

THE INTENSIFYING VISION OF EVIL :
THE GOTHIC NOVEL (1764 - 1820)
AS A SELF-CONTAINED LITERARY CYCLE

by

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FOREWORD

The purpose of this study is to investigate the Gothic novel, a much neglected and misunderstood school, as a unified literary cycle. Attention has been centred on the domains or sub-systems of the novel where cultural models and generic traits are particularly important and distinguishable: character, plot (with the necessary evocation of a fictional world), theme and symbol. No apology is offered for the many quotations: far too little recourse is made to the texts in most discussions of the Gothic novel and this has all too frequently led to misapprehensions and unfounded generalizations.

The opening section places the genre in a historico-literary context, and centres attention on the major novels, while the final section opens additional perspectives on the cycle, suggests the importance of the Gothic school for modern times, and illustrates the inevitability of its central vision of evil.

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Fola vana
è a lei Satana,
riso e scherno
è a lei l'inferno,
scherno e riso
il paradiso.
Oh per Dio!
che or ridò anch'io
nel pensar ciò che le nascondo
Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!
Ecco il mondo, ecco il mondo!

(A fatuous fable
is Satan to the human race,
Hell is to man a subject
for mockery and ridicule,
and ridicule and mockery
is also levelled at Paradise.
Oh, by God
I can laugh too
when I think of what
I'm hiding from them
Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!
So much for the world!)

(Boito: Mefistofele, Act 2 sc.ii.)

THE GOTHIC NOVEL: AN UNDERESTIMATED GENRE

i. AMUSED PATRONAGE

The Gothic novel is a branch of English literature that is still much misunderstood and little read: it has always been regarded more as an historical curiosity, briefly mentioned in textbooks but passed over as if of little consequence and devoid of any intrinsic merits. Indeed it has long been a source of ridicule among the discriminating - something so outlandish and childish as to be safely ignored. Its vogue lasted a few decades and since the early nineteenth century the texts themselves have rarely been re-published: only in the last seven years have anything like definitive modern editions appeared.¹

Mrs Radcliffe, whose Mysteries of Udolpho has always maintained a tenuous secret life, has been kept alive in the minds of most readers simply because the Gothic novel and its readers were subjected to Jane Austen's cool satirical eye in Northanger Abbey. Matthew Gregory Lewis has been the byword of literary vulgarity and excess even though the readers of his Monk have been limited to the curious who have been lucky enough to find a copy of this notorious romance - once branded as blasphemous and pornographic.² Lewis was very much the prophet of his own literary fate (and that of most Gothic novelists) when he discussed the rôle of the author in an intriguing interpolation in his novel:

An Author, whether good or bad, or between both, is an Animal whom every body is privileged to attack; For though All are not able to write books, all conceive themselves able to judge them. A bad composition carries with it its own punishment, contempt and ridicule. A good one excites envy, and entails upon its Author a thousand mortifications. He finds himself assailed by partial and ill-humoured Criticism: One Man finds fault with the plan, Another with the style, a Third with the precept, which it strives to inculcate; and they who cannot succeed in finding fault with the Book, employ themselves in stigmatizing its Author. They maliciously rake out from obscurity every little circumstance, which may throw ridicule upon his private character or conduct, and aim at wounding the Man, since They cannot hurt the Writer. In short to enter the lists of literature is wilfully to expose yourself to the arrows of neglect, ridicule, envy, and disappointment. Whether you write well or ill, be assured that you will not escape from blame; Indeed this circumstance contains a young Author's chief consolation: He remembers that Lope de Vega and Calderona had unjust and envious Critics, and He modestly conceives himself to be exactly in their predicament. But I am conscious, that all these sage observations are thrown away upon

you. Authorship is a mania to conquer which no reasons are sufficiently strong; and you might as easily persuade me not to love, as I persuade you not to write.³

To read the most famous Gothic novels with a freshness unclouded by generations of prejudice and much poor commentary can certainly be a surprisingly rewarding experience. So much of the opinion expressed in old potted histories and critical surveys is jaundiced by fashion in taste and, more culpably, by insufficient and unsympathetic knowledge of the subject. Too often do the critics fall back on vague generalizations and sweeping evaluations. The general impression of a Gothic novel is a picturesque collage of remote castles, moonlit nights, wicked Catholic clerics, exotic Spanish or Italian settings, beautiful persecuted heroines, dark villains and catalogues of horrors. In more popular circles, Frankenstein and Dracula come to mind at the mention of the Gothic: most people are surprised to learn that Frankenstein is in fact not the terrible monster, but his gentle creator. The deeper implications of the Gothic novel remain unknown to critic and reading-public alike.

The situation has not been much improved by the studies of the Gothic novel that have appeared in the twentieth century: there are four that are particularly famous, that more or less sum up the scholarship on this type of novel. They are The Tale of Terror (1921) by Edith Birkhead, The Haunted Castle (1927) by Eino Railo, The Gothic Quest (1938) by Montague Summers and The Gothic Flame (1957) by Devendra Varma. All four are critical histories covering the novel from its inception in 1764 with Walpole's Castle of Otranto to the later nineteenth century examples of the type: they trace origins, give plot summaries, quote striking passages, make a few critical comments and frequently trace the influence of the novels on later literature. These studies have provided an indispensable foundation and are invaluable as source-books, but they hardly provide serious literary analyses of the novels. There is a growing modern trend, interestingly paralleling the fine new editions of the novels (although this is probably co-incidental), that indicates a new approach, a growing awareness of the novels

as serious and rich works of art. The most interesting of the modern studies is Robert Kiely's The English Romantic Novel. However there is still a great need for serious re-evaluation of the Gothic novel, a need to be rid of the amused patronage that still characterizes the attitudes of many. The novels indeed have still to be accorded the proper place they occupy in the history of the English novel specifically and the history of Romanticism generally.

ii. CET ÂGE DE FER

It is significant that the period of the genuine Gothic novel, as opposed to the imitative one of the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries, fell between 1764 when Walpole wrote The Castle of Otranto, and 1820 when Maturin published Melmoth the Wanderer. This period parallels some of the most stirring literary and political history of modern times.

In England the restraints of Classicism were beginning to give way in the flood of new ideas and feelings evoked by such works as Macpherson's Ossian poems (1760) and Bishop Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry (1765). These works were also seminal in Germany where Harman, Herder and the Young Goethe initiated the fiery Sturm und Drang, the Geniezeit, that found greatest expression in the early plays of Goethe and Schiller. By the turn of the century both English and German literary worlds were in the midst of the Romantic efflorescence.

The political situation was in even greater ferment: the French Revolution was followed by the total upheaval of Europe as a result of the Napoleonic wars.

The great Gothic novels and the heyday of their popularity coincides neatly with this period. The wild explosion of ideas and energy, the dramatic acceleration of the advent of the modern age, was appreciated as a powerful and alarming stimulus on literature by the Marquis de Sade whose novels are certainly indicative of the terrifying perceptions of authors of the time. His words in Idée sur les Romans have become the definitive expression of how the troubled

times inevitably affected the creative impulses of the novelists writing at the period:

Ce genre ... devenait le fruit indispensable des secousses révolutionnaires, dont l'Europe entière se ressentait. Pour qui connaissait tous les malheurs dont les méchants peuvent accabler les hommes, le roman devenait assez difficile à faire, que monotone à lire: il n'y avait point d'individu qui n'eût plus éprouvé d'infortunes en quatre ou cinq ans que n'en pouvait peindre en un siècle le plus fameux romancier de la littérature: il fallait donc appeler l'enfer à son secours, pour se composer des titres à l'intérêt, et trouver dans le pays des chimères, ce qu'on savait couramment en ne fouillant que l'histoire de l'homme dans cet âge de fer. Mais que d'inconvénients présentait cette manière d'écrire! L'auteur du Moine ne les a plus évités que Radcliffe; ici nécessairement des deux choses l'une, ou il faut développer le sortilège, et dès lors vous n'intéressez plus, ou il ne faut jamais lever le rideau et vous voilà dans la plus affreuse invraisemblance.⁴

J.M.S. Tompkins states succinctly how the turmoil of the whole age worked on the minds of the Gothic novelists:

The French Revolution, by shaking the foundations of society, had engendered an atmosphere of insecurity and excitement that quickened the nerves of literature, and in this nervous quickening Mrs Radcliffe participates deeply.⁵

The Gothic novel is remarkable in many ways: it bridges the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, expanding the pre-Romantic impulses into full-blooded Romanticism.⁶ In some aspects it is a great point of culmination: research into the sources reveals that the minds of the authors were filled by memories of the medieval romance, Italian Renaissance painting and literature, Elizabethan tragedy, the great seventeenth and eighteenth century English poets, French and English eighteen-century novels of sentiment as well as English and German legends, ballads and folk-tales that were being rediscovered and collected at the time. Tasso, Shakespeare, Milton, Richardson, Prévost, Ossian, Percy, Goethe and Schiller were all major sources of inspiration.⁷ Mrs Radcliffe's love and imitations of Shakespeare, Milton and the eighteenth-century nature poets are well-known. In his preliminary Advertisement to The Monk, Lewis cites some of the manifold ideas and influences incorporated into his novel.

The first idea of this Romance was suggested by the story of the Santon Barsisa, related in The Guardian. - The Bleeding Nun is a tradition still credited in many parts of Germany; and I have been told, that the ruins of the Castle of Lauenstein, which She is supposed to haunt, may yet be seen upon the borders of Thuringia. - The Water-King, from the third to the twelfth stanza, is the fragment of an original Danish Ballad - And Belerma and Durandarte is translated from some stanzas to be found in a collection of old Spanish poetry, which contains also the popular song of Gayferos and Melesindra, mentioned in Don Quixote. - I have now made a full avowal of all the plagiarisms of which I am aware myself; but I doubt not, many more may be found, of which I am at present totally unconscious.⁸

The Gothic novels pull together so many divergent strands and different influences that they stand as a watershed in the history of the novel. They subject their sources to a complete re-processing, and often in re-using old myths they created new ones in typical Romantic fashion. What Siegbert Praver writes concerning the German Romantics applies equally to the English, and especially to the Gothic novelists:

Search for meaning was accompanied by search for centrality of reference - for a body of mythology that would unite German artists and their scattered public as Greek mythology had united Greek artists and the community within which and for which they created their works ... If one surveys German Romantic literature as a whole, one comes to feel, in fact, that these authors' private mythologies interlocked in a meaningful way - that they produced a nearly coherent system of tales, partly invented and partly adapted, which tell of man's relation to the demonic and the divine. This is dominated by a quest for the Blue Flower, symbol of all man's longings in this world for something that transcends it; ... by the Flying Dutchman, the Wandering Jew of the sea, who may find release through love and death; ... by sylvan solitude, Waldeinsamkeit, full of divine or demonic adumbrations ...⁹

The Gothic novelists may have lacked the conscious sense of a common nationalistic idealism, the unifying philosophical intentions of their German counterparts, but the emergence of a new mythology, equally interlocking and meaningful, is a feature of the novels. Symbols like the Haunted Castle and the Secret Cavern and figures like Frankenstein's Monster and Melmoth the Wanderer speak as powerfully and mystically as anything in the German literature of the time.

The Gothic novels, in fact, have exercised a vast influence on the development of the European novel: many of the classics of the nineteenth and twentieth

centuries could never have been written without them. The Brontë sisters, Charles Dickens, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allen Poe, Herman Melville, William Faulkner are a few of the English and American names who either wrote in the Gothic tradition or who were strongly influenced by the type.¹⁰ E.T.A. Hoffmann, Balzac, Dostoyevsky, Kafka and Thomas Mann are some of the great figures of European literature who show a similar influence.¹¹

The purpose of this study is not to trace the origins and influence of the Gothic novel: this has already been done in some detail. What must be emphasized though is that these disparaged and maligned novels were of decisive importance in literary history, and that after generations of authors had pillaged and looted their great storehouse of ideas, they still languish in neglect. The fact is that Melmoth the Wanderer is a sort of novelists' Bible: everything is in it, and this probably accounts for the great admiration in which it has been held by many men of letters.

It fascinated Rossetti, Thackeray and Miss Mitford. It was praised by Balzac, who wrote a satirical sequel - Melmoth Reconcilié à L'Eglise (1835), and by Baudelaire, and exercised a considerable influence on French literature.¹²

The form can change but not the ethos: for in a sense Melmoth is as ageless as his myth: no novel could be more modern. In it, and by implication in the other great novels which preceded it, are statements of ideas and dark problems that are the perennial concern of man in every age. For although they are ostensibly about fairytale castles and romantic adventures, the novels intuitively embody many of the archetypal mysteries of the soul.

iii. UNCONSCIOUS URGINGS

The origin of some of the Gothic novels was in dreams, powerful dreams perhaps expressing some deep, unconscious urging.

The idea for the first of the novels, The Castle of Otranto, came to Horace

Walpole in a powerful dream. The famous event was described by the author himself:

I waked one morning, in the beginning of last June, from a dream, of which all I could recover was, that I had thought myself in an ancient castle (a very natural dream for a head filled like mine with Gothic story) and that on the uppermost bannister of a great staircase I saw a gigantic hand in armour. In the evening I sat down, and began to write, without knowing in the least what I intended to say or relate.¹³

One of the most famous anecdotes in English literary history concerns the origins of one of the last great Gothic novels, Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. The story is as famous as the novel itself, and centres around her holiday in the Swiss Alps with Shelley, Byron and Byron's secretary, Polidori. To while away the time during the rainy weather, the company read a famous collection of German ghost stories and decided as a consequence that each of them should try his hand at writing one himself. The two poets soon abandoned the attempt, although Mrs Shelley did not. She struggled for days to find a good idea, but to no avail. Inspiration came eventually only as the result of an incredible dream:

My imagination, unbidden, possessed and guided me, gifting the successive images that arose in my mind with a vividness far beyond the usual bounds of reverie. I saw - with shut eyes, but acute mental vision - I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life, and stir with an uneasy, half-vital motion. Frightful must it be for supremely frightful would be the effect of any human endeavour to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world. His success would terrify the artist; he would rush away from his odious handiwork, horror-stricken ... He sleeps; but he is awakened; he opens his eyes; behold, the horrid thing stands at his bedside, opening his curtains and looking on him with yellow, watery, but speculative eyes.

I opened mine in terror. The idea so possessed my mind, that a thrill of fear ran through me, and I wished to exchange the ghastly image of my fancy for the realities around ... I could not so easily get rid of my hideous phantom; still it haunted me ... On the morrow I announced that I had thought of a story. I began that day ... making only a transcript of the grim terrors of my waking dream.¹⁴

The outcome was of course Frankenstein, one of the most famous and striking of all Gothic novels.

Polidori did not complete his story immediately; however, the stimulation

provided by his stay with his literary friends inspired him to write his powerful Novelle, The Vampyre. The little work is full of interest and won such fame as to be thought Byron's own.

The creation of The Monk is also very interesting, for it appears that Lewis wrote the book in the surprisingly short period of ten weeks. On September 23, 1794, Lewis wrote to his mother from The Hague:

What do you think of my having written, in the space of ten weeks, a romance of between three and four hundred octavo? I have even written out half of it fair. It is called 'The Monk', and I am myself so pleased with it, that if the Booksellers will not buy it, I shall publish it myself.¹⁵

However, considering the complex and composite elements of his sources, this appears a suspiciously short period for the writing of his novel. It is well-known that The Mysteries of Udolpho made a powerful impression on him, inspiring him to take up the work he had one point relinquished:

I was induced to go on with it by reading 'the Mysteries of Udolpho', which in my opinion is one of the most interesting Books that have ever been published.¹⁶

If Lewis's time of composition is right, the reading of Mrs Radcliffe's novel must have made some deep appeal to his creative faculties and stimulated a process that forged his diverse ideas into a single forceful and well-organized novel.

Mrs Radcliffe herself poses a mystery: a woman of reclusive habits and limited experience she was able to create her vast novels alone at night before a great fire while her husband was out on business. It is not surprising that she was known as "the mighty enchantress of Udolpho"¹⁷ in her time, for her novels do seem to touch on magical chords buried deeply within the unconscious mind.

Like Coleridge and his opium dream which led to writing of 'Kubla Kahn', the Gothic novelists seemed to fuse their impressions and process them into something new. In expressing their creative impulses they indeed seemed to be dipping into some great common well of inspiration.

iv. LES CHEFS D' OEUVRES

The novels used in this study have not been chosen arbitrarily. The Gothic novel stimulated much creative activity, indeed produced many hundreds of examples especially in the very popular chapbook form. Montague Summer's monumental Gothic Bibliography reveals the tremendous literary industry that developed out of Gothic fiction. The vast majority of this literature is forgotten, and indeed was churned out to satisfy an insatiable but ephemeral public demand. Even the better specimens lack the qualities that characterize the finest novels of this type: these, because of their power and artistry and the impact made by their appearances, stand like mountain peaks out of the welter of inferior imitation.¹⁸ Even once famous titles like Confessions of the Nun of St Omer (1805), The Recess (1783), Manfroné, or the One-Handed Monk (1809) and The Nocturnal Minstral (1810)¹⁹ have passed into total oblivion.

However this is not the case with the great authors Mrs Radcliffe, Lewis, Mrs Shelley and Maturin, with Walpole, Mrs Reeve, Beckford and Polidori following at a more discreet distance. The major works of these authors could serve as the key-points through which the graph of the Gothic achievements could be plotted: it would be found that the graph follows an ever-ascending sweep from the first Gothic novel, The Castle of Otranto in 1764, through the vital years of the 1790s when Mrs Radcliffe and Lewis were writing, to a culminating point in 1820 with the appearance of Melmoth the Wanderer.

The graph begins quietly and initially the progression is a slow one. The starting-point is Walpole's epoch-making little novel. It is difficult to read this novel patiently today let alone to concede that it has value. Historically it is crucial, for Walpole's ideas were seminal and the novel is the archetype of the whole Gothic school, containing as it does hints and outlines of nearly every feature that later more creative minds would develop with power. Walpole himself was conscious of the shortcomings of his work: he clearly foresaw that his ideas could be elaborated.

As the public have applauded the attempt, the author must not say he was entirely unequal to the task he had undertaken: yet if the new route he has struck out shall have paved a road for men of brighter talents, he shall own with pleasure and modesty, that he was sensible the plan was capable of receiving greater embellishments than his imagination or conduct of the passions could bestow on it.²⁰

In spite of the great success of his work, the Gothic novel was slow to proliferate: after Walpole, the most notable figure to carry on the development was Clara Reeve. She wrote many novels, but the one to win her great fame and to prove the important link between the works of Walpole and Mrs Radcliffe was The Old English Baron (1777). This dry and colourless work is, like The Castle of Otranto, almost unreadable today: but its importance is too significant to be overlooked. If Walpole initiated the school generally, Mrs Reeve is important for the specific influence she exerted on Mrs Radcliffe, the protagonist of the 'rational' branch of Gothic fiction. In the Preface to the second edition of her novel she explained her attitude clearly:

... I beg leave to conduct my reader back again, till he comes within view of the Castle of Otranto; a work which ... is an attempt to unite various merits and graces of the ancient Romance and modern Novel. To attain this end, there is required a sufficient degree of the marvellous, to excite the attention; enough of the manners of real life, to give an air of probability to the work; and enough of the pathetic, to engage the heart in its behalf.

The book we have mentioned is excellent in the last two points, but has a redundancy in the first; the opening excites the attention very strongly; the conduct of the story is artful and judicious; the characters are admirably drawn and supported; the diction polished and elegant; yet with all these brilliant advantages, it palls upon the mind (though it does not upon the ear); and the reason is obvious, the machinery is so violent, that it destroys the effect it is intended to excite. Had the story been kept within the utmost verge of probability, the effect had been preserved, without losing the least circumstance that excites or detains the attention ...

