notable examples of this. A second kind represents apparently supernatural actions as the product of deluded minds--especially the deluded minds of the poor, the ignorant, and the lower classes. Ferdinand, Count Fathom and most of Scott's works are examples of this.

The treatment of the supernatural was the basis of Clara Reeve's criticism of Walpole. In her preface to The Old English Baron she insists that the tale was written to correct the supernaturalism of The Castle of Otranto. But the point is, despite their apparent differences Walpole and Clara Reeve share the same ideas. Walpole puts

¹¹Hampson, p. 146.

the supernatural in the realm of the divertissement and the fairy tale. Clara Reeve, by her extreme literalness, would remind us that the fairy-tale is, after all, not really true. But whether the fact is implied by the form or insisted on in the words, both writers assume that the supernatural is central to "romance" and is not to be considered as historical.

This attitude about the supernatural is evident in Walpole's prefaces to The Castle of Otranto. (One might be tempted to dismiss his first preface, but his more serious second preface confirms his previous remarks about the supernatural.) The first preface expresses his theme in a somewhat humorous manner. He suggests that "an artful priest" intent on perpetuating "the empire of superstition... so forcibly attacked by the reformers"¹² could have composed the tale.

On the next page of his short first preface, Walpole explains the inclusion of "miracles, visions, necromancy, dreams, and other preternatural events" in The Castle of Otranto:

Belief in every kind of prodigy was so established in those dark ages, that an author would not be faithful to the manners of the times, who should omit all mention of them. He is not bound to believe them himself, but he must represent his actors as believing them.¹³

This statement, we must remember, was made when Walpole was still

¹²Horace Walpole The Castle of Otranto, intro. Marvin Murdick, (New York, 1963), p. 15.

¹³Ibid., p. 16.

claiming the tale was first printed "at Naples, in the black letter, in the year 1529."¹⁴ One could presume, therefore, that no apology for the supernaturalism of the tale would be necessary. That Walpole includes one anyway indicates his strong attitude on the subject and the necessity to yield to the rationalism of the day.

In the second preface to his novel, where he admits to its authorship, Walpole provides further rationale for his supernatural machinery. Walpole's famous defense of his novel is that in it he has tried "to blend the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern."¹⁵ In the ancient romance, notes Walpole, "all was imagination and improbability."¹⁶ This writing allowed free reign to the fancy. The modern romance, on the other hand, has strictly adhered to nature. By this, Walpole seems to mean that the novel has operated in the realm of what Northrop Frye would call the low mimetic. Its characters are "realistic" and its plots brook no intervention, no deus ex machina, on the part of the supernatural or the preternatural.

Walpole sees his work as giving a freer reign of fancy and imagination to the English novel. He is "desirous of leaving the powers of fancy at liberty to expatiate through the boundless realms of invention, and thence of creating more interesting situations."¹⁷ For this reason,

¹⁴Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

he justifies the inclusion of the supernatural machinery: not because he believes it, but because it opens new possibilities for the operation of the imagination.

Clara Reeve's expressed aims and attitudes are exactly those of Walpole. She states this in her preface to The Old English Baron (1778, orig. The Champion of Virtue, A Gothic Tale, 1777):

This story is the literary offspring of the Castle of Otranto, written upon the same plan, with a design to unite the most attractive and interesting circumstances of the ancient romance and modern novel...¹⁸

But she faults Walpole for not keeping his novel "within the utmost verge of probability"¹⁹ The romance trappings of the ghost and the enchanted sword cause her no difficulties, but rather the extent to which Walpole develops them.

A sword so large as to require a hundred men to lift it; a helmet that by its own weight forces a passage through a courtyard into an arched vault, big enough for a man to go through; a picture that walks out of its frame; a skeleton ghost in a hermit's cowl--when your expectation is wound up to the highest pitch, these circumstances take it down with a witness, destroy the work of imagination, and, instead of attention, excite laughter.²⁰

The quarrel between Walpole and Clara Reeve seems, however, to be one of degree, rather than kind. Walpole himself had argued that his new hybrid form of romance must be written "according

¹⁸Clara Reeve, The Old English Baron in Seven Masterpieces of Gothic Horror, ed. Robert Donald Spector (New York, 1963), p. 105.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 106.

²⁰Reeve, p. 106.

to the rules of probability."²¹ Furthermore, he returns Miss Reeve's criticism when in a letter to Rev. William Mason (April 8, 1778), he faults her novel for its excessive literalness: "Have you seen 'The Old Baron,' a Gothic story, professedly written in imitation of Otranto, but reduced to reason and probability? It is so probable, that any trial for murder at Old Bailey would make a more interesting story."²²

It is apparent from their prefatory statements, however, that no matter how much they might quibble about points of execution, both writers are attempting the same thing. But a hybrid of the medieval romance and the 18th century novel is bound to be an awkward combination. The product of such a marriage turns out, in fact, to be a novel with the outward trappings of romance, but "eighteenth-century" at heart.

Both novels preserve merely the conventions of the medieval romance. Walpole's assertion of the "black letter" printing of The Castle of Otranto and Miss Reeve's attempt at verisimilitude by complaining of the gaps in her manuscript are but two examples of this. Walpole's recreation of the appearances of an earlier age, which Scott praised in his 1811 introduction to The Castle of Otranto, is also accomplished, though less successfully, by Miss Reeve. Beyond this,

²¹Walpole, p. 19.

²²Walpole, Letters, ed. Cunningham vol. vii, p. 51, quoted in Moulton, The Library of Literary Criticism (1903, repr. Gloucester, Mass, 1966), pp. 511-512.

many of the motifs of the earlier romances flourish in both novels. The Cinderella folk-tale of the well-born child secreted at birth and reared as a peasant is the theme of the Middle English metrical romance, Havelok the Dane. The theme of the union of two lovers after a series of struggles is the most characteristic one of medieval romance and, incidentally, the reason the word "romance" means both a species of literature and heterosexual love.

In this context of the external medievalism of the two novels, even the supernaturalism has a purpose. Scott was most probably correct in insisting that unabashed supernaturalism was appropriate in The Castle of Otranto, if for no other reason than to confirm our impression of the story as medieval:

The remote and superstitious period in which his scene is laid, the art with which he has furnished forth its Gothic decorations, the sustained, and, in general, the dignified tone of feudal manners, prepare us gradually for the favourable reception of prodigies which, though they could not really have happened at any period, were consistent with the belief of all mankind at that in which the action is placed.²³

Scott justifies Clara Reeve's use of the supernatural for similar reasons:

Her apparition is an ordinary fiction, of which popular superstition used to furnish a thousand instances, when nights were long, and a family, assembled around a

²³Scott, introduction to The Castle of Otranto in Walpole, p. 122. The preface, along with Scott's other critical writings, is available in Sir Walter Scott on Novelists and Fiction, ed. Ioan Williams (London, 1968).

Christmas log, had little better to do than to listen to such tales.²⁴

Both novelists seem to have accomplished what they suggest in their prefaces to be one of their concerns. That is, both have created novels that fulfill all the conventions of the medieval romance. In such a case, Walpole's walking portraits, bleeding statues, and giganticized Alonso and Clara Reeve's prophetic dreams, groaning east wing, and self-opening doors are as necessary to evoking a "Gothic" scene as are monks telling their beads, knights on chestnut steeds, and gloomy churches and castles. All are ingredients necessary for the creation of an impression.

But if The Castle of Otranto and The Old English Baron are medieval in their external structure, essentially both mirror the concerns of the eighteenth-century novel. For this reason, their Gothicism deserves to be described as "Enlightenment". When one moves away from a discussion of plot and setting to a consideration of theme, the strong ties of both novelists to the novels of their contemporaries become apparent. This is especially true in their use of two eighteenth-century themes: class structure and "sensibility".

In the structured world of eighteenth-century neo-classicism, one's position in the "great chain of being" is all important. Thus, that literature is peopled with characters like Tom Jones and Humphry

²⁴Walter Scott, "Clara Reeve," Lives of the Novelists (1821), quoted in Moulton, p. 521.

Clinker, who seek to establish their positions by establishing their identities, and characters like Moll Flanders and the parents of Clarissa Harlowe, who seek to improve their positions by moving up in the social scale. Since money is the usual means to social position, this fiction links wealth and property with title, and even with virtue.

The theme of class structure dominates The Castle of Otranto and The Old English Baron. Two apparently low-born men, Walpole's Theodore and Reeve's Edmund, seek to establish their identities and, in the process, prove themselves noble and well-born and win well-born ladies in turn. (The medieval themes of the male Cinderella and the supremacy of romantic love are, of course, those which appear throughout the literature of the first half of the 18th century. As such, they are appropriate to an eighteenth century novel written in pseudo medieval style.)

Perhaps the strongest indication that both novels are essentially eighteenth century discussions of class and social structure lies in an understanding of the single problem central to both novels: the accession of a man to the rights and the property that are his. The most important considerations in both novels are legal and financial. The Castle of Otranto is at heart concerned with the legal question: who is the rightful heir to Alfonso the Good? The Old English Baron is likewise concerned with a legal problem: who is the rightful heir of Arthur, Lord Lovel? The love problems are secondary to these primary considerations, for both novels make it clear that Theodore's claim to Isabella or to Matilda

and that Edmund Twyford's claim to Lady Emma can be recognized only in terms of class and money.

The supernatural in both stories acts merely as a backdrop for the story which intrudes to hurry the main theme along whenever it is needed. In The Castle of Otranto, the prophecy of the fall of Manfred's line when the former Alfonso becomes too great for the house, the specter-portrait of Manfred's grandfather, the huge sword which Frederic of Vicenza bears from Joppa at the direction of a dying monk, the blood from the nose of Alfonso's statue, the skeleton-monk which appears to Frederic, and finally the destruction of the castle, when the huge form of Alfonso ascends to heaven to be received by St. Nicholas--all of these supernatural incidents act merely to advance some portion of the main theme, which is the return of Theodore to his rightful title. The prophecy, which is fulfilled at the end of the story, is the most obvious example of this. The dramatic highpoint of the novel occurs at the destruction of the castle, with "the form of Alfonso, dilated to an immense magnitude, . . . in the centre of the ruins"²⁵; and Alfonso's most pressing concern is the distribution of earthly title and property. His last words on earth are, "Behold in Theodore the true heir of Alfonso!"²⁶

The supernatural operates to advance the financial in a variety

²⁵Walpole, p. 109.

²⁶Ibid.

of other ways in the novel. The portrait of his grandfather distracts Manfred, for the moment, from the pursuit of the all but exhausted Isabella. The huge sword brings Frederic to Otranto to protect his beleaguered daughter. The blood dripping from the statue's nose, is a portent against Manfred's proposed divorce of Hyppolita and marriage with Isabella. Frederic's frightening apparition confronts him on a less than other-worldly errand. Says the terrified Frederic: "but say, blest spirit, what is thy errand to me?-- what remains to be done?--To forget Matilda! said the apparition--and vanished."²⁷

The same is true in The Old English Baron. Edmund's dream of his parents and his noble birth confirms him in his search to establish a high-born identity for himself. His dream-vision of the grave of his parents in the cellar of the east wing of the old castle and the groans he hears from there provide him with evidence with which he can establish his claim. Likewise, the fact that the doors of the house all spring open when he comes to demand his inheritance is a final example of the supernatural which operates to confirm social standing and to establish financial rights.

For this reason, it is no surprise that the most important considerations and the most intriguing problems in the last part of each novel are the unravelings of family trees and the establishment of the rightful lines of succession. The dénouement of The Castle of Otranto,

²⁷Ibid., p. 104.

after the fall of the castle and Alfonso's ascension into the arms of St. Nicholas, is Manfred's confession of the murder of Alfonso by his grandfather, Ricardo, and the subsequent usurpation of Alfonso's line. This is followed by Father Jerome's description of his dead wife as both the daughter of Alfonso and the mother of Theodore.

The concern with legal rights is strong in The Old English Baron, too. Edmund Twyford is identified as the true heir of Arthur Lovel in a prophetic dream almost at the beginning of the novel. Shortly thereafter, a conversation between the benevolent Father Oswald and the old servant Joseph, all but identifies Sir Walter Lovel as the murderer of Edmund's parents. From this point on, identifying the murderer becomes the means of establishing Edmund's legal rights. In the last third of The Old English Baron, after Edmund is declared heir, many pages are devoted to untangling the legal and financial complications with the Fitz-Owens and to arranging a profitable marriage for Lady Emma. A nineteenth-century critic, John Dunlop, noted the difficulties such financial concerns cause in the novel: "...the most important and heroic characters in the work exhibit a natural anxiety about settlements, stocking of farms, and household furniture, which ill assimilates with the gigantic and awful features of the romance."²⁸

The settling of legal niceties and the concentration on finances becomes almost an obsession. Finances are such a relentless theme

²⁸John Dunlop, The History of Fiction (1814-1845), p. 414, quoted in Moulton, p. 512.

in The Old English Baron, that the novel all but equates virtue with financial and legal cleverness. Sir Phillip Harclay, the father-figure in the story and the champion of Edmund Twyford's cause, is most praiseworthy, from the narrator's point of view, and most often celebrated, precisely in terms of his financial and legal acumen. As he prepares for the decisive judgment of Edmund's claim, his single thought is to write an incontestable will:

Sir Phillip then sent for a lawyer and made his will, by which he appointed Edmund his chief heir...; he ordered that all his old friends, soldiers, and servants, should be maintained in the same manner during their lives; he left to Zadisky an annuity of a hundred a year and a legacy of two hundred pounds; one hundred pounds to a certain monastery....²⁹

Here, the concentration on finance in a supposedly medieval story almost approaches the ludicrous. (Could one, I wonder, imagine the legendary King Arthur concerned with balancing his account books and making out his will, on the eve of a decisive joust?) Perhaps the climax of this bourgeois concern with pounds and pence comes in the last few pages of the novel. Miss Reeve describes the departure of Lord Fitz-Owen, now Edmund's father-in-law, to reside in his castle in Wales: "A few days after the wedding, the Lord Fitz-Owen began to prepare for his journey to the North. He gave to Edmund the plate, linen and furniture of the castle, the farming stock and the utensils."³⁰

²⁹Reeve, p. 184.

³⁰Ibid., p. 233.

If the emphasis on class structure and property has its roots in the eighteenth-century novel, the concern with "sensibility" is in keeping. "Sensibility", whether it be represented in Clarissa Harlowe, in Sterne's Yorick, in Goldsmith's Burchell, or in Mackenzie's "man of feeling," was one of the great themes of the eighteenth-century novel. The theme is itself a product of the philosophical optimism of the age, whose most immediate source is Shaftesbury's Characteristics.³¹ That optimism was characterized by two basic assumptions: "the belief in the moral goodness of the 'natural man' [and] the egalitarian conception of a common reasonableness, both in man and in the natural universe."³²

The typical hero of novels of sensibility is characterized, not by his deeds, but by his sensibility. He is identified

quite simply by his capacities for feeling, mostly for the tender emotions--gentle and tearful love, nostalgia, and a pervasive melancholy that ranges from autumnal musing to "grave-yard" moralizing, with occasional lapses into charnel-house sensationalism.³³

Thus, note how the very last line of The Castle of Otranto describes Theodore's married life with Isabella: "he was persuaded he could know no happiness but in the society of one, with whom he could for ever indulge the melancholy that had taken possession of his soul."³⁴

³¹In The Byronic Hero: Types and Prototypes, (Minneapolis, 1962), Peter L. Thorslev, Jr. discusses the various sources of the idea of the man of feeling, pp. 36-37.

³²Ibid., p. 36.

³³Ibid., p. 35.

³⁴Walpole, pp. 111-112.

The decorousness, the artificial rhetoric, and the extreme sentimentality which are often characteristic of the "feminine" novels which Richardson inspired and which Cleland parodied in Fanny Hill (1749) are all evident in The Castle of Otranto. Manfred's daughter Matilda has stolen up to the tower at night to free Theodore, who was imprisoned after helping Isabella escape to the convent of St. Nicholas:

"Fly, virtuous youth, while it is in my power to save thee, should my father return, thou and I both would, indeed, have cause to tremble." -- "How" said Theodore, "thinkest thou, charming maid, that I will accept of life at the hazard of aught calamitous to thee? better I endured a thousand deaths." -- "I run no risk," said Matilda, "but by thy delay. Depart, it cannot be known that I assisted thy flight." -- "Swear by the saints above," said Theodore, "that thou canst not be suspected; else here I vow to await whatever can befall me" -- "Oh! thou art too generous," said Matilda, "but rest assured that no suspicion can alight on me." -- "Give me thy beautiful hand, in token that thou dost not deceive me," said Theodore, "and let me bathe it with warm tears of gratitude." -- "Alas" said Theodore, "I have never known but calamity until this hour -- perhaps shall never know other fortune again: suffer the chaste raptures of holy gratitude: 'tis my soul would print its effusions on thy hand."³⁵

This same sentimental excess is evident later on in the novel, when Isabella reveals, to Hippolita and to Matilda, Manfred's intention to divorce his wife and marry Isabella.

Hippolita was silent. Grief choked her speech; . . .
 "Excellent, dear lady! madam! mother!" cried Isabella, flinging herself at Hippolita's feet in a transport of passion; "trust me, believe me, I will die a thousand deaths sooner than consent to injure you, than yield to so odious -- oh!" -- "This is too much!"

³⁵Walpole, p. 75.

cried Hippolita: . . . "Rise, dear Isabella; I do not doubt your virtue. Oh! Matilda, this stroke is too heavy for thee! weep not, my child and not a murmur, I charge thee. Remember, he is thy father still!"--"But you are my mother too," said Matilda, fervently; "and you are virtuous, you are guiltless!--Oh! must not I, must not I complain?"--"You must not," said Hippolita, "come, all will yet be well. . . . "Yes," continued she, in a firmer tone; "perhaps the sacrifice of myself may atone for all--I will go and offer myself to this divorce--it boots not what becomes of me. I will withdraw into the neighbouring monastery, and waste the remainder of life in prayers and tears for my child and--the prince!"³⁶

In novels such as this, heroes and heroines are disembodied spirits who mouth extravagantly virtuous sentiments. Such fiction is characterized by a "total absence of personal description";³⁷ instead, we come to know the characters through their moralizing and their sentimentalizing. As Alice Killen points out in Le Roman Terrifiant, these figures in Walpole and in Clara Reeve owe much of their characterization to Richardsonian sentimentality:

Si [Clara Reeve] se donna comme tâche de continuer à marcher dans la voie que Walpole avait tracée, elle n'en fut pas moins en même temps une descendante littéraire de Richardson, dont elle a toute la sentimentalité³⁸

While the supernatural in Walpole and Reeve performs a primary function in restoring the hero to his rightful social and financial

³⁶Ibid., p. 91.

³⁷Gerarda Maria Koorman-van Middendorp, The Hero in the Feminine Novel, New York 1966, p. 34.

³⁸Alice M. Killen, Le Roman Terrifiant (Paris, 1924), partie 1, chapt. 1, p. 2.

roles, the gods also interfere in the interests of romantic love. The portrait of Manfred's grandfather, we remember, distracted his grandson from the pursuit of the fleeing Isabella, thus allowing her first meeting with the virtuous Theodore. Then, too, the skeleton-monk warns Frederic from the proposed marriage with Matilda. In fact, each of the supernatural appearances in Walpole and in Reeve performs a dual function. They not only hurry on the hero to his inheritance but, once his finances are in order, they insure his romantic happiness.

The reason for the close relationship between the themes is, of course, obvious: these novels maintain strictly the connection in the eighteenth century novel between cash and romance. The "virtue" which Moll Flanders and Pamela Andrews are willing to sell only to the highest bidder, and for which the rakes in Fanny Hill are so eager to pay, is considered in the realm of real property. Only when the lover is willing to pay a price for virtue--whether the price be money or title, or both--can he enjoy the prize. So, too, in The Castle of Otranto and The Old English Baron. Only when the gods have raised them to new social and financial positions can Theodore enjoy his Isabella and Edmund his Emma. Without the cash, the novels could not have reached these happy conclusions.

The Castle of Otranto and The Old English Baron, then, include the supernatural as one of their conventions. While the prefaces of both novels offer various apologies for its appearance, supernatural

itself advances the plot to a conclusion similar to the conclusions of any number of sentimental, property-and class-oriented novels of the day. As such, it becomes merely ancillary, merely another means of ensuring a happy outcome to an essentially human course of events. In these novels, the supernatural is merely one of a series of forces--and perhaps not even the most important force--which act to produce a single conclusion.

If one type of Enlightenment Gothicism subordinates the supernatural to the natural in order to describe a world that is just, knowable, and capable of rational human control, a second type all but denies the possibility of supernatural intervention into human affairs. As with the first type, the purpose is to describe a world that, ideally at least, can be controlled by rational human government. The Gothic writing of Smollett and of Scott are examples of this type.

Tobias Smollett's Ferdinand, Count Fathom (1754) is not even an entirely Gothic work. It is more in the tradition of the picaresque novel which extends back to Le Sage's Gil Blas. Its closest literary antecedent in English novel is Fielding's Jonathin Wild. But within this complex tale of the adventures of a villain-hero, Smollett's three chapters are the beginning of a tradition of Gothic literature that is viable even to our own day. We describe these chapters as Gothic precisely because they fulfill the three characteristics of Gothicism discussed in chapter 1: the haunted house, the journey into the forest, and the reflection.

In chapter XXI of Ferdinand, Count Fathom, Ferdinand is retreating from a French army camp, after having duped an officer and robbed him of his valuables. He finds himself in a forest during a rainstorm and seeks shelter in an old crone's cabin. Ushered up to a bed in the loft, he searches his room, only to find a newly murdered corpse in the straw. Fathom uses his wits, puts the corpse in his bed, and awaits the assassins. As expected, they creep into the loft, stab the corpse and leave it, to rob it later. The murderers quit the house and Fathom descends from the loft, terrifies the crone, and forces her to aid in his escape.

The haunted house and the journey into the forest, as they are represented here, could act as prototypes for the Gothic novel. The thunderstorm creates fear or awe: "the heavens contracted a more dreary aspect, the lightning began to gleam, the thunder to roll, and the tempest, raising its voice to a tremendous roar, descended in a torrent of rain."³⁹ Smollett's description of Ferdinand lost in the terrifying and "unknown forest, amidst the darkness of such a boisterous night" is well rendered.

[Ferdinand] continued in this progress through a succession of groves, and bogs, and thorns, and brakes, by which not only his clothes, but also his skin suffered in a grievous manner, while every nerve quivered with eagerness and dismay...⁴⁰

³⁹Tobias Smollett, The Adventures of Ferdinand, Count Fathom (New York n. d.), p. 94.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 95.

The scene is prototypical of a succession of heroes and heroines caught in threatening labyrinths in the Gothic literature to follow: Walpole's Isabella in the tunnel beneath the castle of Otranto, Mrs. Radcliffe's Emily trapped in the threatening castle at Udolpho, "Monk" Lewis's Agnes entombed under the convent of St. Clare, and Coleridge's ancient mariner confined on board the spirit-haunted ghost ship. Each of these scenes evokes the sensations of anxiety, fear, and persecution so characteristic of Gothic literature.

The "reflection" of Gothic fiction is perhaps not so strongly rendered in Smollett's novel. Instead of the cosmic egomania of Walpole's *Manfred*, Mrs. Radcliffe's *Montoni*, or Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Smollett describes a grotesquely old woman and a band of assassins. But if it is a bit more prosaic, their peculiarly self-obsessed villainy does present the opposition with which the hero must contend. Furthermore, it is not the purpose of Smollett's fiction to suggest that human beings are capable of the monstrous iniquity that so overpowers and threatens the heroes and heroines of later Gothicism.

In Ferdinand, Count Fathom, Smollett's hero overcomes the old woman and safely journeys out of the forest of Gothic fiction, by a carefully reasoned and logical solution to the problem in which he finds himself. After he cleverly saves himself from assassination, he takes advantage of the old woman's fears and superstitions and thus escapes. After the departure of the others, Fathom,

then descending with great care and circumspection into the lower apartment, stood before the old beldame,

before she had the least intimation of his approach.

Accustomed as she was to the trade of blood, the hoary hag did not behold this apparition without giving signs of infinite terror and astonishment, believing it was no other than the spirit of her second guest, who had been murdered; she fell upon her knees, and began to recommend herself to the protection of the saints, crossing herself with as much devotion as if she had been entitled to the particular care and attention of Heaven.⁴¹

Having overpowered the woman, he then forces her to lead him out of the forest and to the safety of the nearest large town. The Gothic interlude of chapter XXI thus becomes a minor excursion into frightening possibilities. But that excursion acts to prove that man's reason can save him from whatever threatens. It also serves to indicate that non-rational or extra-rational forces intrude in human affairs only in the minds of the evil, the foolish, and the uneducated.

Once he so categorizes the supernatural, Smollett's hero gallops off to the nearest town. He abandons the world of Gothic picturesqueness to continue his really important adventures in the world of men. This same negative attitude about the supernatural is suggested in the next "Gothic" incident in the novel, the visit to the grave of the "incomparable" Monimia in chapters LXII and LXIII. In chapter LXII, Renaldo, the Count of Melvil, learns the details of the death of his beloved Monimia, a victim of the machinations of Fathom. He persuades the physician who attended her to accompany him to the grave of Monimia. The scene is the familiar one of the graveyard at

⁴¹Ibid., p. 98.

midnight that evokes memories of the sepulchral horrors of Young and Blair:

During this pause, the soul of Melvil was wound up to the highest pitch of enthusiastic sorrow. The uncommon darkness of the night, the solemn silence, and lonely situation of the place, conspired with the occasion of his coming, and the dismal images of his fancy, to produce a real rapture of gloomy expectation, which the whole world would not have persuaded him to disappoint. The clock struck twelve, the owl screeched from the ruined battlement, the door was opened by the sexton, who, by the light of a glimmering taper, conducted the despairing lover to a dreary aisle, and stamped upon the ground with his foot, saying, -- "Here the young lady lies interred."⁴²

As Smollett insists before he begins the familiar Gothic catalogue of the clock at midnight, the screeching owl, and the ruined battlement, the details of the scene create an emotional climate and evoke a specific emotional reaction. They "produce a real rapture of gloomy expectation, which the whole world would not have persuaded him to disappoint."

This "rapture of gloomy expectation" is aptly fulfilled in chapter LXIII. Renaldo returns on the following night, to repeat his morbid lamentations over the grave of Monimia and is suddenly confronted by what appears to be her risen spirit. Thus, Smollett creates an entirely "Gothic" scene in order to describe the debilitating effect it could have on human reason.

In the chapel again at midnight, Melvil's "ear was suddenly

⁴²Ibid., p. 362.

invaded with the sound of some few solemn notes issuing from the organ, which seemed to feel the impulse of an invisible hand."⁴³ The effect is to convince him that he is in the presence of a supernatural being. The thought further immobilizes him:

reason shrunk before the thronging ideas of his fancy, which represented this music as the prelude to something strange and supernatural; and while he waited for the sequel, the place was suddenly illuminated, and each surrounding object brought under the cognizance of his eye.⁴⁴

The effect of his prescience of the supernatural is a terrifying paralysis of his reason; "all his faculties were swallowed up by those of seeing and of hearing."⁴⁵ At the appearance of Monimia, "his hair stood upright, and a cold vapor seemed to thrill through every nerve."⁴⁶

When, after much trembling and expostulation, Renaldo advances to the "spirit" he discovers himself in the embrace of a real creature of flesh and blood. A moment later, he also discovers himself in the presence of an audience. Monimia's protectors, who dreamed up the scheme of her "death" to shelter her from Fathom and who have been secreting her, have come along to take part in the sentimental scene. What was, a moment before, a scene of gloom and terror turns into a tear-filled reunion of separated lovers. At one stroke, the Gothic terrors are unmasked.

⁴³Ibid., p. 369.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 370.

We use the word "unmasked" for a particular purpose--the narrator has created the scene with one purpose in mind: to ridicule the belief of divine or supernatural intervention in human affairs. The "Gothic" scene had first created in Renaldo the sense of "gloomy expectation". Then the strange music and apparent vision had temporarily bereft him of his sight. Such, remarks the narrator, "was the infirmity of human nature, oppressed by the presence of a superior being."⁴⁷ But the whole point, of course, is that Renaldo was not a victim of a superior being, but of his own foolish "fancy". Because he allowed appearances to cloud his reason, he became a victim of the superstition that is more appropriate to the old hag of chapter XXI. In this case, Renaldo's journey into the forest and terror within the haunted Gothic house are exposed as illusions. And the "reflection" with which he must contend is his own weakness and tendency to abandon the controlling force of reason to the dangerous forces of fear and imagination.

The effect on the reader is, one would presume, the same effect Smollett would create in Renaldo: the Gothic terror becomes comical. With Renaldo, we realize that we have been "set up". When the supernatural appearance is exposed as play acting, all the panoply that helped create the impression of the supernatural is exposed as ludicrous and unworthy of the response of a reasonable man.

This response to the supernatural is also the one Scott tries

⁴⁷Ibid.

to create throughout his Gothic fiction. The supernatural is the main concern of Scott's introduction to The Castle of Otranto. In his review of Otranto, Scott distinguishes two kinds of romance: that which is believable at any time and "that which, though held impossible by more enlightened ages, was yet consonant with the faith of earlier times."⁴⁸ Scott defends Walpole's use of the supernatural for the sense of verisimilitude that he thus creates:

It was, therefore, the author's object not merely to excite surprise and terror, by the introduction of supernatural agency, but to wind up the feelings of his reader till they became for a moment identified with those of a ruder age...⁴⁹

Yet Scott is also careful to note that such is possible only because the intelligent reader is always aware that he is reading fiction. Such a reader "throws his mind into the attitude best adapted to humour the deceit which is presented for his entertainment, and grants, for the time of perusal, the premises on which the fable depends."⁵⁰

Beyond this, Scott uses his introduction to make clear his attitudes about the supernatural. At one point he describes the "supernatural machinery [of Gothic fiction] such as the superstition of the period received as matter of devout credulity."⁵¹ At another, he describes The Castle of Otranto as a novel whose "speciosa miracula

⁴⁸Scott, p. 123.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 122.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 124.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 121.

[are] striking and impressive, though our cooler reason admits their impossibility."⁵²

In this introduction, therefore, Scott is distinguishing a dualistic attitude toward the supernatural. In certain circumstances, it can be an aid to the imagination, but Scott is always ready to remind us that it is only an impression on the imagination. Prof. Coleman Parsons expresses this idea in Witchcraft and Demonology in Scott's Fiction (Edinburgh, 1964): "As a man of imagination, Scott himself enjoyed the unexplained sensation, but as an advocate, a sheriff, and a man of reason, he delighted in probing the mechanics of supernatural fraud."⁵³

This same attitude of bemused incredulity is characteristic of Scott's Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft (1830). Scott's ending reveals his beliefs about the supernatural:

Tales of ghosts and demonology are out of date at forty years and upwards...it is only in the morning of life that this feeling of superstition "comes o'er us like a summer cloud," affecting us with fear, which is solemn and awful rather than painful; and I am tempted to think, that if I were to write on the subject at all, it should have been during a period of life when I could have treated it with more interesting vivacity, and might have been at least amusing, if I could not be instructive.⁵⁴

This remark near the end of Scott's literary career stands in

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Coleman O. Parsons, Witchcraft and Demonology in Scott's Fiction (Edinburgh, 1964), p. 264.

⁵⁴Sir Walter Scott, Letters on Witchcraft and Demonology (London, 1830), p. 401.

contrast to his interest in supernatural tales at its beginning. Scott admits, in his notes to the 1830 edition of his poetry, to an early fascination with ballad poetry, under the inspiration of Bishop Percy's Reliques. In 1795, at the age of twenty-four, he produced an imitation of Burger's "Lenore" (1775), which he called "William and Helen". Scott also translated and imitated Burger's "Wilde Jäger" (1775) as "The Wild Huntsman", and a song from Goethe's Claudina von Villa Bella as "Frederick and Alice". These and his original ballads, "Glenfinlas," "The Fire King," and "The Eve of St. John" were all published in Matthew Gregory Lewis's collection, Tales of Wonder (London, 1801).

In the notes to his collected poetry, from the vantage point of thirty years, Scott expressed some doubts about the collection:

As this was to be a collection of tales turning on the preternatural, there were risks in the plan of which the ingenious editor was not aware. The supernatural, though appealing to certain powerful emotions very widely and deeply sown amongst the human race, is, nevertheless, a spring which is peculiarly apt to lose its elasticity by being too much pressed on, and a collection of ghost stories is not more likely to be terrible, than a collection of jests to be merry or entertaining.⁵⁵

But Scott's enthusiasm for the project when Lewis first presented it to him, suggests that this reservation is the product of maturity and sober reflection.

Each of Scott's translations and original ballads in the Tales

⁵⁵Sir Walter Scott, The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott ed. J. Logie Robertson, (London, 1964), p. 684.

of Wonder is an unapologetic presentation of supernatural and preternatural occurrences. Invariably, the supernatural takes the form of the return of reanimated corpses or of diabolical spirits that terrify the living. "William and Helen" ("Lenore") describes the return of a Crusader and a journey through the night with the terrified Helen to a graveyard, where:

The eyes desert the naked skull,
 The mould' ring flesh the bone,
 Till Helen's lily arms entwine
 A ghastly skeleton.

(11. 249-252)

"The Wild Huntsman" ("Der Wilde Jäger") is a German folk tale of a medieval manor lord, condemned to haunting a forest with an eternal hunt for desecrating the Sabbath:

This is the horn, and hound, and horse,
 That oft the lated peasant hears;
 Appall'd, he signs the frequent cross,
 When the wild din invades his ears.

(11. 201-204)

Scott's translation from Goethe, "Frederick and Alice," is another ballad set in the misty past. Frederick, a chevalier, has abandoned Alice and left for France. After seven days of lamentation, Alice dies. Frederick, meanwhile, wanders desperate and terrified for seven days, pursued by nameless fears. Finally, he seeks shelter in a ruined castle. Opening a door, he comes upon a funeral banquet attended by ghostly forms:

Coffins for the seats extend;
 All with black the board was spread;
 Girt by parent, brother, friend,
 Long since number'd with the dead.

Alice, in her grave-clothes bound,
 Ghastly smiling, points a seat;
 All arose, with thundering sound;
 All the expected stranger greet.

High their meagre arms they wave,
 Wild their notes of welcome swell;
 'Welcome, traitor, to the grave!
 Perjured, bid the light farewell!
 (11.97-108)

"The ballad called 'Glenfinlas,' " says Scott, "was, I think, the first original poem which I ventured to compose."⁵⁶ "Glenfinlas" is, appropriately, a native Scottish legend. It describes the chief-tain-seer Moy's prediction of disaster for Lord Ronald. As predicted, Ronald dies, the bloody victim of a green-clad wood-siren. Moy, also confronted by a bewitching spirit, protects himself with prayer. But the wood still remains haunted by the female spirits:

Woe to Moneira's sullen rills!
 Woe to Glenfinlas' dreary glen!
 There never son of Albin's hills
 Shall draw the hunter's shaft agen!

E'en the tired pilgrim's burning feet
 At noon shall shun that sheltering den,
 Lest, journeying in their rage, he meet
 The wayward Ladies of the Glen.
 (11.249-256)

Scott's two remaining ballads from Tales of Wonder are "The Eve of St. John" and "The Fire King". In the first, the Baron of

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 683.

Smaylho'me rides to a duel, during which he treacherously kills Sir Richard of Coldinghame. On his return home, he learns of his lady's rendezvous during his absence with a mysterious knight at "the lonely light/That burns on the wild Watchfold" (11. 37-38). On the eve of St. John, the knight appears at the lady's bedside and reveals himself as her murdered lover, Sir Richard. The spirit reveals that their "lawless love" has been the cause of their damnation, and brands her right hand as a warning. The ghostly visit sends lord and lady to lives of penance as monk and nun.