In the course of my observations upon this singular book, it seemed to me that it was possible to compose a work upon the same plan wherein these defects might be avoided; and the keeping, as in painting, might be preserved.²¹

This rational attitude was to prove a subsidiary one, even though given a masterly exposition in The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794). The fascination of the supernatural was too strong even for Mrs Radcliffe to ignore. She conceded its power but refused to submit to its spell, as is dramatized in this argument

between the rational Count de Villeroy and his superstitious guests:

Though the count had much the superiority of the baron in point of argument, he had considerably fewer adherents; for that love, so natural to the human mind of whatever is able to distend its faculties with wonder and astonishment, attached the majority of the company to the side of the baron; and though many of the count's propositions were unanswerable, his opponents were inclined to believe this the consequence of their own want of knowledge on so abstracted a subject, rather than that arguments did not exist which were forcible enough to conquer his.²²

This rational branch temporarily entered the main stream of Gothic fiction, but was destined to become a tributary once more when Mrs Radcliffe was no longer active and able to provide it with masterpieces.

Walpole's supernaturalism stirred the colourful imagination of the wealthy eccentric, William Beckford, in whose Vathek (1787) the Gothic novel found its fantastic masterpiece. This work drew on other eighteenth century sources of inspiration like the oriental tales of Johnson and Voltaire, and, most importantly, on The Arabian Nights themselves.²³ The work is a riot of colour and life, and is thoroughly Gothic in its conception and characteristics. The vague terrors of Walpole and Mrs Reeve here assume a sinister horror, a lurid sensual-sadistic sensibility that was a lesson to Lewis. Its appeal to the new spirit of the age was clearly indicated in Byron's delight in the work: for him it became a type of Bible, the manifesto of a tortured romantic view of the world.²⁴

If Mrs Reeve was the precursor of Mrs Radcliffe, then Beckford stands in the same relationship to Lewis. If The Castle of Otranto is the Gothic archetype, then surely The Monk is the prototype. Splendidly constructed and rich in content this work contains everything traditionally associated with this school of fiction.

John Crowe Ransom has remarked that Milton succeeded in Lycidas in including every motif in the tradition of the pastoral elegy. Lewis surely came close to the same achievement with the Gothic novel in The Monk, although Montague Summers notes with some regret that despite his fondness for graveyard scenes he is wholly lacking in vampirism. At the least he provides vigorous, expansive, full-blooded melodrama, with a wicked monk who sells himself to the devil, a fair friend who betrays him, burial alive, incest, parricide, the Wandering Jew, a

Bleeding Nun, the Spanish Inquisition, a haunted castle in Germany, intricate love-intrigues, spectacles, some highly competent balladry, and an ending that must be as daring as any in the history of fiction.²⁵

Its success was enormous, the scandal it caused only adding to its mystique. It was the work of a youth of twenty written in all the white heat of fervent inspiration: if its subject matter is sometimes garish and its method crude, the tremendous importance of its content and its vast influence should not blind the reader to its power and importance.

Although Vathek must have exercised a powerful influence on Lewis's novel, The Mysteries of Udolpho was its immediate stimulus. Mrs Radcliffe's great novel is still for many the most famous of the Gothic novels. It is a vast work, planned and controlled with great care and representing a total and unified view of life. The authoress's three prior novels were the testing ground for her ideas and techniques which were fully embodied in Udolpho. If this is her chief work it might seem unnecessary that Mrs Radcliffe should be represented in this study by two novels. This is not the case, however, since in The Italian (1797) Mrs Radcliffe perhaps shows herself to be an even greater artist than in the earlier and more famous work. Here she moves more swiftly with a less cluttered background, and with ideas that emerge clearly and concisely from her pages. The Italian is important for other reasons too: in this novel "the great enchantress of Udolpho" has shown herself very much aware of new developments in Gothic fiction, as represented in the challenge provided by The Monk. Lewis's novel was undoubtedly a little too strong, too unrestrained and colourful for Mrs Radcliffe's fastidious taste. Nevertheless it provided a welter of new ideas and certainly opened up new areas of thought that could not be ignored. The Italian is Mrs Radcliffe's response to The Monk, her very successful adaption to new directions she could never fully take herself: this is probably why she wrote no more novels after The Italian apart from the posthumous Gaston de Blondeville. This last novel was in itself remarkable for it is more historical than Gothic in character, and shows her awareness yet again of new developments in the world of fiction. The Italian remains Mrs Radcliffe's most admirable

book: its restraint and considerable power make its neglect almost incomprehensible.

The period following on the publication of The Italian were poor years for the Gothic novel: Lewis wrote only one novel and Mrs Radcliffe published no more novels during her life time. For two decades there appeared no really substantial work in this school. The next great author to begin writing was Charles Robert Maturin; he wrote several works in the Gothic tradition before producing his masterpiece, Melmoth the Wanderer. His three early novels, The Fatal Revenge or The Family of Montorio (1807), The Wild Irish Boy (1808) and The Milesian Chief (1812) achieved no posterity.

Mrs Shelley's Frankenstein (1819) was the first great Gothic work to be written in the nineteenth century, and a fine example of a work more spoken of than read. In the saga of Dr Frankenstein and his Monster she produced one of the new myths of Romanticism. Her Monster has achieved a grisly notoriety that has little connection with her novel - a work of power and considerable thought, a profound musing on many deep issues. In its restraint it recalls The Italian, for like the Radcliffe novel it is a lucid and pared work of fiction.

Polidori's short work, The Vampyre, a Novelle rather than a novel, like Frankenstein, is very important in that it created another central Romantic myth, that of the Vampire. He took over a folk-motif and created out of it Lord Ruthven, one of the terrifying supernatural beings of the age, the first substantial expression of the vampire myth in England and the direct ancestor of one of the most popular imitative Gothic novels of the nineteenth century, Bram Stoker's Dracula (1896). Dracula is a true descendant of the Gothic line and has furnished modern western man with one of his most popular figures of terror.

Both Frankenstein and The Vampyre immediately preceded the work which

stands at the apotheosis of the whole Gothic novel. This is without doubt Maturin's masterpiece, Melmoth the Wanderer, a very long and complex work. Every notable theme and problem to emerge in the works of his predecessors were embodied in this novel with great thoroughness and in minute detail. The work is so intense in its intellectual and emotional appeal and is capable of making a considerable onslaught on the reader's imagination. Its range is cosmic. Once the Gothic novel had reached this point it could hardly develop any further. This novel marks the highpoint, the culmination of the school. However much the Gothic tales in magazines and chapbooks may have continued to proliferate, the line had exhausted itself.

Many later works written in this tradition are really variations on an already played-out theme. Hence it has only been when the basic inspiration of the Gothic novel fired the mind of genius that truly significant works resulted: but even as Beethoven's late Diabelli Variations is perhaps his greatest work in a field he perfected in his maturity, so the later Gothic-inspired novels that have survived are towering masterpieces: Wuthering Heights and Moby Dick are two that come to mind.

v. THE GOTHIC CYCLE: LE ROMAN NOIR

To speak of a school or cycle is to imply a shared inspiration, a set of common features that give an overall unity to a set of works. It focuses the whole meaning of the Gothic novel more sharply if it is regarded as a genre, a distinct literary type with predictable features. Several handbooks describe this type of novel in terms of its salient features. A Reader's Guide to Literary Terms by Beckson and Ganz has the following entry:

These stories, usually set in medieval castles complete with secret passageways, mysterious dungeons, peripatetic ghosts, and much gloom and supernatural paraphernalia, were thrillers designed to evoke genteel shudders.²⁶

Abrams in his Glossary of Literary Terms is a little more penetrating:

... authors of such novels set their stories in the medieval period, often in a gloomy castle replete with dungeons, subterranean passages and sliding panels, and made plentiful use of ghosts, mysterious disappearances, and other sensational and supernatural occurrences (which in some writers turned out to have natural explanations); their principal aim was to evoke chilling terror by exploiting mystery, cruelty, and a variety of horrors. Most of the novels are now enjoyed as period pieces, but the best of them opened up to fiction the realm of the irrational and of the perverse impulses and the nightmarish terrors that lie beneath the orderly surface of the civilized mind.²⁷

Both these definitions centre attention on the most obvious and 'popular' elements of the Gothic novel. However there is a profounder thematic pre-occupation that links these novels together in a type of cycle: this is simply the enactment of the eternal struggle between Good and Evil. All the Gothic novels have this as their central intention in whatever form it may appear: in fact it infiltrates nearly every level of meaning in these novels, from the early crudities of The Castle of Otranto to the complex involutions of Melmoth the Wanderer. The theme is more elaborately developed until it becomes an all-absorbing obsession of every one of the main characters in Maturin's novels.

The universe of the novels is thus divided between the interests of Heaven and Hell, and once this basic concept is understood, it will be found that it affects every aspect of the novels - from the characters and setting to the actual shaping of the plots.

There are also other clear if subsidiary ideas and forms characterizing aspects of the novels. The same types of characters will be found throughout the various works, from the villains through the heroes and heroines down to the servants; common ideas and symbols govern the concept of setting while the plots are constructed on discernible patterns that have a strong connection with the thematic concerns.

The Gothic novel can be labelled a cycle characterized by a unity of vision, by a series of common pre-occupations that intrigued all the novelists from Walpole to Maturin. This unifying vision is at the same time an intensifying

one for the features that these novels share are also consistently developed in power and detail, as one author influenced another and the achievements of the one were expanded into something more elaborate by his successors. What the upward swing of the graph of the Gothic novel illustrates is a full development complete in itself and integrated sufficiently in ideas and practice to constitute a type of cycle. Walpole was aware of his innovation and he was also conscious that his creation was a beginning that needed a greater genius than himself to develop. Robert D. Hume has described the progression in the Gothic novel very concisely.

With the great Gothic novels - Frankenstein, Melmoth the Wanderer, Moby Dick - to open our eyes, we can see the considerable aesthetic potential latent in the form crudely forged by Walpole and developed by Radcliffe and Lewis. The later, greater Gothic novels do not appear full-blown from nowhere. They inherited a form and tradition which had undergone half a century of exploratory development.²⁸

It is this form and tradition, the nature of this "exploratory development", that are the concerns of this study.

II

CHARACTER

The intensifying vision typifying the development of the Gothic novel is best revealed in character. This is the most important ingredient in the genre, the prime concern of the novelists and the chief means of developing theme. Character is, in fact, theme-dominated, and tends strongly to the emblematic or the symbolic. However, an interesting inner evolution is the development of limited realism in the portrayal of character, a search for greater verisimilitude.

The compendious nature of the Gothic genre becomes very clear when Northrop Frye's famous division of literary character into a system of modes¹ is applied to character in these novels. In his system he describes the development of fictional character from the divine beings of myth, through the supernatural creatures and paragons of romance, the heroes of the high-mimetic and the ordinary personages of the low-mimetic to the isolated and perceptive anti-heroes of the ironic. This is a complete cycle covering literature from its earliest primitive expression to its sophistication in modern times; the cycle is complete and circular, returning in its last stages to a variation of its origins since the ironic protagonist shows signs of reliving old myths in a new form. Frye has emphasized that in much literature great resonance and layers of meaning are achieved because several of these modes are operating at the same time in the one work of fiction:

Once we have learned to distinguish the modes, however, we must then learn to recombine them. For while one mode constitutes the underlying tonality of a work of fiction, any or all of the other four may be simultaneously present. Much of our sense of the subtlety of great literature comes from this modal counterpoint. Chaucer is a medieval poet specializing mainly in romance, whether sacred or secular. Of his pilgrims, the knight and the parson clearly present the norms of the society in which he functions as a poet, and, as we have them, the Canterbury Tales are contained by these two figures, who open and close the series. But to overlook Chaucer's mastery of low mimetic and ironic techniques would be as wrong as to think of him as a modern novelist who got into the Middle Ages by mistake.²

This is characteristic of the Gothic novel where much of the interest and variety springs from a sometimes heady mixture of the modes. The dominant tonality of the genre is the idealistic and fantastic one of romance, spiced by rapid and recurrent transitions from one mode to another, until in the later complex works the pure romance melody has developed into an elaborate web of modal polyphony.

1. THE VILLAIN-HERO

The most striking contribution of the Gothic novel to world literature has been the character of the Villain-Hero. It has become a cliché of literary history to discuss the influence of Milton's Satan on Mrs Radcliffe and the influence in their turn of her villains on the development of the dark, mysterious hero of Byronic Romanticism. However this derivative view is inclined to overlook a dynamic evolution of the villain figure within the Gothic genre itself. An appreciation of this development is the key to understanding the trend of intensification in the Gothic novel between 1764 and 1820.

i. The Inscrutable Tyrant

The first example of the Villain-Hero, indeed the archetype, occurs in The Castle of Otranto. Manfred is the blurred outline of the whole illustrious line of villains who will dominate the Gothic novel for the next sixty years. He is a static figure, uncomplicated and undeveloped. However he establishes the first type in the development, the Inscrutable Tyrant. His most important features are his harsh, imperious ways and his overriding passion for power. Under all these external manifestations of character lies concealed the nagging remorse for his secret crime, the usurpation of the Castle of Otranto, a fact which firmly establishes Manfred as the imposter or alazon whose lineage in literature is an ancient one.³

Jerome returned to the prince, and did not fail to repeat the message in the very words it had been uttered. The first sounds struck Manfred with terror; but when he heard himself styled usurper, his rage re-kindled, and all his courage revived. Usurper! - Insolent villain! cried he, who dares to question my title?⁴

Added to the mystique of his dark past is the arrogance that scorns all the norms and expectations of ordinary society, a defiance that has decidedly sexual overtones. Manfred is quite prepared to tear apart his family in his desire for Isabella, his daughter-in-law to be, even though such a union would mean adultery and incest. His alignment with the intentions of Hell are clear.

You! My father-in-law! the father of Conrad! the husband of the virtuous and tender Hippolita! - I tell you, said Manfred imperiously, Hippolita is no longer my wife, I divorce her from this hour ... At those words he seized the cold hands of Isabella, who was half-dead with fright and horror. She shrieked and started from him. Manfred rose to pursue her ... Look, my lord! see heaven itself declares against your impious intentions! - Heaven nor Hell shall impede my designs, said Manfred, advancing again to seize the princess.⁵

His pursuit of Isabella establishes the relationship between the villain and the heroine in the whole course of the Gothic novel. This tension between the male and female protagonists represents the pursuit of the anima by the shadow, the archetypal pattern established by Jung.

The shadow is the inferior being in ourselves, the one who wants to do all the things that we do not allow ourselves to do, who is everything that we are not, the Mr Hyde to our Dr Jekyll.⁶

Isabella and the type of heroine she initiates, represent an inner ideal of womanhood sought after by the shadow as the complementary feminine element contained in his unconscious:

This image of a woman, because it is an archetype of the collective unconscious, has attributes that appear and re-appear through the ages, whenever men are describing the women who are significant to them ... the anima has a timeless quality - she often looks young, though there is always the suggestion of years of experience behind her. She is wise, but not formidably so; it is rather that 'something strangely meaningful clings to her, a secret knowledge or hidden wisdom.' ...

The compelling power of the anima is due to her image being an archetype of the collective unconscious, which is projected on to any woman who offers the slightest hook on which her picture may be hung.⁷

The significance of Manfred for the Gothic novel is inestimable. He is not a substantial character but he embodies the essential qualities of mystery, power and evil that are the necessary ingredients of the Villain-Hero.

The type is given a fuller representation in Mrs Radcliffe's great villain, Montoni. He emerges from the shadows, unknown, threatening and impenetrable.

... he owned that he had understood abroad that Montoni was a man of desperate fortune and character. He said something of a castle of his situated among the Apennines, and of some strange circumstances that might be mentioned as to his former mode of life. I pressed him to inform me further; but I believe the strong interest I felt was visible in my manner and alarmed him; for no entreaties could prevail with him to give any explanation of the circumstances he had alluded to, or to mention anything further concerning Montoni ... I renewed the subject repeatedly; but the Italian wrapped himself up in reserve, said that what he had mentioned he had caught only from floating reports, and that reports frequently arose from personal malice ...

The information she had just received excited, perhaps, more alarm than it could justify ... She had never liked Montoni; the fire and keenness of his eye, its proud exultation, its bald fierceness, its sullen watchfulness, as occasion and even slight occasion, had called forth the latent soul, she had often observed with emotion; while from the usual expression of his countenance she had always shrunk.⁸

Like Manfred he is driven by ambition for power and wealth and is inexorable in achieving his ends; he too has the dark hint of some mysterious crime hidden in his past. He appears to be a type of giant above the cares, needs and demands of ordinary men, fired as he is by his own inner energy.

... his soul was little susceptible of light pleasures. He delighted in the energies of the passions, the difficulties and tempests of life, which wreck the happiness of others, roused and strengthened all the powers of his mind, and afforded him the highest enjoyments of which his mind was capable.⁹

He is almost superhuman in his scorn for the fears and weaknesses of ordinary men.

He was ... laid upon a couch and suffering a degree of anguish from his wound, which few persons could have disguised as he did. His countenance which was stern but calm, expressed the dark passion of revenge, but no symptom of pain; bodily pain, indeed, he had always despised,¹⁰ and had yielded only to the strong and terrible energies of the soul.

Like Manfred again, he has no regard for society or its norms: they must be bent to his purposes and he will flout them in his own interests. In this he is like the wild Italian mercenaries who held Italy at their pleasure in the Renaissance: the authoress hints at Montoni's dark heroism early in the novel, and links him with the fierce heroes of war.¹¹ Later she develops this theme and describes Montoni as a condottiero, a leader of his own band of soldiers. As such a hero, he embodies violence and lawlessness and is the enemy of all the values Mrs Radcliffe held dear.

Delighting in the tumult and in the struggle of life, he was equally a stranger to pity and to fear; his very courage was a sort of animal ferocity; not the noble impulse of a principle such as inspires the mind against the oppressor in the cause of the oppressed; but a constitutional hardness of nerve that cannot feel, and that, therefore, cannot fear.¹²

Montoni, indeed, is quite insensitive to the beauties of nature and art, the appreciation of which is the hallmark of the refined and ameliorated mind for the authoress.¹³ He is the enemy of all that Emily St Aubert represents, and in the numerous confrontations between the heroine and her oppressor is mirrored in miniature the clash of the forces of culture and anarchy.

The persecution of Emily by Montoni is not the overtly sexual encounter between Isabella and Manfred, although basically it is the same archetypal one. Emily often seems less the niece unjustly constrained by her uncle than the heroine of a fairy tale incarcerated by the wicked ogre in his castle.

... as she surveyed through the twilight its desolation - its lofty walls overtopped with bryony, moss and nightshade, and the embattled towers that rose above - long suffering and murder came to her thoughts. One of those instantaneous and unaccountable convictions which sometimes conquer even strong minds, impressed her with its horror ...¹⁴

... "I can almost believe in giants again, and such-like, for this is just like one of their castles; and some night or other, I suppose, I shall see fairies too hopping about in the great old hall, that looks more like a church, with its huge pillars, than anything else..."¹⁵

True to his shadowy nature, Montoni passes almost imperceptibly out of the story when he has played his part. Far distant word brings the report of his mysterious and violent end in the Venetian jails in just retribution for his crimes.¹⁶

Montoni is the first great Villain-Hero of the Gothic novel, and, as the Inscrutable Tyrant, points very clearly to one of the major sources of inspiration for the Gothic novelists: that of Elizabethan drama.

The "villain-hero", as he developed in the plays of Marlowe and in those of some later Elizabethans, is a distinct and important type of character. Moreover, he did not make his final exit with the ending of the Elizabethan period, but has re-appeared at various times since, especially during the Romantic Revival at the end of the eighteenth century ...

Mrs Radcliffe, who took Walpole's crude beginnings and shaped out of them a definite type of literature, ... was the person really responsible for the revival of the Elizabethan villain ...