"The Fire King" is a tale of the corruption of a Crusader, Count Albert, by "A heathenish damsel.../The Soldan's fair daughter of Mount Lebanon" (11. '39-40). While his beloved, Rosalie, pursues him to the Holy Land, Albert renounces rosary, cross, and guardian angel in favor of the dreaded Fire-King. The Fire-King gives him an enchanted sword, with the admonition:

"With this brand shalt thou conquer, thus long,
and no more,
Till thou bend to the Cross, and the Virgin adore."
(11. 79-80)

So Albert now heads a victorious Moslem force, until he is one day unseated by a Christian page during a battle. Having fallen before the page's crossed shield, Albert unwittingly murmurs "Bonne Grace, Notre Dame!" (1. 104) This removes the spell from his sword, but Albert still kills the page. To his horror, however, he discovers the page to have been Rosalie. During the slaughter that follows, Albert is killed.

The Lady was buried in Salem's bless'd bound,
 The Count he was left to the vulture and hound:
 Her soul to high mercy Our Lady did bring;
 His went on the blast to the dread Fire-King.
 (11.125-128)

It is apparent that, at least in his initial version, Scott offers the supernatural without apology or explanation. His ballads in Lewis's Tales of Wonder and his imitations of German supernaturalism were straight-forward presentations, without a hint of irony. One might wonder, then, how Scott merits the description of Enlightenment Gothicist.

Scott himself provides much of that explanation. His above-quoted remark at the end of the Letters on Witchcraft and Demonology suggests that a fascination with the supernatural and the preternatural is properly an affliction of youth. Moreover, of course, his early supernatural works were in ballad form, which traditionally and conventionally accepted the supernatural. For Scott to write ballads with a medieval setting that rejected the supernatural would have been ludicrous. (Even rigid rationalists such as Wolpole and Clara Reeve accepted the supernatural, because the conventions of the romance demanded it.)

But while Scott defended the supernatural in The Castle of Otranto, because such was the convention of the genre, he did so in a preface that strongly established his attitude about historical supernaturalism. Scott's introduction to Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border (1802-3) and his notes to the 1830 edition of his poems perform the

same function for the supernaturalism in his poetry. That is, the poems preserve the supernaturalism, while Scott's notes explain it away.

In the 1830 edition, Scott's introductory note to his translations from German is largely a description of his enthusiasms, early in life, for the ballad and for German literature. His annotations to "William and Helen" and to "Frederick and Alice" discuss the occasion for his translations from Burger and Goethe. The notes to "The Wild Huntsman" and to "The Fire King" are more scholarly. One such annotation describes the origin of the tale of the wild huntsman in German legend and even suggests sources for further reading. The note to "The Fire-King" pinpoints Scott's historical source for the story in a chronicle of the events of the Crusades.

The descriptive material that Scott provides for his entirely original ballads is even more precise and detailed. The introduction to "Glenfinlas" is a long description of the composition of the tale, complete with historical and geographical information. The introduction to "The Eve of Saint John" details the outlines of the story out of Scottish chronicles and from the characters of contemporary legend.

All this annotation, footnoting, and historical background information is an addition by Scott the antiquarian to the work of Scott the poet. These annotations seem to be the attempt of an older man to temper the enthusiasms of his youth. When Scott provides the myth along with the demythologizing, he would have us remember that the story

is his creation alone. This peculiar intrusion of the author into his story tries to insure that the poetry supports no other attitude about the supernatural than the one that the author would cultivate. This, of course, is Scott's purpose in the introduction to The Castle of Otranto. Like Walpole's second preface and Scott's introduction to that novel, the poet's criticism of his own poetry solves the mysteries and resolves the fears that the literature creates. By their intrusion of the rational into the supernatural, they remind us that Scott's world, where the supernatural does not interfere, is the "real" world, while the other is a plaything of the writer's imagination.

The reason for this extended discussion of Scott's early poetry is not merely for the insights into Scott's attitudes about the supernatural which Scott's later annotations to that poetry provide. These particular poems were selected because they are Scott's earliest experiments in Gothic poetry. One interesting aspect of Scott's development as a Gothicism in the poems is his use of the "haunted house" of Gothic literature. In his early poem, "William and Helen," the house takes the form of William's grave. This is a somewhat conventional version of the property. In "The Eve of St. John" Scott centers his terror in several locales, a practice which Mrs. Radcliffe had inaugurated in The Italian and which Godwin imitated in St. Leon.

The four other ballads also offer interesting variants of the "haunted house". Scott uses the siren-haunted wood of "The Wild Huntsman"--which, of course, originated with Burger--in "Glenfinlas".

Another example is the haunted room behind the bolted iron door underneath the castle in "Frederick and Alice," where the dead welcome Frederick to his own wake. Finally, the cavern in "The Fire-King," "where burns evermore/The mystical flame which the Curdmans adore" (11. 45-46) is one of Scott's most impressive examples of the Gothic "haunted house". (One might wonder, in fact, if it inspired the secret tribunal, or *vehmgericht*, and Gothic inquisitional chamber in Scott's novel, Anne of Geierstein.)

Further, the relative brevity of the ballads results in rather broad and unsubtle characterization. As a result, the narcissistic, egocentric, or maniacal vision of the Gothic "reflection" is developed in one-sided and melodramatic villains. The demon lovers in "William and Helen", "The Eve of St. John", the wild huntsman himself, the faithless lovers in "Frederick and Alice" and "The Fire-King", and the wood-siren of "Glenfinlas" are all two-dimensional evil figures. The same is true for the confrontation with evil, the "journey into the forest," in each poem. The brevity of each poem requires a simple and uncomplicated outcome.

Scott's early Gothic poems were a vehicle for him. With them he could grope toward the expression of Gothic poetry that he more fully realized in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel". (1805) As an examination of that poem will indicate, Scott brought to fruition the Gothic techniques with which he was experimenting in his earlier attempts.

But if "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" is more successful in the

creation of its Gothic effects, the poem cannot really be called a Gothic piece. While its "haunted house" is much better developed than in the earlier shorter pieces, its evil figures (the "reflection") are not well developed. Further, the confrontation with evil--the "journey into the forest"--has no particular connection with the evil figures and the Gothic architecture.

The best Gothic parts of the poem are the "architecture" which Scott creates in Cantos I and II. Canto I opens with a description of the "secret Bower" of the Lady of Branksome's tower, where she goes to conjure up the Spirit of the Flood and the Spirit of the Fell:

The feast was over in Branksome tower,
And the Ladye had gone to her secret bower;
Her bower that was guarded by word and by spell,
Deadly to hear, and deadly to tell--
Jesu Maria, shield us well!
No living wight, save the Ladye alone,
Had dared to cross the threshold stone.

(I, 1)

From its prominence at the beginning of the poem and because it is the place where she practices her black arts, one would expect the "secret bower" to assume an important place in the poem. This impression is reinforced when the Lady uses her arts to overhear the conversation of the two spirits, with its strong overtones of Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner" (I, 15-17). But after this introductory scene, the Lady's room plays little part in the action of the story.

The same unfulfilled expectation is aroused in Canto II, when the Lady sends William of Deloraine to Michael Scott's tomb in Melrose Abbey. In the first stanza of Canto II, Scott seems almost at pains to

create a "Gothic" scene, complete with all its traditional accouterments:

If thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,
 Go visit it by the pale moonlight;
 For the gay beams of lightsome day
 Gild, but to flout, the ruins grey,
 When the broken arches are black in night,
 And each shafted oriel glimmers white;
 When the cold light's uncertain shower
 Streams on the ruin'd central tower;
 When buttress and buttress, alternately
 Seem fram'd of ebon and ivory;
 When silver edges the imagery,
 And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die;
 When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
 And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,
 Then go but alone the while--
 Then view St. David's ruin'd pile;
 And, home returning, soothly swear,
 Was never scene so sad and fair!

(II, i)

Scott continues to create his Gothic scenery, in describing William's entry, along with the aged monk, into the abbey church:

By a steel-clench'd postern door,
 They enter'd now the chancel tall;
 The darken'd roof rose high aloof
 On pillars lofty and light and small:

(II, ix)

They pass "the screened altar's pale" where "the dying lamps did burn" (II, x, 3-4) to the tomb of the wizard Michael Scott, wherein "burns a wondrous light, / To chase the spirits that love the night" (II, xvii, 3-4). They break open the tomb, a light streams forth, and they view the perfectly preserved body of Scott: "His left hand held his Book of Might;/ A silver cross was in his right" (II, xix, 8-9). The old monk presents William with Scott's book of charms and sends him off in the night to Branksome Castle.

Now, in his description of Melrose Abbey and the tomb of Michael Scott, Scott has created what could be a version of the Gothic "haunted house". The Abbey and the tomb could act as that threatening symbol of fascination and repulsion in Gothic fiction. But, like the Lady's tower, Melrose Abbey and the tomb of Michael Scott do not really function in the poem, once they provide the Book of Might. True enough, Scott does bring the poem to a close as the Abbot of Melrose chants a haunting "Dies Irae"; but the final scenes at Melrose are included in a largely unsuccessful attempt to tie the elements of the story together.

Despite its occasional use of Gothic properties, "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" is not a fully developed Gothic poem. Basically, it is a combination of the Romeo and Juliet story with a happy ending and an historical narrative with a faintly medieval locale. The Gothic architecture, Cranstoun's Dwarf with his magical powers, the charms, and the superstitions--all are incidental decorative pieces to a love story in an historical narrative. This all becomes apparent in the second half of the "Lay", where Scott seems to be at his best. Canto IV, with its echoes of the Iliad in the catalogue of fighting men, Canto V, with its picture of Cranstoun's successful substitution for William in the duel, and Canto VI, with its famous celebration of patriotism and of Scotland--these are the best written parts of the poem. Beside them, the Gothic in the poem becomes mere bombast and stage horror. The storm at the wedding of Cranstoun and Margaret, the appearance of Michael Scott, and the disappearance of the Dwarf are anticlimatic and a bit ludicrous,

after all the chivalrous panoply. The ending at the Abbey, the attempt to reintroduce a sense of gloom, and the chanting of the mass for the dead go against the tone created in Cantos IV-VI, and therefore strike one as false and contrived.

If Scott developed his Gothic technique in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" from his use of Gothic in the earlier poems, he also appropriated other techniques for the longer poem. It would be of value, therefore, to note the development of his use of the supernatural from the earlier work to the "Lay".

As with the earlier poems, Scott engaged himself in the process of explaining away the supernatural of "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" in his notes for the 1830 edition of his poetry. As usual, his annotations are a combination of biography, literary influences, and Scottish history and customs. Thus, Scott describes his problem in choosing the correct poetic metre, and he admits the literary influence of Coleridge and Southey on the poem. His notes extend to many pages of historical explanation of the incidents of the poem. Finally, many of these notes are specifically concerned with explaining the Scottish superstitions that lie behind much of the supernaturalism of the poem.

One must object, of course, that notes written twenty-five years after the publication of a poem are irrelevant to the effect of the poem. The fact that the older man felt compelled to explain away the fancy that inspired the poetry of his youth is itself an indication of the ambiguous attitude about the supernatural that characterizes Enlightenment Gothicism.

But if Scott's ideas about the supernatural varied, one fact about that supernatural remains constant: nowhere--except perhaps in his translation of Burger--does the world beyond deprive man of either intellect or will.

Scott was influenced by an unbroken tradition of supernaturalism in Scottish literature--and in English literature, for that matter. But the supernaturalism that he describes is not intended to arouse the psychic fears of his readers as, for example, is the supernaturalism of Matthew Gregory Lewis's The Monk. Not even in his most unashamedly supernatural early poetry does Scott suggest the ironic, terrifying world-order of the later Gothic writers.

Scott's technique in the use of the supernatural is more sophisticated in "Wandering Willie's Tale" from Redgauntlet (1824). The tale is a gem of pure Gothicism, an indulgence in the supernatural that can well be enjoyed for its own sake. But a careful reading of the tale will indicate that Scott has surrounded it with a variety of narrative devices that make ambiguous his attitude about the supernatural. (As with his collected poetry, Scott also explains away the supernaturalism in the notes to his collected novels [1829-1833, 48 vols.] . But, as with the poetry, these explanations need have no influence on our interpretation and understanding of the work itself.)

The first of these devices is the frame within which the story is set, in a letter from Darsie Latimer to Alan Fairford. Darsie's prefatory remarks to the tale describe the superstition of Wandering

Willie, its narrator. Darsie remarks: "I laughed at the extravagance of [Willie's] language, however, and asked him in reply, if he was fool enough to believe that the foul fiend would play so silly a masquerade."⁵⁷ Darsie's remark just after this indicates another attitude of his about the tale: "and as you know I like tales of superstition, I begged to have a specimen of his talent as we went along."⁵⁸ Thus, at the beginning of the tale, Scott indicates, in Willie and Darsie, three approaches to the tale: one can accept the supernatural, one can imaginatively indulge in it, or one can reject it.

Scott maintains these alternatives by several means. In the first place, the transmission of the tale is not direct. Willie first learns it from the minister's wife, after the death of the minister and of Sir John Redgauntlet. Willie then learns the version he tells Darsie Latimer from his aged father. Scott is a bit coy here, in having Willie suggest that his father's memory was somewhat impaired, and that he had a particular reason for presenting as heroic a picture of himself as possible:

And then my gudesire, wha was failed in his limbs,
but not in his judgment or memory--at least nothing
to speak of--was obliged to tell the real narrative
to his freends, for the credit of his good name. He
might else have been charged for a warlock.⁵⁹

In these last lines of his "Tale", Wandering Willie himself is suggesting

⁵⁷Sir Walter Scott, Redgauntlet (London, 1930), p. 112.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 129.

some perfectly understandable reasons why his father could have altered his version of the story.

Even the story itself, with the fairy-tale motifs of the castle of the damned that appears in the middle of the forest and the banquet at which the earthly visitor must not accept any food, might suggest the source of the story in peasant lore, rather than in actual fact. Then, lest we miss the point, Sir John Redgauntlet reminds Willie at the end of the tale that he had drunk enough brandy before his journey into the wood of Pitmurkie. The only questions the tale leaves unanswered--if, indeed, one is looking for explanations--are the receipt for the rent composed after old Redgauntlet's death, the midnight blowing of the whistle and the supposed appearance of the devil on Redgauntlet's coffin, the sight of which caused the death of Doughal MacCallum. Willie himself grudgingly allows an explanation of these last two at the end of the tale:

Indeed, ye'll no hinder some to threap, that it was nane o' the Auld Enemy that Doughal and my gudesire saw in the Laird's room, but only that wanchancy creature, the Major [old Redgauntlet's pet ape], capering on the coffin; and that, as to the blawing on the Laird's whistle that was heard after he was dead, the filthy brute could do that as weel as the Laird himself, if no better.⁶⁰

So the only unanswered question is the bill of receipt, and that was conveniently sent up Redgauntlet's chimney, amid a shower of sparks.

"Wandering Willie's Tale" is Scott's finest example of Gothicism. As could be expected, this prose work from Scott's mature

⁶⁰Ibid.

period indicates the development of Scott's artistry. The mysterious castle filled with the souls of the damned is a refinement of a similar castle in "Frederick and Alice". The "journey into the forest" during which Willie's "gudesire" confronts the damned souls is better realized than similar scenes in "William and Helen" and "The Eve of St. John". And certainly those apparitions themselves are brilliant examples of the Gothic "reflections": "But their smiles were fearfully contorted from time to time; and their laughter passed into such wild sounds, as made my gudesire's very nails grow blue, and chilled the marrow in his bones."⁶¹

But perhaps the best indication of the sophistication of the story is its treatment of the supernatural. Scott so constructs the tale that any interpretation of the "truth" of the supernatural is possible. The reason for this latitude is that, no matter how one views the events of "Wandering Willie's Tale," man is still the most powerful operator in the story. (Willie, we remember, saves himself through his wits.)

Scott's use of the supernatural is more complex than that of Walpole and Clara Reeve, who ultimately try to explain away their supernatural action as a literary convention. But despite their varied attitudes toward the supernatural, the Enlightenment Gothicists all describe man as a creature endowed with the intelligence necessary to solve his problems. For this reason, Enlightenment Gothicism is

⁶¹Ibid., p. 124.

incapable of suggesting the darker and more threatening possibilities that later Gothicism does. Since it views the universe as eminently knowable, its functions resemble those of the modern mystery novel. Like Conan-Doyle's prototype of the modern detective, Sherlock Holmes, it confronts a threatening and complex puzzle. Then, through human intellection, it provides a carefully reasoned and logical solution to the problem.

An almost direct result of this rather benevolent view of man is a need to suppress the extraordinary and grotesque aspects of human nature and human experience. Such fiction cannot present unsolvable problems; nor can it present characters who act from unexplainable motives. Its characters thus tend to be types of virtue or vice: Walpole's Manfred is lust-ridden and power-mad, Clara Reeve's old English Baron is thoroughly wise and benevolent, and Scott's Wandering Willie is the typical superstition-ridden peasant.

The narrator who concentrates on the intricacies of human motivation and the workings of the mental interior proves just how irrational the mind can be--as Sterne does so brilliantly in Tristram Shandy. But the writers of Enlightenment Gothicism either cannot or will not present human nature in such a way. Therefore, besides tending toward typecasting, they never try to realize their characters from within. Their characters are all built up exteriorly; only from the outside are we told of their private doubts, visions, and hopes. So, the second major characteristics of Enlightenment Gothic--a

characteristic which it shares with much of the non-gothic fiction of the age--is its exteriorization of character.

That Smollett's Ferdinand Count Fathom is a type character is obvious in the all-but-universal description of the novel as picaresque. Throughout the novel and up to his less than convincing conversion to virtue at the end of the story, Fathom typically and thoroughly acts the part of the picaro and rogue. Except for the sentimental final conversion, the character acts throughout the novel in a series of apparently programmed moves. Nothing that Ferdinand does has a particularity about it that could be associated with him; each of his actions could be the actions of Gil Blas, or Jonathin Wild, or any other picaro. Since he is a type, then, Fathom, inspires no particular empathy from the reader.

This same "distancing" occurs as a result of Smollett's presentation of Fathom's motivations and the descriptions of the workings of Fathom's mind. In both instances Smollett creates barriers to a sympathetic resonance between character and audience. In describing Fathom's motivations, Smollett invariably relies on those motivations typical of the picaro: greed inspires his thievery, lust inspires his attempted seduction of Monimia, and his downfall inspires his eventual repentance. The novel, in other words, suggests that human experience is composed of easily discernible cause and effect relationships.

Smollett so describes the reactions and experiences of his

characters that the reader is put in the position of observer. One good example of this is his description, Chapter XXI, of Fathom's reaction when the assassins stab the dead man Fathom had put into his own bed:

Never had our hero spent a moment in such agony as he felt during this operation; the whole surface of his body was covered with a cold sweat, and his nerves were relaxed with an universal palsy: in short, he remained in a trance, that in all probability contributed to his safety; for had he retained the use of his senses, he might have been discovered by the transports of his fear. ⁶²

Writing such as this does not involve the reader's emotions in those of the characters. Instead, it asks us to observe the emotional reaction from the exterior. By juxtaposing Fathom's emotional palsy with the narrator's comment on its benefits, Smollett is further insulating us from an empathetic reaction. The scene shows us what happened and tells us why it was fortunate, but nowhere does it encourage an emotional identification with the character. Instead, the complex, tri-partite sentence functions as a single unit. The first part relates Fathom's present situation to his past experience, the second describes the present situation, and the third catalogues the experience in terms of its value. Once this is done, Smollett moves to his next unit of action-- Fathom notices that the assassins have left the door open in their retreat, thus affording him a means of escape.

A second, but somewhat different, example of this exteriorizing of character occurs in Smollett's descriptions of Melvil's reactions at

⁶²Smollett, p. 97.

the tomb of Monimia. In this section, Smollett tries, although unsuccessfully, to represent the character's inner feelings. When Melvil first sees the "apparition," Smollett's description is typical of that exterior narrative observation that has just been described:

What passed within his mind on this occasion is not easy to be described: all his faculties were swallowed up by those of seeing and of hearing; he had mechanically raised himself upon one knee, with his body advancing forwards; and in this attitude he gazed with a look through which his soul seemed eager to escape.⁶³

Besides proving his prejudice that a person whose reason is suspended is somehow not human, Smollett all but admits here his inability to describe emotional reactions. Because Melvil is not thinking at the moment, Smollett cannot describe him as anything but some sort of statue. (A few sentences later, he does just this: "At sight of these well-known features, seemingly improved with new celestial graces, the youth became a statue, expressing amazement, love, and awful adoration.")⁶⁴ The relative complexity and sophistication of this sentence and of the sentence structure of the whole novel indicates not only a preference for rational discourse; it is a vehicle purposely chosen for its rigidity, for its inability to express the vagaries of emotional reactions, in the manner of Tristram Shandy. The complex sentences, with their parallel subordinate clauses, call attention to themselves, instead of to the object they describe. One is invited to

⁶³Ibid., p. 369.

⁶⁴Ibid.

observe Melvil's situation, but never to share it with him.

In the next paragraph, however, Smollett seems to be allowing a glimpse into Melvil's inner experiences, but he immediately cuts it short. As he did with Fathom in the loft, he breaks off our emotional identification by providing a rational explanation of the meaning of Melvil's fear:

He heard the voice of his Monimia call Renaldo! thrice he essayed to answer; as oft his tongue denied its office; his hair stood upright, and a cold vapor seemed to thrill through every nerve. This was not fear, but the infirmity of human nature--oppressed by the presence of a superior being.⁶⁵

From this point, when Melvil addresses Monimia, the narration is entirely external. In the following selection from that address, Melvil not only observes the exterior emotional reactions of Monimia, but also reports on his own:

"Tell me, ah! tell me, dost thou still remember those fond hours we passed together? Doth that enlightened bosom feel a pang of soft regret, when thou recallest our fatal separation? Sure that meekened glance bespeaks thy sympathy! Ah! how thy tender look o'erpowers me!"⁶⁶

The prose here is, first of all, extremely rhetorical and artificial. It all but announces that the novelist has put it in order, polished it, and decked it out with rhetorical flourishes.

But this is not said by way of criticism. One of the important assumptions behind such prose is that this is just the function of the

⁶⁵Ibid., 370.

⁶⁶Ibid.

artist: to endow his raw material with an order and a coherency that is not immediately apparent in nature. For such fiction, we remember, describes a universe whose problems and ambiguities can be resolved through the operation of human intelligence. And if the universe is ordered, so, too, should be the prose which describes it.

Another characteristic result of such a world-view must also be an unwillingness to examine the ambiguities and complexities of human nature. So, as has been indicated, Enlightenment Gothicism tends to represent characters as types. Finally, as these prose selections seem to indicate, the characters in Enlightenment Gothicism are represented as largely rational beings--and inevitably so represented from the outside. A brief review of the other work this chapter has discussed will prove this to be a characteristic feature of all Enlightenment Gothicism.

In her excellent study of the Gothic novel, Le Roman Terrifiant, Alice M. Killen suggests something of the externalization of character that is typical of the earlier Gothic. Miss Killen alludes to this in her description of Theodore, the romantic hero of The Castle of Otranto.

Theodore est le jeune cavalier sans peur et sans reproche, protecteur des dames en détresse, tel qu'on le voyait dans les anciens romans de chevalerie et prototype du jeune héros chez la plupart des romanciers de ce genre.⁶⁷

As Miss Killen makes clear, Theodore is more a character type--and the prototype of a long line of characters like him--than a fully realized

⁶⁷Killen, Parti 1, ch. 1, p. 4.

individual. Hazlitt's remark about Mrs. Radcliffe's heroes might also be appropriate for Theodore and for the other characters who were to be based on him: "Nobody can find any fault with them, for nobody knows anything about them. They are described as very handsome and quite unmenacing and inoffensive. 'Her heroes have no character at all.'"⁶⁸

The best examples of Walpole's insulating his readers against an understanding of the character should be taken from the novel itself. The following scene, in which Father Jerome, Theodore's newly discovered parent, interviews his son about his affection for Matilda, could have been used to develop the character of Theodore. Walpole chooses to ignore that possibility, and summarizes the story, instead.

Jerome, at quitting the castle over-night, had questioned Theodore severely why he had accused him to Manfred of being privy to his escape. Theodore owned it had been with the design to prevent Manfred's suspicion from alighting on Matilda. . . Jerome was heartily grieved to discover his son's inclination for that princess; and leaving him to his rest, promised in the morning to acquaint him with important reasons for conquering his passion.⁶⁹

On the one hand, the section does describe something of the way Theodore's mind works. (On closer examination, however, it merely reveals him to be logical and rational.) But the method of exposition

⁶⁸William Hazlitt, "Lecture on the English Novelists" Sketches and Essays: The World's Classics (New York, 1903), p. 180.

⁶⁹Walpole, p. 93.

Walpole chooses--the journalistic summary--makes any sympathetic identification between reader and character all but impossible. Walpole continues to separate his readers from his hero in the description that follows. Again, he neglects an excellent opportunity to develop character, in favor of mere external summary: "The lovely Matilda had made stronger impressions on him than filial affection. All night he pleased himself with visions of love."⁷⁰ Instead of examining the fantasies of a young man in love, he just tells us of Theodore's affection for the princess. This leaves the reader here, and at the end of the novel, with the sense that he does not understand the young hero in any but the most minor way.

This, too, is the effect created by Walpole's descriptions of the character of Manfred: we know he is evil largely because Walpole puts evil words in his mouth and also because the novelist tells us about his evil qualities. The development of Manfred's "incestuous" passion for Isabella takes place somewhere else than in the pages of this novel; we learn that he wants to divorce his wife and marry the young princess when he tells her so. The same kind of character development occurs when Manfred feels a moment of benevolence for Theodore, whom he has been persecuting up to that time. When this happens, Walpole must interrupt his narrative to explain a part of Manfred's character that is different from what the story has been suggesting about him:

⁷⁰Ibid.

Manfred was not one of those savage tyrants, who wanton in cruelty unprovoked. The circumstances of his fortune had given an asperity to his temper, which was naturally humane; and his virtues were always ready to operate, when his passions did not obscure his reason.⁷¹

This is so about Manfred, not because the story has suggested it, but because the novelist says it is so at this moment. The character thus becomes even more of an enigma, until we eventually must ask whether it is Walpole's intention to develop character at all.

Another example of a neglected opportunity to develop character by exploiting an emotionally explosive situation is Walpole's description of Isabella fleeing Manfred through the caverns beneath the castle. At one moment in her flight, Isabella hears a sigh and footsteps nearby. The princess is further terrified when a sudden gust of wind extinguishes her lamp and leaves her in total darkness:

Words cannot paint the horror of the princess's situation. Alone, in so dismal a place, her mind impressed with all the terrible events of the day, hopeless of escaping, expecting every moment the arrival of Manfred, and far from tranquil on knowing she was within reach of somebody, she knew not whom, who for some cause seemed concealed thereabouts; all these thoughts crowded on her distracted mind, and she was ready to sink under her apprehensions. She addressed herself to every saint in heaven, and inwardly implored their assistance. For a considerable time she remained in an agony of despair. At last, as softly as was possible, she felt for the door; and, having found it, entered trembling into the vault, from whence she had heard the sigh and steps.⁷²

⁷¹Ibid., p. 41.

⁷²Ibid., p. 37.

Any novelist who would wish to examine the effects of terror on the mind or to develop a character by describing her attitudes and reactions to a threatening situation could make much of such a scene. But neither of these seems to be Walpole's intention. Instead, he prefaces the description with the formula out of classical rhetoric: verbum deficit. Then he goes on to indicate why the heroine ought to be terrified, and that she was terrified. Finally, after the saints do not seem ready to offer their intercession, Walpole's Isabella controls her emotions by an act of reason, screws up her courage, and prepares to investigate the threatening sounds. Her rational control of her fears turns out for the best when she discovers Theodore, her future husband.

Another detail also suggests that The Castle of Otranto is not concerned with delineation of characters: the novel provides no means at all to distinguish between Isabella and Matilda. Not one sentence suggests a single identifying physical characteristic of either of them. We only know that Matilda is an eighteen year old virgin of younger vintage. (But even that might not be true, since the marriage must be several times delayed, until Conrad's strength can see him through the rigors and the apparent ordeal of the honeymoon.) In any case, and despite Theodore's unexplained preference for Matilda, the novel offers no means at all of distinguishing between the two.

Perhaps the only instance when the two differ, is the moment

of Isabella's short-lived jealousy when she discovers Theodore's preference for Matilda. (And who couldn't sympathize with her, since Theodore seems to have made a random choice from a matched set?) But Isabella, perfect rationalist that she is, decides to conquer her jealousy, and thereby to destroy the momentary distinction that separates the two:

At length, the dignity of Isabella's virtue reminding her of the preference which Theodore had almost declared for her rival, made her determine to conquer her passion, and cede the beloved object to her friend.⁷³

This sentence is interesting on several accounts. First, it is another example of Walpole's habit of exteriorizing his characters. Second, it is another example of that prejudice, in Enlightenment Gothicism, against representing heroes and heroines with marked and identifying peculiarities. Like the peruke and the heroic portraiture of the eighteenth-century--both of which made men look alike--Enlightenment Gothicism is anxious to suggest that all good men share the same set of attitudes and strive for the same goals, all under the guidance and control of the reasoning faculties. Finally, it is characteristic of Enlightenment Gothicism that human reason properly employed can completely guide and control emotion.

One might still argue, however, that Walpole's type of characterization has nothing to do with philosophical attitudes or a rationalistic world view. Perhaps he was incapable of interiorizing his characterization--instead of being merely unwilling to do so. But in his

⁷³Ibid., p. 89.

so-called Gothic drama The Mysterious Mother (1781)⁷⁴, Walpole proves himself proficient at describing psychological aberrations, the effects of guilt, and the world as seen from a limited point of view.

Despite Bertrand Evans's inclusion of the drama in Gothic Drama from Walpole to Shelley, The Mysterious Mother is not Gothic-- at least not in the manner this paper is using the term. That Evans, along with many others who find themselves confused about the term, should call the drama Gothic is proof of the widespread misuse of the word. Many, unfortunately, call a piece of literature Gothic if it is vaguely associated with the medieval past or at least with noble protagonists in some "picturesque" time, and if it is somehow concerned with guilt or crime--preferably of the more sensational kind. But, as the first chapter argued, literature must fulfill certain specific characteristics to be termed Gothic. If this were not the case, we would find ourselves falling into the trap that many critics do, who describe any threatening scene or character in art or literature as Gothic.

The Mysterious Mother is not a drama which associates a crumbling house with an egocentric madman and then pits a protagonist against that combination, either to affirm life or to affirm its terrifying ambiguities. The castle in which the action takes place is a mere

⁷⁴Although he published it in London in 1781, Walpole had privately printed the drama and circulated it among his friends in 1768. His excuse for publishing the drama, whose subject he describes as "disgusting," is "solely to avoid its being rendered still worse by a surreptitious edition," The Mysterious Mother: A Tragedy, London, 1781, p. v.

backdrop that has no meaning in the action of the drama. True enough, the Countess of Narbonne is something of a madwoman. But her madness is a product of an excess of sexual desire that, like Phaedra's, tempted her to incest with her son. (The play, by the way, is full of allusions to Shakespeare and to the Greek classics, and particularly to Oedipus Rex.) But the Countess is not at all the traditional evil figure. Walpole presents her as a sympathetic figure, and does so by exposing her weaknesses and peculiarities. Walpole, in other words, brings us within his character and shows us why she acts the way she does. As a result, she becomes sympathetic, in the manner of Racine's Phaedra. The result is not a Gothic inquiry into the relationship between good and evil in the universe, but a character study into the effects of guilt.

This concern with a particular character is enough, in the world of rationalistic Gothic, to falsify the description of the play as Gothic. But, lest we content ourselves with an a priori judgment based on a set of artificially conceived rules, we ought to come to that conclusion--if at all--by examining the drama itself.

From the beginning of the drama, one quality establishes the Countess as a sympathetic character: she strongly disavows the "superstition" of priests and peasants. In Act I, Scene 3, friar Benedict complains about the Countess to his fellow conspirator, friar Martin:

I nurse her in new horrors; form her tenants
To fancy visions, phantoms; and report them.
She mocks their fond credulity⁷⁵

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 10.

At the end of Act I, the Countess herself expresses her opposition to superstition and to religion:

Weak minds
 Want their soul's fortune told by oracles
 And holy jugglers. Me, nor oracles,
 Nor prophets, death alone can certify,
 Whether, when justice's full dues exacted,
 Mercy shall grant one drop to slake my torment.⁷⁶

She repeats the same theme in Act III, Scene 1:

But light'nings play not to announce our fate:
 No whirlwinds rise of prophecy to mites:
 Nor, like inquisitors, does heav'n dress up
 In flames the victims it intends to punish;
 Making a holiday for greater sinners.⁷⁷

Walpole also uses the anti-religious--or at least anti-Catholic--sentiments of the Countess to make her a more sympathetic figure. In Act I, Scene 5 friar Benedict and the Countess are conversing. The Countess describes the effects of guilt for an "unpardonable" sin she has committed. (In Act V, she reveals her crime as incest, committed with her unknowing son, Edmund.)

Father, my crimes are Pagan; my belief
 Too orthodox to trust to erring man.
 What! Shall I, foul with guilt, and self-condemn'd,
 Presume to kneel, where angels kneel appal'd,
 And plead a priest's certificate for pardon?
 While he, perchance, before my blasted eyes
 Shall sink to woes, endless, unutterable,
 For having fool'd me into that presumption.⁷⁸

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 18.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 37.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 15.

Her dialogue is of interest, first, because it explores the effects of guilt, which is the major theme of the drama. Second, its interest lies in a certain kind of anti-religiousness that would be congenial to Walpole's audience. But the most interesting thing about her lines is their obvious association with Byron's gloomy heroes.

Literary historians tend to react with amazement and bemusement when they report Byron's unqualified approval of The Mysterious Mother. (In his preface to Marino Faliero in 1820, Byron calls The Mysterious Mother "a tragedy of the highest order" and "the last tragedy of our language".) But a reading of the drama will clearly indicate the reason for Byron's sentiments: Walpole's Countess is the female counterpart and most recent antecedant of the Byronic hero. In his study, The Byronic Hero, Peter L. Thorslev Jr. neglects to suggest the possibility that Byron was influenced by Walpole's character, but the lines just quoted argue strongly for just such an identification. The lines could just as well be included in Manfred's famous dialogue with the abbot in Act III of Byron's drama.

Nor is this an isolated instance. The secret, "unpardonable" sin, with its overtones of sexual degeneracy, the certitude of damnation, the ravages of guilt, and the rejection of the consolations of religion--all these characteristics of Walpole's heroine are developed at greater length in Byron's heroes. The ruined angel, the promethian figure condemned to an over-reaching that must destroy him, is one Byronic theme that earlier appears in Walpole. In Act V, Scene 4, for example,

one can note this in the Countess's description of the conflicting passions of her nature:

Sometimes an angel of excelling brightness
 I seem to whirl the orbs and launch the comet.
 Then hideous wings with forked points array me,
 And I suggest strange crimes to shuddering matrons⁷⁹

Byron, in other words, was not making an error of judgment in praising Walpole's tragedy; he was, instead, indirectly praising his own work.

That a connection exists between Walpole's Countess and the Byronic hero is, of course, not the most important concern here; what is important is that Walpole's drama, like Byron's dramas, allows--almost insists on-- a stronger kind of characterization than Enlightenment Gothicism can support. The characterization in The Mysterious Mother emphasizes the quirks and oddities of human nature and the perils to which the mind can be subject. It emphasizes the individual, instead of the type. If anything else, the drama is largely concerned with character, and not setting or plot. (The outcome of the story--the secret sin which the Countess confesses just before her suicide--is strongly suggested from the beginning.)

This alone could indicate that the drama is not an example of Enlightenment Gothicism. But the concern here is whether it is an example of any kind of Gothicism. That The Mysterious Mother is not a Gothic tale becomes evident when the Countess confesses her incest at the end of Act V. By the very act of explanation, she becomes a

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 79.

thoroughly sympathetic character, and not at all the evil figure which she would have to be in a Gothic tale. Deprived of her husband for eighteen months, she was aroused at the message of his return; but he was borne to the castle all but dead. At the same time, her son proposed an assignation to a young woman. The Countess describes the rest to her horrified son:

Grief, disappointment, opportunity,
 Rais'd such a tumult in my madding blood,
 I took the damsel's place; and while thy arms
 Twin'd, to thy thinking, round another's waist
 Hear, hell, and tremble!--thou did'st clasp thy mother!⁸⁰

The effect that Walpole would produce in these lines is not a kind of revulsion that one associates with a conventional Gothic villain. Manfred's attempted incest in The Castle of Otranto and Count Cenci's incest in Shelley's The Cenci both mark them as villains in Gothic tales. But the Countess's revelation of a double incest--Edmund has just married Adeliza, the child of the single union with his mother--has quite the opposite effect. We are moved to something more akin to the Aristotelian catharsis, which is the product of pity and fear--and not of revulsion. It is not for nothing, in other words, that this climatic penultimate scene also evokes from the Countess lines that paraphrase the words of Oedipus:

Lo! where this monster stands! thy mother! mistress!
 The mother of thy daughter, sister, wife!⁸¹

⁸⁰Ibid., Act V, Scene 6. p. 85.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 82.

The Mysterious Mother is, thus, Walpole's attempt at tragedy in the classic mode. Despite its "medieval" setting and its hints at dark sins and suppressed guilt, it is by no means a Gothic tale. The Gothic castle plays no role at all in the drama. The evil-figure is too sympathetically portrayed to play the role of the two dimensional villain. Finally, the conflict between the innocent and the evil figure--presumably between Count Edmund and his mother--is not developed in the drama. Despite this, however, the drama is one of the finest character studies of the age.

The next important Enlightenment Gothicist, Clara Reeve, shares the lack of interest in characterization that Walpole shows in The Castle of Otranto. Edmund, the young hero of The Old English Baron, is devoid of identifying qualities, except, of course, for the birthmark that is cited as one of the proofs he is the rightful heir of Arthur, Lord Lovel. The novel is characterized by a "total absence of personal description."⁸² As original title, The Champion of Virtue, suggests the real means of discrimination in the novel. Characters differ from each other not by their physical or psychological attributes, but by the quality of their virtues. Sir Walter Lovel differs from Baron Fitz-Owen in that Lovel is evil incarnate, while Fitz-Owen is the spirit of virtue.

The characters in the novel easily divide themselves into two groups, with Master Robert's eventual conversion to Edmund's cause

⁸²Koolman-van Middendorp, p. 34.

the only movement between the two. Within each group, the characters are but thematic variations of each other. As in Walpole's novel, one never comes to know any particular character, nor does one enter into the mental processes of any character. The description of Edmund's long awaited proposal of marriage to Lady Emma is an excellent example of this:

He asked an audience of his fair mistress, and was permitted to declare the passion he had so long stifled in his own bosom. She gave him a favourable hearing, and in a short time confessed that she had suffered equally in that suspense that was so grievous to him. They engaged themselves by mutual vows to each other, ...every cloud was vanished from their brows, and sweet tranquility took possession of their bosoms.⁸³

As these lines indicate, Clara Reeve, like Walpole, is either incapable or not willing to develop strong characters in her novel. And as with Walpole, this is a product of that strong pressure, in Enlightenment Gothicism, against the creation of strongly individualistic heroes.

The application of this principle to Scott, however, creates a problem, for Scott's *Wandering Willie* is a surprisingly well developed and individualistic character. (This consideration purposely neglects "characterization" in Scott's poetry, which is not really possible because of the length of the poems. If one were to make a case, though, the proponderance of "flat" characters in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" would still argue for the thesis.) Despite his short appearances in Redgauntlet and the fact that he does not appear at all in his "Tale",

⁸³Reeve, p. 229.

Willie is recognizable on several counts. His folk wisdom, his dialect speech, his superstitions, and his eccentric appearance all mark Willie as an individual; and if Willie is more an individual in his short appearances than all of Walpole's and of Clara Reeve's characters, then this thesis about the function of characterization in rationalistic Gothic would seem to be disproved.

The key to the problem, of course, is that Scott makes no hero out of Wandering Willie; quite the reverse is true, in fact. Willie, as Darsie Latimer makes clear, is an amusing character for his oddities, and probably something of a dangerous character for his superstition. Willie is also a representative of that lower class which tore down the Tolbooth door in The Heart of Midlothian, thereby threatening the foundations of law and an ordered society. Burkean conservative that he is, Scott shares none of the political sympathy with the poor and the lowly that is more characteristic of Blake or Wordsworth. So, in endowing him with strongly identifying characteristics, Scott is not praising Wandering Willie. If anything, Scott sees in Willie's strangeness and oddness some of the reason that he is not one of the main characters of the novel.

If Enlightenment Gothicism tends to avoid sophisticated and subtle character development, quite the opposite is true of the two other Gothicisms that developed from it, Gothicism of sensibility and romantic Gothicism. The reason that these later Gothicisms develop character is related to the reason the earlier form avoided it--a world-view.

Enlightenment Gothicism hesitated to represent the mental processes as anything but logical because to do so would be to suggest that man could be unwittingly controlled by irrational forces. Furthermore, Enlightenment Gothicism hesitated to create heroes who were largely different from each other because that would suggest that no one norm or set of rules for human conduct exists. To represent idealized humans who are different from each other would be to suggest that no one ideal is "true", and perhaps even that opposites and contraries could both be "true". This attitude, as the next chapter will indicate, was the one that was to be developed in the Gothicisms that would develop from Enlightenment Gothicism.

CHAPTER III: GOTHICISM OF SENSIBILITY

Like Enlightenment Gothicism, Gothicism of sensibility cannot be limited to a particular historical period. Instead, it represents an attitude, or world-view. This particular type, as we shall see, has been the most enduring Gothicism. It has developed into a great variety of forms and is the one Gothicism that has lasted into modern times.

Its ability to endure in a variety of forms makes Gothicism of sensibility the most interesting and noteworthy type. Although this study cannot survey all the important examples of the type, it still can suggest the variety of Gothicism of sensibility. This chapter, therefore, will describe Ann Radcliffe's Mysteries of Udolpho and The Italian, Lewis's The Monk, and Godwin's Caleb Williams and St. Leon. From the next generation of writers, it will examine Scott's Bride of Lammermoor, Byron's Manfred, and the greatest of the Gothic novels, Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer.

The last chapter described the two attitudes that dominate Enlightenment Gothicism: that man is the most important of earthly creatures and that he can control his environment and his destiny through the application of his powers of reason. This fiction suggests that man can intellectually know the world around him; its cosmos, despite the evil capabilities of man, is benevolent. In Gothicism

of sensibility, the opposite is the case. This particular Gothicism sees man as wounded or deficient in reason, so that he is incapable of making sense of the world around him. Furthermore, Gothicism of sensibility suggests that the cosmos may be a threatening and evil one. The words "may be" are used here because the inhabitant of this kind of Gothic world does not know the ultimate orientation of his cosmos--whether it be good or evil, or a combination of the two. Like the speaker in Thomas Hardy's poem, "Hap", he is a victim of "Crass Casualty...and dicing time." The world of this Gothicism is a world of "unresolvable moral and emotional ambiguity."¹

This is the reason for the choice of the term "sensibility" to characterize this Gothicism. It is borrowed from Northrop Frye's essay, "Towards Defining an Age of Sensibility."² Frye's essay describes a particular attitude about poetry as one of the touchstones of an Age of Sensibility. In the poetry that had preceded it, "the emphasis is on the communicated product...: a regular metre, clarity of syntax, epigram and wit, repetition of sense in antithesis and balance rather than of sound."³ This, notes Frye, is an example of

¹Robert D. Hume, "Gothic versus Romantic: a Reevaluation of the Gothic Novel!" PMLA 2, LXXXIV (March, 1969), 290. Hume's article insists this is true of all Gothic fiction, but it is actually true only of Gothicism of sensibility, the most common form of Gothicism. Enlightenment Gothicism and romantic Gothicism both resolve moral and emotional ambiguities, although in different ways.

²Northrop Frye, "Towards Defining an Age of Sensibility" ELH, June, 1956, 144-52, repr. Eighteenth Century English Literature: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. James L. Clifford (New York, 1959), 311-18.

³Ibid., p. 314.

the Aristotelian view of literature, whose concern is aesthetic and which views literature as a finished product.

The opposite of this is the view of literature in an Age of Sensibility. Such a view is a Longinian one, whose concern is psychological and which presents literature in the process of its creation. In such literature, "we are not being led into a story, but into the process of writing a story: we wonder, not what is coming next, but what the author will think of next."⁴ This also has a strong effect on the poetry produced in response to such an attitude:

the qualities of subconscious association take the lead, and the poetry becomes hypnotically repetitive, oracular, incantatory, dreamlike and in the original sense of the word charming. The response to it includes a subconscious factor, the surrendering to a spell.⁵

The use of poetry that is a form of incantation is strong in The Mysteries of Udolpho which, at moments of strong emotion, slips into this kind of poetry. The novel is even stronger in this regard, in its use of the deranged nun, who appears in various parts of the novel as something of a disembodied spirit chanting fascinating and terrifying songs in the depth of the woods at night.

"Monk" Lewis also develops this technique. Matilda seduces Ambrosio in The Monk, siren-like, with music:

She then tuned her harp, and afterwards preluded for some moments with such exquisite taste as to prove her a perfect mistress of the instrument.

⁴Ibid., p. 312.

⁵Ibid., p. 314.

The air which she played was soft and plaintive. Ambrosio, while he listened, felt his uneasiness subside, and a pleasing melancholy spread itself into his bosom.⁶

Lewis prefaces each of his chapters with poetry and, like Mrs. Radcliffe, allows his characters to express themselves in poetry--in "oracular, incantatory, dreamlike" terms--at the moments of strongest emotion. One senses that The Monk is very much one of the prophetic novels which Forster is describing in Aspects of the Novel.

Another part of Frye's description of an Age of Sensibility is appropriate to the kind of Gothicism being described here. Frye notes that a further characteristic of this literature is that it creates a sense of unobjectified fear and pit. In the previous literature of aesthetic product, "pity and fear are detached from the beholder by being directed toward objects."⁷ In the Poetics, Aristotle insists that the drama clearly specify the objects toward which pity and fear are to be directed:

The tragic pleasure is that of pity and fear, and the poet has to produce it by a word of imitation; it is clear, therefore, that the causes should be included in the incidents of his story.⁸

The literature of process, on the other hand, does not communicate pity and fear as related to specific persons or objects, but instead as mental attitudes or moods:

⁶Matthew G. Lewis, The Monk, ed. Louis F. Peck, intro. John Berryman (New York, 1952; 1959 ed.), p. 95.

⁷Frye, p. 316.

⁸Aristotle "Poetics", trans. Ingram Bywater, The Pocket Aristotle, ed. Justin D. Kaplan (New York, 1961), p. 358.

pity and fear become states of mind without objects, moods which are common to the work of art and the reader, and which bind them together psychologically instead of separating them aesthetically.⁹

Frye calls unobjectified fear Angst or anxiety, "a somewhat narrow term for what may be almost anything between pleasure and pain."¹⁰ This, claims Frye, is the basis of the eighteenth-century concept of the sublime, "where qualities of austerity, gloom, grandeur, melancholy or even menace are a source of romantic or pensive feelings."¹¹ In this, Frye sees the origin of graveyard poetry, Ossian, and Gothic horror novels.

Fear without a specific object is thus characteristic of Gothicism of sensibility. In Enlightenment Gothicism, the object of fear is invariably the evil figure--villains like Walpole's Manfred and Clara Reeve's Lord Lovel. But in Gothicism of sensibility the villain plays a different and more complex role. In the first place, the villains of this later Gothic are more sympathetic. Enlightenment Gothicism, as we remember, keeps the reader from sympathizing with the villain by representing him only from the exterior. But the next form of Gothicism moves away from this one-sided romance characterization by explaining motivation--and when motivation, no matter how perverse, is made intelligible, this provides the basis for sympathetic reaction to a character.

⁹Frye, p. 316.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

Schedoni is thus represented as driven by ambition and Ambrosio as driven by lust. Byron's Manfred and Maturin's Melmoth are victims of a self-frustrating promethianism. This kind of character-representation develops within the genre. In Mrs. Radcliffe's Mysteries of Udolpho, only Mme Montoni is a sympathetic evil figure, while her husband represents more closely the two dimensional villain or Enlightenment Gothicism. By the time of Byron, the peculiar villain-who-is-a-hero had been created, to appear in various guises as Melmoth the Wanderer and as Roderick Usher. Such characters are not only victimizers, but are themselves victims. In the reader they evoke an ambiguous response: they are both attractive and repulsive at the same time.

The conflict between appearance and reality in Gothicism of sensibility also creates an ambiguous response. Throughout that literature, attractive appearances are constantly being exposed as ugly realities. Apparent representatives of virtue like Schedoni and Ambrosio are exposed as corrupt at heart. Ellena's escape-route in The Italian becomes her prison cell when a crafty monk's false promise of aid traps her. The church which made a living saint of Ambrosio condemns him in its Inquisition. Lucy Westenra in Bram Stoker's Dracula is changed, through vampirism, from an object of love, to be protected, to a blasphemous object of loathing, to be destroyed. This fiction, then, represents a world completely devoid of certainties. If villains can become objects of sympathy and heroines can become

objects of disgust, who can be sure of anything?

Such characterization, which prevents one from objectifying fear in any particular person or object, makes every person or object capable of acting as objects of fear. At the same time we fear no one and everyone; everything both attracts and repels us. As a result, such literature tends to blur the distinction between good and evil. When the cosmos becomes a question mark, moral value in individuals must come into question, too.

When the distinctions between good and evil are represented as no longer clear, one tends toward a Manichean dualism. Good and evil are seen as expressions of the same impulse, instead of as opposites. Character becomes a necessary combination of the two. This is the origin of the Marquis de Sade's philosophy of crime and his description of nature that is necessarily creative in Justine and necessarily destructive in Juliette (both 1797).

Unfocused and unspecified fear makes the cosmos itself an object of terror and dread. A new and complicated attitude about the interrelationship of good and evil intensifies this particular kind of fear. One fears some unknown thing "out there"; but one also fears that the object of terror might be a monster within. These ambiguous responses produce, in the Byronic hero, a cosmic sense of boredom and ennui, but a boredom underlaid and shot through with despair. Their more typical product, however, is a sense of persecution that verges on the paranoic. Insanity is the logical conclusion of this unobjectified fear

that Frye calls Angst--and it is not for nothing that he recalls the great incidence of madness among the literary men of the Age of Sensibility.

If Gothicism of sensibility evokes a particular kind of fear, the pity it evokes is also a state of mind without objects of focus or orientation. Pity without an object has no particular name, but Frye explains it "as an imaginative animism, or treating everything in nature as though it had human feelings or qualities."¹² The literature of sensibility expresses this in a variety of ways: all nature comes alive in Smart's "Song to David," Burns celebrates the folklore that peoples the countryside with spirits, and Cowper is intensely aware of the animal world.

Mrs. Radcliffe describes this "imaginative animism" almost at the beginning of The Mysteries of Udolpho, when M. St. Aubert relates to his daughter Emily his feelings about contemplating the "evening gloom of woods": "I can linger, with solemn steps, under the deep shades, send forward a transforming eye into the distant obscurity, and listen with thrilling delight to the mystic murmuring of the woods."¹³

Emily's reaction to nature is even more specific:

Bur hark! here comes the sweeping sound over the
wood-tops:--now it dies away;--how solemn the still-
ness that succeeds! Now the breeze swells again. It

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ann Radcliffe, The Mysteries of Udolpho ed. Bonamy Dobrée (London, 1966), p. 15.

is like the voice of some supernatural being--the voice of the spirit of the woods, that watches over them by night. ¹⁴

Emily's words are notable for two reasons. First, their animism--their reference to the "spirit of the woods"--makes the piece an example of unobjectified pity. Second, the lines are also an example of the literature of process, where the writer "does not throw the suspense forward, but keeps the emotion at a continuous present."¹⁵ Emily is not describing a past action, but is making us participate in an action that is happening at the present moment: "here comes the sweeping sound...now it dies away...Now the breeze swells again."

Mrs. Radcliffe is particularly noteworthy in her ability to involve her readers in a continuous emotional present, whose emotion is expressed in a diffusive identification and sympathy with all of nature. Perhaps the best examples of this are her descriptions of Emily's journey with her father and Valancourt through the Pyranées:

The serenity and clearness of the air in these high regions were particularly delightful to the travellers; it seemed to inspire them with a finer spirit, and diffused an indescribable complacency over their minds. ¹⁶

This "indescribably complacency" effects an emotional union between the three and nature, which they contemplate. What follows is a series of descriptions of the wild mountain scenery, whose effect is always

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Frye, p. 312.

¹⁶Radcliffe, p. 43.

to keep them at sublime emotional peaks. At one point the prolonged emotional identification so exhausts them, that they are glad to descend from the mountains to recover their worn-out powers:

Yet the travellers did not look back without some regret to the sublime objects they had quitted; though the eye, fatigued by the extension of its powers, was glad to repose on the verdure of woods and pastures, that now hung on the margin of the river below...¹⁷

Nature, thus, is a presence, a grander and more sublime spirit in whose company Emily and Valancourt fall in love.

Byron's Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, III (1816) also expresses this sense of identification with nature. The following lines from Canto III are a typical expression of the unobjectified pity that expresses itself by treating nature as if it had human qualities:

Are not the mountains, waves, and skies a part
Of me and of my soul, as I of them?
Is not the love of these deep in my heart
With a pure passion? should I not condemn
All objects, if compared with these?
(III, LXXV, 707-11)

Earlier he had expressed the same idea: "I live not in myself, but I become/ Portion of that around me; and to me/ High mountains are a feeling..." He continues the man-nature identification by celebrating a time "when the soul can flee, / And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain/ Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain" (III, lxxii, 680-83, 686-88).

But while all Gothicism of sensibility expresses unobjectified

¹⁷Ibid., p. 44.

fear in varying degrees, unobjectified pity is not common to all forms of the genre. The Monk, for example, has no traces of it at all. Lewis's novel is such an unrelenting exploitation of fear that it comes closer to producing a sense of real paranoia than any other work of Gothic. In exploiting all the possibilities of paranoia, Lewis leaves no room to exploit pity, unobjectified or otherwise.

The general lack of concern with nature is evident in Scott's Bride of Lammermoor. But here the problem is not an orientation of fear, but rather a Gothicism that barely calls itself sensibility. As his biographers have pointed out, Scott composed the novel almost in a delirium. The Bride of Lammermoor, with its witchcraft and supernaturalism, is wholly different from Scott's other novels, and was something of an embarrassment to him as a result. But whatever the circumstances of its composition, the novel uses the conventions and establishes something of the atmosphere of Gothicism of sensibility; nowhere does it fully do so however. It is, instead, and especially after Scott composed the notes to the novel, something of a curious hybrid of Gothicisms. As a result, it fails to develop the anthropomorphism of nature that is characteristic of more typical Gothicism of sensibility.

Perhaps the reason why unobjectified pity is not so well developed in the genre is that the impetus in Gothicism of sensibility is to represent a world of unresolvable moral and emotional ambiguity. That theme is best explored, not through an effusive and pervasive

sympathy with nature, but by a thematic orientation to character and to the oddities and weaknesses of the human psyche. Unresolvable ambiguities, in other words, are the provenance of unobjectified fear, but not of unobjectified pity.

This attitude is a developing one, too. Mrs. Radcliffe, with her need to explain everything away at the end of her novels, is a sensibility-Gothicist almost in spite of herself. After her, the impulse to depict a threatening cosmos becomes stronger in Lewis, Godwin, Byron, and, finally Maturin. After Ann Radcliffe, of course, writers were more strongly influenced by a revolutionary age in politics. Others, especially "Monk" Lewis and Byron were influenced by the Marquis de Sade's revolutionary sexuality.

The next important characteristic of Gothicism, from the time of Mrs. Radcliffe on, is its flexibility. From an historical point of view, the Enlightenment Gothicism produced before 1790 was in the novels of Smollett, Walpole, and Clara Reeve. Scott's Enlightenment Gothicism did not, of course, begin to be produced until the second decade of the nineteenth century. The novels of Walpole and Reeve--the ones which were imitated until Mrs. Radcliffe--were rather rigid in form: a setting in the remote or distant past, with strong overtones of the romance and melodramatic extremes of character. Furthermore, the genre, up to the 1790s, was saddled by a rationalistic pressure to disprove the possibility of supernatural intervention--a concern that becomes distracting and annoying in Walpole and Miss Reeve. During

the 1790s the conventions that were restricting and hindering the development of Gothicism were abandoned and much development took place. Gothicism evolved from its hidebound and potentially stifling form to include an extraordinary complexity of forms and possibilities.

The first of these developments took place within the traditional Gothic novel itself. In her novels, Ann Radcliffe chose to emphasize the persecuted heroine, instead of the setting in the remote historical past. This opened the way for the development of the Gothic form that followed.

The problem with the Gothic novel as Walpole and Clara Reeve conceived it was too great a concern with the past. The Castle of Otranto, The Old English Baron, and their best known imitator, Sophia Lee's The Recess (1786), were all hampered by a negative view of the medieval past. Each of these novels associates cultural barbarity, superstition, and ignorance with the "dark" ages. Each shares Voltaire's celebrated disdain for the "gotique". Besides this, each suffers from a blundering lack of historical knowledge that fills the novels with comic anachronisms.

Because of their prejudices against the Middle Ages, Walpole, Reeve, and Lee limit themselves largely either to extirpating medieval "superstition" or to depicting medieval life in a way that makes it strangely like eighteenth century gentry life in medieval dress. Hazlitt was reacting against this very thing when he called the

supernatural of The Castle of Otranto "pasteboard machinery of a pantomime. . . a fixture and no longer a phantom."¹⁸

Mrs. Radcliffe's novels, on the other hand, are not particularly concerned with the past for the sake of contrast with the present. Operating from a post-Ossianic, post-Rowleyan point of view, her ideas about the past are somewhat more benevolent. Her interest, instead, is another staple of Gothic fiction, the persecuted heroine. Fear, the particular emotion inevitably associated with all forms of Gothic fiction, is still her concern; but Mrs. Radcliffe is interested in fear engendered, not by an historical situation, but by a psychological one. Conservative that she is, Mrs. Radcliffe does preserve the tradition of setting her novels in the past: The Mysteries of Udolpho is supposed to take place in 1584. (Even The Italian, which is set in 1758, seems removed, if not in time at least in setting. Her Italy preserves all the institutions of the past, like monasticism and the Inquisition). But the point is, Mrs. Radcliffe's novels are not concerned with an exposé of the past. The fact that heroines fall victim to the wiles of a decadent aristocracy and a corrupt clergy is incidental; they could as well be victims of modern institutions of power.

Other, less conservative, novelists were soon to exploit the opportunity created by Mrs. Radcliffe in her reorientation of the Gothic novel. Thus, in the next few years Matthew Lewis produced The Monk,

¹⁸William Hazlitt, The English Comic Writers (1819) in Lectures on the English Poets and the English Comic Writers, ed. W. C. Hazlitt, 1912, pp. 171-172, quoted in Thorslev, p. 167.

whose historical setting is not specified. After Lewis, some Gothic novelists abandoned the convention of the setting in the historical past. Mrs. Shelley's Frankenstein and Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer are both set in contemporary times.

While Mrs. Radcliffe grounded the themes of the Gothic novel once for all in an examination of the varieties and effects of fear, she also opened the way for an expansion of other themes in Gothicism. Lewis's The Monk, the closest English equivalent of the sensational German Schauerromans, explores the effects of suppressed sexual desire and the sadistic-masochistic relationship. St. Leon is both a Gothic novel and an exploitation of Godwin's revolutionary politics. This habit of expanding the themes of the Gothic novels even further accelerates in English Romanticism, as the next chapter indicates.

But any profitable discussion of the fruits of Mrs. Radcliffe's work is best prefaced by a discussion of her novels themselves. No matter what forms Gothicism of sensibility takes and no matter what literary experiments Gothicism makes, it is invariably motivated by two related attitudes. First, it suggests that good and evil are ambiguously related, if not indistinguishable. This assumption is based upon the suggestion in Gothicism of sensibility that perhaps the universe is malevolent and chaotic. Both these attitudes are expressed as uncertainties because Gothicism of sensibility admits an ignorance of absolute certainties and ultimate knowledge--an ignorance which results in the philosophical and psychological terrors in which Gothicism of

sensibility specializes.

In The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794), Ann Radcliffe comes to these conclusions almost in spite of her professed intentions. Mrs. Radcliffe's fiction is perhaps best known for its habit of explaining away the apparent supernatural and the fears of her heroines as delusions of the senses or the product of insufficient information. A haunting voice that emanates from the depths of a wood at night turns out to be that of a deranged nun. Emily St. Aubert fears that her father's grief for a mysterious woman means he did not love her mother; at the end of the novel she discovers that the mysterious woman was his sister.

These attitudes of Mrs. Radcliffe's might well be used to classify her as an Enlightenment Gothicism; but they are largely stop-gap efforts at rationalism in a Gothic writer who was unwilling to accept the implications of her work. Because of her obvious debt to Burke's Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1757), Mrs. Radcliffe's work could not be Enlightenment Gothicism. Burke's treatise proposes new attitudes about the nature of reality and a new epistemology. In incorporating both of these into her work, Mrs. Radcliffe, despite her professed intentions, rejects the neo-classic assumptions about reality and about the way men know and learn.

Northrop Frye does not indicate the importance of Burke's essay on the sublime in developing the aesthetics of the Age of Sensibility,

but that debt is unmistakable. In attacking two traditional beliefs, "that poetry is imitation of nature, and that poetry is like painting"¹⁹, Burke provided much of the aesthetic impetus to the Age of Sensibility. In arguing against the all but sacrosanct idea that poetry imitates nature, Burke was really arguing against the interpretation of the idea by Shaftesbury and by Addison. These earlier critics had assumed a concept of nature and of poetry based on a priori reasoning. The result, claims Burke in his "Introduction on Taste" (1759), is a set of preconceived notions about the nature of reality and about the qualities of good poetry. Critics, he complains, base their judgments on rules and on pre-existing poems, instead of their own observations of nature.

In arguing against the attitude that poetry is like painting (Horace's ut pictura poesis), Burke was really insisting that poetry is not strictly an imitative art. "Nothing," he says, "is an imitation further than as it resembles some other thing, and words undoubtedly have no sort of resemblance to the ideas for which they stand."²⁰ Poetry, he insists, affects us not insofar as it can create an accurate picture of what it would represent but only insofar as it creates in the mind and the emotions the effect of what it would represent. Poetry

¹⁹Gerald Wester Chapman, ed. Literary Criticism in England, 1660-1800 (New York, 1966), p. 331.

²⁰Edmund Burke, A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful in Literary Criticism ed. Chapman, p. 351.

operates "to affect rather by sympathy than imitation, to display rather the effect of things in the mind of the speaker, or of others, than to present a clear idea of the things themselves."²¹ For this reason, says Burke, poetry is rather more like music than like painting. (Again, Forster's prophetic novel comes to mind.)

In attacking these neo-classic assumptions, Burke upsets the traditional Aristotelian description of the audience as detached and insulated observer of the artistic product. The literature which Burke describes as ideal demands a more intense emotional involvement between subject and observer than ever before. Perhaps the most compelling indication of this new aesthetic lies in his theory of the sublime.

Burke's theory of the sublime is, in sum, a detailed investigation of the reasons why pain and danger can, in certain circumstances, exercise such strong fascination. Burke thus describes the sublime:

Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is any sort of terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling.²²

In the Poetics Aristotle describes pain and danger as effective insofar as they become repulsive. Through vicarious identification with the

²¹Ibid., p. 331.

²²Ibid., p. 342.

protagonist, the Aristotelian hero achieves emotional purgation and moral resolution. Burke, on the other hand, describes certain kinds of pain and danger for their peculiar attraction.

When danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight and are simply terrible; but at certain distances, and with certain modifications, they are delightful, as we every day experience.²³

What follows is a description of the eight varieties of sublimity: terror, obscurity, power, privation, vastness, infinity, difficulty, magnificence, and the artificial infinite.

By demonstrating the general fascination with what, at least in neo-classic aesthetics, should repel, Burke lays the groundwork for a new aesthetic based on a new epistemology. Burke's theory of knowledge is based on his opposition, on the one hand, to the triumphalism of Shaftesbury and of Addison and, on the other, to the mechanistic pessimism of Hume. The first two describe men as giving meaning to nature by imposing human ideas on it. The third insists, contrarily, that man cannot know anything. Burke's description of how man knows and what he can know is basically a Lockean affirmation of knowledge based on rational judgment. Just as man can perceive the laws of physics and physiology, he can perceive the laws of nature. Of course, while man can understand efficient causes, he can never perceive final causes. The effect of this description is to undermine the old idea of man's intelligence as somehow giving order and reason to the cosmos;

²³Ibid., pp. 342-343.

Burke's epistemology subordinates human reason to the inscrutable operations of nature.

If the first part of his theory of knowledge suggests that man knows less, the second suggests that the mind is less knowable. One reason for this is, he suggests, that the mind does not store the images of things, like some great Xerox machine, but the impressions and effects of things. (This is the basis of his dictum that if poetry is to be natural, it should not imitate.) Another reason is the basis of his theory of the sublime. That theory works out of his observation that nature often combines opposite qualities in the same object, for no apparent reason. From there he moves to observe the combination of attraction and repulsion men sometimes experience when confronted with pain and danger. Although he argues that his observation is true, he does not attempt an explanation of why that should be so. In a sense, he cannot, since he has already insisted man cannot know final causes.

The effect of Burke's epistemology and his aesthetics is to suggest that man is incapable of a photographic representation of reality because his mind is like an imperfect camera, and therefore unsuited to perfect representations of reality. The only principle of representation that Burke can offer is that man should represent reality as he sees it-- through the lens of obscurity.

I am sensible that this idea has met with opposition, and is likely to be rejected by several. But let it be considered that hardly anything can strike the mind with

its greatness which does not make some sort of approach towards infinity, which nothing can do whilst we are able to perceive its bounds; but to see an object distinctly and perceive its bounds is one and same thing. A clear idea is therefore another name for a little idea.²⁴

To seek to prove the exact influence of Burke on Mrs. Radcliffe would be the task of the biographer and the biographical critic.²⁵ Since this dissertation is not primarily concerned with biography, its suggestion that the related aesthetics and epistemology of Burke influenced Mrs. Radcliffe can only be made by indicating certain Burkean ideas at work in her novels. The same is true of other literary critics like Maurice Morgann, Archibald Alison, and Sir Uvedale Price, who seem to have had some influence on Mrs. Radcliffe. It will be assumed that their theories had enough influence or enough imitators²⁶ for Mrs. Radcliffe to be aware of them, for their presence is both obvious and strong in her novels.

In the introduction to his recent edition of Ann Radcliffe's Mysteries of Udolpho, Bonamy Dobrée remarks on the tremendous popularity of the novel:

²⁴Burke, *Inquiry*, p. 349.

²⁵Cf. M. Ware, Sublimity in the Novels of Ann Radcliffe: A Study of the Influence of Burke's Enquiry (Copenhagen, 1963).

²⁶The popularity of Burke's ideas in the 1780s and 1790s is indicated in Edmund Malone's journal entry for 28 July 1789. Malone reports a conversation during which Burke lists his reasons for not attempting a revision of his "Sublime and Beautiful". The first is that age has caused a decline in his memory. The second is that "the subject was then (i.e. in 1757) new, but several writers have since gone over the same ground, Lord Kames and others." Edmund Malone, *Malonianiana*, ed. Prior, quoted in Charles Wells Moulton, ed., The Library of Literary Criticism, IV (Gloucester, Mass., repr., 1959), 298.

For some years after its publication in 1794--one may hazard fifty years--The Mysteries of Udolpho was a 'must', or in the phrase of today, 'required reading' for anybody who had any pretence at all to being a person of education, or culture, or even of popular reading habits.²⁷

But Dobrée's remarks at the beginning of his introduction are countered by his more traditional reservations about the Gothic novel at the end. After nine pages that describe the tremendous popularity of the Gothic novel in its time, Dobrée concludes on a rather apologetic note about the contemporary lack of popularity of Mrs. Radcliffe's novel:

The novel... has been reprinted more than once since then, even in this century, which testifies to a certain core of eternal truth to the emotions which resides [sic] at the heart of The Mysteries of Udolpho, fantastic as much of it may seem.²⁸

Dobrée here seems to be repeating the attitude of the many critics described in chapter I, that Mrs. Radcliffe's novels are flawed and imperfectly realized works of art.

Certainly this chapter will not argue that The Mysteries of Udolpho and The Italian are superior works of art. But it will insist that much of the critical reaction to both novels has been insensitive. The chapter suggests that Mrs. Radcliffe's novels were important, first, from an historical point of view for her depiction of psychological states and for her influence in the development of English Romanticism. Then it discusses Mrs. Radcliffe's literary achievements as a novelist

²⁷Radcliffe, Udolpho, p. vii.

²⁸Ibid., p. XVI.

in her own right.

The fact of Mrs. Radcliffe's influence on the English Romantic writers has become a critical commonplace. Fifty years ago, Prof. Longueil discussed this at length in a Harvard dissertation.²⁹ In 1965, Mary Ellen Park Gilpatric returned to the subject in a dissertation discussing the Gothic elements in English Romantic poetry.³⁰ Certainly Mrs. Radcliffe's influence on Byron has often been discussed. In 1894, Walter Raleigh remarked in The English Novel: "The man that Lord Byron tried to be was the invention of Mrs. Radcliffe."³¹ Lord Ernle's remark in The Light Reading of our Ancestors is another well-known expression of the idea: "Byron modelled his scowl on that of Schedoni, and Lara and The Giaour owed much to the really powerful description of that monastic villain."³² P. L. Thorslev Jr. repeated it in The Byronic Hero,³³ as did M. H. Abrams in his notes on "The Satanic and Byronic Hero" in The Norton Anthology of English Literature.³⁴ The discussion of her influence has not been limited to Byron, however, as

²⁹A. E. Longueil, Gothic Romance, Its Influence on the Romantic Poets Wordsworth, Keats, Coleridge, Byron and Shelley, unpublished dissertation (Harvard University, 1920).

³⁰Mary Ellen Park Gilpatric, Gothic Elements in English Romantic Poetry, unpublished dissertation (Kent State University, 1965).

³¹Walter Raleigh, The English Novel (London, 1894), p. 228.

³²Lord Ernle, The Light Reading of our Ancestors (1920).
quoted in Radcliffe, p. XIV.

³³P. L. Thorlev Jr. The Byronic Hero (Minneapolis, 1962).

³⁴M. H. Abrams et al., eds. The Norton Anthology of English Literature, vol. II (New York, 1962), pp. 20, 607, 611.

one critic has discussed John Keats's debt to Ann Radcliffe.³⁵ Other studies of her influence have been C. F. MacIntyre's Ann Radcliffe in Relation to her Time (New Haven, 1920) and A. S. S. Wigten's Mrs. Radcliffe: Her Relation towards Romanticism (Amsterdam, 1926).