The so-called "Gothic" novelists ... brought him forward again, and handed him on to later Romanticists like Byron and Shelley. Through these men, once more, he influenced the general course of literature and played his part in the development of the nineteenth century novel.¹⁷

The re-processing tendencies of the Gothic novel and its crucial situation as a water-shed is dramatized in the character of the Villain-Hero.

Beckford's Vathek is also a tyrant, and a great lord. Of all the early villains none is more related to the realm of romance. The nature of this oriental tale calls to mind the exuberant world of The Arabian Nights in which magic, the Indian Giaour and Vathek's terrible evil eye are not out of place. He is presented immediately as a splendid figure addicted to extravagant gestures, illustrated in the various delights of his palace of the senses. As with the other Inscrutable Tyrants he is devoted to his own ambitions, but here he is rather different from Manfred and Montoni. Vathek is consumed by an insatiable intellectual curiosity that leads him to look into everything. Not even the sacred mysteries of theology are safe from his insolent investigation.

He had studied so much for his amusement in the lifetime of his father, as to acquire a great deal of knowledge, though not a sufficiency to satisfy himself; for he wished to know everything; even sciences that did not exist ...

- Vathek discovered also a predilection for theological controversy; but it was not with the orthodox that he usually held. By this means he induced the zealots to oppose him, and then persecuted them in return, for he resolved, at any rate, to have reason on his side.¹⁸

In his quest for satiety he is prepared to flout all the norms of his society

which he as Caliph should uphold and protect. Hence he is prepared to seize Nouronihar for himself, irregardless that in so doing he is abusing the sacred laws of hospitality and morality.¹⁹

Vathek is the total sensualist devoted to the exploration of every voluptuous sensation: he and Nouronihar exult in a religion of pleasure.

The waving of fans was heard near the imperial pavillion; where, by the voluptuous light that glowed through the muslins, the Caliph enjoyed, at full view, all the attractions of Nouronihar. Inebriated with delight, he was all ear to her charming voice, which accompanied the lute ...

In this manner they conversed the whole day, and at night they bathed together in a basin of black marble, which admirably set off the fairness of Nouronihar ... some exquisite rarity was ever placed before them ... that fragrant and delicious wine which had been hoarded up in battles prior to the birth of Mahomet.²⁰

Their sensualism is complicated by its extension into a violent sadism.²¹

Vathek's rôle as Caliph, both temporal and spiritual head of the faithful, as well as his neurotic psychology, establish his importance in the evolution of the Villain-Hero from Inscrutable Tyrant into Criminal Monk, the next stage in the process of intensification.

ii. The Criminal Monk

The transformation of the villain into this new ecclesiastical guise still has the strongest link with the Elizabethan inspiration: for these sinister churchmen are the continuation of the line initiated by the gorgeous villains of Webster, Cardinal Montecelso and the Duchess of Malfi's prelate brother.

The first great Villain-Hero to appear in this new guise is Lewis's depraved Capuchin friar, Ambrosio, the protagonist of The Monk. This personality is the first substantial character creation in the Gothic novel.

Ambrosio is first known by his reputation, mysterious in the power it

exerts on the minds of ordinary people, and by the legend of his holiness and origins: he appears almost divine, a gift from Heaven.

No one has ever appeared to claim him, or clear up the mystery which conceals his birth; and the Monks ... have not hesitated to publish, that he is a present to them from the Virgin.²²

When he appears he exercises a fascination over his congregation. His striking appearance raises him above the run of ordinary men, and he is adulated like a saint in the annals of any romance or hagiography.

He ascended the Steps, and then turning towards his Followers, addressed to them a few words of gratitude, and exhortation. While He spoke, his Rosary, composed of large grains of amber, fell from his hand, and dropped among the surrounding multitude. It was seized eagerly, and immediately divided amidst the Spectators. Whoever became possessor of a Bead, preserved it as a sacred relique.²³

Ambrosio is a man of potentially heroic dimensions. When the narrator discusses his pernicious education and his lost qualities of mind and action, the great figures of Elizabethan drama, like Faustus and Tamburlane, are called to mind.

It was by no means his nature to be timid: But his education had impressed his mind with fear so strongly, that apprehension was now become part of his character. Had his Youth been passed in the world, He would have shown himself possessed of many brilliant and manly qualities. He was naturally enterprizing, firm, and fearless: He had a Warrior's heart, and He might have shone with splendour at the head of an Army. There was no want of generosity in his nature.²⁴

The obvious parallels Lewis draws between Ambrosio's career and attitudes, and Shakespeare's Angelo reaffirms this link with the high-mimetic tradition.

Ambrosio himself can fairly be considered an Aristotelian tragic hero ... In the first place, he is like Oedipus a foundling, a circumstance that involves eventually the plot elements of reversal and recognition. His is the tragedy of a family or "house", which Aristotle says is the best kind because of its potentiality for interesting complications. Ambrosio's ignorance of his identity leads him, like Oedipus, unwittingly into incest and parricide. One has to add here the element of Elizabethan villainy and positive evil: Ambrosio knows perfectly well that he is committing murder and rape, although he is unaware that the victims, Elivira and Antonia, are his mother and sister.²⁵

Ambrosio is a dynamic personality, his monumental presence, his force of character, his enormous capacity for "pride, lust and inhumanity" join him in

sheer determination and appetite with Manfred, Montoni and Vathek.

But Ambrosio's lineage goes further back into the mists of folk-tale than any of the three major Gothic villains so far discussed. The whole conception of his character and career is modelled on certain archetypal patterns: his lost parents and his mysterious fateful contacts with his mother and sister, is an ancient folk-motif. Further, the pattern of his career uses another such ancient motif derived from a primitive Arabian-Persian source carried across into Europe in the middle ages and given definitive, if transmuted, literary expression by Lewis: this is the fable of the Three Sins of the Hermit.²⁶ In the story, a Hermit, reputed to be saintly, is tested by fallen angels Hārūt and Mārūt who proffer him the choice of three sins - drunkenness, fornication and murder. In every recorded case of the many manifestations of this story the Hermit chooses the seemingly least dangerous of these sins, drunkenness. However, the unstable ecstasy of intoxication involves the suspension of reason, so that this basic sin has inexorably led to commitment of the other two greater sins; in his drunkenness the Hermit violates a young girl, and is consequently forced to murder her to conceal his crime. This leads to frightening complications that culminate in the Hermit's discovery and punishment.

It is this ancient and popular fable that is the basis of Lewis's creation of Ambrosio. He is a hermit of sorts, a holy man bound by various laws and vows to a stringent and disciplined way of life. His drunkenness is the self-inebriation of pride that lulls him into a false sense of security and superiority.

'Have I not freed myself from the frailty of Mankind? Fear not, Ambrosio! Take confidence in the strength of your virtue. Enter boldly into a world, to whose failings you are superior; Reflect that you are now exempted from Humanity's defects, and defy all the arts of the Spirits of Darkness. They shall know you for what you are!'

Here his reverie was interrupted by three soft knocks at the door of his cell. With difficulty did the Abbot awake from his delirium.²⁷

As a consequence of this pride, this fateful self-ignorance, he falls easy prey to the seductions of Hell, and is led into the crimes of lust and inhumanity in his rape of Antonia and his murder of both his victim and her mother. Capture,

judgment and punishment follow surely.

But if Lewis went further back than Walpole, Beckford or Mrs Radcliffe in using ancient motifs and archetypes, then conversely he went further forward in the growing realism of his depiction of character than any of his predecessors.

The characterization of Ambrosio is a significant achievement. Stimulated by the example of Mrs Radcliffe's Montoni, Lewis developed new complexities of characterization.

There is no doubt Lewis received much of his inspiration from Mrs Radcliffe's Mysteries of Udolpho. ... In his psychological treatment of character he has probably surpassed her; some real power of analysis is shown in the monk's struggle between religion and passion.²⁸

This is a mild statement of the case. Ambrosio is interesting, not because of his evil actions, or the moral example of his fall, or the horror of his end, but because of the progress of his fall, the processes of his degeneration. Ambrosio is a real person suddenly confronted with forces too great to him to withstand. Their intrusion into his life reveals a dark world unsuspected by him, the vision of which is terrific enough to change his nature. The author's concern is not so much the depiction of given situations as an attempt to understand the transitions between them.

When first presented to the reader he is splendid in every way. He has fine looks, great ability, powerful gifts and a reputation for sanctity. Underlying all the qualities, however, is the original fault of the fallen world: pride. The elements of self-effacement and sacrifice are absent so that all he does is the transmuted projection of the ego rather than subservience to an ideal. This is clear from his tumultuous emotions after the sermon described in the opening chapter:

He was no sooner alone than He gave free loose to the indulgence of his vanity. When He remembered the Enthusiasm which his discourse had excited, his heart swelled with rapture, and his imagination presented him with splendid visions of aggrandizement. He looked round him with

exultation, and Pride told him loudly, that he was superior to the rest of his fellow-Creatures.²⁹

Nevertheless the external forms of his expression are excellent: what is lacking is the dedication, the total responsibility to the meaning underlying these externals. Self-satisfaction rather than sacrifice characterize his attitude. In Ambrosio's busy inner life one is witnessing a personality rendered increasingly impervious to the demands of love by the rapt and increasingly involuted contemplation of the self. Lewis helps to endow Ambrosio with a convincing degree of reality by complicating his reactions to the issues of Good and Evil. Unlike the Inscrutable Tyrants who align themselves with Evil unquestioningly, the Monk reacts less predictably. His sense of clear distinction between moral alternatives constantly obtrudes, causing him to evaluate his behaviour for what it is.

He was not unconscious that his attempts were highly criminal: He saw clearly the baseness of seducing the innocent Girl: But his passion was too violent to permit his abandoning his design. He resolved to pursue it, let the consequences be what they might.³⁰

Ambrosio is not a fixed counter as Montoni and Vathek are: he has an inner core of timidity and uncertainty which is violently assailed by events and rapid changes. Consider his response to Rosario's revelation that he is in fact a woman, Matilda.³¹ While she speaks he experiences feelings of surprise, confusion and resentment as he adjusts to the shock of her disclosure. But the author more significantly focuses attention on Ambrosio's subconscious response beneath the frothy excitement of his immediate reactions. His pride is flattered by Matilda's praises, by the attentions of a beautiful young woman. What is most important, however, is the deep sexual impulse stirred by the whole episode.³²

Later, when Ambrosio has satisfied his lust for the first time, his emotion again reveals this attempt at a new complexity of characterization.

The burst of transport was past: Ambrosio's lust was satisfied; Pleasure fled, and Shame usurped her seat in his bosom. Confused and terrified at his weakness He drew himself from Matilda's arms. His perjury presented itself before him ... He looked forward with horror; his heart

was despondent, and became the abode of satiety and disgust.³³

Indeed his mind veers between extremes of frenetic activity and hopeless paralysis, his reactions to the murder of Elvira, the rape of Antonia illustrating the growing verisimilitude of Lewis's portrayal of the inner processes of Ambrosio's mind.

Following on his initial fall, as a complicating factor in the unfolding of the Monk's destruction, is a further development: the central exposition of character analyzing and explaining the influences that have shaped Ambrosio's character from childhood. The author's reasonings may be primitive and his depiction crude, but its significance for the Gothic novel is surely very great indeed. Such an extended piece of analysis, such probing of a character's education and motivation, is something original and important for the genre.³⁴ Judged by this realistic measure, Manfred, Montoni and Vathek are ciphers, although it must be remembered that the yardstick of verisimilitude is by no means the most important one in the appreciation of character in the genre.

Ambrosio's pursuit of Antonia again operates on the shadow-anima principle but with a horror new to the Gothic novel. His neurotic tendencies, exacerbated by his lapses, are intensified by his desire for Antonia. He is now the victim of impulses he cannot control, and wilfully opens himself to temptation in frequently seeing her. As a consequence his impulse quickly develops into an obsession. His attitude is initially a benevolent one of friendship, but with growing obsession comes a progressive debasement of pure feelings.

At first He bounded his wishes to inspire Antonia with friendship: But no sooner was he convinced that she felt that sentiment in its fullest extent, than his aim became more decided, and his attentions assumed a warmer colour.

Once the novelty of her virginal modesty has worn off, his grosser appetite asserts itself in wanting to destroy what he most admires:

Grown used to her modesty it no longer commanded the same respect and awe: He still admired it, but it only made him more anxious to deprive her of that quality, which formed her principal charm.³⁵

As with the other villains, he is eventually suitably punished. His experiences in the cells of the Inquisition provide the author with his last opportunity of depicting Ambrosio's mental turmoil. The legend, the saint, the hero, the profligate and murderer are all forgotten in the anguish of an ordinary agonized man.

Returned to his dungeon, the sufferings of Ambrosio's body were far more supportable than those of his mind. His dislocated limbs, the nails torn from his hands and feet, and his fingers mashed and broken by the pressure of screws, were far surpassed in anguish by the agitation of his soul, and vehemence of his terrors.

He becomes the victim of uncontrollable emotional excesses, terrifying visions and fearful dreams.

He abandoned himself to the transports of desperate rage ... He dreaded the approach of sleep: No sooner did his eyes close, wearied with tears and watching, than the dreadful visions seemed to be realised, on which his mind had dwelt during the day... They vanished not till his repose was disturbed by excess of agony. Then would He start from the ground ... his brows running down with cold sweat, his eyes wild and phrenzied ... Despair chained up his faculties in Idiotism, and He remained for some hours, unable to speak or move, or indeed to think.³⁶

His exhausted mind collapses under the pressure.

Lewis has not produced a stock character in Ambrosio. The Monk is not a static creation, but a developing one. Lewis has shown the human personality to be essentially unstable, inconsistent, the victim of vicissitudes, often capable of much but producing little, even nothing. Ambrosio has discovered depths to his personality that he was unaware existed. In plumbing these depths he releases energies that he cannot control, that must ultimately sweep him to destruction. In many ways he becomes the victim of himself, of his own character with its vast appetites and perverted aptitudes.

The emphasis must fall on the "becomes", for it is the processes of character, the transitions, the actual becoming, that interest Lewis. It is surprising how long and difficult it is to conduct a remarkable man to the point where damnation is certain. "This was Lewis's main insight, fully embodied in his narrative."³⁷

Few psychological processes have been documented more fully than the gradual degradation of Lewis's Ambrosio. Any interpreter of him as a nightmare monster, a dark symbol of sexual violation, must overlook many pages of character exposition. The reader may not want them; he may reject them as bad psychology or bad fictional method, but they are there nonetheless, and they establish a norm of character.³⁸

Education and environment are important formative influences, but just where does the individual's self-responsibility come into play? If confrontation with the disastrous potential buried within the dark and frightening regions of the self can be so fatal for a monk, where does evil end?

Whereas in The Castle of Otranto and in The Mysteries of Udolpho the Villain-Hero had been a vital protagonist, he was not the central concern: only in Vathek and The Monk was he to become so. Ambrosio indeed occupied Lewis's vision completely. The power and detail of this creation were too forceful to be ignored, indeed it was as the Criminal Monk, Ambrosio, that the Gothic novel found a prototype that was to be consolidated within two years by Mrs Radcliffe in her counterpart to Lewis's character, Schedoni.

Mrs Radcliffe was undoubtedly influenced by Lewis although it is certain that her fastidious nature was repelled by his lurid imagination.³⁹ Ambrosio presented Mrs Radcliffe with a new and compelling treatment of the Villain-Hero, in which process and complexity were essential attributes. The magnitude of Ambrosio's crimes, their violent sexual character, was also a little too strong for Mrs Radcliffe whose conception of the Criminal Monk is very different.

Schedoni is an artful cross between Mrs Radcliffe's famous Montoni and Lewis's Ambrosio. Like Montoni he has shadowy origins: they are a secret which he is determined to keep.

There lived in the Dominican Convent of the Spirito Santo, at Naples, a man called father Schedoni ... whose family was unknown, and from some circumstances, it appeared, that he wished to throw an impenetrable veil over his origins ... his spirit, as it had sometimes looked forth

from under the disguise of his manners, seemed lofty; it shewed not, however, the aspirings of a generous mind, but rather the gloomy pride of a disappointed one. Some few persons in the convent, who had been interested by his appearance, believed that the peculiarities of his manners, his severe reserve, and unconquerable silence, his solitary habits and frequent penances, were the effect of misfortunes preying upon a haughty and disordered spirit; while others conjectured them the consequence of some hideous crime gnawing upon an awakened conscience.⁴⁰

His appearance sums up the whole impression he creates: this is the most famous single description of a person in the whole oeuvre of Mrs Radcliffe, a description that served as the manifesto of the dark romantic hero. Here, like Ambrosio, Schedoni is a man almost bigger than life.

Among his associates no one loved him, many disliked him, and more feared him. His figure was striking, but not so from grace; it was tall, and, though extremely thin, his limbs were large and uncouth, and as he stalked along, wrapt in the black garments of his order, there was something terrible in its air; something almost super-human. His cowl, too, as it threw a shade over the livid paleness of his face, encreased its severe character, and gave an effect to his large melancholy eye, which approached to horror. His was not the melancholy of a sensible and wounded heart, but apparently that of a gloomy and ferocious disposition. There was something in his physiognomy extremely singular, and that cannot easily be defined. It 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.⁴¹

In a single exposition Mrs Radcliffe has presented the whole character of Montoni. The latter stalks through the pages of The Mysteries of Udolpho inscrutable and unchanging: he remains an enigma. The power of her new creation and the intensifying vision will be an adumbration of the enigma according to Lewis's technique of characterization.

The change comes in the vigorous inner life Mrs Radcliffe gives to her Criminal Monk. His reaction to the public insult by Vivaldi shows a mind seething with resentment, capable of unscrupulous action.

That insult, which had pointed forth his hypocrisy and ridiculed the solemn abstraction he assumed, had sunk deep in his heart, and, fermenting the direst passions of his nature, he meditated a terrible revenge. It had subjected him to mortifications of various kinds.

Ambition ... was one of his strongest motives of action, and he had long since assumed a character of severe sanctity, chiefly for the purposes of lifting him to promotion.⁴²

In his diabolical wrath he becomes, like Montoni in his castle and Ambrosio preaching to the people, a figure from the magical world of romance.

The torments of his mind and the severe penance he had observed, had produced a surprising change in his appearance, so that he resembled a spectre rather than a human being. His visage was wan and wasted, his eyes were sunk and had become nearly motionless, and his whole air and attitudes exhibited the wild energy of something - not of this earth.⁴³

The authoress depicts Schedoni as a man of ambition: in his search for vengeance he will not stop even at murder. What is missing is the heavy sexual emphasis of Ambrosio's passion. Like Ambrosio, pride is his chief fault, pride that expresses itself in violence and manipulation, as in the Machiavellian villains of Elizabethan revenge tragedy.

Having reached his apartment, he secured the door, though not any person, except himself, was in the house ... Had it been possible to have shut out all consciousness of himself, also, how willingly would he have done so! He threw himself into a chair, and remained for a considerable time motionless, and lost in thought, yet the emotions of his mind were violent and contradictory. At the very instant when his heart reproached him with the crime he had meditated, he regretted the ambitious views he must relinquish if he failed to perpetrate it ... But the subtlety of self-love still eluded his enquiries, and he did not detect that pride was even at this instant of self-examination, and of critical import, the master-spring of his mind.⁴⁴

The desire for power and influence as well as the secret burden of his crimes make of him another imposter or alazon. What is new is the inner life beneath the façade: this inner life comes vividly to life in the horrific scene when he contemplates murdering Ellena. Far from being the cardboard villain of melodrama, his mind seethes with doubts and inhibitions that reach a climax when he discovers that the victim (as he thinks) is his daughter: the predictable core of character is bewildered by a range of complex reactions.

His agitation and repugnance to strike increased with every moment of delay, and, as often as he prepared to plunge the poinard in her bosom, a shuddering horror restrained him. Astonished at his own feelings, and indignant at what he termed a dastardly weakness, he found it

necessary to argue with himself and his rapid thoughts... His respiration was short and laborious, chilly drops stood on his forehead, and all his faculties of mind seemed suspended.⁴⁵

The whole scene is a remarkable one because of Mrs Radcliffe's handling of character and her definite if moderate infusion of inner life: the reader is surprised at finding not a powerful tyrant, but a restless spirit frustrated by remorse, consumed by ambition and assailable in the very human emotions of a father.