Coleridge, too, read and appreciated Mrs. Radcliffe. His review of The Italian, although it indicates a stronger appreciation of The Mysteries of Udolpho, still describes its "scenes that powerfully seize the imagination, and interest the passions."³⁶ Finally, Sir Walter Scott was an appreciative critic of Ann Radcliffe. His preface to volume X of Ballantyne's Novelists' Library³⁷ contains a biography of Mrs. Radcliffe and a generally receptive critique of her work. (Interestingly enough, though, he does censure her, as he had in his preface to The Castle of Otranto, for explaining away her mysteries.³⁸)

But if critics acknowledge that Mrs. Radcliffe was read by the Romantics and might even have influenced them, they still do not generally recognize any particularly important literary value in her work. Even Bonamy Dobrée and Devendra Varma do not pay sufficient attention to the literary achievement of Mrs. Radcliffe. Dobrée's introduction to the 1966 edition of The Mysteries of Udolpho is

³⁵Cf. Martha Hale Shackford, " 'The Eve of St. Agnes' and The Mysteries of Udolpho, PMLA, XXXVI (1920), 104-118.

³⁶Quoted in Radcliffe, p. XIV.

³⁷Sir Walter Scott, ed. The Novelists' Library (Edinburgh, 1821)

³⁸Cf. Margaret Ball, Sir Walter Scott as A Critic of Literature (Port Washington, New York, 1966: reissue of 1907 edition), p. 131, for a short discussion of Scott's attitude about the supernatural.

unfortunately rooted in the tradition of historical criticism, which has been described in chapter I. In his introduction, Dobrée devotes only one paragraph to discussing the well-organized structure of her novel. The rest of the introduction concerns historical background and literary influences.

This, too, is an objection to Devendra Varma's introduction to The Italian (New York, 1968). Although he does discuss the literary value of Mrs. Radcliffe's novel for a few pages, the main purpose of Varma's introduction is to describe the literary influences on Mrs. Radcliffe and her literary influence, in turn, on succeeding writers. Clearly, there is room for a full-length study of Mrs. Radcliffe's novels from an other-than-historical viewpoint. But while this chapter cannot hope to make such a study, it will be discussing Mrs. Radcliffe's novels from a more strictly literary and thematic point of view.

Since chapter III is also concerned with describing Mrs. Radcliffe's themes insofar as they are representative of Gothicism of sensibility, it will limit itself to a consideration of her best-known Gothic novels. Therefore, it will not discuss "The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne" (1789) and her novels, A Sicilian Romance (1790), A Romance of the Forest (1791), and the posthumous Gaston de Blondville (1826). It will discuss The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794) and The Italian (1797), the best of her novels.

Book I, chapter 3 of Mrs. Radcliffe's Mysteries of Udolpho describes the beginning of a voyage to Languedoc and Provence

undertaken by M. St. Aubert and his daughter Emily in the year 1584. Weakened by ill health and the death of his wife, St. Aubert has been ordered on a vacation by his physician. So, he leaves his estate of La Vallée in Gascony and goes on a journey, during the course of which he will die and leave Emily an orphan.

Shortly after that journey begins, their carriage takes them into the Pyrenées, which are described through the next several chapters. The following is a section of that description, reproduced, despite its great length, because of what it can reveal of Mrs. Radcliffe's intentions and achievement:

Leaving the splendour of extensive prospects, they
now entered this narrow valley screened by
Rocks on rocks piled, as if by magic spell,
Here scorch'd by lightnings, there with ivy green.

The scene of barrenness was here and there interrupted by the spreading branches of the larch and cedar, which threw their gloom over the cliff, or athwart the torrent that rolled in the vale. No living creature appeared, except the lizard, scrambling among the rocks, and often hanging upon points so dangerous, that fancy shrunk from the view of them. This was such a scene as Salvator would have chosen, had he then existed, for his canvas; St. Aubert, impressed by the romantic character of the place, almost expected to see banditti start from behind some projecting rock, and he kept his hand upon the arms with which he always travelled.

As they advanced, the valley opened; its savage features gradually softened, and, towards evening, they were among heathy mountains, stretched in far perspective, along which the solitary sheep-bell was heard, and the voice of the shepherd calling his wandering flocks to the nightly fold.³⁹

This description is typical of many like it in The Mysteries of Udolpho. Its characteristics are immediately apparent: the use of poetry

³⁹Radcliffe, Udolpho, p. 38.

as an aid in describing, the description of the scene in terms of landscape painting, the explicit connection between the scene and the observer and the contrasts between the valley and the pastoral scene.

The first thing that can be said of Ann Radcliffe is that she is not attempting photographic representation. As the critics often note, she never actually saw the scenes she describes at such length; her only European journey was described in her travelogue, A Journey made in the Summer of 1794 through Holland and the Western Frontiers of Germany (1794). Ann Radcliffe's landscapes are always notable for their air of heightened drama, for their ominousness and their peculiar emotionality.

Henry A. Beers seemed to be aware of this in his description of her landscapes in terms of operatic scenery:

Her Venice by moonlight, her mountain gorges with their black pines and foaming torrents, are not precisely the Venice and the Alps of Ruskin; rather of the operatic stage. Still they are impressive in their way, and in this department she possessed genuine poetic feeling and a real mastery of the art of painting in distemper.⁴⁰

This awareness that Mrs. Radcliffe's scenery means in a different way seems also to motivate Devendra Varma's discussion, in The Gothic Flame, of the landscapes of Gothic fiction in terms of Surrealistic art. The very prose itself, with its explicit reference to the landscape painting of Salvatore Rosa (1615-1673), suggests that the reader regard

⁴⁰Henry A. Beers, A History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century (New York 1898), p. 255.

the scenery in a special way. The predominance of the landscape in the novel and Mrs. Radcliffe's constant habit of depicting her characters in terms of their relationship with natural scenery require an understanding of the importance of the scenery in the novel.

Now certainly, much of Mrs. Radcliffe's descriptive technique is the product of Burke's idea, that poetry should "affect rather by sympathy than imitation, (should) display rather the effect of things in the mind of the speaker... than... present a clear idea of the things themselves." By applying the same dictum to prose, one could say that Mrs. Radcliffe's prose tries to evoke in the reader the same emotions that the scenery evoked in Emily and her father. Words and exact details are not important in such a case, but merely a cumulative emotional effect similar to the original emotional effect.

Hazlitt describes this function of Mrs. Radcliffe's prose in his 1818 Lecture on the English Novelists: "Her great power lies in describing the indefinable, and embodying a phantom. ... she has all the poetry of romance, all that is obscure, visionary, and objectless in the imagination."⁴¹ In other words, says Hazlitt, Mrs. Radcliffe does not describe things so much as she describes the effect of things. Any writer can describe a thing, because the mind can imagine a thing; but Mrs. Radcliffe's genius lies in an ability to create in the imagination a sense of things that are in themselves objectless.

⁴¹William Hazlitt, Lecture on the English Novelists (1818), quoted in Moulton, p. 719.

Scott, too, seems aware of this quality peculiar to Mrs. Radcliffe's prose. In that same preface to volume X of Ballantyne's Novelists' Library which describes her as "the first poetess of romantic fiction", Scott discusses the "poetic" quality of Mrs. Radcliffe's prose: "(she was)the first to introduce into her prose fictions a beautiful and fanciful tone of natural description and impressive narrative, which had hitherto been exclusively applied to poetry."⁴² While Scott does no more than comment on the prose, he at least admits that Mrs. Radcliffe is attempting something different from Fielding, Richardson, Smollett, and even Walpole.

As was suggested before, Mrs. Radcliffe's prose technique has its origin in part in Burke's "Sublime and Beautiful." Its more particular origin is in his descriptions of the sublime effects of obscurity, vastness, and the artificial infinite. But it must be remembered that Burke's treatise is just one indication of a shift in currents of taste to what Northrop Frye describes as an Age of Sensibility. Examined in terms of Frye's description of the characteristics of that Age, Mrs. Radcliffe's prose is even more understandable.

The primary characteristic of the literature of such an age is the reader's sense of involvement in it during the process of its creation. Certainly this attempt at empathetic involvement in a Longinean process is evident in Mrs. Radcliffe. First, her use of poetry and of landscape

⁴²Scott, Ibid., quoted in Moulton, p. 719.

painting is an attempt to appeal to a variety of senses. Then, her attempt to recreate an emotional experience, which she learned from Burke, breaks down the Aristotelian barrier between work of art and audience. Here, the words are not as important as the effects of the words.

Another characteristic of the involvement demanded of Longinean art is a fascination with the composition of poetry, where the emphasis is on repetition, incantation, and the dreamlike qualities of poetry. In Mrs. Radcliffe's work, this is expressed in the poetic prose which Scott described. Certainly the long section of description quoted above is an example of the dreamlike and literally charming word combinations to which, Frye says, one surrenders as if to a spell.

The literature of the Age of Sensibility is characterized by its unobjectified pity and fear. Unobjectified pity in the quoted section is identified by a kind of animism in the passage that suggests that nature itself has feelings. Mrs. Radcliffe always describes natural scenes as either pleasing or threatening--as if they were people--and this is why she so easily associates the threatening scenery with banditti. Another expression of this unobjectified pity is an exaggerated sympathy with the animal world, and thus her concern for the safety of the izard. Unobjectified fear is strongly expressed in her emphasis on the dangers that might lurk in the landscape. This sense of impending doom is probably the major effect of the novel.

In Book IV, Mrs. Radcliffe herself describes the sensibility that characterizes her novel. That sensibility, she notes, is best described in terms of its reaction to nature.

To a warm imagination, the dubious forms, that float,
half veiled in darkness, afford a higher delight, than
the most distinct scenery, that the sun can shew. While
the fancy thus wanders over landscape partly of its own
creation a sweet complacency steals upon the mind, and
Refines it all to subtlest feeling,
Bids the tear of rapture roll.

The distant note of a torrent, the weak trembling of
the breeze among the woods, or the far-off sound of a
human voice, now lost and heard again, are circumstances
which wonderfully heighten the enthusiastic tone of the
mind.⁴³

If Burke's influence on Mrs. Radcliffe's prose is to be understood in the larger context of the literature of the Age of Sensibility, the Gothicism of the Age of Sensibility must itself be understood in terms of its own philosophical assumptions. The beginning of this chapter suggested that Gothicism of Sensibility is characterized by its view of the cosmos as threatening, disordered, and even malevolent. In such a cosmos, man is pictured as struggling against dark forces which he cannot understand. He sees himself as a victim of circumstances.

When one suggests this attitude in terms of Mrs. Radcliffe's novels, a few problems immediately arise. In the first place, both novels are romances and both have the characteristic romance ending of a marriage. At the conclusion of The Mysteries of Udolpho,

⁴³Radcliffe, pp. 598-99.

Valancourt marries Emily St. Aubert and at the conclusion of The Italian, Vincentio di Vivaldi marries Ellena di Rosalba. Furthermore, both of these endings also indicate a rise in social and in financial status. Emily regains the property that Montoni stole from her and is revealed as a niece of the ill-fated Marchioness de Villeroi, and therefore an heiress to the fortune of Lady Laurentini. Ellena is revealed as the daughter of the Count and Countess di Bruno. Her nobility clears the way for her marriage with Vivaldi and the last lines of the novel describe their wedding feast: "Vivaldi and Ellena withdrew amidst a choral shout, and all the woods and strands of Naples re-echoed with--'O! giorno felice! O! giorno felice!'"⁴⁴

If one reads the novels as romances, it is difficult to describe them as arguing for disordered universes. The evil figures which Mrs. Radcliffe's heroes and heroines must face and the opposition which they must endure are the obstacles that are typical of every romance. In this light, therefore, it is impossible to argue that Mrs. Radcliffe's Gothicism of sensibility was nearly so completely realized as that of Matthew Gregory Lewis. Lewis's The Monk depicts the destruction of the innocent, incest, matricide, the overpowering effects of sexual desire, and, finally, a horrible death as the result of the devil's trickery.

⁴⁴Ann Radcliffe, The Italian; or, The Confessional of the Black Penitents. A romance (London, 1828; reissued New York, 1968), vol II, book IV, pp. 235-236.

Mrs. Radcliffe is better described as a transitional figure. Her often noted need to explain away the apparent supernatural and her preference for the romance link her with the material discussed in chapter II. Certainly Walpole himself was aware of this in his letter of 4 September 1794 to the Countess of Ossory. The Countess had remarked about "the descriptive verbose tales, of which... [Walpole] was the patriarch by several mothers."⁴⁵ Walpole not only acknowledges his relationship to the tales, but suggests Clara Reeve and Ann Radcliffe as their "mothers."

But while Mrs. Radcliffe owes a certain debt to Walpole and to the tradition of Enlightenment Gothicism, her Gothicism contains many of the elements that were later developed by Lewis, Godwin, Byron, and Maturin. Her main contributions to the development of Gothicism were, as was indicated before, her development of characterization and her revision of the conventional treatment of the past as an object of terror in itself.

When Walpole and Clara Reeve set their stories in the distant past, they are implicitly comparing the past with the present, to indicate the virtues of the present by the contrast. This seems to be what Mrs. Radcliffe is doing in The Mysteries of Udolpho. Part of the terror of the story lies in the fact that Emily is trapped in a remote century. The Italian, however, has a contemporary setting. The only

⁴⁵Horace Walpole, To the Countess of Ossory, Sept. 4, 1794, Letters, ed. Cunningham, vol. IX, p. 440. quoted in Moulton, p. 718.

connection with the past is that many of the objects of terror--the convent in Abruzzi, the crumbling cabin on the Adriatic, and the Inquisition in Rome--are associated with the past. But nowhere in Mrs. Radcliffe's novels is there the same kind of treatment of the past as that implied in The Castle of Otranto or The Old English Baron.

In the earlier novels, the past is terrifying in an Enlightenment context. That is, Walpole and Clara Reeve shrink from it for its barbarism, its superstition, its unreasonableness. Ann Radcliffe adopts the convention, but reorients it. Associations with the past are terrifying, not for historical reasons but for psychological ones. Mrs. Radcliffe's heroines are not so much terrified by Catholic superstition as by the spirits that haunt the crumbling houses.

The basis of this new direction in Gothicism is the dimension of terror which Mrs. Radcliffe added to the genre: the personality and the imagination of the observer. Mrs. Radcliffe's main contribution to the development of Gothicism and the main reason she is to be considered with Lewis and Byron is that she takes the reader within the character she is describing, instead of viewing him as the external observer, as Walpole and Clara Reeve do.

Mrs. Radcliffe is so determined to draw readers into the personalities of her characters, so that they may experience their fears that she all but neglects exterior representation. Thus an early critic, John Dunlop, remarked about the "considerable degree of uniformity and mannerism (in Mrs. Radcliffe's novels) . . . Her heroines too nearly

resemble each other, or rather they possess hardly any shade of difference."⁴⁶ But if one chooses to fault her for neglecting the physical appearances of her heroines, certainly Ann Radcliffe excels at representing their fears. Not only does she represent them well, but she succeeds in creating a kind of sympathetic resonance within the reader, so that he is made to feel the fears which the heroine is suffering. Here, too, Mrs. Radcliffe's achievement differs from the prose of Walpole and Clara Reeve, which represents character for contemplation and observation, but not for empathetic involvement.

This reorientation in the development of character in the novels, so that the reader perceives fear along with the character, is Mrs. Radcliffe's most notable contribution to the developing Gothicism of the 1790s. It is also the major reason she may be described as a Gothicism of sensibility. For Mrs. Radcliffe's novels describe not only things as objects of terror; in them, the human mind itself becomes an object of terror.

Their minds and their senses are constantly deluding the heroines of Mrs. Radcliffe's novels. Much of the terror that they experience is inspired by false sense impressions and by the mistaken assumptions that they make as a result. Certainly they suffer as much from the impressions their own minds conjure up as they do from real threats, like Montoni, Schedoni, and the Inquisition. At the end of each novel, Mrs. Radcliffe reveals these false impressions and wrong

⁴⁶John Dunlop, The History of Fiction (1814-1842), vol II, p. 412. quoted in Moulton, p. 1718.

conclusions for what they are and then hurries Emily and Ellena off to fulfillment and happy marriages. But while her conclusions are happy, Mrs. Radcliffe has still raised the challenging suggestion that man is not only a victim of others, but is also a victim of himself.

Scott's criticism of Mrs. Radcliffe for explaining away the mysteries has been generally repeated. This habit of hers is inevitably remarked on by critics, so that even Summers, Dobrée, and Varma comment on it in somewhat disapproving terms. Whatever Mrs. Radcliffe's intention in regard to these conclusions was, will never be known. She might have been inspired by a literalism or by a strong streak of rationalism that impelled her to explain away what could be interpreted as the intervention of the supernatural. She might, as Scott suggests in his "Memoir of Mrs. Radcliffe" prefacing vol. X of the Novelists' Library, be plagued by "the torment of romance writers, those necessary evils, its concluding chapters."⁴⁷ But certainly one effect of Mrs. Radcliffe's endings--an effect that critics have not emphasized--is the implication that the mind is a weak and limited and sometimes untrustworthy medium of information.

Of the early commentators on Mrs. Radcliffe, Hazlitt seems to have been most perceptive in this regard. In his 1818 Lecture on the English Novelists, Hazlitt remarks of Mrs. Radcliffe: "her story comes to nothing. But in harrowing up the soul with imaginary horrors, and making the flesh creep and the nerves thrill with fond hopes and

⁴⁷Scott, Novelists' Library, ch. X, quoted in Ball, p. 76.

fears, she is unrivalled among her fair country-women."⁴⁸ Hazlitt, in other words, sees merit in her ability to frighten with imaginary horrors, instead of using the fact to criticize her. While most critics seem to agree with Scott in this regard, one other nineteenth-century critic, William Minto, agreed with Hazlitt in finding Mrs. Radcliffe's explanatory conclusions praiseworthy. In The Literature of the Georgian Era, Minto remarks:

I read the story myself with a double interest; I enjoy the excitement of superstitious wonder and awe while the illusion lasts, and when the mystery is cleared up, and the excitement is gently subsiding, I am in a mood to get additional enjoyment from reflecting on the ingenuity of the complication that gave to the illusion for the moment the force of truth.⁴⁹

Thus, both Hazlitt and Minto praise Mrs. Radcliffe's conclusions for their power to reveal the mind's weaknesses and its capability of self-delusion.

Again, of course, one ought to emphasize that Mrs. Radcliffe's explanations were probably not an attempt at introducing the unobjectified sense of dread that is characteristic of an Age of Sensibility. The revelations at the end of The Mysteries of Udolpho, that the apparent corpse Emily saw behind the veil at Udolpho was only a waxen figure and that the apparently haunted Chateau-le-Blanc was really occupied by robbers intent on scaring away the inhabitants, might be described as producing such an effect. The same can be said of the end of The

⁴⁸Hazlitt, Ibid., quoted in Moulton, p. 719.

⁴⁹William Minto, The Literature of the Georgian Era, ed. Knight, (London, 1894) p. 126.

Italian, which reveals that the ghostly voice which had warned Vivaldi about Schedoni was really that of Father Nicola, Schedoni's adversary. But it can just as well be argued that in creating these apparent obstacles, Mrs. Radcliffe is introducing the blocking characters which must be overcome to produce a happy ending, and in explaining them away she is producing that comic ending.

The point is, then, that whether or not Mrs. Radcliffe knew what she was doing, her novels could well produce effects she never intended. Like Godwin's Caleb Williams, which was intended as a political tract, but is best appreciated as a psychological study, Mrs. Radcliffe's novels achieved more than she might have intended.

Probably the most important reason this is so is Mrs. Radcliffe's concentration on character, and especially on the causes and the varieties of psychological fear. As a result, she is compelled to define the illogic to which the mind can be subject and the various terrors which it is prone to imagine for itself. Because of this, she undermines the attitude in Walpole and Clara Reeve that man can know himself and the world around him. If the Enlightenment Gothicists like to believe that man's mind was a mirror that reflects all around it, Mrs. Radcliffe's Gothicism points out the flaws and the weaknesses in that reflecting device. At the same time that she disposes of the terrors of the supernatural, she makes the natural more frightening and terrible.

The most important reason why Mrs. Radcliffe can achieve this is that while her novels discuss the romantic theme of the overcoming

of the obstacles to marriage, they express that theme through the point of view of the heroines. Because The Mysteries of Udolpho concentrates on the viewpoint of Emily and The Italian on the viewpoint of Ellena, a major thematic concern of each novel could well be described as the effects of a series of experiences on the mind and imagination of a single character. An examination of each novel will indicate the effects of Mrs. Radcliffe's concentration on the minds and imaginations of her heroines.

Mrs. Radcliffe's technique undermines in two ways the certainty implied in earlier Gothic, that man can understand all that he experiences. First, she describes the existence of worlds beyond the pale of the human senses. Even the perfectly ordered human intelligence can perceive these worlds only in an imperfect way. Second, she describes the weaknesses of the mind and its tendency toward self-delusion. Chapter XVI, with its frightening picture of the crazed Sister Agnes, is the most notable treatment of this theme that runs throughout the novel.

The theme of the world beyond is most often associated with the scenic descriptions in the first half of The Mysteries of Udolpho. These are both a product of an interest in the sublime and an indication of a developing Romanticism. (One sees in such descriptions of nature a kinship with Shelley and Keats.) But besides Emily's fascination with natural scenery, the novel suggests other sources of this Romantic longing for a world beyond.

One of these moments is inspired in Emily when, during her journey through the Pyrenées with Valancourt and her father, she hears the monks chanting evensong in the monastery where they have sought shelter:

From the consideration of His works her mind arose to the adoration of the Deity, in His goodness and power; wherever she turned her view, whether on the sleeping earth, or to the vast regions of space, glowing with worlds beyond the reach of human thought, the sublimity of God, and the majesty of His presence appeared. Her eyes were filled with tears of awful love and admiration; and she felt that pure devotion, superior to all the distinctions of human system, which lifts the soul above this world, and seems to expand it into a nobler nature.⁵⁰

Although the passage does refer to the heaven of Christian tradition, it also describes "the vast regions of space, glowing with worlds beyond the reach of human thought." In her moment of mystic solitude, Emily is catching a glimmer of worlds which she could not ordinarily imagine.

This same sense that the "reality" which can be perceived by the human faculties is limited and imperfect is indicated in Emily's dream of her father after his death:

when she sunk into a kind of slumber, the images of her waking mind still haunted her fancy. She thought she saw her father approaching her with a benign countenance; then, smiling mournfully and pointing upwards, his lips moved, but, instead of words, she heard sweet music borne on the distant air, and presently saw his features glow with the mild rapture of a superior being.⁵¹

The passage could well be interpreted as the wish fulfillment of a

⁵⁰Radcliffe, Udolpho, pp. 47-48.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 83.

distracted mind. But it is also characteristic of an other-worldliness that pervades the novel.

Another expression of this attitude comes during a description of Emily's reveries in the garden of La Vallée, her father's home, on the eve of her departure with her aunt to Thoulouse. [sic] As before, the contemplation of natural scenery under the effect of certain modifying conditions--here, the evening--produces a trance-like state in Emily:

The deep repose of the scene, the rich scents, that floated on the breeze, the grandeur of the wide horizon and the clear blue arch, smoothed and gradually elevated her mind to that sublime complacency, which renders the vexations of this world so insignificant and mean in our eyes, that we wonder that they have had power for a moment to disturb us. . . . her thoughts ascended to the contemplation of those unnumbered worlds, that lie scattered in the depths of aether, thousands of them hid from human eyes, and almost beyond the flight of human fancy.⁵²

As with her feelings at hearing the monks chant evensong, Emily's experience is a combination of thoughts of heaven and thoughts of worlds undiscovered because of the weakness and imperfection of the human faculties. But while this theme of human weakness makes an excellent subject for a meditation on heaven, it could also bolster a sense of human helplessness in purely human affairs.

This is precisely what happens when the novel turns to a consideration of the ways in which the mind can delude itself. On his deathbed, St. Aubert seems to be warning Emily of the weakness and

⁵²Radcliffe, Udolpho, pp. 113-114.

helplessness of human beings, and especially as a result of emotional afflictions:

'Above all, my dear Emily,' said he, 'do not indulge in the pride of fine feeling, the romantic error of amiable minds. Those, who really possess sensibility, ought early to be taught, that it is a dangerous quality, which is continually extracting the excess of misery, or delight, from every surrounding circumstance. And since, in our passage through this world, painful circumstances occur more frequently than pleasing ones, and since our sense of evil is, I fear, more acute than our sense of good, we become the victims of our feelings, unless we can in some degree command them'.⁵³

St. Aubert, who is presented as something of a moral norm in the novel, gives as his most important advice to his daughter his observations on the predominance of human misery and the precarious nature of human sanity, unless feelings are carefully guarded. The rest of the novel demonstrates at length both the misery of human existence and the terrors with which the imagination makes one contend.

Emily experiences one of these terrors when, alone in the convent chapel at night, she pays a last visit to her father's grave. Here Mrs. Radcliffe creates a thoroughly "gothic" scene: cold breezes playing through the chapel, moonlight streaming through a distant window, a new-made grave, and the far-off sounds of friars chanting a requiem. (The scene reminds one of the visit to the tomb of Michael Scott in The Lay of the Last Minstrel, and one wonders if Scott was influenced by this description of Mrs. Radcliffe's.) As she hastens to the grave of her father, Emily's melancholy thoughts are interrupted: "in the

⁵³Ibid., pp. 79-80.

moonlight, that fell athwart a remote part of the aisle, she thought she saw a shadow gliding between the pillars. She stopped to listen, and, not hearing any footstep, believed that her fancy had deceived her...⁵⁴

The end of the novel reveals that the deranged Sister Agnes was allowed to roam abroad at night, but does not suggest that she is the shadow Emily saw. Even if this sight was conjured up by her distressed emotions and her gloomy surroundings, however, Emily's self-control is such, at this early point in the novel, that she can follow her late father's advice and keep her imagination in check. As the novel progresses, however, Emily finds self control much more difficult.

Volume II, chapter XI, describes Emily after she has been led all but a prisoner from Thoulouse to Venice and then to Udolpho, where Montoni imprisons her aunt. Here Emily is made to experience the terrors of total helplessness. Alone in her room at midnight, she hears strange music:

Long-suffering had made her spirits peculiarly sensible to terror, and liable to be affected by the illusions of superstition. --It now seemed to her, as if her dead father had spoken to her in that strain, to inspire her with comfort and confidence, on the subject which had then occupied her mind. Yet reason told her, that this was a wild conjecture, and she was inclined to dismiss it; but, with the inconsistency so natural, when imagination

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 91.

guides the thoughts, she then wavered towards a belief as wild.⁵⁵

This wild belief is the conjecture that the mysterious music has something to do with the Lady Laurentini, the missing owner of Udolpho. "At this conjecture, a sudden chillness ran through her frame; she looked fearfully upon the duskiness of her chamber, and the dead silence, that prevailed there, heightened to her fancy its gloomy aspect."⁵⁶

In this section, Mrs. Radcliffe carefully notes all the reasons why Emily could be deceived by her imagination, and each of these explanations is eminently logical. But certainly the strongest impression of the scene and the one most calculated to frighten us, because it could happen to us as well, is the image of Emily staring terrified into the duskiness of her chamber.

Mrs. Radcliffe creates a similar effect when she describes Emily, shortly after, embarked with her maid Annette on a midnight attempt to visit her imprisoned aunt. Here again, the novelist explains why Emily's imagination could conjure up terrors; but her explanation is of little avail to us, for we are made to feel those terrors, too:

The castle was perfectly still, and the great hall... now returned only the whispering footsteps of the two solitary figures gliding fearfully between the pillars, and gleamed only to the feeble lamp they carried. Emily, deceived by the long shadows of the pillars and

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 330-331.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 331.

by the catching lights between, often stopped, imagining she saw some person, moving in the distant obscurity of the perspective; and, as she passed these pillars, she feared to turn her eyes toward them, almost expecting to see a figure start out from behind their broad shaft.⁵⁷

Mrs. Radcliffe continues her technique of involving her readers in the fears of her heroine, at the same time that she offers rational explanations for these fears. In Book III, chapter VIII, Emily is returning to Udolpho at night, after being hidden in a cabin in Tuscany during a siege. In an effort to avoid Montoni, Emily stealthily enters the castle and attempts to reach her room without a light. Suddenly, a drunken trio breaks the silence. Emily overhears the two young men disputing with Montoni about her, each seeming to claim of him some former promise. Terrified by these implications of rape or murder, Emily is inspired to flee:

Emily, who, during this discourse, had trembled so excessively, that she had with difficulty supported herself, seemed inspired with new strength, the moment she heard the sound of their steps, and ran along the gallery, dark as it was, with the fleetness of a fawn. But, long before she reached its extremity, the light, which Verezzi carried, flashed upon the walls; both appeared, and, instantly perceiving Emily, pursued her.⁵⁸

As with Mrs. Radcliffe's previous descriptions of flight and pursuit, the reasons for Emily's terror are completely understandable, and yet we, too, are made to experience that terror.

Another characteristic of Mrs. Radcliffe's prose is her ability

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 343.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 431.

to compound terror with terror. She has the habit of describing her heroines as remembering all the other persons and objects that have terrified them, while they are coping with the latest object of terror. During this description of Emily fleeing in the darkness from her drunken pursuers, Mrs. Radcliffe brings Emily face to face with the mysterious chamber which had previously so terrified her.

As thus she stood, light glimmered under an opposite door of the gallery. . . the door of that mysterious chamber, where she had made a discovery so shocking, that she never remembered it but with the utmost horror. That there should be light in this chamber, and at this hour, excited her strong surprise, and she felt a momentary terror concerning it, which did not permit her to look again, for her spirits were now in such a state of weakness, that she almost expected to see the door slowly open, and some horrible object appear at it.⁵⁹

The passage is a masterpiece in evocation. In the first place, it piles terror upon terror: as Emily flees from possible rape, she comes across a vision of death. Then, the passage describes an object of terror that has extensions in the past, present, and future: the room terrified Emily in the past, terrifies her at the moment, and, by an exercise of her imagination, might terrify her with some "horrible object" in the future.

In this passage, Mrs. Radcliffe is describing the development of a form of insanity. Pursued by identifiable fears and by nameless fears, by the facts of the past and by the possibilities of the future, Emily is slowly being driven mad. Victim of the obsessions of others,

⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 431-432.

she is herself becoming victim of the obsession called paranoia.

At this point, the novel has so tested the sanity of Emily, that she must be given a rest in order to prepare her for the trials to come. (Thus, at the moment of terror described above, the narrator remarks that Emily's spirits were in such a state of weakness that she was about to imagine the appearance of some hideous apparition.) This comes in the form of Monsieur DuPont, a family friend who effects Emily's escape to France and the comfort of the Villeforts at Chateau-le-Blanc.

Emily's trials at Chateau-le-Blanc are a series of further indications that the mind is an unreliable transmitter of truth. Her experiences in the "haunted" apartments, for example, terrify her because of apparent supernatural intrusion when the bed pall in one of the rooms seems to rise of its own volition. At the end of the novel this will be explained as the ruse of a band of robbers who were using the chateau as a storehouse.

But if this scene, and the many others like it in the novel, are exposed as ruses to trick the imagination, the effect of the mad Sister Agnes cannot be so easily explained away. Emily first sees the deranged nun in Book IV, chapter IX, haunted by visions out of her past: "O! could I strike from my memory all former scenes--the figures, that rise up, like furies, to torment me!--I see them, when I sleep, and, when I am awake, they are all still before my eyes! I see them

now--now!"⁶⁰ Emily learns the cause of Sister Agnes's madness in Book IV, chapters XVI and XVII. In chapter XVI, the nun describes her madness as the product of the sins of her past that have plagued her conscience. Chapter XVII describes that past in all its detail.

Her treatment of the madness of Sister Agnes is characteristic of Mrs. Radcliffe in that it adds a dimension to the genre of Gothic literature without exploiting it. That addition is the theme of madness, with the implication that everyone is a potential victim of madness. But while she toys with the ironic attitude that the mind is an imperfect medium, capable of leading one to destruction, Mrs. Radcliffe's characterization of the one mad figure of the novel takes a different direction.

In chapter XVI, when Emily questions Sister Agnes, the nun explains her malady as the product of a moral disorder brought on by herself. The nun climaxes her long self-incrimination with an exhortation to virtue and self-control: "Remember, sister, that the passions are the seeds of vices as well as of virtues, from which either may spring, accordingly as they are nurtured. Unhappy they who have never been taught the art to govern them!"⁶¹ Such a remark, with its overtones of St. Aubert's dying speech to his daughter, seems out of sympathy with what Mrs. Radcliffe has been doing throughout the rest

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 575.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 641.

of the novel. One might, of course, argue that her reason for describing Emily's reaction to her real and her imagined fears has been to insist that the reasoning powers must ever be employed to protect the sanity of the individual; but Mrs. Radcliffe's thoroughly convincing picture of the vulnerability of the mind, the emotions, and the imagination in the rest of the novel belies this conclusion, or at least makes it irrelevant. Even if Sister Agnes was driven mad by the remorse of conscience, could not the innocent Emily have been driven mad, too, if she had stayed in Udolpho a little longer?

Mrs. Radcliffe does not choose to answer this question and opts, instead, for a romance ending at the marriage of Emily and Valancourt. The same, as we shall see, is what she does in The Italian. But if Mrs. Radcliffe does not choose to recognize all that is implicit in her attitude about the human mind, her contributions to Gothicism --and especially to characterization in the form--were such that other Gothicists like Lewis and Godwin could recognize and develop these implications.

The sub-title of Mrs. Radcliffe's next novel, The Italian (1797), is The Confessional of the Black Penitents. Unlike The Mysteries of Udolpho, whose title refers merely to the haunted house that almost drives Emily St. Aubert mad, the next novel refers, first, to the villain and only then to the haunted house. The importance of Schedoni, the villain of the novel, has been discussed by the generations of critics who have described the effect of Mrs. Radcliffe's character

on the development of the Byronic hero. This concentration on one aspect of the novel has resulted in a neglect of the others.

The Italian opens in the church of Santa Maria del Pianto in 1764, six years after the events of the story. Here in the church of the Black Penitents an English traveller notices a sinister figure skulking about in the dark and finally entering a large, ornate confessional; "I think it one of the most gloomy spots I ever beheld; the view of it is enough to strike a criminal with despair!"⁶² says the Englishman of the confessional. At this point his Italian companion tells him that the man he saw entering the confessional is an assassin who has sought sanctuary in the church. The Englishman's response is shock and indignation enough to imply praise of the English legal system. This introduction leads the Italian to refer to a confession made several years before in the same place. This confession, he says, is the basis of the story that follows.

This opening of The Italian, with the images of the assassin, the gloomy church, and the confessional and its terrible past, immediately establishes a more somber tone than that of The Mysteries of Udolpho. In her earlier novel, Mrs. Radcliffe was under the spell of the sublime, and so the treatment of nature in that novel is characterized by what Frye calls unobjectified pity. In The Italian, Mrs. Radcliffe does not entirely neglect her interest in natural scenery and its effects, but the

⁶²Radcliffe, Italian, I, 7.

later novel is much more somber in tone and much more concerned with exploring a variety of psychic fears.

In The Mysteries of Udolpho, this exploration of psychic states was limited to Emily and the fears associated with pursuit, claustrophobia, and the night, which are correlatives of those of violation, suffocation, and death. In The Italian Mrs. Radcliffe does exploit these fears in describing the various terrors to which her heroine, Ellena di Rosalba, is subject: but the later novel also addresses itself to examining the psyche of its hero, Vincentio di Vivaldi. The scenes of Vivaldi, blindfolded in the underground courts of the Inquisition and accused by voices issuing out of the dark, is a brilliant use of the sense of frustrated helplessness that Kafka was to develop. Here, the appeal is not so much to fear of pursuit and the rest, but to that of persecution by unknown forces.

Some of the difference between the two novels might be understood by comparing the explanations Mrs. Radcliffe offers in the dénouement of each. The explanations at the end of The Mysteries of Udolpho are concerned, for the most part, with revealing the real truth behind Emily's mistaken impressions. The effect of this is to suggest that the mind and the imagination, especially in times of stress, are capable of self-delusion.

The denouement of The Italian, on the other hand entirely lacks such explanations. The questions it answers instead are mostly those of identity: the relationship of Schedoni to Ellena, the identity of

Sister Olivia, and the like. In the later novel, Mrs. Radcliffe does not rely on false problems and mistaken assumptions to create terror and maintain suspense. Instead, the real terrors manufactured by Schedoni and the real terrors associated with the Inquisition are enough to maintain our interest.

This is not necessarily to suggest, that one novel is superior to the other. In The Mysteries of Udolpho, Mrs. Radcliffe provides a brilliant picture of the frightening effects of external phenomena on one character. In making her readers share the fears of her heroine, despite the fact that she is explaining the origin of these fears, Mrs. Radcliffe makes a case for man's imagination itself as a possible object of terror. By showing us that we, too, are weak, she suggests that one source of terror is within.

In The Italian, on the other hand, the emphasis is not so much on the imagined terrors as the real ones. (In the convent in Abruzzi, for example, Ellena suffers the agonies of imagination when she fears her escape plans have been intercepted; but even this is a real terror concerning a possible event, and not the product of a distracted mind.) While maintaining the sympathetic bonds between hero, heroine, and audience, Mrs. Radcliffe projects the source of the terrors to the exterior. In The Italian, in other words, the object of terror is not the mind, for its ability to manufacture fears, but the world outside, for the fearful things it manufactures.

If we are to accept Mrs. Radcliffe's novels as examples of

Gothicism of sensibility, these two treatments of terror could well be used to support the case. The Mysteries of Udolpho implies an ironic view of man because he is wounded in his reasoning faculties. The Italian implies an ironic view of nature because it plagues man and unjustly terrorizes him. But both views are implied, because Mrs. Radcliffe does no more than suggest these attitudes before she concludes both novels during wedding ceremonies.

It might be worth while at this point, since a case has been made for something of an ironic world-view in The Italian, to describe Mrs. Radcliffe's evocative power in the novel. The Italian describes a series of rapes--in the other sense of the word--to places of confinement and a series of escapes from those confinements. In the novel there are at least five distinct "haunted houses," instead of the usual one haunted Gothic house. Two of them, the chamber in the ruined fortress and the subterranean tribunal of the Inquisition, are associated with Vivaldi. Two of them, the convent in the Appenines and the cabin on the shores of the Adriatic, are associated with Ellena. Brooding over them all and, in a sense, dominating them because the story is based on events associated with it, is the confessional of the Black Penitents.

Besides the theme of confinement, the novel also describes the often sinister interaction of men and nature. Devendra Varma calls this "her portrayal of the terrible forces of nature reflecting the dark

passions of man."⁶³ Although Mrs. Radcliffe does describe Ellena's experiences of the sublime on contemplating natural scenes, her most consistent descriptions of nature in The Italian allude to scenes that inspire terror, rather than awe.

Two examples of Mrs. Radcliffe's emphasis on the sinister aspect of nature will suffice here. When Ellena has been kidnapped from her home in Naples and is being brought through the mountains of Abruzzi to the convent prison, she spends a certain amount of time contemplating the natural scenery. Her situation here, of course, differs from that of Emily St. Aubert, who fell in love with Valancourt while they both gazed at the Pyrenées. Mrs. Radcliffe is therefore careful to note the different effect of Ellena's emotions on her observation of similar scenery:

At every step were objects, which would have afforded pleasure to a tranquil mind; the beautifully variegated marbles, that formed the cliffs above... the elegance of the shrubs that tufted, and the majestic grace of the palms, which waved over them, would have charmed almost any other eye than Ellena's, whose spirit was wrapt in care, or than those of her companions, whose hearts were dead to feeling.⁶⁴

In terms of Burke's theory, Ellena's experience could not be sublime because the danger which she was experiencing was too immediate. But while such a reaction is understandable, Mrs. Radcliffe's description of the monastery, which appears immediately after this,

⁶³Radcliffe, Italian, p. XII.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 169.

suggests that the works of nature are much more sinister.

Partial features of the vast edifice she was approaching, appeared now and then between the trees; the tall west window of the cathedral with the spires that overtopped it; the narrow pointed roofs of the cloisters; angles of the insurmountable walls, which fenced the garden from the precipices below, and the dark portal leading into the chief court; each of these, seen at intervals beneath the gloom of cypress and spreading cedar, seemed as if menacing the unhappy Ellena with hints of future suffering.⁶⁵

In this passage, nature has suddenly assumed a threatening aspect, when it is seen in conjunction with the threatening convent. The pleasing and elegant shrubs and palms of a few lines before give room to the cypresses and cedars that frame the convent. The beautiful marble cliffs change into precipices when juxtaposed with the convent walls. Mrs. Radcliffe is ambiguous, though, about whether the scene has really become sinister, or whether it just appears so to Ellena.

Mrs. Radcliffe preserves this same ambiguity in another description of nature under a sinister light. Shortly after she comes to the convent, Ellena discovers an unused tower in the building, where she can go to gaze at the surrounding countryside. The peculiar kind of contemplation that this sublime experience inspires, however, is quite different from that inspired in Emily St. Aubert:

Here, gazing upon the stupendous imagery around her, looking as it were beyond the awful veil, which obscures the features of the Deity, and conceals Him from the eyes of his creatures, dwelling as with a present God, in the midst of his sublime works; with a mind thus

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 169-170.

elevated, how insignificant would appear to her the transactions, and the sufferings of this world! How poor the boasted power of man, when the fall of a single cliff from these mountains would with ease destroy thousands of his race assembled on the plains below!⁶⁶

The description is ambiguous in that it leaves unclear whether this is a new attitude about sublime scenery which Mrs. Radcliffe herself is suggesting, or whether the attitude is a product of Ellena's depressed spirits. But even if a product of her unhappy surroundings, the image of a falling cliff crushing thousands of men is a particularly cruel one. In this later novel, Mrs. Radcliffe more often exposes the cruelties of nature and the violence of men than she did before.

Another indication of the stronger tone of The Italian lies in the character of its villain, Schedoni. The Mysteries of Udolpho, as its title suggests, is largely concerned with examining all the ways a place could affect Emily St. Aubert. The Italian, on the other hand, is largely concerned with a person and, secondarily, with his relationship with the confessional of the Black Penitents. The first novel does not develop the character of Montoni much more than to describe him in terms of his effect on Emily. Schedoni, on the other hand, is more fully developed in The Italian. His hypocrisy and his treachery are so well described that Schedoni influenced the development of the Romantic imagination. His sinister qualities are apparent from his first appearance:

⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 240-241.

(His physiogomy) bore the traces of many passions, which seemed to have fixed the features they no longer animated. An habitual gloom and severity prevailed over the deep lines of his countenance; and his eyes were so piercing, that they seemed to penetrate, at a single glance, into the hearts of men, and to read their most secret thoughts...⁶⁷

These threatening qualities are apparent throughout the novel, when he engineers Ellena's capture, for example, or when he convinces the Marchesa di Vivaldi that Ellena must be killed.

But Schedoni is a well developed character in The Italian, because we are occasionally permitted to view the machinations and the operations of his mind. The most memorable of these occasions is in Book III, chapter iv, as he prepares to kill Ellena in the seashore cottage. Seeing the sleeping girl, the monk is rendered momentarily unable to accomplish his mission. He tries to overcome his reluctance by repeating to himself all the reasons that prompt his deed. Then, as he prepares to kill her, he suddenly notices a locket which convinces him that Ellena is his daughter.

The novel does not permit us to sympathize with Schedoni, however, and the rest of the story pictures his continued pursuit of schemes of self-aggrandizement. In Book IV, Schedoni is exposed as the treacherous Count di Bruno, who murdered his brother in order to marry his brother's wife, whom he later falsely accused of faithlessness and stabbed. (It was the confession of these deeds that had driven Father Ansaldo, the grand penitentiary, half mad.) Our impression

⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 90-91.

of Schedoni as villain is confirmed when he poisons his accuser, Father Nicola, and then himself, in order to avoid the punishment of the Inquisition.

A final indication of Mrs. Radcliffe's ironic vision in The Italian is her treatment of the Inquisition. This new motif in Gothic fiction, which Varma calls the "terrors of the Vatican"⁶⁸ was partly the product of a certain anti-Catholic prejudice. Thus, her loquacious domestics are always superstitious, while her heroes and heroines are virtuous in proportion as they control their superstitions. The monks in the mountain convent, for instance, have constructed a passage to convey secretly to the shrine of Mount Carmel articles to excite the superstitious wonder of ignorant devotees.

The theme of the Inquisition might also be the product of a value judgment about the past. In his preface to Les Crimes de l'Amour (1800), the Marquis de Sade describes the Gothic novel as "the fruit of the revolution of which all Europe felt the shock."⁶⁹ Certainly Mrs. Radcliffe's attitude toward the Inquisition must be partly shaped by a mistrust of that church power which the French Revolution swept away.

But no matter what is the source of these Inquisition scenes, they are among Mrs. Radcliffe's finest achievements. These and the scenes during which Vivaldi struggles in his mind against the idea of

⁶⁸Ibid., p. XII.

⁶⁹Quoted in Varma, p. 217.

the Inquisition explore the ironic attitude of Gothicism of sensibility, that true justice is impossible on this earth.

Mrs. Radcliffe goes about creating this attitude in book III, chapter I, which describes Vivaldi's journey to the prisons of the Inquisition. Her technique is first to exploit the dramatic possibilities of the setting of the prison and then to describe the prison itself in terms of diabolical imagery and associations. Thus, from the carriage transporting him through the night, Vivaldi notices a scene suggesting death and decay: "Some of those mighty monuments of Rome's eternal name, those gigantic skeletons, which once enclosed a soul, whose energies governed a world!"⁷⁰ The carriage passes through a wasteland whose desolation reinforces the impression of the former scene:

It appeared, from its desolation and from the ruins scattered distantly along its skirts, to be a part of the city entirely abandoned by the modern inhabitants to the reliques of its former grandeur. Not even the shadow of a human being crossed the waste, nor any building appeared, which might be supposed to shelter one.⁷¹

After the carriage passes through the immense walls of the prison, Vivaldi is silently led into a darkened underground chamber.

No person appeared, and a death-like silence prevailed . . . To Vivaldi it occurred, that this was one of the burial vaults of the victims, who suffered in the Inquisition, and his whole frame thrilled with horror.

⁷⁰Radcliffe, *Italian*, vol II, bk 3, p. 10.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

Several avenues, opening from the apartment, seemed to lead to distant quarters of this immense fabric, but still no footstep whispering along the pavement, or voice murmuring through the arched roofs, indicated it to be the residence of the living.⁷²

The scene invites associations with the journies of Vergil and of Dante to the underground. It appeals to our neurotic fears of darkness, entrapment, and death.

The scene, shortly after, during Vivaldi's interrogation, confirms the impression that his persecutors are diabolic in intent, if not identity. Vivaldi is forced to testify against himself, and his words are taken out of context and twisted in meaning. He rails against the "malice of demons like these" and the "diabolical cruelties"⁷³ practiced in the shadowy chambers of the Inquisition.

But struggle as he may, Vivaldi is important before his accusers, many of whom he cannot even see. In these scenes, and the scenes of book IV, when Vivaldi is menaced by a spirit unseen by his questioners, Mrs. Radcliffe's novel comes closest to recreating the landscape of a nightmare. The circumstances of that second interrogation combine to produce an extraordinary instance of the Gothicism that appeals to archetypal fears. In his prison cell, Vivaldi has just dreamt of a sinister monk whose "intense and fiery eyes resembled

⁷²Ibid., pp. 13-14.

⁷³Ibid., pp. 27-28.

those of an evil spirit, rather than of a human character."⁷⁴ The monk draws a bloody knife from his robes and then disappears. Vivaldi awakes from his nightmare, only to see the same monk leaning over his cot. The surrealistic dream seems to continue on into reality, as the monk speaks to Vivaldi: "His mind resembled the glass of a magician, on which the apparitions of long buried events arise, and as they fleet away, point portentously to shapes half hid in the duskieness of futurity."⁷⁵ The monk is father Nicola, a former ally of Schedoni, who has abandoned Schedoni in favor of Vivaldi.

Shortly after, Vivaldi is led blindfolded down through a series of subterranean vaults and into the trial room. His Inquisitors are only voices which threaten him in the dark. At this point he hears the strange voice which his accusers cannot identify.

This whole section of the novel, with the dream that turns into reality and the menacing voices that come out of the darkness, is calculated to disturb us in a most profound way. At this point, one is inevitably reminded of Kafka's Joseph K. trying to defend himself against accusations of an unspecified crime. It is largely her achievement up to this episode that warrants a description of Mrs. Radcliffe as a Gothicism of sensibility.

From this point on, the novel is turned in the direction of a romance conclusion. At the prompting of Father Nicola, Vivaldi

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 329.

⁷⁵Ibid., pp. 331-332.

accuses Schedoni of a series of crimes and the saintly Sister Olivia appears to confirm the accusation. Schedoni is apprehended and convicted and the lovers are reunited. Even Vivaldi's wicked mother, whose machinations with Schedoni caused Ellena's kidnap, is revealed to have died in appropriate torments. Then Schedoni kills Father Nicola through some unexplained means and dies himself in agony. Once the evil figures are cleared away, the novel concludes on two typically romantic notes. First, Ellena discovers that Sister Olivia is her mother and that the first Count di Bruno, and not Schedoni, was her father. Then, the two lovers are married.

In this working out of the plot in the direction of romance, Mrs. Radcliffe attempts to explain away much of the terrors of the first three books. But her explanations are not so effective as in The Mysteries of Udolpho, since the terrors of The Italian are the product of more realistic inspirations. They are realistic reactions to situations which might well face anyone. These are not the fears inspired by waxen images and clever robber-bands, but those of guilt and dreams, of helplessness and false accusation.

In book IV, chapter VI, Mrs. Radcliffe even employs Schedoni himself to explain away the terrors he inspired in Vivaldi:

The opinions you avowed were rational, said Schedoni, but the ardour of your imagination was apparent, and what ardent imagination ever would trust to plain reasoning, or to the evidence of the senses? It may not willingly confine itself to the dull truths of this earth, but, eager to expand its faculties, to fill its capacity,

and to experience its own peculiar delights, soars
after new wonders into a world of its own!⁷⁶

As in The Mysteries of Udolpho, though, such an explanation should be more a cause for disquietude than for comfort. What the explanation does, in effect, is to reveal to Vivaldi the potential terrors to which his imagination could always be subject. Having been made to feel those terrors ourselves, we can only agree with such an implication as Mrs. Radcliffe was perhaps unwilling to suggest. No matter how much it preaches the joys of a well-controlled imagination, the appeal of the novel is based squarely on the fact that the imagination is often fascinated by irrational forces which it does not tend to control. In other words, the novel implies the attitude that man's mind, the reflecting device which conveys information to him about the world, is cracked and distorted. Despite her professed intentions, Mrs. Radcliffe leads us to ambiguous and ironic conclusions about man and the world around him.

In Matthew Gregory Lewis's The Monk (1795), these conclusions are much more explicit. Something of the difference between the two novelists may be understood by contrasting the marriages that conclude them. In Mrs. Radcliffe's novels, the blocking characters are removed and the lovers are reunited: Emily marries her Valancourt and Ellena marries her Vivaldi. In Lewis's novel, the marriages are performed, but in a much more somber manner. Lorenzo's beloved

⁷⁶Ibid., bk 4, p. 192.

Antonia has been raped and murdered by Ambrosio, and so he marries the beautiful heiress, Virginia. Raymond and Agnes are finally married, but only after the death of their child and Agnes's terrifying sufferings, immured in the catacombs under the Convent of Saint Clare. Lewis strikes the tone of the grimmer attitude expressed in his fiction, in describing their married lives: "The remaining years of Raymond and Agnes, of Lorenzo and Virginia, were happy as can be those allotted to mortals, born to be the prey of grief, and sport of disappointment."⁷⁷

The stronger tone of irony, contradiction, and despair in the novel may be understood by comparing the retribution endured by Mrs. Radcliffe's villains with that endured by Lewis's Ambrosio. At the end of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Montoni is apprehended and imprisoned by the authorities, while Schedoni, at the end of *The Italian*, kills himself to avoid the punishments of the Inquisition. Ambrosio's end, by contrast, is infinitely more harrowing.

The monk, whose psychology has been presented in enough detail to render him sympathetic, is so terrified by the approach of his executioners that he offers his soul to the devil, in return for his escape. Satan bears Ambrosio to a mountain height and then taunts him with the fact that Antonia was Ambrosio's sister and that Elvira, whom he also murdered, was his mother. Matilda, Ambrosio's accomplice, was a

⁷⁷Matthew G. Lewis, *The Monk*, ed. Lewis F. Peck, introd. John Berryman (New York, 1959), p. 400.

diabolic spirit used by Satan for Ambrosio's seduction.

"Know, vain man! that I long have marked you for my prey: I watched the movements of your heart; I saw that you were virtuous from vanity, not principle, and I seized the fit moment of seduction."⁷⁸

These terrible revelations are followed by even more gruesome and disgusting descriptions--bowdlerized in some editions--of the devil's pitching the monk onto the rocks below and Ambrosio's hideous sufferings until he dies seven days later.

The very last lines of the novel, with their terrifying and apocalyptic imagery, confirm the impression that Lewis is moving in a direction different from Mrs. Radcliffe's romantic endings:

On the seventh (day) a violent storm arose; the winds in fury rent up rocks and forests: the sky was now black with clouds, now sheeted with fire: the rain fell in torrents; it swelled the stream; the waves overflowed their banks; they reached the spot where Ambrosio lay, and, when they abated, carried with them into the river the corpse of the despairing monk.⁷⁹

These lines, to say the least, differ from Paolo's cries of "O! giorno felice!" at the end of The Italian. Despair is the keynote, and utter irony, for Ambrosio is a victim of a fate that had been prepared for him by the wily evil spirit. Although his own lust was the vehicle of his destruction, Ambrosio is as much a victim of unfathomable fate as is Oedipus Rex. Because of its relentless exploitation of the Gothic devices of pursuit and entrapment, because of its depiction of the

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 418.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 420.

inevitable disintegration of a personality, and, finally, because of its terrifying conclusion, The Monk could best be described with the words Jan Kott uses to describe King Lear: "The theme... is the decay and fall of the world."⁸⁰

Lewis's achievement in The Monk is remarkable despite several weaknesses. First, he wrote the novel at the early age of twenty-one. Second, it succeeds despite the awkward mechanism of a sub-plot which consumes one-third of its length, but "touches the main plot at only two vital points: the detection of Agnes's guilt by Ambrosio, and the detection of his guilt on the occasion of her rescue."⁸¹ The sub-plot itself is a rather interesting combination of otherwise unconnected material: the German legend of the Bleeding Nun and the legend of the Wandering Jew.

But despite occasional problems in construction, the novel's real strength lies in its development of two techniques which it owes to Mrs. Radcliffe, but which it develops to a greater extent than she does. The first of these is contrast. Lewis juxtaposes beauty with decay, darkness with light, apparent holiness with actual viciousness. As with Mrs. Radcliffe, this practice emerges from Burke's sublime, which is produced by viewing scenes of danger from a vantage point of safety. But Lewis changes what in Mrs. Radcliffe is a fascination with

⁸⁰Jan Kott, Shakespeare our Contemporary trans. Boleslaw Taborski (Garden City, New York, 1966), p. 152.

⁸¹Varma, p. 142.

the picturesque to a series of moral and ethical considerations about cosmic order and justice. Like the shifting planes of reality in mannerist art⁸² Lewis's landscape lacks a single point of resolution, or, in moral terms, a single norm. De Sade, whom Lewis read and whose influence is strong in The Monk, recognized in the novel a revolutionary impulse similar to the one he creates in Justine and Juliette. Of The Monk, de Sade said, "the appearance of this novel was truly a literary event. It answered the need for strong emotions following great social upheavals, flattered sensualism with its voluptuous pictures and irreligion by the boldness with which it treated sacred things."⁸³

The second motif of Mrs. Radcliffe's which Lewis develops, that of mental disorder and madness, is associated with and works out of the contrasts that dominate the novel. The Monk depicts man trapped in a world not of his own making, a world of conflicting norms or perhaps of no norms at all. The result is often madness, and especially madness that has its roots in sexual disorders. Thus, Ambrosio's sexuality expresses itself in a kind of necrophilia as he finally violates Antonia.

Naturally addicted to the gratification of the senses, in the full vigour of manhood and heat of blood, he had suffered his temperament to acquire such

⁸²Cf. Wylie Sypher's discussion of "Gothic" in Rococo to Cubism in Art and Literature (New York, 1960), pp. 107-09.

⁸³Quoted in Varma, pp. 150-151.

ascendency, that his lust was become madness. Of his fondness for Antonia, none but the grosser particles remained; he longed for the possession of her person; and even the gloom of the vault, the surrounding silence, and the resistance which he expected from her, seemed to give a fresh edge to his fierce and unbridled desires.⁸⁴

Thus, too, Agnes's sexual frustrations, when a misunderstanding with Raymond sends her into the convent, cause the moment of weakness that renders her pregnant and vulnerable to the perverse hysteria of the abbess of Saint Clare. The result is another form of necrophilia, with Agnes clutching at the decaying remains of her baby in the cemetery-prison:

She looked at the bundle, which lay upon her breast. She bent over it, and kissed it, then drew back hastily, and shuddered with disgust:

"It was once so sweet! It would have been so lovely, so like him! I have lost it for ever. How a few days have changed it! I should not know it again myself. Yet it is dear to me. God! how dear!"⁸⁵

But while the technique of contrast and the theme of the varieties of madness characterize The Monk, the novel is not a morality. It does not, in other words, suggest that simple solutions exist for moral problems. The moral--if the novel can be considered to have a moral--is that judgment is exceedingly difficult, crippled as every human being must be by the very circumstances of existence.

Perhaps the strongest indication of this attitude in The Monk

⁸⁴Lewis, p. 365.

⁸⁵Ibid., pp. 237-238.

is the fact of the surprising sympathy with which Lewis treats the character of Ambrosio. This note of sympathy for the villain is the other contribution which Lewis made to the development of the form. We see traces of it, for example, in the character of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner and, later, in the Byronic hero. The attitude influenced, in varying degrees, the characterizations of Maturin's Sebastian Melmoth, of Poe's Roderick Usher, and of Emily Brontë's Heathcliff.

That sympathy is surprising, of course, because it is a departure from the usual treatment of the Gothic villain--as the melodramatic opposite and foil to the hero and heroine. While he spares no effort in describing the villainy of Ambrosio, painting him in perhaps more vivid colors than Mrs. Radcliffe does her evil figures, Lewis does at least attempt to understand why Ambrosio acts as he does. In volume II, chapter VI, for example, the narrator points out that Ambrosio's environment has perverted many of his natural virtues:

Had his youth been passed in the world, he would have shown himself possessed of many brilliant and manly qualities... With such qualifications he would have been an ornament to his country: that he possessed them he had given proofs in his earliest infancy, and his parents had beheld his dawning virtues with the fondest delight and admiration. Unfortunately, while yet a child, he was deprived of those parents.⁸⁶

Shunted into a cloister at an early age, Ambrosio came under the influence

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 237-238.

of a Capuchin abbot who used all his powers to persuade the boy to become a monk. Thus influenced, the young Ambrosio came to desire admittance to the order and came under the repressive tutelage of the monks:

His instructors carefully repressed those virtues, whose grandeur and disinterestedness were ill suited to the cloister. Instead of universal benevolence, he was taught to consider compassion for the errors of others as a crime of the blackest dye: the noble frankness of his temper was exchanged for servile humility; and in order to break his natural spirit, the monks terrified his young mind, by placing before him all the horrors with which superstition could furnish them.⁸⁷

The effect of this environment is to make perverse the character of Ambrosio. "While the monks were busied in rooting out his virtues, and narrowing his sentiments, they allowed every vice which had fallen to his share to arrive at full perfection."⁸⁸

This discourse, half-way through the novel, reminds one of a conversation between Lorenzo and Agnes in the first chapter of The Monk. The young girl who has been sounding the praises of Ambrosio, is interrupted by the more mature man:

"... a man who has passed the whole of his life within the walls of a convent, cannot have found the opportunity to be guilty, even were he possessed of the inclination. But now, when, obliged by the duties of his situation, he must enter occasionally into the world, and be thrown into the way of temptation, it

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 238.

⁸⁸Ibid.

is now that it behoves him to show the brilliance of his virtue."⁸⁹

The rest of the novel, of course, will demonstrate to Ambrosio just how ill his education has fitted him to cope with temptations.

In his description of Ambrosio's capitulation to temptation Lewis adopts the technique that Mrs. Radcliffe uses so effectively in detailing the mental states of her heroines. That technique is her habit of making the reader feel what the character is feeling. But in making his readers share the feelings of his villain, Lewis effectively gains reader sympathy for Ambrosio.

This technique of creating sympathetic emotional resonance between reader and character is best employed by Lewis in the prolonged seduction scenes. The effectiveness of the scenes is testified to by the fact that the novel was charged with indecency and blasphemy, to the point that Lewis was forced to make several expurgations in the fourth (1798) edition in order to avoid prosecution. An early charge comes from a contemporary reviewer, Thomas James Mathias, who, in 1797, called The Monk "the most open and unqualified blasphemy against the very code and volume of our religion."⁹⁰ The charge was rather widely accepted in the nineteenth century; thus, Macaulay remarks of Lewis in his Journal of February 16, 1854:

⁸⁹Ibid., pp. 47-48.

⁹⁰Thomas James Mathias, The Pursuits of Literature, 8th ed. (1797), p. 239.

"One of the best of men, if he had not had a trick of writing profane and indecent books."⁹¹ Sir Leslie Stephen sums up this attitude in volume XI of The Dictionary of National Biography: "His intellectual vivacity enabled him to catch the literary fashion of the day, and his books secured a temporary success, partly due to the dash of indecency."⁹²

While a modern reader might consider such reactions somewhat strong--especially in light of the freedom allowed modern literary men--he can at least admit that they attest to the emotional power of the scenes. The seduction scenes are limited to chapters II, VI, and VII. In chapter II, Matilda, disguised as a young novice, wears down Ambrosio's will through a variety of ruses. Lewis's picture of the mental state of the monk is a brilliant psychological case study. Lewis depicts Ambrosio as he moves from a mixture of devotion and lust in contemplating a picture of the Madona [sic], through Ambrosio's frenetic dream visions of Matilda, to the final scenes where Matilda would sacrifice her life to save Ambrosio's when a snake-bite brings him near to death. At this point, Matilda reveals herself as the model for Ambrosio's portrait of the Madona and also reveals that Ambrosio

⁹¹Thomas Babington Macaulay, Journal in Life and Letters of Thomas Babington Macaulay, ed. Trevelyan, p. 632. quoted in Moulton III, p. 725.

⁹²Leslie Stephen, The Dictionary of National Biography, s.v. Lewis. The same attitude is expressed in the 9th ed. of the Encyclopedia Britannica (1875-1889; repr. Chicago 1891), XIV, 493.

can save her only at the risk of his own soul.

The chapter is a brilliant description, from within, of the effects of lust and pride. This chapter and chapters VI and VII describe in detail the steps in the disintegration of a personality. "It is surprising, after all," says John Berryman of Ambrosio, "how long it takes--how difficult it is--to be certain of damnation."⁹³ The concern with which Lewis describes the progress of Ambrosio's damnation--both of the theological and psychological kinds--raises the novel from the level of the thriller to that of true artistic significance.

But, to return to a theme that was suggested before, the concentration on the character of Ambrosio not only creates verisimilitude, but it also makes the monk in some ways sympathetic. One senses that Ambrosio is to be understood in terms of victim: victim of his own weaknesses, of his environment, of other people, like Matilda, and of unknown forces beyond the ken of human understanding, forces which the devil suggests before he kills Ambrosio. Ambrosio is seen as a character in whom two personalities, one corrupt and the other benevolent, are locked in a desperate struggle. Lewis describes this struggle in chapter VI, after Matilda has seduced Ambrosio:

Still in spite of the pains taken to pervert them, his natural good qualities would occasionally break

⁹³Lewis, p. 13.

through the gloom cast over them so carefully. At such times the contest for superiority between his real and acquired character was striking and unaccountable to those unacquainted with his original disposition. . . The fact was, that the different sentiments with which education and nature had inspired him, were combating in his bosom: it remained for his passions, which as yet no opportunity had called into play, to decide the victory. Unfortunately his passions were the very worst judges to whom he could possibly have applied.⁹⁴

This analysis of Ambrosio as a pathetic victim of forces beyond his control is included, interestingly enough, at Ambrosio's worst moment, just after he has raped Antonia and as he prepares to murder her. Terrified at his evil deed, fearing Antonia's denunciations, the monk is tortured by guilt and berates the girl:

"You shall not from hence to tell Madrid that I am a villain; that my conscience is loaded with sins, which make me despair of Heaven's pardon. Wretched girl, you must stay here with me! Here amidst these lonely tombs, these images of death, these rotting, loathsome, corrupted bodies! Here shall you stay, and witness my sufferings; witness what it is to be in the horrors of despondency, and breathe the last groan in blasphemy and curses!"⁹⁵

The reason Ambrosio insists Antonia must remain in her graveyard prison is that she is as much responsible for Ambrosio's crimes as he is: "What seduced me into crimes, whose bare remembrance makes me shudder? Fatal witch! was it not thy beauty? Have you not

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 239.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 369.

plunged my soul into infamy?"⁹⁶

In a sense, both Ambrosio and Antonia are victims of forces beyond their control. Antonia's beauty has singled her out and the fact of Ambrosio's frustrated passions has led to the inevitable expression of passion in the most terrible of ways. If this is the case, the easy distinction between villain and heroine, between pursuer and pursued, is not quite so simple in The Monk. If both the murderer and his victim are presented as victims, then the fiction could be implying an ironic judgment about cosmic order and justice. Certainly that impression is complete at the end of the novel, when Ambrosio's extraordinary sufferings and presumed damnation suggest that he is being made to suffer as a result of disorder and injustice on a grand scale.

Another strong indication of this occurs in chapter X, when Mother Saint Ursula has denounced the prioress of the convent of Saint Clare and the mob sets on the woman. Lewis's description of the mob's murdering the prioress and sending the convent up in flames is one of the most impressive and powerful in the novel. The mob first abuses the prioress. "They stifled with howls and execrations her shrill cries for mercy, and dragged her through the streets, spurning her, trampling her, and treating her with every species of cruelty which hate or vindictive fury could invent."⁹⁷ But once they have

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 344.

killed her, they continue to abuse the dead nun's body. "They beat it, trod upon it, and illused it, till it became no more than a mass of flesh, unsightly, shapeless, and disgusting."⁹⁸

Once the mob has finished with the prioress, it turns on the convent. "The incensed populace, confounding the innocent with the guilty, had resolved to sacrifice all the nuns of that order to their rage, and not to leave one stone of the building upon another."⁹⁹ The mob assaults the convent, and sets it afire:

The walls were soon shaken by the devouring element. The columns gave way, the roofs came tumbling down upon the rioters, and crushed many of them beneath their weight. Nothing was to be heard but shrieks and groans. The convent was wrapped in flames, and the whole presented a scene of devastation and horror.¹⁰⁰

After reading this scene, it is not difficult to understand Lewis's appeal to the Marquis de Sade and why Sade praised The Monk as the finest of the Gothic novels. Sade praised the novel not only because the description of the burning convent is a political act with revolutionary significance. He also recognized in Lewis an awareness of the powerful psychological and sexual impulses that influence men.

But, perhaps strongest of all, Sade seems to have recognized in Lewis that Manichean or Albigensian dualism that is so strong in his own writings. If the theme of contrasts is strong in The Monk, that theme is best understood as an expression of the necessary conjunction

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 345.

of good and evil, life and death in each person and each experience. Perhaps the strongest indication of this attitude is the contrast, which Lewis makes several times, between physical animation and physical decay. One example is the change that takes place in Elvira's features after Ambrosio murders her:

Her face was covered with a frightful blackness: her limbs moved no more: the blood was chilled in her veins: her heart had forgotten to beat; and her hands were stiff and frozen. Ambrosio beheld before him that once noble and majestic form, now become a corpse, cold, senseless, and disgusting.¹⁰¹

Another example is the contrast between beauty and decay in the scene--one of Lewis's many variations of Shakespearean themes--when Ambrosio approaches the tomb of Antonia in order to seduce her.

By the side of three putrid half-corrupted bodies lay the sleeping beauty. A lively red, the forerunner of returning animation, had already spread itself over her cheeks; and as wrapped in her shroud she reclined upon her funeral bier, she seemed to smile at the images of death around her. While he gazed upon their rotting bones and disgusting figures, who perhaps were once as sweet and lovely, Ambrosio thought upon Elvira, by him reduced to the same state.¹⁰² (emphasis mine)

In this scene, Lewis is making explicit connections between beauty and decay. He suggests in quite specific terms that Antonia will one day be as hideous as the figures moldering around her. The other two contrasts between life and death are Lewis's grotesque descriptions of the deaths of the prioress and of Ambrosio.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 297.

¹⁰²Ibid., pp. 363-364.

The purpose of these contrasts is, I think, to suggest the philosophical conclusions typical of Gothicism of sensibility. Of all the Gothic novels of sensibility, The Monk pursues most relentlessly the suggestion that man is trapped in a terrifying, disordered cosmos. In that cosmos, the innocent suffer unjustly and the guilty are victims of forces that have warped and perverted them. Nor does that cosmos necessarily offer the hope of justice and resolution in some "other" place. The dominant images of the novel are, instead, of beauty decaying into corruption, of a flaming convent that consumes the innocent and the guilty, and of despair-filled agonies of the dying monk.

If the 1790s saw an expansion of the capabilities of the Gothic novel, the decade also saw an expansion of the modes of expression that Gothic could take. Gothic drama is a fine example. As Bertrand Evans amply documents, Gothic drama did exist from Walpole's time, but it was almost entirely made up of plots adapted from the Gothic novels. But with "Monk" Lewis's Castle Spectre (1798), a series of first-rate Gothic dramas written for the stage was inaugurated. Byron's closet drama, Manfred (1817), continues the tradition.

The 1790s, as the last chapter indicated, was when Scott began translating and composing his Gothic poetry. Poetry, in fact, became the most common expression of Gothicism after 1798. Lewis's collections, Tales of Wonder and Tales of Terror, Wordsworth's "Hart Leap Well", Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner", Scott's "Lay of the Last Minstrel", and Keats's "La Belle dame sans Merci" are all

well know examples. These poems represent different types of Gothicism, but they could have been developed only after Mrs. Radcliffe expanded the capabilities of the Gothic novel.

The most salutary effects of the expansion and development of Gothicism through the decade of the 1790s, however, are two. First, because it was a developing form during a transitional period of literary history, Gothicism acted as one of the bridges between eighteenth century literature and Romanticism. Second, for its ability to assume a variety of forms and to develop certain themes and ideas that were to be important in Romanticism, Gothicism acted as something like Sturm und Drang in English literary history.

One of the peculiarities of English literary history is the limited awareness, on the part of the literary men of the time, that a critical and literary revolution was taking place. In France, the awareness of a new literary age was strong, aided as it was by the political revolution after 1789. In Germany, the critical doctrines of the Sturm und Drang period and the philosophical and aesthetic debates they occasioned made all educated Germans aware that a period of great change was under way. In England, on the other hand, not much seemed to be happening.