Something more than a Gothic thriller, then, The Italian has within it the elements of tragedy; but Mrs Radcliffe's imagination was of the kind to create a mood and not a tragic fall. Her love of Shakespeare showed her what tragedy could be like, and in her revolt against what Monk Lewis had done she came as close to tragedy as she was able (or cared) to approach.⁴⁵

Schedoni is endowed with only some of the inner life that Lewis bestows on Ambrosio. Nevertheless for Mrs Radcliffe it was a major advance in characterization and Schedoni remains a very significant achievement. With Ambrosio he stands as the most typical embodiment of the Gothic villain. From a mysterious and romantic ancestor in Manfred, the Villain-Hero had developed into a palpable personality moulded in the style of the great heroes of the high-mimetic of tragedy and the less exulted protagonists of the low-mimetic novel. Ambrosio had illustrated verisimilitude in character; Lewis's creation could be bettered in detail and technique but not in essential conception. If the Villain-Hero was to develop further, new directions would have to be taken, as indeed they were in the last great efflorescence of the genre at the end of the second decade of the nineteenth century.

iii. The Accursed Wanderer

The Villain-Heroes of the last great Gothic novels are complex creations, the most intellectual of the line they bring to culmination. In their characterization the move to verisimilitude is convincingly used and then discarded in favour of a return to myth, an inevitable aspect of the ironic mode that emerges in these late novels.

Victor Frankenstein is the first example of this stage of development. Mrs Shelley's novel actually poses a problem in connection with the Villain-Hero. A new complexity is perceived in that it is not simply the Monster who is the villain: in fact it is with shattering irony that one is forced to recognize him equally in the gentle Frankenstein.

When Frankenstein is considered in relation to the other Villain-Heroes so far discussed it is difficult to see how he could be one of their company. The common link is soon found in Frankenstein's ruling passion. Like Vathek he seeks to fathom the deepest secrets of existence:

It was the secrets of heaven and earth that I desired to learn, and whether it was the outward substance of things or the inner spirit of nature and the mysterious soul of man that occupied me, still my enquiries were directed to the metaphysical, or in its highest sense, the physical secrets of the world.⁴⁷

His ambition is very different from the crimes that have hitherto characterized the Villain-Hero's aspirations, from Vathek's occult profanities, Ambrosio's lustful frenzies and Schedoni's machinations for power. Frankenstein wishes to understand the ultimate secrets of existence, the very nature of life itself. The power and potential of science obsess him, transforming the significance of the Villain's crime and adding a terrifying spiritual dimension to the thematic considerations of the Gothic genre.

... I felt as if my soul were grappling with a palpable enemy; one by one the various keys were touched which formed the mechanism of my being; chord after chord was sounded, and soon my mind was filled with one thought, one conception, one purpose. So much has been done, exclaimed the soul of Frankenstein - more, far more, will I achieve; treading in the steps already marked, I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation.⁴⁸

Like the other Gothic villains, Frankenstein appears as an extraordinary being, a man far above the average run of humanity. He possesses the same heroic qualities that elicit the involuntary admiration of other men.

Will you smile at the enthusiasm I express concerning this divine wanderer? You would not if you saw him. You have been tutored

and refined by books and retirement from the world, ... but this only renders you the more fit to appreciate the extraordinary merits of this wonderful man. Sometimes I have endeavoured to discover what quality it is which he possesses that elevates him so immeasurably above any other person I ever knew. I believe it to be an intuitive discernment, a quick but never failing power of judgment, a penetration into the causes of things, unequalled for clearness and precision; add to this a facility of expression and a voice whose varied intonations are soul-subduing music.⁴⁹

The marks of suffering, the secret sorrow eating at his heart, recall Montoni and Schedoni.

Frankenstein clearly continues the movement towards greater realism in the depiction of character. As he tells his own story, his development comes across to the reader rather differently from Ambrosio's primitive stream of consciousness. Nevertheless the emphasis is still on development, on the processes undergone by personality in the course of living. Frankenstein's life is, on one level, a splendid example of the traditions of the domestic novel. His bourgeois background, his life in a merchant family in prosperous late eighteenth century Geneva, his attachments to friend and lover, his education, are all realistically described. All is perfectly ordinary until his passionate scientific interest reveals forceful new developments in his personality. Already in the epistolary prologue, Frankenstein's words to Walton indicate that the transformation of his character has been tragically related to his quest for knowledge.⁵⁰

His scientific discoveries and the creation of the Monster have radically assaulted his personality. The exacerbation of shattered idealism continues the transformation.⁵¹ From the creation of the Monster onwards his life is a series of unmitigated agonies as the Monster gradually destroys all that is precious to him, depriving him of peace, purpose, friendship, love and home.

The blood flowed freely in my veins, but a weight of despair and remorse pressed on my heart which nothing could remove. Sleep fled from my eyes; I wandered like an evil spirit, for I had committed deeds of mischief beyond description horrible... Now all was blasted, instead of that serenity of conscience ... I was seized by remorse and the sense of guilt, which hurried me away to a hell of intense tortures such as no language can describe.⁵²

He passes through life like the alazon, burdened with the secret knowledge of his ancient crime. His gradual disintegration is traced through agony and delirium. The victim of his own creation, he becomes an accursed wanderer devoted to the destruction of the Monster.

And now my wanderings began which are to cease but with life. I have traversed a vast portion of the earth and have endured all the hardships which travellers in deserts and barbarous countries are wont to meet. How I have lived I hardly know; many times I have stretched my failing limbs upon the sandy plain and prayed for death. But revenge kept me alive; I dared not die and leave my adversary in being.⁵³

The very realistic depiction of Frankenstein suffering and the processes of his disillusionment and disintegration are detailed and sustained, worthy to stand next to Lewis's Monk.

However, there is a whole dimension of Frankenstein's character that renders him an even more complex creation than Ambrosio.

Frankenstein's actions appropriate a divine prerogative, a factor which comes into startling focus whenever the Monster addresses him as "my creator". That the Monster should see himself as the equivalent of Milton's Satan, a creature badly treated by God his Father, only emphasizes the analogy: for Frankenstein, in discovering the secret of imparting life, becomes a type of God. The author-ess thicked this mythic resonance by her subtitle, "the Modern Prometheus", which summons up associations of the ancient Greek myth about the Titan who in his hybris dared to steal fire from the gods for the benefit of mankind, and was fearfully punished for his presumption.

Frankenstein's actions in modern times are a re-enactment of the myth. He himself is aware of his blasphemous presumption in playing God.⁵⁴ His punishment comes in the disillusionment immediately attendant upon his hideous handiwork: in his human imperfection he has become a horror-creator.

Now I was led to examine the cause and progress of this decay and forced to spend days and nights in vaults and charnel-houses. My attention was fixed upon every object the most insupportable to the delicacy of

human feeling ... I saw how the worm inherited the wonder of the eye and brain ... After days and nights of incredible labour and fatigue, I succeeded in discovering the cause of generation and life; nay more, I became myself capable of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter.⁵⁵

His intentions and hopes are ironically inverted: he had hoped to bring blessing on mankind by his action, but instead he has caused only suffering. Like Prometheus chained to his Caucasian rock, agony is his destiny. Self-condemned, forever banished from the society of man, he retreats within himself, even to the point of madness, and isolates himself in exile, hiding his crime and burning with the desire for vengeance.

Added to these ironic inversions is the complex relation of Frankenstein to the Monster. That in posterity the Monster should be known solely by the name of his creator is perhaps not as ironic as first appears. As Frankenstein's creature, he reflects something of his maker's personality. At the most symbolic level the Monster is Frankenstein's alter ego, the externalization of all within the gentle scientist's subconscious that is frightening and violent: Frankenstein himself tragically perceives this mytical relationship.

But I did not feel the inconvenience of the weather; my imagination was busy in scenes of evil and despair. I considered the being whom I had cast among mankind and endowed with the will and power to effect purposes of horror, such as the deed which he had now done, nearly in the light of my own vampire, my own spirit let loose from the grave and forced to destroy all that was dear to me.⁵⁶

The connection between them is further emphasized by the close parallels between Frankenstein's early life and the experiences of the Monster. He too passes from a desire for goodness and love into a perception of the irony of existence, the predominance of disappointment and disillusionment. The supreme irony is man himself as the Monster himself finds.

'Was man, indeed, at once so powerful, so virtuous, and magnificent, yet so vicious and base? He appeared at one time a mere scion of the evil principle and at another as all that can be conceived as noble and godlike. To be a great and virtuous man appeared the highest honour that can befall a sensitive being; to be base and vicious, as many on record have been, appeared the lowest degradation, a condition more abject than the blind mole or harmless worm. For a long time I could not conceive how one man could go forth to murder his fellow, or even why there were laws and governments; but when I heard details of vice and bloodshed, my wonder ceased and I turned away with disgust and loathing.'⁵⁷

Whereas Frankenstein suffers in silence, the Monster responds with fury against his creator: in his anguish he becomes the spokesman of an ironic vision of life.⁵⁸

The Monster is one of the most powerful creations to emerge from Gothic literature. Arising out of the old myths that shape Frankenstein's story, he became a new one in himself, reflecting the tendency in the Gothic novel to return to myth in its last flowering.

The Monster in his wickedness presents the conventional image of the Gothic villain, but the complexity of the late novel precludes such a simplistic view: the Villain-Hero in Frankenstein is a complex amalgum of creator and creature, the two being part of the same whole. The incongruity of this situation stresses the movement into the ironic mode.

The being which Victor Frankenstein creates (and meant to be beautiful) mirrors in its outward form his own inward deformity. The early history of the monster, which craves love, is an ironic reflection of Frankenstein's personality, for he can neither love nor respond properly to human feeling... Frankenstein is a monster, and in a real sense he is the monster. Again and again Frankenstein calls himself the murderer of his family and friends; at first he is blaming himself for having let loose so dangerous a being, but as the novel advances we recognize that he has a half-mad understanding that the monster is enacting in objective form the implications of his own inhumanity.⁵⁹

This association between Frankenstein and the Monster is a development in the Doppelgänger-motif already prefigured in Ambrosio and his assumption of rôles. Thus the novel embodies another great myth of Romanticism, and opened the way for Robert Louis Stevenson and Oscar Wilde who later in the century respectively gave the idea popular expression in Dr Jeekyll and Mr Hyde (1886) and The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891).

Frankenstein marks the advent of the sophisticated myths and cynical view of the world that are the characteristics of the ironic mode in literature. The novel initiates the later development, the transition from the prototypical Gothic novel to the apotheosis of the genre in Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer.

As the Villain-Hero, Frankenstein shows both the old emphasis on verisimilitude of characterization and the new apprehension of myth. In the depiction of the Monster, the emphasis on process and inner-life begin to wane in the interests of this new awareness of the potential of mythic symbolism. The development is carried a step further in John Polidori's small but important Novelle, The Vampyre. With powerful directness he delineates by a few deft strokes another great mythical figure of Romanticism, Lord Ruthven the Vampire. From his striking appearance at a London ball to the final identification of him as an evil supernatural being, he moves through the story with the inscrutability of the old tyrants Manfred and Montoni. Like all the Villain-Heroes he appears larger than life, exercises the same mysterious power and fascination. Ruthven is not mortal, however, but supernatural, and like the Monster an enemy of mankind. His ironic vision of life is expressed in his contempt for society and traditional values: this is not a careless disregard of ethical norms as displayed by Montoni, but a sustained and insidious inversion of value finding cynical satisfaction in his patronage of crime and destruction of virtue.

Hitherto, Aubrey had had no opportunity of studying Lord Ruthven's character, and now he found, that, though many more of his actions were exposed to his view, the results offered different conclusions from the apparent motives to his conduct. His companion was profuse in his liberality - the idle, the vagabond, and the beggar, received from his hand more than enough to relieve their immediate wants. But Aubrey could not avoid remarking, that it was not upon the virtuous, reduced to indigence by the misfortunes attendant even upon virtue; that he bestowed his alms - these were sent from the door with suppressed sneers; but when the profligate came to ask something, not to relieve his wants but to allow him to wallow in his lusts, or to sink him still deeper in his iniquity, he was sent away with rich charity... There was one circumstance about the charity of his Lordship, which was still more impressed upon his mind: all those upon whom it was bestowed, inevitably found there was a curse upon it, for they were all either led to the scaffold, or sunk to the lowest and the most abject misery.⁶⁰

In the story there is no penetration of Ruthven's mind, no depiction of process. He is in a sense a return to the static character type: however, Ruthven carries a mythic resonance that outweighs the issue of verisimilitude. If Frankenstein's Monster embodies the dark cravings of the soul, Ruthven symbolizes the Romantic pre-occupation with perplexing issues of the undying evil that haunts simple and innocent men (as represented in Aubrey).

The movement away from realistic characterization served to concentrate attention more definitely on the symbolic preoccupations of character. With Melmoth the Wanderer the line of Gothic novels reaches its highpoint. Melmoth is pre-eminently the embodiment of myth with only slight detail of personality. In this last great Gothic novel the reader does not share the inner-life of the Villain-Hero as he had done in Ambrosio's instance. Melmoth is experienced as an elemental force by various characters in extreme situations of suffering. He emerges slowly from the involved stories in the novel but always with enticing hints and fascinating implications. He is already part of a folk-tradition, appearing in the fables and sagas of many countries.⁶¹ He is a legend, but equally a tangible historical reality as the "Tale of the Spaniard" shows; he is history extending back in time to the incidents documented by Stanton and the records kept by Adonijah, yet he is equally alive in the present time, in the life of the Young John Melmoth. He is a supernatural being like Lord Ruthven, unbounded by time and place while his power as a force for evil lasts. In all this he is the descendant of Manfred in his majestic appearance and air of melancholy. His mythic quality is emphasized by the Leitmotif of his eyes which burn upon all his victims in their distress.

'Have you any thing to inquire of me?' - 'Much.' 'Speak, then' - 'This is no place.' 'No place! Poor wretch, I am independent of time and place. Speak, if you have anything to ask or to learn?' - 'I have many things to ask, but nothing to learn, I hope, from you.' 'You deceive yourself, but you will be undeceived when next we meet.' - 'And when shall that be?' said Stanton, grasping his arm; 'name your hour and your place.' 'The hour shall be mid-day answered the stranger, with a horrid and unintelligible smile; 'and the place shall be the bare walls of a madhouse ... My voice shall ring in your ears till then, and the glance of these eyes shall be reflected from every object, animate or inanimate, till you behold them again.' - 'Is it under circumstances so horrible we are to meet again?' said Stanton, shrinking under the full-lighted blaze of those demon eyes. 'I never,' said the stranger, in an emphatic tone, - 'I never desert my friends in misfortune. When they are plunged in the lowest abyss of human calamity, they are sure to be visited by me.'⁶²

Like all the Villain-Heroes his potential for evil is the dominant trait. However, here is no mere crime of usurpation, or of political ambition or of lust: here the quest that has turned Melmoth into the prototype of the Accursed Wanderer is the very possession of men's souls.

he passed his hand over his livid brow, and, wiping off some cold drops, thought for a moment he was not the Cain of the moral world, and that the brand was effaced, - at least for a moment.⁶³

As the story moves towards its centre Melmoth begins to emerge as a more distinct personality. This comes, firstly, as a consequence of the clear exposition of the Melmoth myth by Adonijah and, secondly, as he appears in person, and at great length, on Immalee's island. His dealings with this innocent child of nature present not only the archetypal situation of shadow and anima, but of the tempter and his victim. In another sense it is a cynical inversion of Raphael's teaching of Adam in Paradise Lost.⁶⁴ Like Raphael, he shows his pupil the whole world, but unlike Milton's archangel, it is not to reveal the glory of God in creation. Melmoth's cosmic survey of nature, man and society is hideous in its bitter perception of the world groaning in travail. With a breadth of vision, an intensity of detail, a perspicuity of interpretation, Melmoth embodies for all time the spirit of the ironic, surpassing the limited perceptions of the Monster and leaving even the vituperations of the Jacobean Malcontents colourless by comparison. He passes through the world untouched, scornful of its values and standards, commenting with "fiendish acrimony, biting irony and fearful truth." Lord Ruthven's cynical inversions of morality are swirled away in the destructive flood of "the demon of his superhuman misanthropy."⁶⁵ Here he discusses the nature of love in the family.

... 'Are there no parents or children in these horrible worlds?' said Immalee, turning her tearful eyes on this traducer of humanity; 'none that love each other as I loved the tree under which I was first conscious of existence, or the flowers that grew with me?' - 'Parents? - Children?' said the stranger, 'Oh yes! There are fathers who instruct their sons -' And his voice was lost - he struggled to recover it.

After a long pause he said, 'There are some kind parents among those sophisticated people.' - 'And who are they?' said Immalee, whose heart throbbed spontaneously at the mention of kindness. - 'Those,' said the stranger, with a withering smile, 'who murder their children at the hour of their birth, or, by medical art, dismiss them before they have seen the light; and in so doing, they give the only credible evidence of parental affection.'

He ceased, and Immalee remained silent in melancholy meditation on what she had heard. The acrid and searing irony of his language had made no impression on one with whom 'speech was truth', and who could have no idea why a circuitous mode of conveying meaning could be adopted, when even a direct one was often attended with difficulty to herself. But

she could understand, that he had spoken much of evil and suffering, names unknown to her before she beheld him ...⁶⁶

This horrific vision lies at the heart of the novel, both literally and figuratively. It is as much the exposition of Melmoth's fearful nature as of the state of the cosmos. Further facts about him and his history emerge later in the novel, but these are only details in a story the underlying meaning of which has already been revealed in great detail. Melmoth's original crime, like that of Vathek and Frankenstein, has been one of the intellect, a searing pride that can find fulfilment only in the investigation of the ultimate secrets of the universe - again a violation of God's prerogative and the re-enactment of Lucifer's rebellion. As a youth travelling in Europe Melmoth

... was irrevocably attached to the study of that art which is held in just abomination by all 'who name the name of Christ'. The power of the intellectual vessel was too great for the narrow seas where it was coasting - it longed to set out on a voyage of discovery - in other words, Melmoth attached himself to those imposters, or worse, who promised him the knowledge and the power of the future world - on conditions that are unutterable ...

'... Mine was the great angelic sin - pride and intellectual glorying! It was the first mortal sin - a boundless aspiration after forbidden knowledge! ...'⁶⁷

He must pay the consequence and wander lost and accursed through the world seeking another to take his burden of guilt and damnation from him, or seeking at least companionship in suffering, a temporary assuagement of eternal agony in the contemplation of the pain of others.

Frankenstein's Monster, the Vampire and Melmoth the Wanderer represent a significant English contribution to the many new myths of Romanticism. They are based in some respects on older literary ideas, but ultimately on the same archetype of the fallen soul lost in the labyrinth of generation. Such is the power of originality, however, that these new characters subsume the older mythic substratum, so adding resonance to the eternal truths they represent.

Nowhere in the Gothic novel written between 1764 and 1820 is the intensifying vision more clearly evident than in the development of the Villain-Hero from Manfred to Melmoth. The movement from the Inscrutable Tyrant, through the Criminal Monk to the Accursed Wanderer is a progression from the fairy-tale villains of romance through the anguished hero of tragedy to the cynical commentator of the ironic mode that completes the cycle by returning to primitive myth in transmuted form. This evolution grows in power and intensity by way of a double development: first, a growing realism in the idea and depiction of character, and secondly, overlapping and the surpassing this consideration, a growth in the metaphysical implications of theme and its embodiment in character. The intensity of these developments, their increasingly complex conception, characterize the Gothic novel over the sixty years of its heyday as a complete literary cycle that uses many old ideas and motifs and that by re-processing them becomes in its turn the starting-point, the inspiration of much in the literature of the next one-and-a-half centuries.