In 1798, Wordsworth and Coleridge produced their Lyrical Ballads, with its preface, which Wordsworth made even more revolutionary in its 1800 edition. From an aesthetic point of view, the Preface was the declaration of independence for a whole new age. But

from an historical point of view, the document was all but ignored. Nowhere in England, except in the small literary coterie that surrounded Wordsworth and Coleridge, was it received with loud praise. Nowhere did it excite the interest and the response evoked by the doctrines of the French and German aestheticians.

One explanation of this could be that the English have tended to avoid the rigid theorizing and categorizing that results in an Academie française or a Sturm und Drang movement. Nor, as their amorphous body of common law indicates, are they adept at devising complicated systems. Not even Coleridge, the one Englishman who most tried to be like a German aesthetician, succeeded in creating much more than a series of brilliant fragments and half-completed treatises. So, one might not expect in England a strong awareness of a literary and philosophical revolution.

But even if, as this explanation might suggest, the English blundered into the Romantic movement, this still leaves some questions unresolved. The reversal in poetic practice which Wordsworth calls for in the Lyrical Ballads, and which M. H. Abrams describes in such detail in The Mirror and the Lamp (1953), could not have been accomplished unaided and without forethought. Without attempting a complete explanation of an admittedly complex process, one could suggest a partial answer in the phenomenon of Gothicism.

The most obvious fact about literary Gothicism is its development during a transitional period in English literature. Conceived as an

entertainment by a thoroughgoing neo-classicist, Gothic literature assemed a variety of expressions during the Age of Sensibility and was further developed in English Romanticism. Although its assumptions might have changed with each period, it still was the single form or general group of conventions to maintain any sort of consistency between 1760 and 1820. While literary fashions passed and literary genres fell into disfavor, Gothicism endured.

Because Gothicism was a developing phenomenon during this period, it was able to accommodate a great deal of experimentation with new forms and themes. Its status as a developing literature encouraged experimentation with new forms and themes. All this is to suggest that literary Gothicism played something of the function at this time that the Sturm und Drang was playing in German Romanticism. Because of its flexibility, Gothicism was able to experiment with revolutionary philosophy in Lewis's The Monk and with revolutionary politics in Godwin's St. Leon. With the advent of Romanticism, that same flexibility allowed it to be used for the earliest experiments in the philosophical concerns of each romantic poet. Wordsworth's The Borderers is an exercise in his characteristic self scrutiny. Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner"--especially in its earlier, more specifically Gothic version--is his famous statement of faith in an ultimately benevolent universe. Keats's "Eve of St. Agnes" is a typical lament on the impermanence of human experience. In each of these instances a form of Gothic literature was used to test a new theme or to experiment

with a new literary attitude. The critical theorizing could come later, but these pieces of Gothic literature were experiments in the shaping of English Romanticism.

It would be enlightening to examine Godwin's Gothic novel, St. Leon: a Tale of the Sixteenth Century (1799). But one must first consider it in relation to his two earlier works, Political Justice and Caleb Williams.

The first is a political treatise which Godwin published in 1793: The Inquiry concerning Political Justice, and its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness. The tract envisions

the birth of a new social order, to be introduced by discussion, in which life would be ruled by principle instead of custom, a kingless, priestless world where no man would have the control of another, where punishment was abolished, where property was owned in common, where marriage and family ties no longer restricted freedom of the individual.¹⁰³

One most notable characteristic of Godwin's ethic was its thoroughgoing rationality. The world Godwin envisions in Political Justice is one in which emotion does not influence human decisions. Godwin's scheme denies

tradition, sentiment, feeling or habit as forces motivating man's conduct. Truth and justice are thus left as the sole ideals for society, to be pursued without rancour and abjuring even the

¹⁰³William Godwin, The Adventures of Caleb Williams, introd. Van Wyck Brooks (New York, 1926), p. V.

sanctions of legislation, with the ideal goal a benevolent anarchism.¹⁰⁴

If Political Justice describes Godwin's vision of an utopian world where involuntary and emotive action does not influence human conduct, his novel Things as They Are; or The Adventures of Caleb Williams (1794), contrasts with this a picture of the effects of emotion and irrationality in the world at its present stage. (Thus, his main title for the novel.) Caleb Williams is, briefly, the story of two men, Caleb Williams and his employer Ferdinando Falkland, who persecute and pursue each other. Falkland is a generally virtuous gentleman whose single flaw is his overweening pride. Falkland is involved in an affair of honor, during which his opponent is mysteriously murdered. Although he is suspected, an extenant of his is hanged for the crime. Williams decides to search out the truth of the case. He discovers Falkland's guilt and is discovered, in turn, by Falkland.

The rest of the novel is a series of persecutions, as Falkland and his agents pursue Williams in and out of prison and across Europe. At the end of the tale, and after extraordinary sufferings, Williams succeeds in proving Falkland's guilt and exposing the now broken man. At the same time that his agents were pursuing Williams, the memory of his deeds and the guilt they engendered were destroying the peace of mind of Falkland. Both, in other words, were victims of a social

¹⁰⁴William Moelwyn Merchant, "William Godwin", Encyclopedia Britannica (1966, Chicago), X, 519-520.

system that placed an undue premium on reputation and also gave the rich power over the lives of the poor. The point, at the end of the story, is that such a system has destroyed the two main characters.

But besides its social commentary, *Caleb Williams* is notable for the psychological realism Godwin creates in depicting Caleb's mental states as he is pursued. The psychology of the novel is important enough to act as a principle of organization. "Incidents are conceived not in a series of disconnected episodes, but as part of an involved psychological situation."¹⁰⁵ The psychology of the novel is to provide the opportunity for Godwin to display the physical horrors of the English prisons for which the novel is famous.

Caleb Williams, however, is not a Gothic novel in the strict sense that the form has been discussed here. At best, it could be described as somewhat Gothic in content. Its concentration on physical horror and psychological fears makes it akin to the novels of Lewis and Mrs. Radcliffe. Furthermore, it shares with the Gothic novels the atmosphere of threatening gloom, especially in scenes of imprisonment and of flight. As in the Gothic novels, the gloom is most often associated with various depressive psychological states.

The main reason why the novel should not be called Gothic is that it does not include some dominating version of the haunted Gothic castle. Certainly the prison in which Caleb is cast and which causes his

¹⁰⁵Varma, p. 136.

extreme mental anguish can well be described as a version of the Gothic castle. (This is especially so in George Colman the Younger's version of the novel, The Iron Chest (1796), which emphasizes the prison scenes.) But the prison is the single place of any importance in the novel. This distinction about the Gothic castle is no pedantic nitpicking that has no thematic importance in making an aesthetic judgment about the novel. The castle is important in Gothic fiction for its correlation to mental states and for its associations with the past. Without it, fiction could be called psychological or supernatural, but not Gothic.

This, finally, is something of the problem with Godwin's St. Leon. The story is that of a sixteenth-century moral weakling who accepts the philosopher's stone and the elixir of life from a mysterious stranger. His weaknesses deprive him of wife, family, and wealth and finally cause him to be condemned by the Inquisition. He escapes, but is made to wander across Europe, shunned as an outcast for the ruin he brings to all he meets.

The story is Gothic in its duplication of many of the conventions of the Gothic novel--the setting in the past, the suggestion of the supernatural in the mysterious stranger and the philosopher's stone, the images of pursuit and terror. But the Gothic castle--the prison of Phillip II and, later, St. Leon's ancestral home--is not well developed. "Godwin," says Devendra Varma, "had neither gift nor inclination to conjure with Gothic properties."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 139.

But if St. Leon is not a well realized Gothic novel, it is important for another reason. In the novel, Godwin portrays an important change in his thinking. The novel includes a celebration of affection and married life that modifies his earlier anti-emotionalism and his opposition to marriage. Godwin describes the change in his preface to the novel:

Some readers of my graver productions will perhaps, in perusing these little volumes, accuse me of inconsistency; the affections and charities of private life being every where in this publication a topic of the warmest eulogium, while in the Enquiry concerning Political Justice they seemed to be treated with no great degree of indulgence and favour.¹⁰⁷

In the rest of his introduction, Godwin states that the novel provides a long-awaited opportunity to modify his ideas in public. He explains his reasons for the change:

...I apprehend domestic and private affections inseparable from the nature of man, and from what may be styled the culture of the heart, and am fully persuaded that they are not incompatible with a profound and active sense of justice in the mind of him that cherishes them.¹⁰⁸

Not only, continues Godwin, are private affections incompatible with the public pursuit of justice, but they can even actually help that enterprise:

Nay, by kindling his sensibility, and harmonising his soul, they may be expected, if he is endowed with a liberal and manly spirit, to render him more

¹⁰⁷William Godwin, Travels of St. Leon (London, 1831), p.IX.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. X.

prompt in the service of strangers and the public.¹⁰⁹

The reason for Godwin's change of heart was his wife, Mary Wollstonecraft, who had died on September 10, 1797, after giving birth to the future Mary Shelley. Godwin's sympathetic portrait of St. Leon's wife, Marguerite, is generally recognized as a portrait of Mary Wollstonecraft. (Thus, Godwin's friend Thomas Holcroft wrote him on September 9, 1800: "Your Marguerite is inimitable, Knowing the model after which you drew, as often as I recollected it, my heart ached while I read."¹¹⁰)

That Godwin chose to include a significant revision of his philosophy within a Gothic novel and, in fact, as one of its themes is an argument for the idea that Gothicism as a genre was particularly congenial to development and experimentation. St. Leon is also experimental in that it is planned backwards, a method of narration that influenced Conan Doyle and the writers of detective fiction.¹¹¹

That the novel is in part a social tract also explains why it is an example of Gothicism of sensibility. Just as Caleb Williams explained things as they are--life, in other words, in all its cruelty and injustice--St. Leon calls for reform by detailing many of the horrors of human existence. As a social tract, of course, its concern is the reform of existing ills. Its picture of human existence is

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰William Godwin by Paul II, 25. quoted in Moulton, 300.

¹¹¹Varma, p. 139.

therefore not so ironic as that Lewis suggests in The Monk. Nor does it develop Lewis's theme that there is a disorder within the cosmos. But its picture of the present cosmic disorder and of the injustices that such disorder creates, make it an apt example of the developing genre of Gothicism of sensibility.

The next examples of Gothicism of sensibility I shall treat were written almost twenty years after Godwin's St. Leon. Byron's Manfred was published in 1817, Sir Walter Scott's Bride of Lammermoor in 1819, and Charles Robert Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer in 1820. This gap in time does not suggest a cessation of interest in Gothicism: the ample bibliographies of Summers and of Evans demonstrate that the opposite was true. What did happen in this twenty-year period, of course, was the advent of an extraordinarily complex literary revolution that came to be called Romanticism. Much of the important Gothicism created during that period was influenced by the attitudes and conventions of Romanticism, to be described in the next chapter. That Gothicism of sensibility flourished in the Romantic age indicates that the rigid divisions between literary periods which some historians make are not really absolute. That Gothicism of sensibility and Romantic Gothicism flourished side by side further indicates the viability of Gothicism.

The relationship of Byron's Manfred to its Gothic forebears has long been pointed out--almost ad nauseam, comments Robert Gleckner.¹¹²

¹¹²Robert F. Gleckner, Byron and the Ruins of Paradise (Baltimore, 1967), p. 253.

Samuel Chew, for example, devotes much of his discussion of Manfred in The Dramas of Lord Byron¹¹³ to a consideration of the play's Gothic antecedents. He notes the influence of The Castle of Otranto and of Walpole's "Gothic" play, The Mysterious Mother, of Beckford's Vathek, and of Lewis's Monk. Mrs. Radcliffe's "atmosphere" and Shelley's St. Irvyne are also part of the brew. Bertrand Evans points out the influence of the incidents and characterization that had become the stock in trade of the Gothic drama.¹¹⁴ Andrew Rutherford¹¹⁵ and Robert Gleckner, despite his protests, repeat the information and also the comparison, started by Goethe himself,¹¹⁶ between Manfred and Faust.

This comparison between Manfred and Faust inspired a nineteenth-century biographer of Byron, Emilio Castelar, to remark that both poems "represent this disenchantment which is produced within the limits of human existence."¹¹⁷ But while Faust's complaint with human existence is the necessary limits it places on his intellectual potential, Manfred's complaint is of a different order. Like Huysmans'

¹¹³Samuel C. Chew, The Dramas of Lord Byron: A Critical Study (1915; repr. New York, 1964), pp. 59 ff.

¹¹⁴Bertrand Evans, "Manfred's Remorse and Dramatic Tradition", PMLA, LXII (1947), 752 ff.

¹¹⁵Andrew Rutherford, Byron: A Critical Study (Stanford, 1961, repr. 1965), pp. 76 ff.

¹¹⁶Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Review of Manfred tr. Hopper, quoted in Moulton, vol V (1935 repr.), p. 750. Goethe says of Byron's drama, "This singular intellectual poet has taken my Faustus to himself, and extracted from it the strangest nourishment for his hypochondriac humour."

¹¹⁷Emilio Castelar, Life of Lord Byron and Other Sketches, 1873-75 (trans. Arnold) p. 169, quoted in Moulton, vol V (1935 repr), p. 751.

DesEsseintes, one of his descendants, Manfred has tried all human experience and has found it limited and therefore frustrating. Manfred's opening soliloquy in Act I makes this clear:

they who know the most
 Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth,
 The Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life
 Philosophy and science, and the springs
 Of Wonder, and the wisdom of the world,
 I have essay'd, and in my mind there is
 A power to make these subject to itself--
 But they avail not: I have done men good,
 And I have met with good even among men--
 But this avail'd not: I have had my foes,
 And none have baffled, many fallen before me--
 But this avail'd not:--Good, or evil, life,
 Powers, passions, all I see in other beings,
 Have been to me as rain unto the sands,
 Since that all-nameless hour. I have no dread,
 And feel the curse to have no natural fear,
 Nor fluttering throb, that beats with hopes or wishes,
 Or lurking love of something on the earth.¹¹⁸
 (I, i, 10-27)

The soliloquy is important for two reasons. First, it summarizes the problem that will confront Manfred throughout the drama: an inborn skepticism that separates him from the fears of other men and also from the easy solutions that men concoct as responses to their fears. Second, in the person of its main character, it presents a variation on the standard Gothic properties that constitutes Byron's main contribution to the development of Gothicism.

Manfred himself is just one representative of the so-called

¹¹⁸George Gordon, Lord Byron, The Complete Poetical Works of Byron, ed. Paul Elmar More (Boston, 1905; repr. 1933), pp. 478-79, All quotations will be from this edition.

"Byronic hero", the characteristic hero of Byron's major poems.

"Manfred is the Giaour plus the poet of Childe Harold, Prometheus, and . . . a Gothic villain and Faust."¹¹⁹ But one strange characteristic of the Byronic hero, and of Manfred in particular, is that he is both hero and villain at the same time. In terms of the Gothic tradition, he is both pursued and pursuer. Byron achieves this, as Bertrand Evans points out, by leaving unexplained the criminal past which the hero seems to be repenting of:

Yet Manfred remains a hero, whose heroic reputation was preserved by extending the traditional Gothic ambiguity. Byron never lifted the dark veil which envelops him and the past event where the truth lies, and thus what might have been irreparably ugly, when boldly displayed, retained the fascination of profound mystery.¹²⁰

But, it seems to me, Byron's achievement in the use of the conventions of Gothicism was greater than just this. The drama opens in a Gothic gallery of Manfred's Alpine castle, where he conjures up the six spirits and his own ill-fated star. (The echoes of Scott's *Lady of Branksome Castle* are strong here.) The drama concludes with Manfred's death, after having exorcised the demons that would damn him, in the tower of the same castle. The associations of the (literally) haunted house and the tormented personality are such, in other words, that the house has some importance in the drama.

¹¹⁹Gleckner, p. 253.

¹²⁰Evans, pp. 237-38.

Byron's achievement in Manfred is his use of these standard Gothic conventions in a brilliant exploitation of the theme that was a Gothic concern from the time of Mrs. Radcliffe: the depiction of psychological states. Not only does Byron use his hero-villain and his haunted house to describe a particular state of mind, but his description of that mental state leads to the conclusion that Manfred is a brilliant example of Gothicism of sensibility. In fact, the drama is Byron's disillusioned reaction to the "consolation" both of Christianity and of Romanticism.

Much of the puzzlement the poem has caused critics has to do with the spirits Manfred invokes during the course of the drama. One critic even describes the "failure" of the poem as due "in part to the hopeless confusion of the supernatural machinery."¹²¹ These spirits can create problems if one tries to fit them into something like a classical pantheon, where their symbolic or allegorical meanings will be consistent. If, on the other hand, the spirits are seen as projections of mental states, the need for such rigidity in assigning them meaning will not be so strong. This will also be closer to the Gothic tradition that is behind the drama. In certain practitioners of that tradition, such as Mrs. Radcliffe, the "meaning" of things such as darkness and night and the symbolism of dreams is often ambiguous or contradictory. One's interpretations and descriptions of meaning are

¹²¹Rutherford, p. 90.

often limited to attitudes or general impressions.

Understood in this sense, the poem is largely a mental dialogue during which Manfred undermines four general myths of consolation. These myths are that human consolation can be achieved through fellowship, love, nature, or religion. In his conversations with the spirits and with the human characters, Manfred examines each of these attitudes and finds it wanting. In disavowing fellowship, love, and nature, Manfred refuses the consolation of Romanticism. In forsaking religion, he rejects the consolation of Christianity. What remains, once Manfred has thrown off these false consolations, is the single true consolation, if one can call it that, that his intellect has accepted an honest, if ironic, view of reality.

Manfred's parting imprecations to the spirit who would damn him are most important:

The mind which is immortal makes itself
 Requital for its good or evil thoughts,
 Is its own origin of ill and end,
 And its own place and time; its innate sense,
 When stripp'd of this mortality, derives
 No colour from the fleeting things without,
 But is absorb'd in sufferance or in joy,
 Born from the knowledge of its own desert.
 (III, iv, 389-96)

These all but dying words of Manfred are not so much a celebration of individuality, for he has just described the misery of his existence: "I bear within/ A torture which could nothing gain from thine" (III, iv, 387-88). They represent, instead, an attitude about the utter alienation of the individual, a fact of life which only the great mind can

accept. Even Manfred himself can accept this only after he has rejected each of the myths referred to above.

The first of these myths, the myth of fellowship, is represented in Manfred's meeting with the chamois hunter. Manfred recoils from a proffered cup of wine, because he sees blood on the rim of the cup:

I say 't is blood--my blood! the pure warm stream
Which ran in the veins of my fathers, and in ours
When we were in our youth, and had one heart,
And loved each other as we should not love,
And this was shed. . .

(II, i, 24-28)

The reference to an unholy love could, as some critics would have it, be a reference to incest; but it could as well be a reference to the disillusion inherent in all forms of human fellowship. If this is the case, Gleckner's remark that the dying Manfred is "reaching out the hand of humanity to the Abbot"¹²² is not entirely true. Instead, it is more like Manfred's parting reminder of the inadequacy of the holy man's belief. Manfred's last words, "Old man! 't is not so difficult to die" (III, iv, 411), have meaning for Manfred, but strike fear into the Abbot of St. Maurice. The Abbot's horror at Manfred's rejection of religious consolation, and not the hand of fellowship, is the subject of the scene.

Then, too, Manfred explodes the myth of love. The memory of Astarte tortures him at the first advent of the spirits. The fact that the star of Manfred's destiny assumes her form to torture him is significant here. Whatever the guilty facts of their relationship may have been,

¹²²Gleckner, p. 265.

Manfred associates their ill-starred love with his predestined fate. He expresses these feelings of guilt and helplessness before the inevitability of fate in the hall of the evil spirit Arimanes, where he would speak to her in the presence of the three destinies and Nemesis:

Speak to me! I have wander'd o'er the earth,
 And never found thy likeness--Speak to me!
 Look on the fiends around--they feel for me:
 I fear them not, and feel for thee alone.
 Speak to me! though it be in wrath;--but say--
 I reckon not what--but let me hear thee once--
 This once--once more!

(II, iv, 513-19)

Astarte's reaction is neither love nor rejection, but, rather, the prophecy that the next day will end his despair. This apparent rejection by Astarte is something of a liberation for Manfred. He no longer suffers from his unspecified sense of guilt, nor does he, apparently, anticipate a "Romantic" reunion with Astarte in death. Manfred does not mention Astarte from this point on. His dying concerns are a statement of the inviolability of his mind, and not the thoughts of the beloved.

The romantic myth of nature is also exploded in Manfred. The spirits of the four elements cannot offer Manfred the forgetfulness and oblivion which he desires of them: "It is not in our essence, in our skill" (I, i, 147). The Witch of the Alps, with whom Manfred shares a momentary vision of the magnificence of nature, demands eternal submission of Manfred: "but if thou/ Wilt swear obedience to my will, and do/ My bidding, it may help thee to thy wishes" (II, ii, 249-51).

The next myth which Manfred finds wanting, because it would demand submission of him, is that of religion. In Act II, the chamois

hunter recommends him to the "aid of holy men, and heavenly patience", but Manfred rejects the suggestion as unreal: "that word was made/ For brutes of burthen, not for birds of prey" (II, i, 34-36). The Abbot of St. Maurice repeats the same exhortation in a famous scene in Act II. Manfred's reply is to reject the Abbot's proffered consolation as useless: "there is no future pang/ Can deal that justice on the self-condemn'd/ He deals on his own soul" (III, i, 76-78). But Manfred's rejection of the Abbot does not imply any sort of belief in reverse of the efficacy of the holy man's powers. That the poem is not concerned with schemes of good versus evil is made evident immediately after, when Manfred, and not the Abbot, repulses the diabolic spirit. Abbot and evil spirit are both rejected because the drama depicts not a moral problem, but a philosophical one.

Manfred's final declaration of independence comes once he has exploded the last of the myths that men create for themselves in order not to face Manfred's view of reality. To borrow Lionel Trilling's remark on Oedipus Rex, Manfred "is calculated to disturb us in our deepest and most private emotions, for most of us live with the sense of a guilty secret, although what the secret is about we do not know."¹²³ Byron's drama is something of a ritual exorcism during which a man objectifies each of the terrors and the illusions which haunt him, and, by so doing, rids himself of them. But one's feeling at the end of

¹²³Lionel Trilling, The Experience of Literature: Drama (New York, 1967), p. 39.

Manfred is irony, instead of resolution--and such is the reaction typical of Gothicism of sensibility. Manfred does live up to the meaning of his name. At the end of the drama he literally does become man freed--but freed to a vision of reality so terrifying that it must necessarily cause him to die.

The next example of Gothicism of sensibility is a further proof that Gothicism is an extremely flexible genre. Sir Walter Scott's Bride of Lammermoor (1819) is a Gothic novel whose themes are typical of those of Scott, although the narrative itself is different from his others. The Bride of Lammermoor also challenges the easy (and therefore inept) descriptions and categorizations that are often hastily made of Scott.

Francis R. Hart addresses himself to the complex problem of these generalizations about Scott ('If Scott differed sharply from 'the typical Romantic writer,' who is he?', asks Hart.),¹²⁴ but offers no normative solution to the problem--probably because there is no solution. But if the complexities of Scott's art make categorization impossible, The Bride of Lammermoor can at least be described as characteristic of the larger thematic concerns in the body of his work. Thus Prof. Hart describes The Bride of Lammermoor in a section entitled "The Falls and Survivals of Ancient Houses". This section discusses the novel in its thematic relationship to The Antiquary, Guy Mannering, St. Ronan's Well, The Pirate, The Surgeon's Daughter, and

¹²⁴Francis R. Hart, Scott's Novels: The Plotting of Historic Survival (Charlottesville, Va., 1966), pp. 3 ff.

The Black Dwarf.

The fact that The Bride of Lammermoor differs from Scott's other novels has also long been recognized. "This plot, indeed the whole narrative, reveals a sense of construction unusual with Scott, and the tone and texture are suffused with a glamour that characterizes the tragic Border ballads,"¹²⁵ says one critic. Other critics have tended to describe the uniqueness of the novel by establishing comparisons with the drama. Thus, the New Monthly critic thought it "almost as single and harmonious as a tragedy of Sophocles."¹²⁶ In 1847, Thomas Shaw suggested that certain scenes, like the appearance of the three hags at Lucy's marriage, "might have been conceived by Ford, by Middleton, or by the somber genius of Webster."¹²⁷ Both Emerson¹²⁸ and Gladstone¹²⁹ compared the novel to the tragedies of Aeschylus. Of course, comparisons such as these are at best inept and Scott himself suggested to the actor Daniel Terry that the story would not lend itself to dramatization.¹³⁰ (Is the success of Lucia di Lammermoor, one then wonders, due more to Donizetti's music than to Salvatore Cammarano's

¹²⁵Sir Walter Scott, The Bride of Lammermoor, pref. W. M. Parker (New York, 1906; repr. 1966), p. VI.

¹²⁶Ibid.

¹²⁷Thomas B. Shaw, Outlines of English Literature (London, 1847) p. 328.

¹²⁸Scott, Bride, p. VI.

¹²⁹Quoted in Sir Henry Craik "The Bride of Lammermoor" Blackwood's Magazine vol CLXII (1897), p. 853.

¹³⁰Scott, Bride, p. VIII.

libretto?) Bulwer Lytton also recognized the distinction between drama and prose, in describing Scott as "an artist of Narrative and not of the Drama."¹³¹ But whether one accepts the opinion of the enthusiasts or of the more precise critics, both groups seem to suggest that The Bride of Lammermoor is different from the rest of Scott's novels.

Part of this difference resides in the fact that Scott attempted only two Gothic novels: this and The Black Dwarf (1816), which is generally regarded as a failure. The description of The Bride of Lammermoor as a Gothic novel is something of a critical commonplace.¹³² The Gothic elements in the story are obvious and well developed. The imperious Lady Ashton, whose unyielding will first terrifies her daughter and then drives her mad, is Scott's version of the Gothic villain. Like Scott's other Gothic villain, the Lady of Branksome tower in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," Lady Ashton is one of the few female evil figures in Gothic fiction. The Gothic castle in The Bride of Lammermoor exists in two versions: Ravenswood's sea-beaten tower, Wolf's Crag, and, to a lesser extent, the bridal suite in Ravenswood Castle, where Lucy stabs Bucklaw. Besides this, the Mermaid Fountain, the traditionally fateful spot for his family where Ravenswood sees the apparition of the direful spirit of blind Alice, could also be argued for

¹³¹Lord Edward Bulwer Lytton, Caxtoniana, Miscellaneous Prose Works (1863-1868), vol III, p. 473.

¹³²Cf. Robert G. Gordon "The Bride of Lammermoor: A Novel of Tory Pessimism," Nineteenth Century Fiction, XII (1957-58), III, n., for a list of critics who have described the novel as Gothic.

as a variant of the haunted Gothic castle. The victims of the persecution associated with these various Gothic "castles" are, of course, Lucy Ashton and Edgar, the Master of Ravenswood.

The beginning of this description, we remember, suggested that its conception as a Gothic novel indicates something of the flexibility of Gothicism as a genre. Scott, like Godwin and the Romantics, finds Gothicism a congenial form to express his "typical" themes. In this case--if one can assign a general theme to Scott's novels--that theme is the historical and political fortunes of Scotland. In The Bride of Lammermoor, says Robert C. Gordon, it is the pessimistic Tory view that Scotland suffered an irreversable downfall after the union with England. "The realm (was) in a condition of social disintegration, and its symptoms (werē) the decline of ancient families, the corruption of justice, and a vicious political factionalism!"¹³³

But another question remains, the reason for classifying the novel as Gothicism of sensibility. The reasons suggest something of the complexity of Scott as a literary figure. Chapter II, we remember, described Scott's attempt, late in life, to rationalize or to explain away the supernaturalism in the poems and ballads he wrote as a youth. In light of this, Scott was described as an Enlightenment Gothicism. The Bride of Lammermoor, however, indicates that he was more than just this. Scott's novel is, as we shall see, an example of pure Gothicism of sensibility.

¹³³Ibid., p. 113.

Coleridge's reaction to The Bride of Lammermoor was a combination of praise and blame. On the one hand, he called the novel a "wretched abortion" while, on the other, he said it recalled to him Greek tragic fate.¹³⁴ Coleridge, in this instance, is only half right, for the novel is far from stillborn. His comment on tragic fate is interesting, however, because Francis Hart describes the novel precisely in terms of fate:

What the Master stands for is tragically at war with his hereditary identity. . . His description marks him as of Gothic lineage, afflicted and alienated by "some secret sorrow, or the brooding spirit of some moody passion". But he is no Gothic type. He denies his own fatality.¹³⁵

Ravenswood, like Oedipus, denies his own fatality, only to meet it head on. (One wonders, at this point, if the earlier quoted references to Sophocles and Aeschylus had more substance than was first apparent.)

The fatalism of the novel seems to argue for the apparent supernatural, which his Enlightenment prejudice argues against. In the novel, Ravenswood's Enlightenment rationalism renders him vulnerable. Thus, he rages against the warnings of blind Alice and refuses to see any meaning in the ominous killing of the raven whose blood stains Lucy's dress. When he tries to convince himself that his vision of Alice's ghost at Mermaid Fountain is an illusion, Ravenswood prepares for the prediction of Lucy's death by the hag-chorus at her

¹³⁴Quoted in Scott, Bride, p. VI.

¹³⁵Hart, pp. 314-315.

wedding procession.

Much of the effect of the novel, as Prof. Hart points out, lies in its use of the descriptive mode of Gothic fiction. This technique, which we have seen Mrs. Radcliffe use so well, allows for interior or psychological narration.

This in turn makes for sustained manipulation of point of view. . . . Thus, while Ravenswood is internalized sufficiently to show us his tragic inward struggle between fatal hereditary role and enlightened self, his most memorable function in the book is as an ambivalent force or symbol in the timid, anxious machinations of Ashton and Lucy. 136

This exploitation of the Gothic technique of interiorization, so that we can share many perceptions of the same character or situation, produces an interesting result: we share, at once, several versions of "truth". Everything, even conflicting "truths" are at the same time true. One of the best examples of this is the contrast between the espoused rationalism of the narrative voice, the fictitious Peter Pattieson, and the fatalism that becomes inevitable in the novel:

And such is the complex, bitterly ironic inevitability of the catastrophe that the reader experiences throughout--whatever "enlightenment" he supposes he shares with the narrator: a growing sense of fatality, at once historic, natural, and spiritual. 137

The result of this is the ambiguity, the uncertainty, and the irony that characterize the world-view of Gothicism of sensibility.

¹³⁶Ibid., p. 328.

¹³⁷Ibid., p. 326.

The novel concludes with a description of the haughty Lady Ashton, the one who was an instrument of the tragedy.

That she might internally feel compunction, and reconcile herself with Heaven whom she had offended, we will not, and we dare not, deny; but to those around her, she did not evince the slightest symptom either of repentance or remorse. In all external appearance, she bore the same bold, haughty, unbending character, which she had displayed before these unhappy events. A splendid marble monument records her name, titles, and virtues, while her victims remain undistinguished by tomb or epitaph.¹³⁸

Two points about the description are noteworthy. First, it expresses doubt. The novelist who has been reading hearts throughout the story is forced to express his human fallibility at the end. Second, the final sentence of The Bride of Lammermoor compounds this description of ignorance with a remark of crowning irony. "Is there justice in this world" implies Scott, the Gothicism of sensibility? "Is there justice at all?"

The final example of Gothicism of sensibility that this chapter will discuss is Charles Robert Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer. The novel is clearly indebted to the earlier Gothic novels of Walpole, Ann Radcliffe, "Monk" Lewis, and William Godwin. It borrows, besides, from Dr. Faustus of Marlowe and from the first part of Goethe's Faust. Melmoth the Wanderer exploits an extraordinary number of the

¹³⁸Scott, pp. 333-34.

conventions of the Gothic novel,¹³⁹ but does so without creating confusion. For this Varma calls it "the apotheosis of the whole cult."¹⁴⁰ William Axton describes the novel in similar terms, calling it "the last and greatest expression of its kind."¹⁴¹

This kind of praise represents something of a change in attitude, for the work of Maturin did not enjoy much critical approval in the early nineteenth-century. His first Gothic novel, The Fatal Revenge, or The Family of Montorio (1807; pseud. Dennis Jasper Murphy) shares with Mrs. Radcliffe the wrath of an article in the Quarterly Review of May, 1810 about the "Explained Supernatural".¹⁴² Maturin's Gothic drama, Bertram, or The Castle of St. Aldobrand (1816) provokes Coleridge's displeasure in an act by act analysis that takes up most of chapter XXIII of the Biographia Literaria. The play concludes, says Coleridge,

¹³⁹Cf. Varma's description of Melmoth the Wanderer: "All the machinery of the Gothic school is here: the mysterious portrait, the decaying parchment, ruins and storms, Inquisition and convent cells, entombed lovers, dead bride and insane bridegroom, idyllic nature in the Indian islands..." He also quotes from The Edinburgh Review (July, 1821) a section describing the use of all the Gothic conventions in the novel. p. 167.

¹⁴⁰Ibid. Summers mentions the novel only four times, and then only in passing. The reason for his lack of enthusiasm for Melmoth the Wanderer might well be his disapproval of Maturin's anti-Catholic prejudice. "Maturin, in Melmoth the Wanderer, 1820, has some extremely detailed and lurid descriptions of what he conceived monastic life in Spain might be..." remarks Summers. "But then Maturin was of French Protestant stock, he was curate of S. Peter's Dublin, from which pulpit he preached Six Sermons on the Errors of the Roman Catholic Church." The Gothic Quest, p. 193.

¹⁴¹Maturin, Melmoth, ed. Axton, p. xii.

¹⁴²Quoted in Summers, p. 140.

"as it began, viz. in a superfetation of blasphemy upon nonsense. . ."¹⁴³

The generally averse reaction to Melmoth the Wanderer is noted in Allan Cunningham's Biographical and Critical History of the Literature of the Last Fifty Years (1833): "'Melmoth' is not altogether so mad as some reviewers pronounced it, yet sufficiently so to excuse thousands for closing their eyes against the poetic invention and buoyancy of fancy everywhere visible."¹⁴⁴

But while the critics of the last century tended to be limited by a moralizing approach to literature, those of the present century have discussed other aspects of the novel. One of these has invariably been the complex narrative structure of Melmoth The Wanderer. Although it is set in early nineteenth-century Ireland, the novel moves through one hundred and fifty years and several narrative voices. The narrative framework is associated with John Melmoth, a descendent of the Wanderer and heir of the Melmoth ancestral mansion in Ireland. John's function in the novel is to investigate and finally to discover the history of the Wanderer.

The first of the narrative threads is oral: from Biddy Brannigan, a household servant, he learns of the cruelty of the Melmoth family under Cromwell. The next is an aged document, composed by an Englishman named Stanton, which describes the appearances of the original John Melmoth after his supposed death. When Stanton is

¹⁴³Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Biographic Literaria, ed. J. Shawcross (Oxford, 1907; 1965 repr.), II, 206.

¹⁴⁴Quoted in Moulton (1963 repr.), p. 767.

unjustly confined in Bedlam, the Wanderer appears to him, offering him his freedom in return for his soul. The scenes of suffering and degradation in Bedlam and the fact of Stanton's refusal of Melmoth's offer establish a pattern that is several times repeated in the novel.

After a nighttime visit from the Wanderer, John Melmoth helps to rescue a shipwrecked Spaniard, Alonzo Monçada. The narrative structure of the rest of the novel is associated with Alonzo. Alonzo's tales of the Wanderer form an intricate series of interconnected narratives--"a system of interpolated tales nested one within another like the boxes of a child's toy..."¹⁴⁵ Alonzo describes his own entrapment in the prisons of the Inquisition, after an unsuccessful attempt at escape from the monastic life which his family had destined for him. As he had in Stanton's prison, the Wanderer appears to Alonzo to offer him freedom for his soul. Again, the offer is refused.