In miniature, this character type of the Villain-Hero contains within itself the whole movement of Western literature, from the primitive myths to the ironic novels of Joyce and Kafka.

2. THE YOUNG HERO

The intensifying vision is reflected in the character of the Young Hero, without the detail and intensity of the Villain-Hero, but nevertheless with a distinct sense of development. The growing realism of character depiction and increasing thematic weightiness are repeated, but with lighter emphasis. The Young Hero is not a superman like the Villain-Hero: indeed he fits more comfortably into the low-mimetic mode, being ordinary in his virtues but on that count socially attractive. Indeed he provides a means of identification for the reader.

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The Castle of Otranto contains the archetype. Theodore is ostensibly a peasant but really the son of the nobleman, Nicolo Falconara. He possesses the first pre-requisites of the Young Hero, nobility of appearance and origins. Even as a prisoner his fine bearing elicits admiration.

During this examination, Matilda was going to the apartment of Hippolita ... The prisoner soon drew her attention: the steady and composed manner in which he answered, and the gallantry of his last reply ... interested her in his favour. His person was noble, handsome and commanding, even in that situation ...¹

His likeness to the portrait of an ancient owner of the Castle immediately strikes Princess Matilda; soon after he is recognized by a birth-mark as the long-lost son of Father Jerome who is the nobleman Nicolo Falconara in disguise. He distinguishes himself as a brave hero,² the chivalrous protector of womanhood, by twice rescuing Isabella and by winning the affections of Princess Matilda herself. His emotional life is characterized by all the commendable virtues. He is indeed the sentimental hero in chivalrous dress: he is prone to weeping³ while a soft melancholy of soul colours his refined sensibilities.

... Theodore at length determined to repair to the forest that Matilda had pointed out to him. Arriving there, he sought the gloomiest shades, as best suited to the pleasing melancholy that reigned in his mind.⁴

The most important function of the Young Hero, however, is the incipient comparison he provides with ^{the} Villain-Hero. He is rightly the companion and partner of the heroine persecuted by the villains. His nature and experiences differ from those of the Villain-Hero in every way: far from concealing and plotting crime, he is noble and innocent; rather than persecute, he suffers, the victim of events beyond his control. Even as the Villain-Hero is almost a superman apart from his society, moving inexorably into the isolation of exile and retribution, the Young Hero suffers temporary isolation but is ultimately rescued and reintegrated into the society from which he was separated. Northrop Frye calls this typical victim the pharmakos or scapegoat.

... The pharmakos is neither innocent nor guilty. He is innocent in the sense that what happens to him is far greater than anything he has done provokes, like the mountaineer whose shout brings down an avalanche ... What happens to, say, the hero of Kafka's Trial is not the result of what he has done, but the end of what he is, which is an "all too human" being. The archetype of the inevitably ironic is Adam, human nature under sentence of death.⁵

ii

The Young Hero is given prototypical depiction in Mrs Radcliffe's Valancourt in The Mysteries of Udolpho. He appears first in the heroic garb of the hunter, displaying all the graces of a young gentleman.

He looked again from the window, and then saw a young man spring from the bushes into the road, followed by a couple of dogs. The stranger was in a hunter's dress; his gun was slung across his shoulders; the hunter's horn hung from his belt; and in his hand was a small pike, which, as he held it, added to the manly grace of his figure, and assisted the agility of his steps.⁶

But he is not a fierce hero of the Montoni class, as is soon made apparent when he describes his real reasons for wearing hunter's garb: the effect is an undercutting of the heroic posture.

'... I am pleased with the countryside, and mean to saunter away a few weeks among its scenes: my dogs I take with me more for companionship than for game: this dress, too, gives me an ostensible business, and procures me that respect from the people which would, perhaps, be refused to a lonely stranger who had no visible motive for coming among them.'⁷

His real aims are educational and his interests are the tasteful pursuits of a

cultivated mind. M. St. Aubert, the most exactingly correct of mentors, approves of him and accords him the highest approbation, linking him with all the pastoral virtues.⁸ The influence of Rousseau is evident here.

Valancourt is destined to suffer innocently. This is prefigured by the wound he sustains while travelling in the Pyrenees with Emily and her father when the latter shoots him, mistaking him for a robber.

His isolation begins when Emily is forced to leave him on her Italian journey. Alone and sorrowing he haunts their meeting-places. Later he visits Paris where owing to vulnerability he falls into the wrong company and incurs gambling debts. Worse still, he is associated with a society lady and becomes the victim of salacious rumour that is eventually responsible for his rejection by Emily and his exclusion from the society that gives his life meaning.

'O excess of misery!' he suddenly exclaimed, 'that I can never lament my sufferings, without accusing myself, nor remember you, without recollecting the folly and the vice by which I have lost you! Why was I forced to Paris, and why did I yield to allurements, which were to make me despicable for ever? Oh, why cannot I look back, without interruption, to those days of innocence and peace, the days of our early love?' - The recollection seemed to melt his heart, and the frenzy of despair yielded to tears.⁹

The irony of his sufferings is emphasized by his deeds of generosity and compassion which are overlooked in the opprobrium caused by the malign rumours.¹⁰ Only the intervention of a friend reveals the truth and rehabilitates Valancourt's name, so marking his re-entry into society and the consummation of his social function in marriage with Emily. In the meantime he has again been the victim of a gun-wound when mistaken for a thief by Emily's gardener: the injury is a small image of the deep spiritual hurt he suffers through his unjust rejection.

iii

In The Monk there are two Young Heroes, Raymond de las Cisternas and Lorenzo di Medina. They are both depicted as very ordinary young men of society. Lorenzo, first seen in the Cathedral of St Francis with his friend

Don Christoval, appears as a fashionable gentleman, modelled presumably on the characters of Restoration comedy.¹¹

Don Raymond initially appears as another character of the novel of manners and sentiment: a young man of means about to make his Grand Tour. Like Valancourt, he is virtuous, tasteful and fastidious: the evil pleasures of the city hold no attraction for him. Education and pure love are his ideals, reason his mentor.

On leaving Salamanca ... I immediately set out upon my Travels; My Father supplied me liberally with money; But he insisted upon my concealing my rank, and presenting myself as no more than a private gentleman ...

I quitted Spain, calling myself by the assumed title of Don Alphonso d' Alvarada, and attended by a single Domestic of approved fidelity. Paris was my first station. For some time I was enchanted with it, as indeed must be every Man, who is young, rich, and fond of pleasure. Yet among all its gaieties, I felt that something was wanting to my heart. I grew sick of dissipation: I discovered, that the People among whom I lived, and whose exterior was so polished and seducing, were at bottom frivolous, unfeeling and insincere. I turned from the Inhabitants of Paris with disgust, and quitted that Theatre of Luxury without heaving one sigh of regret.¹²

His is the ordinary everyday world of the sentimental novel until his experiences begin in earnest: his rôle of pharmakos is established early, as soon as he enters the Alsatian woods where he only just escapes with his life from a band of robbers. His sojourn in the Castle of Lindenburg initially continues the world of manners and sentiment until he is unwittingly entangled in a misunderstanding of passion with his hostess. The love that exists between him and Agnes is his true métier as the hero of romance. However his victimization develops ever more frighteningly as dark forces intervene to separate the lovers: their plan of elopement is foiled by Raymond's terrifying experience with the Bleeding Nun, the suffering spirit of a distant ancestress who by some evil, numinous power of predestination substitutes herself for Agnes and haunts his life, imprisoning him in a state of physical and mental paralysis.

I gazed upon the Spectre with horror too great to be described. My blood was frozen in my veins. I would have called for aid but the sound expired, ere it could pass my lips. My nerves were bound up in impotence, and I remained in the same attitude inanimate as a Statue.¹³

Liberty and health can return only when the malign influence is exorcized.

Later Agnes and Raymond are again separated, this time by the intervention of uncontrollable circumstances and powers from the past, firstly in the form of the vow of Agnes's parents committing her to the religious life, and secondly in the Church represented by Ambrosio and the Prioress, who ruthlessly implement the rigid and terrifying conventual regulations, dooming Agnes to imprisonment for breaking her vows. When she again appears lost to him, Raymond is trapped and isolated in the violent sickness attendant upon his disappointment.

No sooner had the Marquis read the note, than he fell back upon his pillow deprived of sense or motion. The hope failed him which till now had supported his existence; and these lines convinced him but too positively that Agnes was indeed no more ... He continued to rave and torment himself with impotent passion, till his constitution enfeebled by grief and illness could support itself no longer, and He relapsed into insensibility.¹⁴

Unremarkable and guileless, Raymond is tormented by frightening forces beyond his control or ken that cruelly invade his life entrapping him in situations of acute suffering. Only ultimately, as with Emily and Valancourt, does resolution of the unjust pain come, and are the lovers united in marriage.

In The Italian Mrs Radcliffe has again learned from Lewis in the depiction of the Young Hero. Vivaldi, like Valancourt and Raymond, is noble, virtuous and cultured. The pleasures of Naples, even the issues of wealth and inheritance, are of no importance when compared with the call of true love which is sacrosanct to him.¹⁵

However, there are times when Mrs Radcliffe seems to treat his obligatory chivalry with a touch of irony, a surprising development in the authoress's approach and one that perhaps points to her new concern for greater realism in the depiction of character.

'Would that the whole world were wrong that you might have the glory of setting it right!' said the Abate, smiling. 'Young man! you are an enthusiast, and I pardon you. You are a knight of chivalry, who would go about the earth fighting with every body by way of proving your right to do good; it is unfortunate that you are born somewhat too late.'¹⁶

Vivaldi's innocent sufferings are also the result of separation from his beloved. Mrs Radcliffe, however, had learned of a more frightening type of suffering than she had ever portrayed in The Mysteries of Udolpho. The victimization of Vivaldi is more terrifying than Valancourt's besmirched reputation: by the machinations of Schedoni Vivaldi finds himself the prisoner of the Inquisition. It is in the depiction of Vivaldi's sufferings in the prisons that Mrs Radcliffe achieves one of her most accomplished creations. In The Monk the sufferings of the Young Hero had assumed a more subtle quality: Raymond's agonies are all of the mind, even his sickness is psychosomatic. However, the mind of the Young Hero has not so far been depicted. This was done by Mrs Radcliffe, who in one of her most remarkable inspirations, suddenly turns the stock Vivaldi into a credible suffering protagonist. The experience of the dungeons of the Holy Office suddenly stirs his mind into action, which the authoress convincingly describes.

Vivaldi lost every selfish consideration in astonishment and indignation of the sufferings, which the frenzied wickedness of man prepares for man, who, even at the moment of infliction, insults his victim with assertions of the justice and necessity of such procedure.

His experience is in fact a type of epiphany.

A new view of human nature seemed to burst, at once, upon his mind, and he could not have experienced greater astonishment, if this had been the first moment, in which he had heard of the institution.¹⁷

The servant Paulo observes "the revolutions of his master's mind"¹⁸ with amazement, as well he might, for this is something new in the characterization of the Young Hero. Nor is this an isolated moment: Mrs Radcliffe gives several equally convincing portrayals of the inner workings of Vivaldi's consciousness, at times rivalling even her depiction of Schedoni in palpability and conviction.

The conduct of the mysterious being, who now stood before him, with many other particular of his own adventures there, passed like a vision over his memory. 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 duskiness of futurity. An unusual dread seized upon him; and a superstition, such as he had never before admitted in an equal degree, usurped his judgment. He looked up to the shadowy countenance of the stranger; and almost believed he beheld an inhabitant of the world of spirits.¹⁹

The later authors of the Gothic novel quite predictably developed the concept of the Young Hero in symbolic intensity. Again the substantial gains in realistic portrayal achieved in the novel of the 1790s are discarded for a greater emphasis on theme. In fact the full ironic significance of the pharmakos is realized in these later examples of the type: they come to represent something of the spiritual mystery of victimhood. For them the experience of pain is not resolved positively by re-integration into society; instead the terrifying reality of death lies at the heart of their agony. Northrop Frye continues his definition of the pharmakos as follows:

At the other pole is the incongruous irony of human life, in which all attempts to transfer guilt to a victim give that victim something of the dignity of innocence. The archetype of the incongruously ironic is Christ, the perfectly innocent victim excluded from human society.²⁰

Polidori's tale is again of interest in ascertaining the developments in the last stage of the Gothic novel. Rich, noble and virtuous Aubrey shows all the romantic appurtenances of the Young Hero. However, elaborating the hint already provided by Mrs Radcliffe in her affectionate undercutting of Vivaldi's chivalry, these qualities are now viewed ironically for what they are: the charming but insubstantial traits of a world of idealism, ill-equipped to understand the grim realities of life. Aubrey's romantic mind has all the qualities of a poet: but poetry becomes the only reality for him, and his whole view of life a misapprehension. The intensity of his sufferings are as a consequence all the more catastrophically felt:

... he was an orphan left with an only sister in the possession of great wealth, by parents who died while he was yet in childhood. Left also to himself by guardians ... he cultivated more his imagination than his judgment. He had, hence, that high romantic feeling of honour and candour, which daily ruins so many milliners' apprentices. He believed all to sympathize with virtue, and thought that vice was thrown in by Providence merely for the picturesque effect of the scene, as we see in romances: he thought that the misery of a cottage merely consisted in the vesting of clothes, which were as warm, but which were better adapted to the painter's eye by their irregular folds and various coloured patches. He thought, in fine, that the dreams of poets were the realities of life.²¹

Aubrey's sufferings are, as in the instances of all the other Young Heroes, directly caused by the Villain-Hero, in this instance Lord Ruthven. His persecution of Ianthe and Aubrey's sister cause the hero's mental isolation, his near madness and finally his death.²²

There is no reason why Aubrey should suffer, and yet he becomes the victim of a monster, as if his guileless idealism had been the fatal fascination for the terrifying force of irony and cynical evil that Lord Ruthven symbolizes.

A more developed figure of incongruous irony is Victor Frankenstein's gentle and noble friend, Henry Clerval. Unlike Theodore, Raymond, Valancourt and Aubrey, Clerval is not the scion of a noble house or a chivalrous knight: he is only the son of a merchant. However, Mrs Shelley connects him with the Young Hero type by depicting him as an impressionable mind nourished by medieval romance.

I was indifferent, therefore, to my schoolfellows in general; but I united myself in the bonds of the closest friendship to one among them. Henry Clerval was the son of a merchant of Geneva. He was a boy of singular talent and fancy. He loved enterprize, hardship, and even danger for its own sake. He was deeply read in books of chivalry and romance. He composed heroic songs and began to write many a tale of enchantment and knightly adventure. He tried to make us act plays and to enter into masquerades, in which the characters were drawn from the heroes of Roncesvalles, of the Round Table of King Arthur, and the chivalrous train who shed their blood to redeem the holy sepulchre from the hands of the infidels.²³

Unlike Frankenstein whose scientific mind would plumb the secrets of life, Clerval, like Raymond beginning his Grand Tour, chooses man himself for his subject.

Meanwhile Clerval occupied himself, so to speak, with the moral reflections of things. The busy stage of life, the virtues of heroes, and the actions of men were his theme; and his hope and his dream was to become one among those whose names are recorded in story as the gallant and adventurous benefactors of our species.²⁴

All the older Young Heroes find delight in solitude, melancholy music and literature; Clerval does as well, only with all the power and conviction of a true poet.



Clerval! Beloved friend! Even now it delights me to record your words and to dwell on the praise of which you are so eminently deserving. He was a being formed in the "very poetry of nature". His wild and enthusiastic imagination was chastened by the sensibility of his heart. His soul overflowed with ardent affections, and his friendship was of that devoted and wondrous nature that the world-minded teach us to look for only in the imagination. But even human sympathies were not sufficient to satisfy his eager mind. The scenery of external nature, which others regarded only with admiration, he loved with ardour.²⁵

If the Monster represents some dark and frightful aspect of Frankenstein's mind, then Clerval stands for the very opposite: the light of love, idealism and friendship, all the positive forces operating in Frankenstein's life. He is the scientist's good genius bringing him peace and hope, opening his selfish soul to love.

Study had before secluded me from the intercourse of my fellow creatures and rendered me unsocial, but Clerval called forth the bitter feelings of my heart; he again taught me to love the aspect of nature and the cheerful faces of children. Excellent friend! How sincerely did you love me and endeavour to elevate my mind until it was on a level with your own! A selfish pursuit had cramped and narrowed me until your gentleness and affection warmed and opened my senses; I became the same happy creature who, a few years ago, loved and beloved by all, had no sorrow or care.²⁶

As Frankenstein's cherished friend he is one of the chief victims of the Monster's vengeance, and is murdered by him as a type of propitiation for Frankenstein's sins.²⁷

v

The Young Hero type finds its most complex embodiment in Melmoth the Wanderer.

In this vast novel which investigates the condition of suffering man at various times and places, the Young Hero occurs in several variations of differing intensity.

The character who most resembles the virtuous gentleman of Walpole, Mrs Radcliffe, and Lewis is John Sandal. He is noble and gallant, a hero of the sea with a gentleness that recalls Clerval; at the same time his modesty in

appearance and action is characteristic of an ordinary young man.²⁸

Like all the other Young Heroes, his career would be fulfilled in union with his chosen bride, but as always in their destinies, forces obtrude and separate him from her. The machinations of his greedy, perverted mother destroy any hope of union with Elinor: she tells him the pernicious lie that they are in fact blood relatives. As a consequence he marries Margaret, but after her death when the truth of the deception is revealed, his reason breaks.

'Her son listened to this horrible confession with fixed eye and features unmoved; and at its conclusion, when the wretched penitent implored the assistance of her son to raise her from her knees, he repelled her outstretched hands, and with a weak wild laugh, sunk back on the bed. He never could be removed from it till the course to which he clung was borne away, and then the mourners hardly knew which to deplore - her who was deprived of the light of life, or him in whom the light of reason was extinguished for ever.'²⁹

In another of the Melmoth stories the Young Hero appears as the German father, Walberg. He is not a nobleman or a poet but a very ordinary head of a typical bourgeois family. His isolation and suffering rise out of a terrible reversal of expectation when the fortune of his wife's uncle is left to the Church instead of to him and his family. The sustained suffering he and his family undergo mark him as another innocent victim. His agony, like that of Raymond and Aubrey, borders on insanity.³⁰ His suffering is counterpointed by that of his son, Everhard, who sells his blood to earn money for his starving family. The hideous picture of the agonized body of his son epitomizes the dull bewilderment and horror of the pharmakos who suffers without reason and without complaint.

The snow-white limbs of Everhard were extended as if for the inspection of a sculptor, and moveless, as if they were indeed what they resembled, in hue and symmetry, those of a marble statue. His arms were tossed above his head, and the blood was trickling fast from the opened veins of both - his bright and curled hair was clotted with the red stream that flowed from his arms, - his lips were blue, and a faint and fainter moan issued from them ...³¹

The most sustained portrait of the Young Hero in this novel is that of

the young Spanish Monk, Moncada. His story lies between the romantic emphasis of John Sandal's and the vivid low-mimetic details of Walberg's domestic one. However, it is in Moncada that one sees the mythic overtones of the pharmakos most clearly adumbrated. His first words to John Melmoth on being rescued from the wreck of his ship identify him as the hated outcast.

As he concluded the account of his sufferings during the storm, the wreck, and the subsequent struggle for life, he exclaimed in Spanish, 'God! why did the Jonah survive, and the mariners perish?'³²

His story is a long one in which his adventures and agony of mind are recorded in detail: it is in fact a study in suffering, a type of anthology of the pain experienced in varying forms by the Young Hero in isolation, from Theodore to Aubrey. Like most of his predecessors, Moncada is born into a noble family: however, he is marked from youth, being the illegitimate offspring of his parents' youthful folly. Like Raymond before him, he is predestined to suffer for the crimes of his fathers. It is decided that he shall take holy orders and expiate in prayer the sin of his birth: he is the lamb to be led to the slaughter. Like Ambrosio, Moncada's bent, his very nature, leans to the heroic, as he yearns for the life of courage and action.