When Alonzo escapes to the protection of the old Jewish doctor, Adonijah, this becomes the basis of three other intricately narrated tales of entrapment and a diabolic offer which is rejected. The old patriarch's manuscript, "Tale of the Indians," is interpolated in Alonzo's tale and brings the novel further back to an unspecified narrative time. The "Tale" is the tragic story of Immalée, an innocent whom the Wanderer would tempt to the diabolic bargain. Instead, the pair fall in love. Back in Spain, the Wanderer tricks Immalée into a

¹⁴⁵Maturin, p. XV.

Satanic marriage ceremony and impregnates her with a half-devil child.

The conscience-stricken Wanderer tries to warn Immalée's father of the danger to his daughter by narrating two manuscript stories similar in construction to earlier ones in the novel. "The Tale of Guzman's Family," and "The Lover's Tale" describe two people who resisted the Wanderer's temptation. The two tales are an indication of the complex narrative structure of Melmoth the Wanderer. The tales occur within Adonijah's "Tale of the Indians," all of which is itself repeated by Alonzo in his own oral autobiography, repeated to John Melmoth in the novel which we are reading.

The girl's father procrastinates, however. When he brings his daughter a husband, the Wanderer exposes their liason. Turned over to the Inquisition, Immalée gives birth to a child, who dies soon after. The dying Immalée--now called Isidora--reveals that the Wanderer has appeared to her, to make his proposition, and that she has refused it. Her last words, however, describe her love for the Wanderer: "'Paradise!' uttered Isidora, with her last breath--'Will he be there!'"¹⁴⁶

The novel concludes in two short chapters, which bring the story back to the events of the present. At the end of Alonzo's narrative, the Wanderer appears, to announce that his allotted one hundred and fifty years are finished, without his having damned a single soul. Left alone to meet his destiny, the Wanderer suffers through a dream which is a

¹⁴⁶Ibid., p. 405.

parody of the previous tales of entrapment and resisted temptation. During the night, the sounds of a fierce struggle are heard in the Wanderer's room. In the morning, John Melmoth and Alonzo Monçada trace his path to the edge of a cliff overlooking the sea: "Melmoth and Monçada exchanged looks of silent and unutterable horror, and returned slowly home."¹⁴⁷

The functions of such a complex narrative structure as this are several. One reason was Maturin's own need, as a cleric, to protect his reputation.¹⁴⁸ Thus, "...the deliberate variation in point of view and the multiplicity of narrators protect the author, who had already suffered by a false identification with the blasphemous opinions of his characters, from the pious reader's imputation of heterodoxy."¹⁴⁹ Axton notes, for example, that the tales are "analogous in theme and pattern of action: each deals in differing terms with social or religious sadism."¹⁵⁰ The reiteration of these themes from different narrative points of view and in different periods of time suggests that social and religious sadism are melancholy, but universal, facts of human life.

Understood in these terms, the tales, locked one within the

¹⁴⁷Ibid., p. 412.

¹⁴⁸The novelist seems to be paying lip-service to this need, when, in his preface, he states: "Did my profession furnish me with the means of subsistence, I should hold myself culpable indeed in having recourse to any other, but--am I allowed the choice?" Maturin, p. 3.

¹⁴⁹Maturin, p. XV.

¹⁵⁰Ibi d.

other, could be a brilliant example of the relationship of form to function. That is, the tales describe a series of entrapments: Stanton is locked up within the confines of Bedlam, Alonzo in a monastery and in the prisons of the Inquisition, Walberg and Elinor Morton in prison, and Immalée-Isidora in the Inquisition's prisons. All these tales are told to young John Melmoth, who is himself a prisoner of his ancestral home and the terrible secret of the Wanderer--a secret which he must pursue until it is revealed to him. The physical shape of the novel thus reinforces the attitude which the novel expresses, that the cosmos itself is a never-ending series of entrapments, one opening up within another.

Maturin's variations on the conventions of Gothicism further reinforce this connection of form and function. The Gothic villain is, of course, the Wanderer himself. But the Gothic "castles" and the pursued innocents in the novel are varied. The predominant "castle" is the ancestral home of the Melmoths, in which the story takes place. There are, however, several other variations on this standard Gothic property in the novel: Bedlam, the Inquisitional prisons, the subterranean caverns of Adonijah, the other prisons. So, too, the list of innocents includes several: Stanton, Alonzo, Walberg, Elinor Morton, Immalée, and John Melmoth. If one theme of the novel is the attitude that the cosmos can be terrifying for all, then this particular structuring of the novel also suggests that theme of Gothicism of sensibility. The tales of victims on several social levels, in various countries, and at different historical periods make the application of the ironic attitudes of Gothicism

of sensibility more universal.

The only problem with this interpretation is that, at the center of Maturin's narrative structure, is the story of the innocent and incorruptible Immalee'. Axton argues that in Immalee' the story offers a principle of regeneration which the Wanderer rejects through his own perverted weaknesses:

The tragic irony in Melmoth the Wanderer as in Marlowe's Faustus arises from the fact that the protagonist is damned by his own inability to perceive the existence of ultimate goodness which is manifest all about him. Submerged in and by his own despair, Melmoth cannot see the little good that redeems all in the unselfish love of Walberg, Elinor, and Immalee and in the moral order implied by their unshaken faith.¹⁵¹

One's first objection to Axton's interpretation might well be his reading of Marlowe's Faustus. It seems to me an error to read that play as an Elizabethan example of the morality play, as if its assumptions about the world order are those of Everyman. If the act of selling his soul to the devil shuts Faustus off from any hope of divine grace, then the playwright is suggesting a rather terrifying view of divine justice. Marlowe's Faustus is a sympathetic character who regrets his choice but is still damned by an unrelenting Providence. His last speech suggests the special kind of despair that results:

O, I'll leap up to my God! Who pulls me down?
See, see where Christ's blood streams in the
firmament!
One drop would save my soul--half a drop:
ah, my Christ!

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. XVIII.

Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ!
 Yet will I call on him: O spare me, Lucifer!--
 Where is it now? 'T is gone; and see where God
 Stretcheth out his arm, and bends his ireful
 brows!
 Mountains and hills, come, come and fall on me,
 And hide me from the heavy wrath of God!¹⁵²

This despair at divine mercy withheld is made even clearer in the next few lines of Faustus' speech:

O God!
 If thou wilt not have mercy on my soul,
 Yet for Christ's sake whose blood hath ransom'd me,
 Impose some end to my incessant pain!¹⁵³

No end of that pain is, of course, available, no matter how much Faustus would repent.

The reason for this attention to Marlowe's hero is that the situation of Maturin's Wanderer is largely the same as Dr. Faustus's. Locked into a choice made one hundred and fifty years before, the Wanderer is incapable of extricating himself, no matter how much he desires redemption. One reason for this seems to be a divine Providence that offers him no viable means of regeneration and redemption. The interlude on the Indian island and the love of Immalée seem, at one point to offer some hope, but that hope is foredoomed when Immalée is forced to return to society.

The Christian ideals which Immalée defends can be lived only in isolation from society. Thus, the Wanderer's "temptation" of

¹⁵²Christopher Marlowe, The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus, XIV, 136-144 in English Drama: 1580-1642, ed. C. F. Tucker Brooke and Nathaniel Burton Paradise (Boston, 1933), 190.

¹⁵³Ibid., XIV, 156-159.

Immalee on the island is more a recital of history than an invitation to sin. His ironic contrast between the benevolent ideals of Christianity and the cruel details of Christian history suggests that religious idealism is a practical impossibility. The sense of despair that he evokes is reinforced by an extraordinary catalogue of human ills: "the colonial exploitation of subject peoples, the corruptions of urban life, economic and legal injustice, the tyranny of kings and oligarchs--all miseries of human invention piled atop the natural evils of disease, famine, and catastrophe to which mortal flesh is doomed."¹⁵⁴ Immalee and the Wanderer's other victims might achieve some sort of salvation in spite of all this misery, but it seems to me that the real basis of a projected divine order should be in its effect on the Wanderer. That character, one of the promethean figures who so fascinated the imagination of the age, is presented as a thoroughly sympathetic person. He is trapped by the terms of his bargain and by the condition of a world that leads him to nothing but despair. Like Byron's gloomy heroes, he is impelled to a kind of over-reaching that dooms him to failure and damnation.

Because of the Wanderer's condition, it seems difficult to describe the novel as positing an ultimately benevolent world-view. Perhaps that cosmos would be better described as benevolent only to those it does not compel to seek beyond it. But for those who are inexplicably singled out--like Marlowe's Dr. Faustus, the hero of

¹⁵⁴Maturin, p. XVII.

Goethe's Faust Part I, and Melmoth the Wanderer--the cosmos is ironic and cruel. The Romantic world of ultimate certainties was described only in Faust, Part II when Goethe himself became a convinced Romantic. Melmoth the Wanderer had to await a similar conclusion in Balzac's Melmoth reconlié. But Maturin's novel, the greatest of its genre, describes a world that offers salvation and damnation with no particular concern for victims.

Gothicism of sensibility, then, can best be understood in terms of its ironic view of the cosmos. But, as the beginning of the chapter indicated, that Gothicism posits a universe incapable of any kind of certainty. Therefore, the causes of cosmic disorder differ in each novel. Mrs. Radcliffe suggests the terrors of the human mind. "Monk" Lewis sees the disorder in the sexual repressions that inevitably plague man. Godwin's ironic universe is the product of the never-ending forms of political repressions. Byron's Weltschmerz is caused by what he recognizes as a philosophical disorder that deprives the world of coherent meaning. Maturin--and this is probably why he is the greatest of the Gothicismists of sensibility--describes a universe whose disorders are psychological, sexual, political, and philosophical. By a brilliant use of narrative technique, he exploits each attitude and creates the most chillingly ironic world view in all Gothicism of sensibility.

CHAPTER 4: ROMANTIC GOTHICISM

Just as Enlightenment Gothicism and Gothicism of sensibility have been described in terms of a world-view, in terms of the attitudes they imply about ultimate order and justice within the cosmos, the same will be true of romantic Gothicism. This chapter will argue that this last form of Gothicism describes a world of justice and resolution. But unlike Enlightenment Gothicism, which sees that resolution as capable of realization in the present world, romantic Gothicism suggests fulfillment and resolution in some "other" world.

The "other-wordly" fulfillment of romantic Gothicism must be described in terms of an understanding of the phenomenon of Romanticism itself. Such an understanding, as Edwin Berry Burgum has pointed out, is far from an easy thing. "He who seeks to define Romanticism," remarks Burgum, "is entering a hazardous occupation which has claimed many victims."¹ The difficulty in forming such a definition was indicated by Ernest Bernbaum's long list of definitions of Romanticism in Guide Through the Romantic Movement (1930, 2nd ed. New York, 1949). Jacques Barzun has also indicated that difficulty in Classic, Romantic, and Modern (1943, rev. ed. Garden City, New

¹Edwin Berry Burgum, "Romanticism," Kenyon Review, III, 4 (Autumn, 1941), 479.

York, 1961). The casebook approach to Romanticism has also indicated the range of critical opinion on the subject, most notably in Romanticism: Points of View, edited by Robert F. Gleckner and Gerald E. Enscoe (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1962) and in Romanticism: Definition, Explanation, and Evaluation, edited by John B. Halsted (Boston, 1965).

But while the definitions of Romanticism have proliferated, modern criticism has come to certain general and appreciative ideas about Romanticism. This is in contrast to the negative, anti-Romanticism of an earlier generation of critics. Irving Babbitt's Rousseau and Romanticism (Boston, 1919) was a statement of the "New Humanism" that equated the advent of Romanticism with the decay in the value and quality of life. T. E. Hulme's Speculations (London, 1924; 2nd ed. New York, 1936) was a further examination of the classic versus romantic theme,² with obvious disapproval of Romanticism. The anti-Romanticism of the "new critics" was demonstrated in Cleanth Brooks's charge, in Modern Poetry and the Tradition (Chapel Hill, 1939), that Romanticism merely substituted subjectivism for objectivism, instead of fusing the two, as the Elizabethans are supposed to have done.

But while Babbitt, Hulme, and Brooks were continuing the fashionable habit of the post-Victorian critics of blaming the historical ills of Europe on the supposed excesses of Romanticism, a counter movement was taking place. The criticism of the past fifty years had

²Walter Jackson Bate's From Classic to Romantic: Premises of Taste in Eighteenth Century England (Cambridge, Mass., 1946) is perhaps the best known treatment of the theme.

produced a new realization of the coherence of the Romantic movement. A result of this has been a new awareness of the tremendous contribution of Romanticism in the history of Western thought.

The understanding of the Romantic movement as a coherent unit came about largely in reaction to A. O. Lovejoy's lecture, "On the Discrimination of Romanticism," which he published in 1924.³ In that well-known article, Lovejoy described Romanticism as a fearfully complex phenomenon that differed in different periods and countries. Lovejoy's point was that Romanticism is perhaps confusing as a term, since it can be used to describe conflicting ideas, practices, and attitudes. That Lovejoy modified these ideas is apparent in the last three chapters of The Great Chain of Being (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), as Morse Peckham has argued.⁴ Certainly Lovejoy seemed to indicate a changed point of view when, in 1941, he offered three criteria of Romanticism: organicism, dynamism and diversitarianism.⁵

Whether or not this indicates the reversal in Lovejoy's position that Peckham argues for, critics have tended to come to view Romanticism as a term and a movement about which one can formulate criteria and in which one can see certain ideas and attitudes at work. In 1949,

³A. O. Lovejoy, "On the Discrimination of Romanticisms" PMLA, XXXIX (1924), 229-253.

⁴Morse Peckham, "Toward a Theory of Romanticism," PMLA, LXVI (1951), quoted in Romanticism: Points of View ed. Robert F. Gleckner and Gerald E. Enscoe (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1962), 214 ff.

⁵A. O. Lovejoy, "The Meaning of Romanticism for the Historian of Ideas," Journal of the History of Ideas II (1941), 237-278.

for example, René Wellek wrote what he considered a reply to Lovejoy's 1924 article. Wellek's article, which inaugurated the periodical Comparative Literature, proposed that three ideas are at work in Romanticism and give the movement an identifiable coherence: the view of an organic nature, the view of imagination as creative and of poetry and prophecy, and a symbolist, and even mythic, conception of poetry.⁶ Peckham continued the tradition in 1951, in his aforementioned article, which attempted to reconcile Lovejoy and Wellek. He defined Romanticism as

the revolution in the European mind against thinking in terms of static mechanism and the redirection of the mind to thinking in terms of dynamic organicism. Its values are change, imperfection, growth, diversity, the creative imagination, the unconscious.⁷

In 1965, he altered this to a definition of Romanticism in terms of a breakup of the Enlightenment identification of the mind with nature. Romanticism asserts "the Self as the source of order, meaning, value, and identity."⁸ Peckham then described Romanticism in terms of role-playing and describes four stages or four types of roles played by the nineteenth-century Romantics: analogism, transcendentalism, objectism, and stylism.

⁶René Wellek, "The Concept of 'Romanticism' in Literary History," Comparative Literature, I (1949), 1-23, 147-172.

⁷Morse Peckham, p. 219. Peckham continued his discussion and revised his theories slightly in "Toward a Theory of Romanticism: II. Reconsiderations," Studies in Romanticism, I (1961), 1-8

⁸Romanticism: The Culture of the Nineteenth Century, ed. Morse Peckham (New York, 1965), p. 19.

Besides Lovejoy, Wellek, and Peckham, many other modern critics have argued for Romanticism as both a coherent and an intelligible literary term and historical process. Richard H. Fogle, Albert Gerard, R. A. Foakes, Earl R. Wasserman and M. H. Abrams are but a few of the many who have disagreed with Lovejoy's original contentions.⁹

This tendency to recognize certain principles at work in Romanticism has also produced somewhat general critical agreement about the romantic world order. Like its predecessors, romantic Gothicism can best be understood in its assumptions about ultimate order and justice in the cosmos. What will become apparent, however, is that the bases of the benevolent world-view in Romanticism differ from the bases of the benevolent Enlightenment world-view.

In order to understand these attitudes about ultimate order in Romanticism, however, one must recognize its sources. Common to the thinking of the whole movement was an awareness in the Romantic mind of a conflict between two worlds:

One was the world of ideal truth, goodness, and beauty; this was eternal, infinite, and absolutely real. The other was the world of actual appearances, which to common sense was the only world, and which to the

⁹Richard H. Fogle, "Romantic Bards and Metaphysical Reviewers," *ELH*, XII (1945), 221-250; Albert Gerard, "On the Logic of Romanticism," *Essays in Criticism* VII (1957), 262-273, trans. George Watson; R. A. Foakes, *The Romantic Assertion* (New Haven, 1958); Earl R. Wasserman, *The Subtler Language* (Baltimore, 1959); M. H. Abrams, "English Romanticism: The Spirit of the Age," *Romanticism Reconsidered*, ed. Northrop Frye (New York, 1963, 26-72.

idealists was so obviously full of untruth, ignorance, evil, ugliness, and wretchedness, as to compel him to dejection and indignation.¹⁰

This was made more painful by the innate Romantic striving for fulfillment: the romantic was characterized by an aspiration "to a certain fullness of being, to a certain purity of spiritual life, to harmony and unity, a yearning toward the absolute, usually known by its German name Sehnsucht."¹¹ His was, to borrow the title of David Perkins's brilliant study of Romanticism, the quest for permanence: "applying equally to the search for the objectively permanent and also to states of mind--confidence, calm, security, and the like..."¹²

When these conflicts arose in the Enlightenment, they were resolved by an appeal to nature; the artist sought meaning "through the isomorphism, or structural identity, of mind and nature."¹³ The Age of Sensibility, on the other hand, saw in these conflicts evidence of the fundamental and irreconcilable struggle between man and nature. While Romanticism rejected the ironic view of the Age of Sensibility, it also rejected the false consolations of the Enlightenment view. Romanticism, instead, sought its resolution, its system of order, through a new ontology and a new aesthetic.

The new relationship of being was made necessary by the

¹⁰Ernest Bernbaum, "The Romantic Movement," in Gleckner and Enscoe, pp. 90-91.

¹¹Gerard, in Gleckner and Enscoe, p. 230.

¹²David Perkins, The Quest for Permanence (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), p. 3.

¹³Peckham, Romanticism, p. 18.

political and the philosophical upheavals of the time. The political revolutions of the century, of which the French Revolution was only the most prominent, so undermined the old concept of the ideal order in the world, that the idea of the great chain of being lost its usefulness even as a myth. "The old concept of an external order in the universe had gone, and was replaced by various ideas, which, like Godwin's theory, postulated the possibility of the self-fulfillment of the individual man as an ideal--the natural corollary to democracy."¹⁴

The philosophy of the age, which is perhaps best represented in Kant, also rejected the easy solutions of the Enlightenment. Kant was

the first great philosopher to realize that the principle questions of philosophy are neither those for which there is a clear method of solution by empirical investigation... nor those to be answered by deduction from self-evident or a priori axioms...¹⁵

As in the political failures of the age, the breakdown of British Empiricism under the influence of Kant, led, in the work of the romantics, to the establishment of a concept of being in terms of the individual:

The Romantic poets wrote for a society which could no longer be measured against a concept of order and degree, or by the standards of a mode of government fixed in a religious dispensation, one which was beginning to postulate the notion of self-government, of the equality of men. The destruction of an external

¹⁴Foakes, in Gleckner and Enscoe, p. 240.

¹⁵The Age of Enlightenment, ed. Sir Isaiah Berlin (New York, 1956), p. 24.

frame of reference led them to seek principle of order within the individual. . .¹⁶

This new ontology produced a new aesthetic. Once the principle of being was located within the poet, its seat of operation was recognized in the imagination. The romantics understood the imagination as "not merely the power of visualization. . . nor even the inventive power of the poet. . . but a creative power by which the mind 'gains insight into reality, reads nature as a symbol of something behind or within nature not ordinarily perceived.' "¹⁷ In romantic aesthetics, then, the imagination functions to describe relationships and to perceive order not ordinarily understood. "Imagination is thus an organ of knowledge which transforms objects, sees through them, even if they are only the 'meanest flower' or the humble ass, an idiot boy, or simply a child: 'mighty prophet, seer blest.' "¹⁸

The Gothic literature inspired by the romantic ontology and aesthetic naturally reflects the ultimately benevolent world-view of Romanticism. That literature also reflects the premises peculiar to the romantic vision. Romantic Gothicism thus differs from Enlightenment Gothicism, with its ambiguous reaction to the supernatural and its exterior representation of character.

One characteristic of romantic Gothicism is the theme of the

¹⁶Foakes, p. 240.

¹⁷Wellek, in Gleckner and Enscoe, p. 202; quotation from I. A. Richards, Coleridge on Imagination (London, 1935), p. 145.

¹⁸Wellek, pp. 202-203.

conflict between the ideal and the actual--with implied resolution in the romantic "other" world. In Wordsworth's Gothic drama, The Borderers, murder and treachery become the basis, ultimately, for moral and psychological regeneration. In Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," nightmares and unconscious fears are resolved through an appeal to pity and result in an affirmation of an ultimate order beyond the flux of the purely temporal. Shelley's The Cenci describes the moral horror of a world that can corrupt an innocent and drive her to murder; but if Beatrice Cenci is a victim of a cruel society, Shelley suggests that "redemption" or "salvation" is available to her in an ideally conceived world beyond. This same scheme of temporal limitations and resolutions in the ideal operates in Mary Shelley's novel, Frankenstein. Keats's "La Belle Dame sans Merci" is a final example of the conflict. Keats expresses the romantic striving for permanence in the celebration of the ideal world of art and in the attempt to create perfect artifacts.

Another characteristic of romantic Gothicism--one that should have become obvious in the list of these examples--is the variety of expressions and resolutions of the conflict of ideal and real. In Enlightenment Gothicism, the conflict was inevitably resolved through the operation of man's reasoning powers and a reaffirmation of the identification of reasoning man with nature. The source of the change in romantic Gothicism is the new aesthetic of Romanticism, which celebrates the imagination as it expresses itself in each poet.

The resolution of conflicts in romantic Gothicism therefore resorts to a variety of solutions: in Wordsworth, the identification of the ego with nature; in Coleridge, the appeal to a new philosophy and a new psychology; in the Shelleys, the creation of a new social and political order; in Keats, the escape to the world of art.

A third characteristic of romantic Gothicism is the product of its benevolent world-view. In romantic Gothicism, the evil figures are described in sympathetic terms. In Gothicism of sensibility, this sympathy with the villain was the product of a need to examine motivation and psychological states. But that Gothicism describes its villains in ambiguous or sympathetic terms in order to reinforce its ironic attitudes about comic order. Such conclusions are impossible in romantic Gothicism, which offers various resolutions to the conflict between ideal and actual worlds.

On the other hand, Enlightenment Gothicism, which does offer principles of resolution, is also incapable of such sympathy with evil figures. The difference lies in that the principles of ultimate order in romantic Gothicism are not merely based on Christian moral concepts of good versus evil, as they are in Enlightenment Gothicism. Walpole's *Manfred* and Clara Reeve's *Count Lovel* are products of a world-view that judges men according to strict and objective moral standards. The Enlightenment avoidance of interiorization of character discourages a concern with the complexities of motivation and thus results in a structuring of character in terms of moral extremes.

Although it does accept a moral order analogous to the Christian system, romantic Gothicism--as does romantic literature--tends to subordinate moral judgment to the principle of an environmentalist explanation of evil. Evil is explained, not in terms of inborn and internal impulses but of external stimuli. Implicit in Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality" is the romantic rejection of the concept of original sin:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
 The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar:
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home:
(V, 58-65)¹⁹

The result of this more benevolent attitude toward evil is a more benevolent concept of man. Its more immediate affect in romantic Gothicism is the creation of a generation of Gothic villains, whose actions are understandable. For example, Mary Shelley describes the evil wrought by Dr. Frankenstein's creature as the product of rejection by everyone, including its creator. Thus, Frankenstein's monster berates the doctor:

"Remember that I am thy creature; I ought to be thy Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed. Everywhere

¹⁹William Wordsworth, "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood," The Poetical Works of Wordsworth ed. Thomas Hutchinson, rev. ed. Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford, 1904; repr. 1939), p. 588. All future references will be to this edition.

I see bliss, from which I alone am irrevocably excluded. I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous."²⁰

Often, these evil figures are given the opportunity of repentance and fulfillment. After he has been tricked into killing the woman he loves, Marmaduke, in Wordsworth's The Borderers, goes off to seek expiation for his sin. Coleridge's Ancient Mariner enjoys a moment of divine grace on his spirit-haunted ship and his retelling the tale of his adventures is his means of expiation. Even Heathcliff, Emily Brontë's version of the romantic Gothic villain, in a later generation, is released at death to some kind of transcendent fulfillment.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty in making generalizations about romantic Gothicism is created by the variety of forms it takes and ideas it expresses. Certainly, the romantic doctrine of individualism is demonstrated in the variety of romantic Gothicism.

Wordsworth's Gothicism, for example, tends to modify and even to neutralize the function of the Gothic villain. The only identifiable villain in Wordsworth's Gothic work is Oswald, the Iago-like figure of The Borderers (1795-1796), the closet drama which the poet composed at the age of twenty-six. In this extended study of the criminal mind Wordsworth modifies the typical clichéd treatment of the villain as the personification of evil. In his 1797 preface to the drama, Wordsworth emphasizes that the superstition which Oswald uses with such devastating

²⁰Mary Shelley Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus, introd. Robert Donald Spector (New York, 1967), p. 84.

effect is something that can affect every man:

There is a kind of superstition which makes us shudder when we find moral sentiments to which we attach a sacred importance applied to vicious purposes . . . This superstition of which I have spoken is not without its use; yet it appears to be one great source of our vices; it is our constant engine in seducing each other.²¹

In other words, Wordsworth makes his villain less villainous by describing his evil as a universal malady.

Wordsworth makes one other modification in the traditional concept of the Gothic evil figure: he makes Oswald sympathetic. "In The Borderers," remarks Bertrand Evans, "the figure became subjective."²² Geoffrey Hartman even argues that Oswald's confession to Marmaduke in Act IV is the cause of the hero's regeneration:

By this motive which he adds to others more similar to those of Iago, Oswald becomes a metaphysical villain who forces the hero to pass from a naive to a new and isolating consciousness. The hero, Marmaduke, is made to realize the burden of solitary and responsible thought weighing on individual man. . .²³

Wordsworth's use of Gothic properties then seems an attempt to expand the potentialities of Gothicism. (If this is true, then Swinburne was far from the mark indeed when he called The Borderers, "this

²¹William Wordsworth, Literary Criticism of William Wordsworth, ed. Paul M. Zall (Lincoln, Neb., 1966), pp. 7-8.

²²Bertrand Evans, Gothic Drama from Walpole to Shelley (Berkeley, 1947), p. 219.

²³Geoffrey H. Hartman, Wordsworth's Poetry: 1787-1814 (New Haven, 1964), p. 126.

burlesque experiment in unnatural horror...²⁴) In the rest of his Gothic poetry, Wordsworth attempts even freer uses of the Gothic forms.

The White Doe of Rylstone (1807, publ. 1815), for example, makes extensive use of Gothic properties, without any use of a specifically Gothic villain. Here again the poet would seem to be trying to modify the genre of Gothic poetry to express his own particular poetic concerns. His opinion of the importance of the White Doe is indicated in a letter he wrote to Coleridge in 1808, which celebrates Emily's endurance of her trials and her final achievement of resolution through mystical identification with the doe. He describes her as:

forwarded in that ascent of love by communion with a creature not of her own species, but spotless, beautiful, innocent, and loving in that temper of earthly love to which alone she can conform, without violation to the majesty of her losses, or degradation from those heights of heavenly serenity to which she has been raised.²⁵

As an example of romantic Gothicism, The White Doe of Rylstone

²⁴Algernon Charles Swinburne, "Wordsworth and Byron," Miscellanies (London, 1886), p. 119.

²⁵Alice Pattee Comparetti, The White Doe of Rylstone by William Wordsworth: A Critical Edition (Ithaca, 1940), p. 2. In his journal, Thomas Moore recounts an incident that indicates Wordsworth's high opinion of the poem: "...one day, in a large party, Wordsworth... called out suddenly from the top of the table to the bottom in his most epic tone, "Davy!" and on [Sir Humphry] Davy's putting forth his head in awful expectation of what was coming, said, "Do you know the reason why I published the 'White Doe' in quarto?" "No, what was it?" "To Show the world my own opinion of it." Journal, Oct. 27, 1820. Quoted in Moulton, The Library of Literary Criticism, vol. III (1903, repr. Gloucester, Mass., 1966), 621-622.

culminates "not in a catastrophe of the material sort but rather in the spiritual state of the heroine, who triumphs with the help of the doe over despair and solipsism."²⁶

This adaptation of Gothic conventions to the concerns of the poet was also the technique of a small body of Gothic poetry Wordsworth composed between 1800 and 1840. In one group of the poems, the decaying works of man are contrasted with the eternal works of nature. In "Hart-leap Well," for example, a pleasure palace built to commemorate a stag hunt crumbles away. Only a magic well remains, haunted by the spirit of the stag. Unlike the spirits of the haunted well in *The Bride of Lammermoor*, however, the spirits of romantic Gothicism are benign. The narrator, who has learned the tale from one of Wordsworth's rustics, a wandering shepherd, considers the impermanence of purely human undertakings:

"The pleasure-house is dust:--behind, before,
This is no common waste, no common gloom;
But Nature, in due course of time, once more
Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom."
(II. 169-72, p. 203)

He then concludes on a note of universal sympathy for all the creatures of nature:

"One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shows, and what conceals;
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels."
(II. 177-80, p. 203)

"The Brownie's Cell" (c. 1814, publ. 1820) is a similar transformation of Gothic materials into the benevolent world view of

²⁶Hartman, p. 324.

Romanticism. The poem describes the retreat from the world of a medieval hermit to a life in harmony with nature. "Composed among the Ruins of a Castle in North Wales" (c. 1824, publ. 1827) describes the improvements nature and time make on the decaying works of man:

Relic of Kings! Wreck of forgotten wars,
 To winds abandoned and the prying stars,
 Time Loves Thee! at his call the Seasons twine
 Luxuriant wreaths around thy forehead hoar;
 (11.9-12; p. 272)

"Nun's Well, Brigham" (1833, publ. 1835) describes another example of the benignly haunted "house" of romantic Gothicism:

A tender Spirit broods--the pensive Shade
 Of ritual honours to this Fountain paid
 By hooded Votareesses with saintly cheer;
 (11.9-11; p. 465)

Another relic of the past inspires Wordsworth to contemplate the permanence of nature in "Among the Ruins of a Convent in the Apennines" (1842):

...fractured arch and mouldering wall--
 Do but more touchingly recall
 Man's headstrong violence and Time's fleetness,
 (11. 14-16; p. 366)

Finally, the themes of the benign haunting spirit and the superiority of nature are repeated in the first of Wordsworth's sonnets "At Furness Abbey" (1845):

Here, where, of havoc tired and rash undoing,
 Man left this Structure to become Time's prey,
 A soothing spirit follows in the way
 That Nature takes, her counter-work pursuing.
 (11. 1-4; p. 283)

Perhaps the one exception to this continued celebration in

Wordsworth of the superiority of nature over the works of man comes in the 1805 revisions to Book VI of The Prelude. In the middle of his description of his first tour of France with Robert Jones in the summer of 1790, Wordsworth breaks the narrative with a vision of nature's reaction to the sack of the monastery of Chartreuse in 1792:

--"Stay, stay your sacrilegious hands!"--
 The voice
 Was Nature's, uttered from her Alpine throne;
 I heard it then, and seem to hear it now--
 "Your impious work forbear: perish what may,
 Let this one temple last, be this one spot
 Of earth devoted to eternity!" (VI, 429-35; p. 681)

If this discussion of the varieties of romantic Gothicism had described a consistent reaction to Gothic properties in Wordsworth's poetry, the passage could well be used to disprove the theory. But the point made was that Wordsworth, like all the romantics, uses his Gothic materials to reinforce his critical doctrines. This specific passage from The Prelude marks, as M. H. Abrams has pointed out, Wordsworth's movement from specifically political hopes in the French Revolution to the revolutionary aesthetic of Romanticism:

In short, Wordsworth evokes from the unbounded and hence impossible hopes in the French Revolution a central Romantic doctrine; one which reverses the cardinal neoclassic ideal of setting only accessible goals, by converting what had been man's tragic error --the inordinacy of his "pride" that persists in setting infinite aims for finite man--into his specific glory and his triumph.²⁷

Coleridge, too, creates a Gothicism that is both romantic and

²⁷Abrams, p. 57.

specifically his own. Coleridge's Gothic writings fall into three categories: his reviews for the Critical Review, his Gothic drama, Remorse, and his Gothic poetry, specifically "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and "Christabel".

In August, 1794, Coleridge published a generally favorable review of The Mysteries of Udolpho in The Critical Review. The review echoes much of the adverse criticism of Mrs. Radcliffe, however, in commenting on her repetitions and her denouement:

The Mysteries of Udolpho are indeed relieved by much elegant description and picturesque scenery; but in the descriptions there is too much of sameness... Curiosity is raised oftener than it is gratified; or rather, it is raised so high that no adequate gratification can be given it; the interest is completely dissolved when once the adventure is finished, and the reader, when he is got to the end of the work, looks about in vain for the spell which had bound him so strongly to it.²⁹

Coleridge's next review, of The Monk, was published in February, 1797, after he had written his own Gothic drama, Osorio (retitled Remorse). Coleridge's main objection to the novel is from an aesthetic point of view: "Let the romance-writer work physical wonders only, and we will be content to dream with him for a while; but the first moral miracle which he attempts he disgusts and awakens us."³⁰ The specific objection Coleridge makes is that Ambrosio could be filled with lust for Matilda immediately after he conjures with the

²⁹Bowles, pp. 169-170.

³⁰Ibid., p. 194.

devil. If one understands Lewis's novel in terms of its ironic descriptions of the corruptibility of human nature, such a conjunction of the diabolic and the sexual is understandable. But Coleridge's Christian sentiments rebel against the attitudes of Gothicism of sensibility. These strong Christian concerns are evident in the rest of the review, which rails against Lewis's "libidinous minuteness"³¹ and his deprecating remarks about the Bible.

In June, 1798, Coleridge reviewed The Italian. The review consists largely of a single extended quotation from the novel, included as an example of one of the "scenes that powerfully seize the imagination, and interest the passions."³² The single objection Coleridge makes is against the length descriptions in the novel:

...the Italian falls short of the Mysteries of Udolpho, by reminding us of the same characters and the same scenes; and, although the descriptive part is less prolix, the author has had recourse to it in various instances, in which it has no natural connection with the story.³³

Although they do not particularly illuminate the Gothic novels in question, Coleridge's reviews at least indicate enough familiarity with the genre for us to draw some conclusions about its effect on his work. "The assurance we now have that Coleridge was widely acquainted with this type of fiction... makes the suggestion on his indebtedness

³¹Ibid., p. 195.

³²Ibid., p. 186.

³³Ibid.

more than credible."³⁴

Coleridge's debt to the tradition of Gothicism is evident in his drama, *Remorse* (1797: orid. Osorio). The drama can be called an example of romantic Gothicism precisely in that its villain, Don Ordonio, is capable of remorse at the end of the drama. Coleridge does not take the liberties with Gothic conventions that Wordsworth does. Thus his power figures are evil and his Gothic castles are threatening. In Coleridge's drama, only the conclusion varies from the more traditional Gothicism of sensibility.

Thus, as Don Ordonio approaches, sword in hand, Don Alvar determines not to have revenge, but to arouse in his brother the remorse that will lead to his salvation. Don Alvar's speech is a lecture on villainy in general:

What then art thou? For shame, put up thy sword!
 I fix mine upon thee, and thou tremblest!
 I speak, and fear and wonder crush thy rage,
 And turn it to a motionless distraction!
 Thou blind self-worshipper! thy pride, thy cunning,
 Thy faith in universal villany, (sic)
 Thy shallow sophisms, thy pretended scorn
 For all thy human brethren--out upon them!
 What have they done for thee? have they given thee peace?
 Cured thee of starting in thy sleep? or made
 The darkness pleasant when thou wak'st at midnight?
 Art Happy when alone? Can'st walk by thyself
 With even step and quiet cheerfulness?
 Yet, yet thou mayst be saved--³⁵

The effect of this speech is just the remorse that Don Alvar had hoped

³⁴Ibid., p. 166.

³⁵Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Remorse*, V, I, 152-166 in *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge II (Oxford, 1912, repr. 1966), 876.

for his brother. Ordonio makes his reconciliation with his brother and with his own conscience before he is killed by the widow of a man he has slain.

While Remorse is characterized by a generally traditional use of Gothic conventions, Coleridge uses his Gothic materials in new and startling ways in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner". The ballad is both his best known poem and the one which has elicited the most criticism.³⁶ This discussion of the poem will limit itself to two concerns: the poem in its relationship to Gothicism and the poem as an example of romantic Gothicism.

The influence of the Gothic tradition is obvious in the archaisms of the "Rime". This is especially true in the number of obsolete forms of the 1798 version, many of which Coleridge wisely deleted from his final version, in the 1834 edition of his Poetical Works. The abundance of these original Chaucerian and Spenserian forms becomes as distracting as the false convention of the manuscript sources of Walpole and Clara Reeve. Coleridge's aforementioned reading of Mrs. Radcliffe is also obvious in the Gothic background of the poem. Even a detail like the mariner's glittering eye originates in Gothic tradition, as

³⁶Three recent casebooks on the poem indicate the extent of that Criticism: The Rime of the Ancient Mariner: A Handbook ed. Royal A. Gettmann (1961), The Annotated Ancient Mariner, introd. Martin Gardner (New York, 1965), and Twentieth Century Interpretations of the Rime of the Ancient Mariner ed. James D. Boulger (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1969).

Lowes has indicated.³⁷

Our concern, however, is not with the Gothic background of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," but rather with Coleridge's uses of Gothicism. In the first place, the poem develops the three characteristics of Gothicism which chapter I described: the haunted castle, the reflection, and the journey into the forest. The haunted castle exists in two forms in the poem. First, it is the mariner's ship with its crew of reanimated corpses. Then it is the skeleton ship in Part III, with its crew of Death and Life-in-Death.

Coleridge's originality appears in his particular uses of the last two characteristics of Gothicism. The evil figure associated with the Gothic "reflection" is complex, since it is no single person. Death and Life-in-Death, however one may interpret them, can be called retributive evil figures; but the greatest evil figure--because his self-obsession drove him to kill the albatross and bring disaster to the crew--is the mariner himself. Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner" adds a new dimension to characterization in Gothic literature in that it combines the pursued innocent and the pursuing villain in one person. This balance of evil and redeeming qualities, which seems peculiar to romantic Gothicism, was developed in various ways in Shelley's The Cenci and especially in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein.

Coleridge's handling of the Gothic "journey into the forest" is

³⁷John Livingston Lowes, The Road to Xanada (2nd rev. ed. Boston, 1930, repr., 1964), pp. 230 ff.

what chiefly makes the poem an example of romantic Gothicism. Instead of an affirmation of man's ability to solve his problems or an ironic journey to uncertainty, Coleridge describes a journey, first, to frustration and then, with the help of divine grace, to affirmation and to salvation.³⁸

Coleridge's use of another stock figure of Gothic fiction--the Wandering Jew--is a further indication of his romantic Gothicism. That wandering figure which Lewis employed in The Monk and which Maturin was to use in Melmoth the Wanderer is, in these novels, an indication of the ironic and frustrating forces at work in the cosmos. Coleridge's Mariner, on the other hand, wanders both to work out his own repentance and to spread abroad a message of the certainty of a divine and benevolent cosmic order:

He prayest best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

(VII, 614-617)

Such a positive statement about the benevolence of the cosmic order cannot, of course, be so easily made of Coleridge's fragment, "Christabel," which he began to write shortly after he finished "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner".³⁹ Although one can never be certain of how Coleridge would have concluded the poem, there is enough evidence in

³⁸Cf. Coleman O. Parsons, "The Mariner and the Albatross," Virginia Quarterly Review, XXVI (Winter, 1950), 102-123.

³⁹In the Biographia Literaria, Coleridge states that he began "Christabel" after he finished the "Ancient Mariner": II, p. 6.

the present two parts to describe it as an example of romantic Gothicism.

That the poem is firmly grounded in the tradition of Gothicism is quite evident. (One begins such an exercise in source hunting with a little hesitation, however, since Coleridge's 1816 preface to "Christabel" rails at critics" . . . who have no notion that there are such things as fountains in the world. . . and who would therefore charitably derive every rill they behold flowing, from a perforation made in some other man's tank."⁴⁰) Nethercot, for example, notes the obvious influence of the Gothic romances on the poem. He, in fact, even bases his interpretation of "Christabel" on Coleridge's "theory" of the preternatural in his review of The Monk.⁴¹

The first staple of Gothic fiction, the "haunted castle," exists in two versions in the poem: the Christian castle of Sir Leoline, which Geraldine invades, and the pagan "midnight wood" (I, 29),⁴² with its druidic oak and mistletoe. In his characterization of Geraldine, the evil figure of the poem, Coleridge evokes the ambivalent response that is typical of the Gothic villain from the time of Mrs. Radcliffe. On the one hand, Geraldine is an evil figure. Besides being associated with

Coleridge's preface to the 1816 edition of the poem begins: "The first part of the following poem was written in the year 1797, at Stowey, in the county of Somerset" Poems, p. 213.

⁴⁰Coleridge, Poems, pp. 214-215

⁴¹Arthur H. Nethercot, The Road to Tryermaine (1939 ; repr. New York, 1962), pp. 78-80; 185 ff.

⁴²Coleridge, "Christabel," Poems, pp. 213-236.

the pagan oak and mistletoe, she cannot cross the lindle of Sir Leoline's castle without the aid of Christabel. She troubles the sleep of the mastiff, she seems to cause the coals to flare up, and she engages in a struggle with the benevolent spirit of Christabel's mother. Finally, she is a form of vampire.

But Geraldine is not merely a projection of total evil, as Lewis's Matilda seems to have been.⁴³ As a vampire, she is half human, half spirit-possessed. "The brand of some undivulged sin in her past disfigures her body ineffaceably, to her shame and disgust. She seems, likewise, to be under the control of some spirit power from the other world, and has a mission to carry out, though she is apparently not reconciled to it herself."⁴⁴ Thus, before she violates Christabel, Geraldine seems almost to pity her victim:

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs;
 Ah! what a stricken look was hers!
 Deep from within she seems half-way
 To lift some weight with sick assay,
 And eyes the maid and seeks delay;
 Then suddenly, as one defied,
 Collects herself in scorn and pride,
 And lay down by the Maiden's side!--
 (I, 255-262)

Even her incantatory lines that follow suggest a kind of revulsion at her actions: "Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow, / This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow;" (I, 269-270).

⁴³Nethercot argues that Coleridge, who praised Lewis's characterization of Matilda, based Geraldine on her. p. 194.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 185.

Christabel herself reminds us of a line of pursued Gothic heroines. To this tradition of pursuit, however, Coleridge seems to have added some specifically Christian references. Thus, Nethercot suggests that the image of Christabel as victim is supported by the suggestion of Christ, the proto-victim of Christianity, in her name.⁴⁵ But the second half of her name suggests another victim figure in the tradition: Able, the slain son of Adam and Eve. One might well argue that these specific references to the main participants in Christian salvation history would seem to make of Christabel a figure of that scheme of salvation through suffering.

The specifically Christian interpretation of the story must, of course, be tentative, since the poem remains a fragment. Parts I and II describe the encounter of good and evil, with the apparent triumph of evil, and there the poem ends. There is, of course, Coleridge's projected completion of the poem, which he was supposed to have outlined to Dr. Gillman:

According to him, the poem was to continue with Bard Bracy's fruitless journey in search of Geraldine's home, Geraldine continuing to deepen the cleavage between Sir Leoline and Christabel and finally taking the shape of Christabel's lover and pursuing her unpleasantly. In the end, however, the real lover returning, Geraldine was to vanish, the castle bell to toll, the voice of Christabel's mother to approve, and all was to be explained to reconcile the father and permit everyone to live happily ever after.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 207.

⁴⁶Kathleen Coburn, "Coleridge and Wordsworth and the 'Supernatural'" University of Toronto Quarterly, 25 (January, 1956), 129,

Told in these terms, however, the conclusion resembles that of a poor Gothic novel. Such a conclusion, furthermore, seems too simple when one considers the ambiguities and the sophistication of the fragment that Coleridge produced. Finally, of course, such a treatment of Gothic themes seems unlikely, especially in light of Coleridge's brilliant Gothicism in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner".

But while Coleridge's ending of the poem would probably have been more complex, "Christabel" may still be discussed as an example of romantic Gothicism. Coleridge's other Gothicism and the affirmative use of Christian reference in the poem both suggest Coleridge's belief in the lines at the end of part I, which fuse Christian doctrine and romantic imagery:

But this she knows, in joys and woes,
That saints will aid if men will call:
For the blue sky bends over all!
(I, 229-231)

The same kind of positive vision and unconventional use of Gothic properties is characteristic of Shelley's The Cenci (1819). Shelley's early Gothic novels, Zastrozzi (1810) and St. Irvyne (1811), were written under the influence of the chapbooks he read eagerly as a student at Eton. Critics have generally regarded them as failures. (Even the future Mary Shelley, whose reaction to Shelley's work is generally full of praise, merely notes in her journal for 12 October,

quoted in Werner W. Beyer, The Enchanted Forest (New York, 1963), p. 181.

1814: "Read 'Zastrozzi'."⁴⁷ Two other pieces are the unfinished romances, The Assissins (1814) and The Coliseum (1818-1819). But The Cenci, which is just about the only other example of Shelley's Gothicism,⁴⁸ is a brilliant example of romantic Gothicism.

Shelley's drama describes the incestuous sadism of Count Francesco Cenci toward his daughter, Beatrice. Cenci rapes her in Rome and locks Beatrice in the remote castle of Petrella. The crime obsesses her with vengeance and Beatrice arranges for her father's assassination. At her trial, Beatrice refuses to confess, since she believes herself innocent of any crime. When the corrupt Pope Clement VIII refuses clemency, Beatrice goes to her death.

A prime theme of Shelley's in the drama is to demonstrate the inevitable corruption of purity by the repeated cruelty of authority and social standards. Thus, Shelley describes Beatrice in his preface to The Cenci:

The young maiden, who was urged to this tremendous deed by an impulse which overpowered its horror, was evidently a most gentle and amiable being, a creature formed to adorn and be admired, and thus violently thwarted from her nature by the necessity of circumstance and opinion.⁴⁹

⁴⁷Mary Shelley, Mary Shelley's Journal, ed. Frederick L. Jones (Norman, Oklahoma, 1947), p. 19.

⁴⁸Shelley's poetry is strongly influenced by Gothicism, but is seldom Gothic in the sense discussed here. Cf. Mary Ellen Park Gilpatric, Gothic Elements in English Romanticism (Unpublished dissertation, Kent State University).

⁴⁹Percy Bysshe Shelley, The Cenci, The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck (New York, 1965), II, 69.

His important contribution to the development of Gothicism was his concept of the character of Beatrice. Act V shows a heroine, strong in her belief in her innocence. Resolution characterizes the scene, and not the typical remorse of the Gothic drama. Beatrice's speech in the last scene is filled with hope:

Farewell, my tender brother. Think
Of our sad fate with gentleness, as now:
And let mild, pitying thoughts lighten for thee
Thy sorrow's load. Err not in harsh despair,
But tears and patience. One thing more, my child,
For thine own sake be constant to the love
Thou bearest us; and to the faith that I,
Though wrapt in a strange cloud of crime and shame,
Lived ever holy and unstained. . . ⁵⁰

Act V, which Mary Shelley called "the finest thing he ever wrote,"⁵¹ offers a brilliant example of the transformation of character in Romantic Gothicism. Although such development cause problems for an historian of Gothic drama like Bertrand Evans,⁵² they are really an indication of the evolutionary character of Gothicism itself.

Just as Shelley's romantic Gothicism expresses his political and religious concerns, Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1818) explores her characteristic theme of the naturalistic goodness of man. The story of the contest to write a ghost story at Lake Geneva in 1816 is well known: Polidori's The Vampyre (1819), Byron's narrative fragment of the same

⁵⁰The Cenci V, VI, 142-149 (p. 154).

⁵¹Ibid., p. 158.

⁵²Evan's credits the "idealization" of Beatrice to Shelley's ignorance of the conventions of Gothic drama and to his "poetic power." p. 232.

name (1819), and Mrs. Shelley's novel were the result. Shelley defended the theme of the complexities of human motivation, in the preface to Frankenstein, which he wrote in his wife's name:

[The novel] was recommended by the novelty of the situations which it develops, and however impossible as a physical fact, affords a point of view to the imagination for the delineating of human passions more comprehensive and commanding than any which the ordinary relations of existing events can yield.⁵³

The novel also contributes to the evolution of a complex sense of character in romantic Gothicism. This is achieved in the relationship of Robert Walton, the narrator, Frankenstein, and his creature. In one of his letters to his sister at the beginning of the novel, Walton describes its central theme:

I said in one of my letters, my dear Margaret, that I should find no friend on the wide ocean; yet I have found a man who, before his spirit had been broken by misery, I should have been happy to have possessed as the brother of my heart.⁵⁴

The need to love in the form of friendship, and the fact that circumstances have made it impossible, is the cause of Walton's unhappiness and the source of the tragedy of Frankenstein and his creature.

Throughout the novel, the creature is made to suffer because of his terrifying outward appearance. Every attempt at human friendship is repulsed. Finally, when Dr. Frankenstein refuses to create a companion for him, the creature begins a career of evil and destruction.

⁵³Mary Shelley, p. XVII.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 12.

But Frankenstein and his creature, despite the misery they bring to each other, are relentlessly drawn into a sort of symbiotic relationship resembling that of Falkland and Caleb Williams. Although they pursue each other and try to destroy each other throughout the novel, one literally cannot live without the other. The creature's reaction over Frankenstein's corpse is not exultation, but bitter anguish, as he describes his feelings to Walton:

"You, who call Frankenstein your friend, seem to have a knowledge of my crimes and his misfortunes. But in the detail which he gave you of them he could not sum up the hours and months of misery which I endured wasting in impotent passions. For while I destroyed his hopes, I did not satisfy my own desires, They were forever ardent and craving; still I desired love and fellowship, and I was still spurned."⁵⁵

With his creator gone, the only recourse of the creature is death, too.

These themes of flight and pursuit suggest "the quest of the Romantic hero to come to terms with his own nature, with the evil which he has unleashed upon himself."⁵⁶ The connections with similar Romantic heroes--like Wordsworth's Marmaduke, Coleridge's Mariner, and Shelley's Beatrice Cenci--are obvious.

The fact that Frankenstein is both creator and slave to his creature also indicates another perception of the romantic mind. That mind, on the one hand, describes man as capable of extraordinary achievement as a result of his natural tendency to goodness. But it is

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 204.

⁵⁶Mary W. Shelley, Frankenstein, introd. Robert E. Dowse and D. J. Palmer (New York, 1965), p. XI.

also aware of a power beyond his intellect: "the hidden power of the imagination which controls and determines man's moral nature, and which is the source of man's creative energy."⁵⁷ In this sense, the mysterious love-hate relationship that binds Frankenstein and his creature--perverted though it be by the force of circumstances--is a projection of the ultimately benevolent romantic cosmic order.

While the romantic Gothicism of the Shelleys envisions a world in which love can flourish unhindered, John Keats equates the ideal world with the permanence of art. Of all the romantic poets, Keats seems to feel most acutely the conflict between ideal and actual. In fact, he insists, in a letter to John Hamilton Reynolds, that good poetry is based on an awareness "...that the World is full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness and oppression..." (3 May 1818).⁵⁸ Like the other romantics, Keats used the materials of the Gothic tradition to express his own vision of the romantic "other" world; like them, too, he devised new uses for Gothic materials.

Although Keats did create other Gothic poetry--"Isabella" and "The Eve of St. Mark" are examples--his use of Gothic conventions can be described by comparing his technique in two poems: "The Eve of St. Agnes" and "La Belle Dame sans Merci". Of the two, the Gothicism of "The Eve of St. Agnes" is much more conventional. Although the castle of Madeline's kinsmen is not dominated by any

⁵⁷Ibid., p. XII.

⁵⁸John Keats, The Letters of John Keats: 1814-1821, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), I, 281.

recognizable version of the Gothic villain except the "dwarfish Hildebrand," it holds all the dangers of a villain-haunted castle for Porphyro:

For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations howl
Against his lineage: not one breast affords
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.
(X, 11. 85-90)⁵⁹

Porphyro braves the terrors of the castle and wins the love of Madeline. In terms of Gothic conventions, his "journey into the forest" concludes in happiness and fulfillment, as the lovers flee out of the castle into the storm. This movement into a new realm of love and affirmation is a straight-forward expression of the positive vision of romantic Gothicism.

In "La Belle Dame sans Merci," however, the use of Gothic materials is rather more complex. This is especially so if one understands the poem as "a symbolic narrative about poetic experience."⁶⁰ Keats sees poetry as both the source of his highest aspirations and of his greatest frustrations. In terms of romantic Gothicism, the poem describes the contrast between actual and ideal worlds, expressed in terms of the highest concern of the particular poet.

The "elfin grot" (1. 29), the form of the Gothic castle in the

⁵⁹John Keats, "The Eve of St. Agnes" John Keats: Complete Poems and Selected Letters, ed. Clarence De Witt Thorpe, (New York, 1935), p. 315.

⁶⁰Mario L. D'Avanzo, Keats's Metaphors for the Poetic Imagination (Durham, 1967), p. 192.

poem, is the place of the young knight's desires, instead of the object of his fears:

She took me to her elfin grot,
 And there she gaz'd and sighed deep,
 And there I shut her wild sad eyes--
 So kiss'd to sleep.

(11. 29-32)⁶¹

The reversed scale of value operates throughout the poem: the movement away from the castle results in frustration. The knight awakes from a troubled dream and finds himself "On the cold hill side" (l. 36). "That final, waking dream of troubled visions on the cold hillside announces the death of imagination and ensuing pains of the poet's return to the numbing world of reality."⁶² Thus, the end of the poem finds the poet continuing his loitering--in hopes of finding the Lady once again and gaining readmittance to the Gothic castle of imagination and artistic fulfillment.

The literature of the Age of Sensibility, we remember, uses Gothicism to propose various explanations of cosmic disorder. Romantic Gothicism, on the other hand, uses its materials to propose complex explanations of the benevolent romantic world order. More specifically, it sees that world order as somehow allied with the overriding romantic concern with the imagination. That each romantic describes the relationship of the imagination to the transcendent world order differently,

⁶¹Keats, Poems, p. 341.

⁶²D'Avanzo, p. 200.

merely indicates the complexity of the romantic vision and the adaptability of Gothicism as a literary type.

Romantic Gothicism is characterized by daring uses of Gothic conventions. One might wonder, then, why it did not become the dominant form of Gothicism, instead of Gothicism of sensibility. One explanation could well be that the imaginative uses of romantic Gothicism could only be the product of genius. There seems to be within Gothicism an inborn dynamic to examine the varieties of disorder within the cosmos. Certainly, this seems to be the lesson of history. The achievement of the romantic poets in restructuring and reorienting Gothicism to their own needs, then, could not be maintained by lesser literary men.

The important point, though, is the adaptability of Gothicism as a kind of writing. It could express The Enlightenment certainties, the ironic vision of the Age of Sensibility, and the transcendent world view of Romanticism. To understand this evolutionary nature of Gothicism, one need merely compare the different meanings of the attempted rape of Walpole's Isabella, the rape of Lewis's Antonia, and the rape of Shelley's Beatrice Cenci. The complexity of Gothicism is also to be understood in the different meanings attached to three Gothic "castles": Walpole's Otranto, Mrs. Radcliffe's Udolpho, and Keats's "elfin grot". Finally, the varieties of Gothicism can be indicated in three kinds of Gothic villain: Walpole's totally monstrous Manfred, Lewis's vile, yet sympathetic, Ambrosio, and Coleridge's Mariner, whose sin is somehow ours.

As a literary type, Gothicism acted as a cultural bridge during the most important transitional period in English literary history. Moreover, it was an important source of inspiration for the romantic imagination--one which needs further critical examination. But perhaps the most important aspect of Gothicism has been its continuing adaptability to the changing notions about the philosophical order--or lack of it--in the universe.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abrams, M. H. "English Romanticism: The Spirit of the Age," in Romanticism Reconsidered: Selected Papers from the English Institute, ed. Northrop Frye, New York, 1963, 26-72.
- _____. The Mirror and the Lamp. New York, 1953.
- _____. ed. The Norton Anthology of English Literature. vol. 2 of 2 vols. New York, 1962.
- Allen, Walter. The English Novel, A Short Critical History. New York, 1954.
- Aristotle. Poetics, trans. Ingram Bywater. The Pocket Aristotle, ed. Justin D. Kaplan. New York, 1961.
- Baker, Ernest A. The History of the English Novel, vol. V of X vols. New York, 1934.
- Ball, Margaret. Sir Walter Scott As a Critic of Literature. 1907. repr. Port Washington, New York, 1966.
- Barzun, Jacques. Classic, Romantic and Modern. New York, 1961.
- Bate, Walter Jackson. From Classic to Romantic: Premises of Taste in Eighteenth-Century England. 1946. repr. New York, 1961.
- Beers, Henry A. A History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century. New York 1898.
- Beck, White Lewis. Eighteenth-Century Philosophy. New York, 1966.
- Bergum, Edwin Berry. "Romanticism," Kenyon Review, III, (Autumn, 1941), 479-490.
- Berlin, Isaiah. The Age of Enlightenment. New York, 1956.
- Birkhead, Edith. The Tale of Terror: A Study of the Gothic Romance. London, 1921.
- Bleiler, E. F., ed. Three Gothic Novels. New York, 1966.

- Boulger, James D., ed. Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Rime of the Ancient Mariner. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1969.
- Brauchli, Jakob. Der englische Schauer-Roman um 1800. Weida i. Thur., 1928.
- Burke, Edmund. On the Sublime and Beautiful, Reflections on the French Revolution, A Letter to a Noble Lord. New York 1909.
- Bush, Douglas. John Keats: His Life and Writings. New York, 1966.
- Byron, George Gordon, Lord. The Complete Poetical Works of Byron. ed. Paul Elmer More, Boston, 1905; repr. 1933.
- Chapman, Gerald Wester. Literary Criticism in England 1660-1800. New York, 1966.
- Chew, Samuel C. The Dramas of Lord Byron: A Critical Study. 1915; repr. New York, 1964.
- _____. The Nineteenth Century and After. Book IV of A Literary History of England, ed. A. C. Baugh, New York, 1948.
- Clark, Kenneth. The Gothic Revival: An Essay in the History of Taste. rev. ed. New York, 1950.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. "Four Anonymous Reviews by Coleridge," A Wiltshire Parson and His Friends: The Correspondence of William Lisle Bowles Together with Four Hitherto Unidentified Reviews by Coleridge, ed. Garland Greever. Boston, 1926.
- _____. The Poems of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, London, 1912, repr. 1960.
- _____. Biographia Literaria 2 vols., ed. by J. Shawcross, Oxford, 1965.
- Camparetti, Alice Pattee. The White Doe of Rylstone by William Wordsworth: A Critical Edition. Ithaca, 1940.
- Cragg, Gerald R. Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century. Cambridge, G. B., 1964.
- Daiches, David. A Critical History of English Literature vol. II of II vols. New York, 1960.

- D'Avanzo, Mario. Keats's Metaphors for the Poetic Imagination. Durham, N. C., 1967.
- Day, Martin S. History of English Literature: 1660-1837. Garden City, New York, 1963.
- Evans, Bertrand. Gothic Drama from Walpole to Shelley. University of California Publications in English, XVIII. Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1947.
- _____. "Manfred's Remorse and Dramatic Tradition," PMLA, LXII (1947), 752-773.
- Fletcher, Angus. Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode. Ithaca, New York, 1964.
- Foakes, R. A. The Romantic Assertion. New Haven, 1958.
- Fogle, Richard H. "Romantic Bards and Metaphysical Reviewers," ELH, XII (1945), 221-250.
- Foster, James R. History of the Pre-Romantic Novel in England. Baltimore, 1949.
- Forster, E. M. Aspects of the Novel. New York, 1927.
- Frye, Northrop. The Anatomy of Criticism. Princeton, New Jersey, 1957, repr. New York, 1966.
- _____. "Towards Defining an Age of Sensibility," ELH, XXIII (June 1956), 144-152. repr. Eighteenth Century English Literature: Modern Essays in Criticism ed. James L. Clifford. New York, 1959, 311-318.
- Gardner, Martin. The Annotated Ancient Mariner. New York, 1965.
- Gérard, Albert S. English Romantic Poetry: Ethos, Structure, and Symbol in Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats. Berkeley, 1968.
- _____. "On the Logic of Romanticism," Essays in English, VII (1957), 262-273, trans. George Watson.
- Gilpatric, Mary Ellen Park. Gothic Elements in English Romantic Poetry. (unpublished dissertation). Kent State University, 1965.

- Gleckner, Robert F. Byron and the Ruins of Paradise. Baltimore, 1967.
- Godwin, William. The Adventures of Caleb Williams, intr. Van Wyck Brooks. New York, 1926.
- _____. Travels of St. Leon. London, 1831.
- Hampson, Norman. A Cultural History of the Enlightenment. New York, 1968.
- Hanson, Lawrence. The Life of S. T. Coleridge: The Early Years. New York, 1962.
- Hart, Francis Russel. "The Experience of Character in the English Gothic Novel" in Selected Papers from the English Institute, ed. Roy Harvey Pearce. New York, 1968.
- _____. Scott's Novels: The Plotting of Historic Survival. The University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1966.
- Hartman, Geoffrey H. Wordsworth's Poetry 1787-1814. New Haven, 1964.
- Hazlitt, William. Lecture on the English Novelists. 1818.
- _____. Sketches and Essays. The World's Classics. 1903.
- Heilman, Robert B. "Charlotte Brontë's 'New' Gothic," Victorian Literature: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. Austin Wright, New York, 1961.
- Hume, Robert D. "Gothic versus Romantic: a Revaluation of the Gothic Novel," PMLA, LXXXIV, 2 (March, 1969), 282-290.
- Keats, John. Complete Poems and Selected Letters. ed. Clarence DeWitt Thorpe. New York, 1935.
- Killen, Alice M. Le Roman Terrifiant ou Roman Noir: de Walpole a Ann Radcliffe, et, son Influence sur la Litterature Française Jusqu'en 1840. Paris, 1923.
- Koorman-van Middendorp, Gerarda Maria. The Hero in the Feminine Novel. New York, 1966.
- Kott, Jan. Shakespeare our Contemporary, trans. Bolwslar Taborski. Garden City, New York, 1966.

- Lewis, Matthew G. The Monk, intro. John Berryman. New York, 1952.
- _____. Tales of Terror and Wonder. New York, 1887.
- Litz, Walton A. Jane Austen: A Study of Her Artistic Development. New York, 1965.
- Longueil, Alfred E. Gothic Romance, Its Influence on the Romantic Poets Wordsworth, Keats, Coleridge, Byron and Shelley. (unpublished dissertation) Harvard University, 1920.
- _____. "The Word 'Gothic' in Eighteenth Century Criticism," Modern Language Notes, XLVII (1932), 419-446.
- Lovejoy, Arthur O. "On the Discrimination of Romanticisms," PMLA, XXXIX (1924), 229-253.
- _____. The Great Chain of Being: A Study in the History of an Idea. New York, 1965.
- _____. "The Meaning of Romanticism for the Historian of Ideas," Journal of the History of Ideas, II (1941), 237-278.
- Lowes, John Livingston. The Road to Xanadu: A Study of the Imagination. 1927, repr. Cambridge, Mass., 1964.
- Lubbock, Percy. The Craft of Fiction. rev. ed. New York, 1931.
- Malin, Irving. New American Gothic. Carbondale, Ill., 1962.
- Manuel, Frank E. The Enlightenment. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1965.
- Marlowe, Christopher. Doctor Faustus. in English Drama 1580-1642, ed. C. F. Tucker Brooke and Nathaniel Burton Paradise. Boston, 1933.
- Maturin, Charles R. Bertram; or, The Castle of St. Aldobrand. London, 1827.
- _____. Melmoth the Wanderer, ed. William F. Axton. Lincoln, Nebraska, 1961.
- McIntyre, Clara F. "Were the Gothic Novels Gothic?" PMLA, XXXVI (1921), 644-667.

- Moulton, Charles Wells, ed. The Library of Literary Criticism, vols. IV. Gloucester, Mass., repr. 1959.
- Nethercot, Arthur H. The Road to Tryermaine: A Study of the History, Background, and Purposes of Coleridge's "Christabel." repr. New York, 1962.
- Parsons, Coleman O. "The Mariner and the Albatross," Virginia Quarterly Review. XXVI (Winter, 1950), 102-123.
- _____. Witchcraft and Demonology in Scott's Fiction. Edinburgh and London, 1964.
- Peckham, Morse. "Toward a Theory of Romanticism," PMLA, LXVI (1951), 5-23.
- _____. "Toward a Theory of Romanticism: II. Reconsiderations," Studies in Romanticism, I (1961), 1-8.
- _____. ed. Romanticism: The Culture of the Nineteenth Century. New York, 1965.
- Perkins, David. The Quest for Permanence: The Symbolism of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats. Cambridge, Mass., 1965.
- Praz, Mario. The Romantic Agony, trs. Angus Davidson. 2nd ed. repr. New York, 1965.
- Price, Martin. To the Palace of Wisdom. New York, 1964.
- Quennell, Peter. "The Moon Stood Still on Strawberry Hill," Horizon, XI, 3 (Summer, 1969), 112-119.
- Radcliffe, Ann. The Italian; or The Confessional of the Black Penitents. A Romance, ed. Devendra Varma. 2 vols. London, 1828; reissued New York, 1968.
- _____. The Mysteries of Udolpho, ed. Bonamy Dobrée. London, 1966.
- _____. The Mysteries of Udolpho, intro. R. Austin Freeman. New York, 1959.
- Railo, Eino. The Haunted Castle: A Study of the Elements of English Romanticism. 1927, repr. New York, 1964.

- Raleigh, Walter. The English Novel. London, 1894.
- Reeve, Clara. The Old English Baron in Seven Masterpieces of Gothic Horror, ed. Robert Donald Spector, New York, 1963.
- Renwick, W. L. English Literature: 1789-1815 vol. IX of The Oxford History of English Literature, ed. F. P. Wilson and Bonamy Dobrée. Oxford, 1963.
- Robbins, Rossell Hope. Eve of Witchcraft and Demonology. 1959.
- Romanticism: Points of View, ed. Robert F. Gleckner, and Gerald E. Enscoe, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1962.
- Rutherford, Andrew. Byron: A Critical Study. Stanford, 1961; repr. 1965.
- Saintsbury, George. The Collected Essays and Papers of George Saintsbury 1875-1920, v. III of V vols., London, 1923.
- _____. The English Novel. London, 1913 repr. 1931.
- Scott, Sir Walter. The Bride of Lammermoor. New York, 1966.
- _____. Letters on Witchcraft and Demonology. London, 1830.
- _____. Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, ed. Thomas Henderson. London, 1931.
- _____. The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott, ed. J. Logie Robertson. 1904. repr. London, 1964.
- _____. The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott. New York, 1964.
- _____. Redgauntlet. New York, 1930.
- Shackford, Martha Hale. "'The Eve of St. Agnes' and The Mysteries of Udolpho," PMLA, XXXVI (1920).
- Shelley, Mary W. Frankenstein, intro. Robert E. Dowse and D. J. Palmer. New York, 1912, repr. 1965.
- _____. Frankenstein, intro. Robert Donald Spector. New York, 1967.

- _____. Mary Shelley's Journal, ed. Frederlick L. Jones. Norman, Oklahoma, 1947.
- Shelley, Percy Bysshe. The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck. vols. I, X of X vols. New York, 1965.
- _____. The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. Mrs. Shelley, vol. I of III vols. Cambridge, Mass., 1855.
- _____. Shelley's Critical Prose, ed. Bruce R. McElderry Jr. Lincoln, Mebr., 1967.
- Smollett, Tobias. The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom. New York, n. d.
- Snyder, Louis, ed. The Age of Reason. Princeton, New Jersey, 1955
- Spacks, Patricia Meyer. The Insistence of Horror: Aspects of the Supernatural in Eighteenth-Century Poetry. Cambridge, Mass., 1962.
- Steeves, Harrison R. Before Jane Austen. New York, 1965.
- Stephen, Leslie. "Matthew G. Lewis," The Dictionary of National Biography, vol. XI 1892-93; repr. 1960.
- Summers, Montague. A Gothic Bibliography. London, 1941.
- _____. The Gothic Quest: A History of the Gothic Novel. London, 1938.
- _____. The Vampire in Europe. New Hyde Park, New York, 1961.
- Swinburne, Algernon Charles, "Wordsworth and Byron," Miscellanies. London, 1886.
- Sypher, Wylie. Four Stages of Renaissance Style. Garden City, New York, 1955.
- _____. Rococo to Cubism in Art and Literature. New York, 1960.
- Thorslev, Peter L. Jr. The Byronic Hero: Types and Prototypes. Minneapolis, 1962.

- Tompkins, J. M. S. The Popular Novel in England: 1770-1800. London, 1932; repr. Lincoln, Neb., 1961.
- Trilling, Lionel. The Experience of Literature: Drama. New York, 1967.
- Tuttle, Donald R. "Christabel Sources in Percy's Reliques and the Gothic Romance," PMLA, LIII (June, 1938), 445-474.
- Varma, Devendra. The Gothic Flame, Being a History of the Gothic Novel in England: Its Origins, Efflorescence, Disintegration, and Residuary Influences. London, 1957. repr. New York, 1966.
- Wegenknecht, Edward. Cavalcade of the English Novel from Elizabeth to George VI. New York, 2nd ed. 1950.
- Walpole, Horace. The Castle of Otranto. New York, 1963.
- _____. The Castle of Otranto, intro. Marvin Mudrick. New York, 1963.
- _____. The Mysterious Mother: A Tragedy. London, 1781
- Wasserman, Earl R. The Finer Tone: Keats's Major Poems. Baltimore, 1953.
- _____. The Subtler Language. Baltimore, 1959.
- Welsh, Alexander. The Hero of the Waverly Novels. New Haven, 1963.
- Wellek, René. "The Concept of 'Romanticism' in Literary History," Comparative Literature, I (1949), 1-23, 147-172.
- West Paul. Byron and The Spoiler's Art. London, 1960.
- Wordsworth, William. The Poetical Works of Wordsworth, ed. Thomas Hutchinson; rev. ed. Ernest De Selincourt. London, 1914, repr. 1939.
- _____. Literary Criticism of William Wordsworth, ed. Paul M. Zall. Lincoln, Nebr., 1966.