'Let me embrace the meanest profession, but do not make me a monk ... Give me a sword - send me into the armies of Spain to seek death, - death is all I ask, in preference to the life you doom me to.'³³

But he is "burdened with the curse of his father"³⁴ and is forced to accept his fate, conscious that he is being sacrificed for the sins of others.³⁵

When finally professed his life in the monastery becomes unmitigated torture. When he holds aloof he is condemned; when he practises his vocation he is regarded as a proud imposter. His innocent legal attempts at securing release from his vows bring down on him the redoubled wrath of the community. Again he sees himself as the outcast while the Superior expresses the insensate and causeless hatred he evokes in the hearts of the desiccated monks: his nobility, idealism and scorn for their ways stir up their hatred.

'Satan hath desired to have you,' he said, 'because you have put yourself

within his power, by your impious reclamation of your vows. You are the Judas among the brethren, a branded Cain amid a primitive family; a scape-goat that struggles to burst from the hands of the congregation into the wilderness.³⁶

The last image used by the Superior expresses the whole truth of the pharmakos who must suffer innocently. He is plunged into the solitary confinement of a dungeon but even more perniciously, is isolated by his society. It is in his last prison, that of the Inquisition, where his final and most terrible trial occurs - in the appearances of Melmoth, who threatens his last sustaining hope, that of salvation. It is Moncada's incongruously ironic fate that he, Melmoth's potential victim, should be suspected of the sin of his tempter.

... I had suffered enough from the Inquisition, but at this moment ... I would have encountered any thing that the Inquisition could inflict, to be spared the horror of being imagined the ally of the enemy of souls.³⁷

As was the case in the Walberg tale, there are smaller instances within the greater story that counterpoint and intensify the experience of the central protagonist. This happens twice in Moncada's story. The first of these lesser victims is the Young Monk who is hounded to death on the slightest pretext by a band of sadistic monks: like Everhard bleeding in the moonlight, his torment is a tableau of suffering.

A naked human being, covered with blood, and uttering screams of rage and torture, flashed by me; four monks pursued him - they had lights.

... A more perfect human form never existed than that of this unfortunate youth. He stood in an attitude of despair - he was streaming with blood. The monks, with their lights, their sourges and their dark habits, seemed like a group of demons who had made prey of a wandering angel, - the group resembled the infernal furies pursuing a mad Orestes.³⁸

The second of these lesser victims is the younger brother Juan who nobly seeks to rescue Moncada. On the very threshold of liberty, Juan is shot in his brother's arms by the agent of the Superior.

Juan staggered back from the step of the carriage, - he fell. I sprung out, I fell too - on his body. I was bathed in his blood, - he was no more.³⁹

The blood of both the Young Monk and Juan epitomize the agony of the pharmakos who is a martyr, sacrificed for the sins of others. He is the incongruously ironic victim of Evil, the natural prey of dark forces at large in the world and in the hearts of men.

3. THE ANGELIC HEROINE

It has been seen that the position of both the Villain-Hero and the Young Hero in the Gothic novel is largely defined and determined by the relationship of both to a central female figure, a virtuous heroine. She is more than simply an outstanding embodiment of beauty and morality but is linked as emphatically as possible with the forces of good.

The development in the depiction of the Villain-Hero, echoed in milder form in that of the Young Hero, certainly characterizes the Heroine just as strongly. In her case; however, the issues of realism are sometimes muted by her essentially symbolic function.

i

The blueprint for the Gothic Heroine is, as in all the salient characteristics of the genre, presented in The Castle of Otranto. There are two central woman figures in this story: Isabella and Matilda. The first one encountered is Isabella, Manfred's future daughter-in-law, the hope of his dynastic ambitions and the object of his sexual passion. His pursuit of her, her terror and flight, presents the basic relationship of persecution that exists between the Heroine and the Villain-Hero. Her escape is facilitated by Theodore, who later also rescues her from the forest where she has sought concealment. However, it is soon understood that Isabella, for all her virtue, is surpassed in noble qualities by the Princess Matilda.¹ Isabella, beautiful and courtly, lacks the aura of sanctity that aligns Matilda with Heaven.

Fly; the doors of thy prison are open ... begone in safety; and may the angels of heaven direct thy course! - Thou art surely one of those angels! said the enraptured Theodore.²

Matilda is Theodore's guardian angel, guiding and helping him, filling his soul with religious fervour and inspiring him to feats of chivalry. In this way she becomes the embodiment of the Beloved in courtly romance, whose great prototype is Dante's Beatrice, ever leading him heavenwards. As this angelic being

or Donna Angelicata, Matilda is opposed in every way to her father's diabolical plans and actions, and in the end becomes the victim of his evil.³

Manfred's murder of his daughter is unintentional, but it is the inevitable outworking of a nexus of wickedness surrounding him; Matilda becomes an innocent sacrifice.

Now, tyrant! behold the completion of woe fulfilled on thy impious and devoted head! The blood of Alfonso cried to heaven for vengeance; and heaven has permitted its altar to be polluted by assassination, that thou mightest shed thy own blood at the foot of that prince's sepulchre! - Cruel man! cried Matilda, to aggravate the woes of a parent! May heaven bless my father, and forgive him as I do!⁴

There is no doubt of her immediate entry into heaven.

... weep not for me, my mother! I am going where sorrow never dwells.⁵

Theodore is left with Isabella, a less than perfect substitute. Her destiny is realized in this world, fulfilled in the social function of marriage. Not being the extreme and uncompromisingly pure symbolic entity that Matilda is, she can pass through life touched but unscathed by the forces of evil. There is a certain firm sense of decorum, a keen instinct of self-preservation that can not only effect a successful escape from the tyrant, but can even question the propriety of being found alone with her rescuer.

Alas! what mean you, sir? said she. Though all your actions are noble, though your sentiments speak the purity of your soul, is it fitting that I should accompany you alone into these perplexed retreats? Should we be found together, what would a censorious world think of my conduct?⁶

Her strict sense of morality does not lend itself to victimhood. She is the woman of the world, the Donna Umanata, whose resilience contrasts strongly with the defencelessness and vulnerability of Matilda who cannot resist her fate.

In Mrs Radcliffe's novels the Angelic Heroine is the most important protagonist: most of the action is directly or indirectly related to her

experience which in its turn is the vindication of all that Mrs Radcliffe valued as the characteristics of the good life - the elegance and refinement of eighteenth century culture.

In her novels the division into an angelic and more human representative does not occur: the authoress is content to fuse these two aspects of the heroine into a single figure, the result being a certain de-charging of symbolic resonance.

In The Mysteries of Udolpho, Emily St Aubert is depicted primarily as a virtuous and highly accomplished young gentlewoman devoted to the values of home life, simple nature, restrained taste and becoming enthusiasm - all the qualities of the life of rural retirement so highly prized in the eighteenth century. Even her appearance fulfils the requirements of a classical ideal.

In person Emily resembled her mother; having the same elegant symmetry of form, the same delicacy of features, and the same blue eyes full of tender sweetness. But lovely as was her person, it was the varied expression of her countenance, as conversation awakened the nicer emotions of her mind, that threw such a captivating grace around her.⁷

Emily is in every way a paragon of pure and sensible womanhood, as emerges in her confrontations with Montoni.

Emily, who had always endeavoured to regulate her conduct by the nicest laws, and whose mind was finely sensible not only of what is just in morals but of whatever is beautiful in the female character, was shocked by these words; yet in the next moment her heart swelled with the consciousness of having deserved praise instead of censure, and she was proudly silent. Montoni, acquainted with the delicacy of her mind, knew how keenly she would feel his rebuke; but he was a stranger to the luxury of conscious worth, and therefore did not foresee the energy of that sentiment which now repelled his satire.⁸

All these rational and eminently sensible qualities are not to deny that Emily has definite affiliations with the heavenly: even if her feet are firmly fixed in reality, she is still the Donna Angelicata.

The rays of the moon, strengthening as the shadows deepened, soon threw a silvery gleam upon her countenance, which was partly shaded by a thick

black veil, and touched it with inimitable softness. Hers was the contour of a Madonna, with the sensibility of a Magdalen; and the pensive uplifted eye, with the tear that glittered on her cheek, confirmed the expression of the character.⁹

Her emotions can be the most saintly.¹⁰

Emily's religious devotion, however, sometimes seems more an ancillary to her refined attitude to life than an essential inner volition. Her enthusiasm for nature moves her to a form of rather restrained devotion.

... she loved still more the wild wood walks that skirted the mountain; and still more the mountain's stupendous recesses, where the silence and grandeur of solitude impressed a sacred awe upon her heart, and lifted her thoughts to the GOD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH. In scenes like these she would often linger alone, wrapt in a melancholy charm, till the last gleam of day faded from the west.¹¹

Her love of God stems from a commendable appreciation of nature, not from an inner source of spiritual contemplation. The authoress intends Emily's spirituality to be a major quality of her character: however, Emily is pietistic rather than saintly and one cannot escape feeling that her religion is more a correct attitude of mind rather than a burning inner conviction of soul.¹²

Mrs Radcliffe's unwillingness to unbend, her refusal to abandon a stately apprehension of life and powerful emotions, mean that her heroines experience life at one decorous remove with feelings that must be described as diluted. This is a timidity that the authoress overcomes to a degree in her depictions of the Villain-Heroes. Her heroines, however, are encased in a carapace of propriety that ensures them an ultimate inviolability, whatever the nature of their privations. And indeed, as with Matilda and Isabella, they do undergo harrowing experiences. Emily is subjected to a slow but inexorable process of isolation as one by one the emotional and physical supports of her life are removed: her parents, her home, her lover - everything except her own careful sense of value that provides her with the necessary fortitude to meet any challenge.¹³

With this inner ballast of good sense, she can face the challenging new life with her Aunt and later with Montoni in faraway places.

An aspect of her good sense is her ability to assess her situation so that she always has a vibrant enough inner life, a dimension missing from Matilda and Isabella. There is a definite movement towards greater realism in the depiction of the Heroine's character.

But a variety of interests pressed upon her attention, and prevented sleep. She thought much on what Annette had told her of the dissolute manners of Montoni and his associates, and more of his present conduct towards herself, and of the danger from which she had just escaped. From the view of her present situation she shrank as from a new picture of terror. She saw herself in a castle inhabited by vice and violence, seated beyond the reach of law or justice, and in the power of a man whose perseverance was equal to every occasion, and in whom passions, of which revenge was not the weakest, entirely supplied the place of principles. She was compelled once more to acknowledge, that it would be folly, and not fortitude, any longer to dare his power.¹⁴

The importance of the inner equilibrium of Mrs Radcliffe's heroines cannot be emphasized sufficiently. She floats on a tide of experience rather than being submerged by it. As in Isabella's trials there is a sexual undertone to much of the danger that threatens her. However, she is always about to be abducted or raped without the full horror of the experience ever actually engulfing her. Here she differs from Matilda who must succumb to the onslaught and die. Characterizing the whole of Emily's experience is the sense of propriety already referred to: all is measured by the yardstick of her high moral standards, and evaluated in terms of her own preferment.¹⁵ Valancourt must prove himself worthy of her before he can be considered: when later rumour reaches her of his reputed follies in Paris her reactions are interesting.

... she again beheld Valancourt degraded - Valancourt unworthy of the esteem and tenderness she had once bestowed upon him: her spirits faltered; and withdrawing her hand, she turned from him to conceal her grief, while he, yet more embarrassed and agitated, remained silent.

A sense of what she owed herself restrained her tears, and taught her soon to overcome, in some degree, the emotions of mingled joy and sorrow that contended at her heart as she rose ... As she was leaving the cottage, Valancourt ... entreated in a voice that pleaded powerfully for compassion a few moment's attention. Emily's heart, perhaps, pleaded as powerfully; but she had resolution enough to resist both ...¹⁶

The words "a sense of what she owed herself" are significant, for although she is depicted as sad and desolate at the loss of her love, by far the dominant impression is a strong sense of self-interest that curbs any emotional excess. Indeed Emily's final vindication, the ultimate triumph of her view of life, is realized in terms of the social security of marriage and the material comforts of wealth and possession.¹⁷

iii

Lewis characteristically took an interesting step forward: if Mrs Radcliffe had developed the concept of the heroine from a mere formula into a credible if stilted personality, he was both to intensify the nature of her experiences and re-emphasize her symbolic importance.

Lewis returned to the situation of two heroines as in The Castle of Otranto. In Agnes he portrayed the more ordinary and fallibly human character; in Antonia an ideal of purity and sanctity.

Agnes is first encountered in the Castle of Lindenburg, an attractive and accomplished young woman, like Emily, depicted in thoroughly eighteenth century concepts.

I found in Agnes all that was requisite to secure my affection. She was then scarcely sixteen; her person light and elegant was already formed; She possessed several talents in perfection, particularly those of music and drawing: Her character was gay, open and good humoured; and the graceful simplicity of her dress and manner formed an advantageous contrast to the art and studied coquetry of the Parisian Dames I had just quitted.¹⁸

She is the unfortunate victim of her parents' folly, and is destined by them to be a nun as an offering of gratitude. Her lively nature finds its hope of fulfilment in love for Raymond: Lewis tries to endow her character with greater life by showing her to be vivacious, gracious and passionate. Here his conception of the heroine diverges radically from Mrs Radcliffe's: Agnes can love deeply and wrecklessly enough to plan elopement, and later, even to give her body to her lover, although she is by this stage in holy orders. Here there

is no core of selfish preservation, no prudence that weighs the options before acting. Agnes suffers because of her very humanity. Her experience of isolation is no mere assault upon the imagination and emotions as is Isabella's and Emily's: it is persecution of the most harrowing kind that entails long imprisonment, the death of her infant and an agony of mind inconceivable to Mrs Radcliffe.

Thus did I drag on a miserable existence. Far from growing familiar with my prison, I beheld it every moment with new horror. The cold seemed more piercing and bitter, the air more thick and pestilential. My frame became weak, feverish, and emaciated ... Although exhausted, faint and weary, I trembled to profit by the approach of Sleep: My slumbers were constantly interrupted by some obnoxious Insect crawling over me. Sometimes I felt the bloated toad, hideous and pampered with the poisonous vapours of the dungeon, dragging his loathesome length along my bosom ... Often have I at waking found my fingers ringed with the long worms, which bred in the corrupted flesh of my Infant. At such times I shrieked with terror and disgust, and while I shook off the reptile, trembled with all a Woman's weakness.¹⁹

Agnes is the Donna Umanata, however, and this means that her destiny must be realized in the world. Her sufferings are acute, but rescue comes, and with rescue full restitution of life and happiness in the traditional symbols of stability, marriage and prosperity - as used by Mrs Radcliffe.

Antonia is characterized very differently. Just as Agnes had developed the potential for greater verisimilitude, Antonia carries the symbolic pre-occupation much further than either Walpole or Mrs Radcliffe had conceived it. The difference is noticeable by comparing her appearance with that of Agnes. Like Agnes she shows all the classical pre-requisites of smoothness and regularity. More important, however, are the emblematic features that link her with the heavenly.

The voice came from a female, the delicacy and elegance of whose figure inspired the Youths with the most lively curiosity to view the face to which it belonged ... Her features were hidden by a thick veil; But struggling through the crowd had deranged it sufficiently to discover a neck which for symmetry and beauty might have vied with the Medicean Venus. It was of the most dazzling whiteness, and received additional charms from being shaded by the tresses of her long fair hair, which descended in ringlets to her waist ... Her bosom was carefully veiled. Her dress was white; it was fastened by a blue sash ... A chaplet of

large grains hung from her arm, and her face was covered with a veil of thick black gauze.²⁰

White is the colour of purity, and blue is associated with the Blessed Virgin. The veil emphasizes her modesty, while its black colour presages her destiny of suffering. The rosary consolidates the religious imagery of her dress.

The author cannot sufficiently stress her innocence: guarded and guided by her mother she is totally unaware of the realities of life. Elvira is determined to keep her in this state of innocence.

She now endeavoured to make her Daughter aware of the risque, which She had ran: But She was obliged to treat the subject with caution, lest in removing the bandage of ignorance, the veil of innocence should be rent away.²¹

Antonia's purity is strengthened by her childlike devotion which is the expression of trust rather than the graceful embellishment of a sensitive young woman of accomplishment.

... She knelt before a Statue of St Rosolia, her Patroness; She recommended herself to the protection of heaven, and as had been her custom from infancy, concluded her devotions by chanting the following Stanzas ... Having finished her usual devotions, Antonia retired to bed. Sleep soon stole over her senses; and for several hours She enjoyed that calm repose which innocence alone can know ...²²

Her guileless nature sees only good in others,²³ even at the peril of her personal safety, as when she naïvely misunderstands Ambrosio's suggestive behaviour.²⁴

The Monk in his evil is attracted to the inherent beauty of spirit that Antonia possesses. In his depravity with its naturally debasing consequences, she becomes the ideal vehicle for the realization of his lust, an obsession that causes him to seek infernal assistance.

The death of her mother is the beginning of her isolation and suffering.²⁵ But the full horror comes only in the crypt where Ambrosio has caused her to be interred. Her rape, vilification and murder constitute a scene unparalleled in the Gothic novel in its brutality and lust. Wounded and broken she becomes

a picture of agonized womanhood.

The Unfortunate had fainted ere the completion of her disgrace. She only recovered life to be sensible of her misfortune. She remained stretched upon the earth in silent despair: The tears chased each other slowly down her cheeks, and her bosom heaved with frequent sobs.²⁶

Lewis relentlessly portrays the inevitable process of Evil in its quest to destroy Good. Antonia's defencelessness, the piteous plight of the innocent in the world of darkness and suffering, is powerfully symbolized by her torn body and broken will. Her natural state is chaste and inviolate: when sullied her nature is destroyed and she must die. Her death at Ambrosio's hands only marks the completion of the process. Like Matilda before her, Antonia's heavenly destiny is a matter of course.

Suddenly Antonia's eyes sparkled with celestial brightness: Her frame seemed to have received new strength and animation. She started from her Lover's arms. 'Three o'clock!' She cried; 'Mother, I come!'²⁷

Lorenzo's apocalyptic dream had depicted her salvation in terms of an assumption, an apotheosis that calls to mind the Virgin and St Rosalia, Antonia's patroness.

Lewis's new ideas again had their effect on Mrs Radcliffe in her depiction of the heroine in The Italian. From the beginning Ellena di Rosalba is more clearly identified with the angelic than ever Emily St Aubert was. The symbolism is strong and obviously modelled on the scene of Antonia's devotions in The Monk.

... (he) reached another side of the villa, where he soon heard the voice of Ellena herself, performing the midnight hymn to the Virgin, and accompanied by a lute, which she touched with most affecting and delicate expression. He stood for a moment entranced, and scarcely daring to breathe lest he should lose any note of that meek and holy strain, which seemed to flow from a devotion almost saintly. Then, looking round to discover the object of his admiration, a light issuing from among the bowery foliage of a climatis led him to a lattice and showed him Ellena. The lattice had been thrown upon to admit cool air, and he had a full view of her and the apartment. She was rising from a small altar where she had concluded the service; the glow of devotion was still upon her countenance as she raised her eyes, and with a rapt earnestness fixed them on the heavens.²⁸

Ellena does resemble Emily though in the fusion of Umanata and Angelicata characteristics. However, where Mrs Radcliffe shows that she has learned from Lewis's strong approach is in the nature of her heroine's sufferings. Ellena's abductions are more terrifying than Emily's sedate journeyings, and her imprisonment is a bewildering experience when compared with Emily's milder restraint. Even Ellena's isolation and her mental reactions are depicted with greater realism.

Ellena, meanwhile, endeavouring to dissipate melancholy recollections by employment, continued busy in preparation for her departure on the following day, till a late hour of the night. In the prospect of quitting ... the home where she had passed almost every-day since the dawn of her earliest remembrance, there was something melancholy, if not solemn. In leaving these well-known scenes, where ... the shade of her deceased relative seemed yet to linger, she was quitting all vestige of her late happiness, all note of former years and of present consolation; as she felt as if going forth into a new and homeless world.²⁹

Where Ellena shows herself to be a genuine Radcliffian heroine is in the whole question of propriety. Even her clandestine meetings with Vivaldi, crucial to her escape from San Stefano, are governed by a ludicrous code of primness.

To his mention of escape she listened with varying emotion; at one moment attending to it with hope and joy, ... and at another, recoiling from the thought of departing with him while his family was so decidedly averse to their marriage ... Vivaldi understood all the delicacy of her scruples, and though they afflicted him, he honoured the good sense and just pride that suggested them.³⁰

However, even as Vivaldi is suddenly given an interesting dimension of character by the realization that comes to him in the Inquisitorial dungeons, so Ellena too has the sudden dawning of a new insight into life that seems to change the very substance of her personality into something different and nobler. Its significance can be gauged when one considers its connection with propriety, that central concern of the Radcliffian heroine. With rapid and penetrating accuracy, Ellena questions the basis of her action and reveals the ludicrous implications of her propriety.

While these considerations occupied him, the emotion they occasioned did not escape Ellena's observation; it increased as he reflected on the impossibility of urging them to her, and on the hopelessness of prevailing upon her, unless he could produce new arguments in his favour. His unaffected distress awakened all her tenderness and gratitude; she asked herself whether she ought any longer to assert her own rights, when by doing so, she sacrificed the peace of him, who had incurred so much danger for her sake; who had rescued her from severe oppression, and had so long and so well proved the strength of his affection.

As she applied these questions, she appeared to herself an unjust and selfish being, unwilling to make any sacrifice for the tranquillity of him, who had given her liberty, even at the risk of his life. Her very virtues, now that they were carried to excess, seemed to her to border upon vices; her sense of dignity, appeared to be narrow pride; her delicacy weakness; her moderated affection cold ingratitude; and her circumspection, little less than prudence degenerated into meanness.³¹

This whole scene is another type of epiphany paralleling Vivaldi's. It is a revolutionary step for a Radcliffian heroine to question her unimpeachable motives: with it comes a transformation, a cracking of the inner carapace of inviolability and self-preservation. This is not to say that Ellena's experiences will now be of the horrific kind of Antonia's. Like Isabella and Agnes, a bright future awaits her in this world once she has passed through the vale of suffering. What is new is the sense of selflessness and helplessness that characterize her actions, softening what in Emily had been a correctness and self-sufficiency into something more tender and human.

iv

It is in the last stage that the most powerful and affecting portraits of pure and noble womanhood are to be found. Again the issues of realism developed to a degree in the prototypes provided by Mrs Radcliffe and Lewis are overshadowed by the demands of symbolism.

Frankenstein presents two such Donne Angelicate. The scientist's mother is clearly associated with the interests of Heaven.

... remembering what she had suffered, and how she had been relieved - for her to act in her turn the guardian angel to the afflicted.³²

But Caroline Beaufort prepares the way for the real heroine, Elizabeth Lavenza: her appearance as a child recalls Lewis's description of the naïve and childlike

Antonia.

Among these there was one which attracted my mother far above the rest. She appeared of a different stock ... Her hair was the brightest living gold, and despite the poverty of her clothing, seemed to set a crown of distinction upon her head. Her brow was clear and ample, her blue eyes cloudless, and her lips and the moulding of her face expressive of sensibility and sweetness that none could behold without looking on her as a distinct species, a being heaven-sent, and bearing a celestial stamp in all her features.³³

Her rôle as muse and beloved is established even as a child.³⁴ But as an adult she becomes more: a type of purity, a saintly benefactress. The author-ess's imagery could not fix the symbolic qualities of Elizabeth more strongly.

The saintly soul of Elizabeth shone like a shrine-dedicated lamp in our peaceful home. Her sympathy was ours; her smile, her soft voice, the sweet glance of her celestial eyes, were ever there to bless and animate us. She was the living spirit of love to soften and attract; I might have become sullen in my study, rough through the ardour of my nature, but that she was there to subdue me to a semblance of her own gentleness.³⁵

Elizabeth is a character undergoing no development and having no inner life: she remains a pure and noble symbol of all that is good.

The sufferings Frankenstein's creation have brought upon his family are taken upon herself by Elizabeth. Her body bears the signs of her agony of mind. In all this she remains the spiritual beacon-light in Frankenstein's ruined life.³⁶ She is the only person able to lead Frankenstein to peace and salvation. Her death at the hands of the Monster on their wedding-night is the destruction of his last hopes and the inevitable consequence of the depradations of Evil: she follows Matilda and Antonia as the innocent victim of the Villain-Heroes crimes.

The Vampyre again distils the essence of the symbolism prevalent in the later Gothic novel. The young Greek maiden Ianthe is given no character development and no inner life. She is a symbol pure and unambiguous of all that is innocent and uplifting.

Under the same roof as himself, existed a being, so beautiful and delicate, that she might have formed the model for a painter, wishing to portray on canvas the promised hope of the faithful in Mahomet's paradise, save that her eyes spoke too much mind for anyone to think she could belong to those who had no souls. As she danced upon the plain, or tripped along the mountain's side, one would have thought the gazelle a poor type of her beauties.³⁷

Her effect on Aubrey is the same as that of Elizabeth on Frankenstein: tired and disillusioned with society, Aubrey finds in her a nobler view of life that fills him with new hope.

Aubrey began to attach himself more and more to Ianthe; her innocence, so contrasted with all the affected virtues of the women among whom he had sought for his vision of romance, won his heart; and while he ridiculed the idea of a young man of English habits, marrying an uneducated Greek girl, still he found himself more and more attached to the almost fairy form before him.³⁸

Her death at the hands of Lord Ruthven is her inevitable destiny.³⁹

All the issues of growing realism and a more lucid symbolism, as well as the pre-occupation with weightier metaphysical concerns and the mythic elements these entail, find definitive expression in Melmoth the Wanderer.

Parallel with the central revelation of Melmoth's destructive spirit of irony is his meeting with Immalee on the desert isle in the Indian Ocean. From the start the author depicts her in mythic terms, as the child of nature in a paradise of her own. It is hardly surprising that she is regarded as a divinity by the local Indian populace, for in her ethereal appearance on her island home she embodies all that is pure, innocent and otherworldly. Here is the apotheosis of the saintly descriptions associated with the Angelic Heroine from Matilda through Antonia and Ellena to Elizabeth Lavenza and Ianthe. Her identification with Heaven is equally important and firmly-fixed; even in her innocent state of nature it is symbolically significant that all she remembers from the mists of her infancy as the daughter of a Spanish nobleman are the opening words of the Christian Catechism: unconsciously she affirms her belief in the Creator and her oneness with the heavenly.⁴⁰ What at this stage is

unconscious, will soon express itself as an overt confession of faith; for when Melmoth in his bitter and relentless depiction to her of the depravity of man describes the mass of horror and contradiction that characterize the world religions, Immalee is distraught at what she hears.⁴¹ Only when Melmoth describes the ideals of Christianity is the innocent creature filled with rapturous recognition and she declares herself for Christ.

As he spoke, (perhaps constrained by a higher power), Immalee bowed her glowing face to the earth, and then raising it with the look of a new-born angel, exclaimed, 'Christ shall be my God, and I will be a Christian!' Again she bowed in the deep prostration which indicates the united submission of soul and body, and remained in this attitude of absorption so long, that, when she rose, she did not perceive the absence of her companion. - 'He fled murmuring and with him fled the shades of night.'⁴²

Like Ambrosio and his inevitable attraction to Antonia, Melmoth is drawn to Immalee, hoping to find here the innocent agent of his salvation who will take the curse of damnation upon herself. If Ambrosio by his rape of Antonia tears away "the veil of innocence" and teaches her the reality of suffering, then Melmoth's visits to Immalee on her island are in the nature of spiritual violation. His hideous depiction of the world destroys Immalee's wonderland of innocence, not only by what he tells and shows her, but by his very presence as a human. Her generous and selfless nature responds automatically to impulses of love. It is her destiny as a human being to experience the world in suffering, for contact with Melmoth has taught her the perplexing compulsion of communion with a fellow creature.

'And is it, then, in my power to confer happiness?' said her companion; 'is it for this purpose I wander among mankind?' A mingled and indefinable expression of derision, malevolence, and despair, overspread his features ...

Immalee, whose eyes were averted, did not see this expression, and she replied, 'I know not, but you have taught me the joy of grief; before I saw you I only smiled, but since I saw you, I weep, and my tears are delicious. Oh! they are far different from those I shed for the setting sun, or the faded rose! And yet I know not -' And the poor Indian, oppressed by emotions could neither understand or express, clasped her hands⁴³ on her bosom, as if to hide the secret of its new palpitations ...

She is prepared to enter the world because that is where Melmoth comes from: she is prepared to love him and so realize her destiny.

... she seemed, by an anticipation of her destiny, to make alliance with all that is awful and ominous. She had begun to love the rocks and the ocean, the thunder of the wave, and the sterility of the sand, - awful objects, the incessant recurrence of whose very sounds seemed intended to remind us of grief and of eternity.⁴⁴

If the depiction of Immalee in her paradise marks the culmination of the symbolism invested in the Angelic Heroine, the second part of her story set in Spain, to where she has returned after being "rescued" from her island, brings the realistic elements in the portrayal of the heroine, as developed by Lewis in Agnes and Mrs Radcliffe in Ellena, to a highpoint. Immalee, the sylph of nature in the Garden of Innocence, is incarnated as Isidora, the beautiful young noblewoman in the Vale of Generation. The move is in some respects from the depiction of the Donna Angelicata to the Donna Umanata. Accordingly her appearance has changed from the emblematic to one of greater verisimilitude, without any loss in her powerful symbolic link with the angelic.

But, amid the bright host that advanced against them, there was one whose arms were not artificial, and the effect of whose singular and simple attractions made a strong contrast to the studied arrangements of her associates. If her fan moved, it was only to collect air - if she arranged her veil, it was only to hide her face - if she adjusted her mantilla, it was but to hide that form, whose exquisite symmetry defied the voluminous drapery of even that day to conceal it. Men of the loosest gallantry fell back as she approached, with involuntary awe - the libertine who looked on her was half converted - the susceptible beheld her as one who realized that vision of imagination that might must never be emboldened here - and the unfortunate as one whose sight alone was consolation - the old, as they gazed on her, dreamt of their youth - and the young for the first time dreamt of love - the only love which deserves the name - that which purity alone can inspire, and perfect purity alone can reward.⁴⁵

Her relationship with Melmoth has not changed either - only now hers is a vulnerable situation, no longer the timeless mystical one of the earlier encounter on the island. That the guise of their relationship has altered but not its underlying meaning, is evident in Isidora's reaction at seeing Melmoth again: her cry is an intuition of her spiritual destiny.⁴⁶

What is also new is the depiction of her inner life, marking her entrance into the harsh world with the accompanying knowledge of Good and Evil.

The breeze, indeed, though redolent of the breath of the orange blossom, the jasmine, and the rose, had not the rich and balmy odour that scents the Indian air by night ...

Except this, what was not there that might not renew the delicious dream of her former existence, and make her believe herself again the queen of that fairy isle? - One image was wanting - an image whose absence made that paradise of islands, and all the odorous and flowery luxury of a moonlight garden in Spain, alike deserts to her. In her heart alone could she hope to meet that image, - to herself alone did she dare repeat his name, and those wild and sweet songs of his country ... And so strange was the contrast between her former and present existence, - so subdued was she by constraint and coldness, - so often had she been told that every thing she did, said, or thought, was wrong, - that she began to yield up the evidence of her senses, to avoid the perpetual persecutions of teasing and imperious mediocrity, and considered the appearance of the stranger as one of those visions that formed the trouble and joy of her dreamy and illusive existence.⁴⁷

Her saintliness is not in the least impaired by her new life and experiences: rather it is emphasized in the suffering now attendant upon her prayers. Like Antonia and Ellena she is associated with the Virgin as the perfect representative of gentle womanhood. The passion of Isidora's emotions and prayers is an excellent dramatization of the intensifying vision: the devotions of Antonia and Ellena are artificial by comparison.

'Mild and beautiful Spirit!' she cried, prostrating herself before the figure - 'you whose lips alone have smiled on me since I reached your Christian land, - you whose countenance I have sometimes imagined to belong to those who dwelt in the stars of my own Indian sky, - hear me, and be not angry with me! Let me lose all feeling of my present existence, or all memory of the past ... No, mother of the Deity! divine and mysterious woman, no! - they shall never see another throb of my burning heart. Let it consume in its own fires before a drop of their cold compassion extinguishes them! Mother divine! are not burning hearts, then, worthiest of thee? - and does not the love of nature assimilate itself to the love of God! True, we may love without religion, but can we be religious without love? Yet, mother divine! dry up my heart, since there is no longer a channel for its streams to flow through! ... Let my heart be like this lovely apartment, consecrated by the presence of one sole image, and illuminated only by that light which affection kindles before the object of its adoration, and worships it by for ever.'⁴⁸

Isidora's heart, however, is venerable in her humanity. Her love for Melmoth is not simply described, but passes through a complicated process of mind that the author records in minute detail.⁴⁹ Her deep and tender nature is deeply affected as she yearns to the attainment of love. This for her is

the deepest mystery of life.

'I will be yours for ever ... You but insult me when you appear to doubt that feeling, which you may wish to have analyzed, because you do not experience or cannot comprehend it. Tell me, then, what is it to love? ...'⁵⁰

Melmoth provides a cruelly consuming answer, a challenge that Isidora is prepared to meet in every respect except one, the one that is crucial to her angelic identity.

'Then I do love,' said Isidora ... 'I will renounce, if it must be so, parents, - country, - the habits which I have acquired, - the thoughts which I have learnt, - the religion which I - Oh no! My God! My Saviour!' she exclaimed, darting from the casement and clinging to the crucifix - 'No! I will never renounce you! - I will never renounce you! - You will not forsake me in the hour of death! - You will not desert me in the moment of trial! - You will not forsake me at this moment!'⁵¹

Isidora gives herself to Melmoth in the face of every danger and potential suffering. Her sacrifice and selflessness are complete: never can one imagine her considering with Mrs Radcliffe's Emily "what she owed herself". Isidora gives all she has except her vital identification with Christ. Her action can humanize even Melmoth for a fleeting moment.

Melmoth gazed on her as she stood. One generous, one human feeling, throbbed in his veins, and thrilled in his heart. He saw her in her beauty, - her devotedness, - her pure and perfect innocence, - her sole feeling for one who could not, by the fearful power of his unnatural existence, feel for mortal being.⁵²

Like all the other Angelic Heroines, her relationship with the Villain-Hero means isolation and imprisonment. Even though she is eventually a literal prisoner of the Inquisition, by far the subtler torture is the restriction of her noble and expansive soul by the petty tyrannies and restraints of a home and a society who can never hope to understand her. Maturin fully understood that what he was depicting in his characterization of Isidora spelled the death of romance. The reality of Isidora's inner life, her suffering and her sacrifice leave Matilda a puppet and Emily St Aubert the priggish embodiment of certain

cold and formal virtues.

To the mere reader of romance, it may seem incredible that a female of Isidora's energy and devotedness should feel anxiety or terror in a situation so common to a heroine. She has only to stand proof against all the importunities and authority of her family, and announce her desperate resolution to share the destiny of a mysterious and unacknowledged lover. All this sounds very plausible and interesting. Romances have been written and read, whose interest arose from the noble and impossible defiance of the heroine to all powers human and super-human alike. But neither the writers nor readers seem ever to have taken into account the thousand petty external causes that operate on human agency with a force, if not more powerful, far more effective than the grand internal motive which makes so grand a figure in romance, and so rare and trivial a one in common life.

Isidora would have died for him she loved. At the stake or scaffold she would have avowed her passion, and triumphed in perishing as its victim. The mind can collect itself for one great effort, but it is exhausted by the eternally-recurring necessity of domestic conflicts, - victories by which she must lose, and defeats by which she might gain the praise of perseverance, and feel such gain was loss. The last single and terrible effort of the Jewish champion, in which he and his enemies perished together, must have been a luxury compared to the blind drudgery in his mill.

Before Isidora lay that painful and perpetual struggle of fettered strength with persecuting weakness, which, if the truth were told, would divest half the heroines of romance of the power or the wish to contend against the difficulties that beset them. Her mansion was a prison ... her escape was completely barred; and had every door in the house been thrown open, she would have felt like a bird on its first flight from the cage without a spray that she dared to rest on. Such was her prospect, even if she could effect her escape - at home it was worse.⁵³

Her clandestine pregnancy, her public humiliation, her incarceration and agony of mind progressively intensify her suffering.

Isidora was dying of a disease not the less mortal because it makes no appearance in an obituary - she was dying of that internal and incurable wound - a broken heart.⁵⁴

However, like Antonia her victory is complete in death.

... 'Call upon God, daughter!' said the priest, applying the crucifix to her lips. 'I loved his religion,' said the penitent kissing it devoutly, 'I loved it before I knew it, and God must have been my teacher, for I had no other! Oh! ... that I had loved none but God - how profound would have been my peace - how glorious my departure - now - his image pursues me even to the brink of the grave, into which I plunge to escape it!'

'My daughter,' said the priest ... 'my daughter, you are passing into bliss ... harps are tuned to a new song, even a song of welcome, and wreaths of palm are weaving for you in Paradise.'⁵⁵

Isidora's dying words express the whole destructive relationship between the Villain-Hero and the Angelic-Heroine in its most mystical and frightening form: that of an evil presence battenning on the purity of a noble soul.

By now it should be clear that it is Maturin's practice to reinforce his central themes with lighter and less developed counterpoint. The heroine is no exception.

The counterpart in the novel to the Donna Umanata is Frau Walberg, a Spanish woman married to a German. She is an ordinary wife and mother with no outstanding or heroic qualities. Her outlook is characterized by pessimism and pragmatism, hardly features of the idealistic heroine.⁵⁶ Her suffering is acute when the happiness and unity of her family come near to cracking under the strain of the privations they must endure from poverty. According to the pattern established by Mrs Radcliffe's heroines, the period of trial soon ends and relief and restitution come.

A much more interesting variation of the heroine figure comes in "The Lovers' Tale", and is centred on the cousins Margaret and Elinor Mortimer. A definite tension is established between them from the beginning, each embodying distinctions found as far back as Walpole's Matilda and Isabella. Margaret is the Donna Umanata: for her, all the values of life are vested in the outward symbols of valour and excellence like hereditary titles, family and national pride, the delights of culture and refined society.⁵⁷ The cousin Elinor is the Donna Angelicata whose values are those of the spirit, whose concern is the standing of the soul with God.⁵⁸

Elinor is interesting in another way, for the author investigates the workings of her mind in some detail. In her passionate perception of life, in her intense discernment of the underlying spirituality of things, Elinor seems almost to lose her hold on reality. There is considerable verisimilitude in the depiction of this central core of instability that bodes collapse.

She sat and tried, as well as her wandering fancy would allow her, to reconcile the images of that remembered eye, whose beam rested on her like the dark blue of a summer heaven swimming in dewy light ... The slender form, the soft and springy movements, the kiss of childhood that felt like velvet ... was suddenly exchanged in her dream (for all her thoughts were dreams) for a fearful figure of one drenched in blood, and splattered with brains and gore. And Elinor, half-screaming, exclaimed, 'Is this he whom I loved?' Thus her mind, vacillating between contrasts so strongly opposed, began to feel its moorings give way. She drifted from rock to rock, and on every rock she struck a wreck ...

... The tones of this dreamy life harmonized awfully for Elinor, with the sound of the vlast as it shook the turrets of the Castle, or swept the woods that groaned and bowed beneath its awful visitings. And this secluded life, intense feeling, and profound and heart-rooted secret of her silent passion, held perhaps fearful and indescribable alliance with that aberration of mind, that prostration at once of the heart and intellect, that have been found to bring forth, according as the agents were impelled, 'the savour of life unto life, or of death unto death'. She had all the intensity of passion, combined with all the devotedness of religion, but she knew not which way to steer, or what gale to follow. She trembled and shrunk from her doubtful pilotage, and the rudder was left to the mercy of winds and waves. Slender mercy do those experience who commit themselves to the tempests of the mental world - better if they had sunk at once amid the strife of the dark waters in their wild and wintry rage; there they would soon have arrived at the haven where they would be secure.⁵⁹

Isolation and suffering come as a consequence of her disappointed nuptials and her exile to the home of a withered old puritan aunt.⁶⁰

It is Margaret who in the way of all the more earthly heroines, marries Elinor's bridegroom, even as so long ago in The Castle of Otranto it was Isabella and not Matilda who eventually married Theodore.

Elinor must in the meantime experience the full humiliation of exclusion: like Isidora, she feels the bitterness of the ultimate implications of love, frustration of the desire for deep spiritual communion. Like Immalee her experience is symbolic of the soul in the fallen world of suffering.

Love is a very noble and exalting sentiment in its first germ and principle. We never love without arraying the object in all the glories of moral as well as physical perfection ... but this lavish and magnificent prodigality of the imagination often leaves the heart a bankrupt. Love in its iron age of disappointment, becomes very degraded - it submits to be satisfied with merely exterior indulgences ... a kind word, though uttered almost unconsciously, suffices for its humble existence. In its first state it is like man before the fall, inhaling the odours of paradise, and enjoying

the communion of the Deity; in the latter, it is like the same being toiling amid the briar and the thistle, barely to maintain a squalid existence without enjoyment, utility, or loveliness.⁶¹

But Elinor's story lacks the direct relation to the mythic that is so peculiar to that of Immalee. When with an ironic twist new to the fate of the Donna Umanata Margaret dies and the Young Hero becomes demented, Elinor's sufferings continue in a type of living death as the perpetual guardian of the invalid.⁶²

The intensifying vision is thus characteristic of the development of the heroine in the Gothic novel. Beginning modestly with The Castle of Otranto where the angelic and more human archetypes are depicted in a few strokes, greater adumbration comes in the works of Mrs Radcliffe and Lewis. By fusing the two types, Mrs Radcliffe achieves the blend of the secular and spiritual that characterize her view of life. In Emily St Aubert the dual features of a more realistic depiction and symbolism are likewise held in balance: there can be no doubt that the authoress intended to embody in her the values she held so precious. At the same time she made tentative progress at creating some inner-life.

Lewis in Agnes and Antonia gave the realistic and symbolic emphases greater stress respectively. His example was too compelling not to have influenced Mrs Radcliffe in her second great novel.

By this time the prototype of the Gothic heroine was firmly established. The novels of Mrs Shelley and Maturin intensified both the realistic and symbolic qualities of the heroine, increasing always the metaphysical implications of their roles in the stories.

There is certainly a tension between Mrs Radcliffe's conception of the

Heroine and that of the later writers: she looked back to the certainties and re-assuring values of the eighteenth century whereas Lewis, Polidori, Mrs Shelley and Maturin were pre-occupied with a new and more frightening vision. The Radcliffian heroine has an inner core of propriety and self-preservation, akin in Emily to something very close to selfishness: it is a keen sense of prosperity, a buoyancy, a magnetism towards light, and optimum conditions of existence. In this respect she differs by worlds from the angelic women of the rest of Gothic fiction: they epitomize the world of suffering and selflessness, the deprivations of Evil on Good. Their destiny is growing isolation, pain and finally death.

The intensifying vision is in fact the movement from a colourless heroine of romance to a picture of suffering and sacrificial womanhood.

4. THE DEMONIC WOMAN

There is another expression of female character recurrent in the Gothic novel, darkly contrasting with the purer women like a shadowy feminine counterpart of the Villain-Hero. Because of her devilish nature, she is the opposite side of the Angelic Heroine, the Demonic Woman or Donna Demoniaca, the Jezebel who causes evil wherever she goes. This figure is not nearly as sustained as the three major character types already discussed, but nevertheless makes a few appearances that must be counted among the most striking achievements in the genre.

i

The first appearance of this evil figure is not in The Castle of Otranto but in Beckford's Vathek. She is the Caliph's mother, Carathis, who is immediately described as a woman of "superior genius", and significantly an alien element in a rigidly ordered society. Her spirit of restless enquiry is apparent in her contempt for the traditionally sacrosanct.

... the Caliph not only loved her as a mother, but respected her as a person of superior genius. It was she who had induced him, being a Greek herself, to adopt the sciences and systems of her country, which all good Mussulmans hold in thorough abhorrence.¹

That this great intellectual force is at the disposal of the interests of evil soon emerges.² Her great ambition is distinctly demonic.

During these preparations, Carathis, who never lost sight of her great object, which was to obtain favour with the powers of darkness, made select parties of the fairest and most delicate ladies of the city; but in the midst of their gaiety, she contrived to introduce vipers among them, and break pots of scorpions under the table.³

She is the dark genius, the most forceful and pernicious influence working on Vathek's mind: his vacillation, his ambition, his greed are all encouraged and fostered by her black arts. When in the caverns of Eblis she is far from being daunted at the prospect of imminent damnation, and realizes for a brief moment all her longings in the exultation of her terrifying genius.

Carathis, however, eagerly entered the dome of Soliman, and without regarding in the least the groans of the prophet, undauntedly removed the covers of the vases and violently seized on the talismans ... She passed, by rapid descents, known only to Eblis and his most favoured potentates; and thus penetrated the very entrails of the earth, where where breathes the sansar, or icy wind of death ... She assembled all the choirs of Genii, and all the dives, to pay her homage. Thus marched she, in triumph, through a vapour of perfumes, amidst the acclamations of all the malignant spirits. She even attempted to dethrone one of the Solimans, for the purpose of usurping his place; when a voice, proceeding from the abyss of death, proclaimed, 'All is accomplished!' Instantaneously the haughty forehead of the intrepid princess became corrugated with agony; she uttered a tremendous yell, and fixed no more to be withdrawn, her right hand upon her heart, which was become a receptacle of eternal fire.

In this delirium, forgetting all ambitious projects, and her thirst for that knowledge which should ever be hidden from mortals, she overturned the offerings of the Genii.⁴

Carathis is conceived in the boldest manner and in the nature of the great enchantresses of romance: Alcina in Orlando Furioso, Duessa and Acrasia in The Faerie Queen. All are beautiful and attractive figures but really the handmaidens of evil and destruction.

ii

Mrs Radcliffe was cautious in her conception of evil women. The nearest she comes to depicting one in The Mysteries of Udolpho is Emily's aunt, Madame Cheron. The model for this character is not Carathis, but rather the old step-mother types of folk-tale. Her fault lies in her disregard for the attitudes and values beloved of the authoress, her coarseness and vulgarity, her lack of any tenderness or finesse. Her first meeting with Emily sets the tone of their whole relationship: a petty tyranny on her aunt's part borne with noble restraint by Emily.

"Who is that young man?" said her aunt, in an accent which equally implied inquisitiveness and censure; "some idle admirer of yours I suppose? But I believed, niece, you had a greater sense of propriety than to have received the visits of any young man in your present unfriended situation. Let me tell you the world will observe those things; and it will talk - ay, and very freely too."

Emily, extremely shocked at this coarse speech, attempted to interrupt it; but Madame Cheron would proceed, with all the self-importance of a person to whom power is new.⁵

She is a vulgar woman: her propriety is founded not on inner convictions of

taste and decorum, but on salacious suspicion and a fear of gossip.

Further, Madame Cheron represents a serious insensitivity and a greedy quest for wealth and social position. Eventually she becomes hopelessly entangled in the web of her own petty ambitions.

However, Madame Cheron is more misguided than evil. Her great mistake is her marriage to Montoni for the consequences are fraught with danger for herself. Indeed, once she has reached Venice, her sorrows begin in earnest. Ultimately she is not an example of the demonic nature but a variation on the all too human aspect of the heroine. She is invested with a type of pathetic dignity in her isolation, agony and finally death.

... she rushed towards a bed that stood in a remote part of the room, and drew aside the curtains. Within appeared a pale and emaciated face. She started back, then again advanced, shuddered as she took up the skeleton hand that lay stretched upon the quilt, then let it drop, and then viewed the face with a long, unsettled gaze. It was that of Madame Montoni, though so changed by illness that the resemblance of what it had been could scarcely be traced in what it now appeared.⁶

iii

It was Lewis who developed the type Beckford had so strongly portrayed in *Carathis*. His *Matilda* is a fascinating creation, and one greatly admired by Coleridge.

But the character of *Matilda*, the chief agent in the seduction of *Ambrosio*, appears to us to be the author's master piece. It is, indeed, exquisitely imagined, and as exquisitely supported. The whole work is distinguished by the variety and impressiveness of its incidents; and the author everywhere discovers an imagination rich, powerful and fervid.⁷

Matilda is the literal embodiment of the *Donna Demonicata*, not simply a wicked woman but a demon incarnate. This is revealed in Satan's big speech at the end of the novel, even if it is not always clear in the course of the action.

... 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. I observed your blind idolatry of the Madonna's picture. I had a subordinate but crafty spirit assume a similar form; and you eagerly yielded to the blandishments of *Matilda*.⁸

The most fascinating aspect of Matilda is her protean nature, her mercurial changeability from one scene to another according to the nature and method of her temptation, for her rôle is always that of temptress, her commission to secure the soul of Ambrosio for Hell.

When she first appears she is disguised as a young novice, Rosario. She enters at the most opportune moment, when Ambrosio, drunk with the recollection of his powerful sermon, is most vulnerable to her crafty insinuation. Matilda's fateful part in his life is symbolically presaged by her three taps at his door, as if Hell ironically responds on the instant to Ambrosio's proud challenge.

"... Reflect that you are now exempted from Humanity's defects, and defy all the arts of the Spirits of Darkness. They shall know you for what you are!"

Here his Reverie was interrupted by three soft knocks at the door of his Cell ...

"Who is there?" said Ambrosio at length.

"It is only Rosario," replied a gentle voice.

"Enter! Enter, my son!"⁹

Her first attack is aimed at Ambrosio's principle flaw, his pride, as she pretends to be the devoted disciple. This approach moves subtly, by way of Rosario's fabricated story of his love-stricken sister, to a play on Ambrosio's second great flaw, his tremendous sexual appetite, suppressed but perilously latent. Her revelation of her femininity results in shattering mental turmoil for Ambrosio. He can resist the new and terrifying forces threatening him only by expelling her, but the hellish forces working against him are again ready to intervene through Matilda. She requests that Ambrosio pick her a rose that conceals a deadly serpent. His subsequent illness provides Matilda with the requisite opportunity for inflaming the Monk's senses. She confesses a consuming change in her attitude that leads inexorably to his sexual fall.

'... I deceived both you and myself. Either I must die at present, or expire by the lingering torments of the unsatisfied. Oh! since we last conversed together, a dreadful veil has been rent from before my eyes. I love you no longer with the devotion which is paid to a Saint: I prize you no more for the virtues of your soul; I lust for the enjoyment of your person. The Woman reigns in my bosom, and I am become a prey to the wildest of passions.'¹⁰

Her initial task completed, Matilda's character begins an even more amazing series of transformations, so that there is eventually no longer any central recognizable point of identity.

Left to himself He could not reflect without surprise on the sudden change in Matilda's character and sentiments. But a few days had past, since she had appeared the mildest and softest of her sex, devoted to his will, and looking up to him as to a superior being. Now She assumed a sort of courage and manliness in her manners and discourse but ill to please him. She spoke no longer to insinuate, but command: He found himself unable to cope with her in argument, and was unwillingly obliged to confess the superiority of her judgment.¹¹

She is the catalyst in developing Ambrosio's dual personality and inculcating the principle of evil in him.

With the satiation of Ambrosio's desire for her body, his attention turns to other women and fixes on the pure Antonia. Matilda accordingly changes from wanton concubine to satanic mentor, revealing all the while a close association with the powers of darkness. By means of her talismanic powers she is able to conjure up erotic visions and so enflame Ambrosio's lust to the point of frenzy that will later enmesh him in the inhuman crimes of murder and rape. Her real aim is to bring him into communion with Hell, a suggestion to which he first reacts with horror. Her rôle of temptress now comes into fearful play as she subtly overturns the moral precepts that govern his understanding of life even in his sin.

'Rash Matilda! What have you done? You have doomed yourself to endless perdition ... If on witchcraft depends the fruition of my desires, I renounce your aid most absolutely. The consequences are too horrible: I doat upon Antonia, but am not so blinded by lust as to sacrifice for her enjoyment my existence both in this world and the next ...'

'Are you then God's friend at present? Have you not broken your engagements with him, renounced his service and abandoned yourself to the impulse of your passions? Are you not planning the destruction of innocence ...? It is not virtue, which makes you reject my offer: You would accept it, but you dare not ... 'Tis not respect for God which restrains you, but the terror of his vengeance!'¹²

In the caverns she appears as a terrific high priestess, a necessary intermediary between Ambrosio and the dark powers of Hell. The parallel here with

Carathis becomes very pronounced.

She had quitted her religious habit: She was now cloathed in a long sable Robe, on which was traced in gold embroidery a variety of unknown characters: It was fastened by a girdle of precious stones, in which was fixed a poignard. Her neck and arms were uncovered. In her hand She bore a golden wand. Her hair was loose and flowed wildly upon her shoulders; Her eyes sparkled with terrific expression; and her whole Demeanour was calculated to inspire the beholder with awe and admiration.¹³

Eventually it is in all the glittering panoply of a princely denizen of Hell that she appears to Ambrosio as he suffers in agony and fear. Again her pernicious attack on hope and all the consolations of faith definitively reveals her demonic nature as the enemy of mankind.

'Summon then your resolution to your aid; and renounce for immediate and certain benefits the hopes of a salvation, difficult to obtain, and perhaps altogether erroneous. Shake off the prejudice of vulgar souls; Abandon a God, who has abandoned you, and raise yourself to the level of superior Beings!'¹⁴

Satan promises Ambrosio a place with her in Hell where her soul lives in its state of unending damnation.

Matilda is one of the most remarkable creations in Gothic literature, and one who exercised enormous influence on the literature of the nineteenth century. She is so complete in herself that there could be no direct development of her, only the adaption of her mercurial personality as the sensual temptress. She is in fact a powerful prototype of the Femme Fatale.

... a line of tradition may be traced through the characters of these Fatal Women, right from the beginning of Romanticism. In this pedigree one may say that Lewis's Matilda is at the head of the line: she develops, on one side into Velléda (Chateaubriand) and Salammbô (Flaubert), and, on the other, into Carmen (Mérimée), Cécily (Sue), and Conchita (Pierre Louys) ...¹⁵

When Mrs Radcliffe came to write The Italian she was as always responsive to the challenge of Lewis's ideas. In the Marchesa di Vivaldi she created one of her most powerful characters, perhaps the most uncomplicatedly evil person in

her novels. She is very differently conceived from the weak but wilful and selfish Madame Cheron. She has all the proud majesty of Carathis and displays all Matilda's persistent ingenuity in the implementation of her evil will.¹⁶

If the issues of Good and Evil are not as consciously discussed by the authoress as they are in Beckford and Lewis, they are nevertheless present in the Marchesa's relentless war against the expression of pure love in the sordid interests of power.

In her relentless passion the Marchesa becomes a type of elemental force: indeed she is Schedoni's kindred spirit, and the scenes between her and the Confessor are splendidly conceived. They represent the highpoint of Mrs Radcliffe's depiction of character. In her passionate obsession she is prepared, like Carathis and Matilda, to flout even the most sacrosanct moral norms that hold society together.

The Marchesa wished him to lead her to the point, from which she herself had deviated, and he seemed determined, that she should lead him thither. She mused, and hesitated. Her mind was not yet familiar with atrocious guilt; and the crime which Schedoni had suggested, somewhat alarmed her. She feared to think, and still more to name it; yet, so acutely susceptible was her pride, so stern her indignation, and so profound her desire of vengeance, that mind was tossed as on a tempestuous ocean, and these terrible feelings threatened to overwhelm all the residue of humanity in her heart. Schedoni observed all its progressive movements, and, like a gaunt tyger, lurked in silence, ready to spring forward at the moment of opportunity.

'It is your advice, then, father,' resumed the Marchesa, after a long pause, - 'it is your opinion - that Ellena.' - She hesitated, desirous that Schedoni should anticipate her meaning; but he chose to spare his own delicacy rather than that of the Marchesa.

'You think, then, that this insidious girl deserves' - She paused again, but the Confessor, still silent, seemed to wait with submission for what the Marchesa should deliver.

'I repeat, father, that it is your opinion this girl deserves severe punishment.' -

'Undoubtedly,' replied Schedoni ...

'That not any punishment can be too severe?' continued the Marchesa.

'That justice, equally with necessity, demands - her life? ...'¹⁷

Her evil emphasized by her insensitivity to beauty, a typical trait of Mrs Radcliffe's villains. The intensity of her wicked and gloomy disposition

is described in images that carry a convincing understanding of psychological process.

This delightful residence was situated on an airy promontary, that overhung the water, and was nearly embosomed among the woods, that spread far along the heights, and descended, with great pomp of foliage and colouring, to the very margin of the waves. It seemed scarcely possible that misery could inhabit so enchanting an abode; yet the Marchesa was wretched amidst all these luxuries of nature and art, which would have perfected the happiness of an innocent mind. Her heart was possessed by evil passions, and all her perceptions were distorted and discoloured by them, which, like a dark magician, had power to change the fairest scenes into those of gloom and desolation.¹⁸

The Marchesa's evil personality is dramatically reinforced by the discovery on her death that she has long suffered from a physical malignancy. Her psychological reality is emphasized in the strength of her self-inflicted punishment, the remorse which is her own judgment and condemnation, the secular and metaphysical counterpart of Carathis's burning heart and Matilda's place in Hell.¹⁹

The Marchesa shows Mrs Radcliffe's growing mastery of her art, by the great advance both in technique of presentation and in thematic richness; when she is compared with Madame Cheron the development is clear. Carathis and Matilda have clearly influenced the authoress in the stronger depiction of evil. The earlier figures are powerful embodiments of ideas, mythical in the eternal type they represent. The Marchesa carries the type forward: she is the same eternal spirit of demonic womanhood but in terms of a secular realism.

There is one more substantial occurrence of the evil woman in the cycle of the Gothic novel. She is the Widow Sandal in "The Lovers' Tale" of Melmoth the Wanderer.

She is modelled in the style of the Marchesa di Vivaldi, if not quite in the same detail; but the mythologizing tendencies of this great novel are clearly in evidence. If Matilda embodies the myth of the Femme Fatale, then the Widow Sandal is an example of a myth of modern times - the Puritan hypocrite

who preaches the Gospel of Love but lives the life of complete selfishness. Like Carathis and Matilda she is consumed with greed and visions of self-aggrandizement, and is prepared to tear apart all moral restraint to realize her ambitions. In this case, as with the Marchesa, it is to prevent marriage between her son and a woman she feels to be undesirable.

Since her son's arrival, the widow Sandal had betrayed a marked degree of anxiety, and a kind of restless precaution against some invisible evil. She was now frequently at the Castle. She could not be blind to the increasing attachment of John and Elinor - and her only thought was how to prevent the possibility of their union, by which the interest of the former and her own importance would be materially affected.²⁰

It will be noticed that Maturin speaks plainly in terms of Good and Evil, impregnating the story with the issues of salvation and damnation emphasized by Beckford and Lewis. The spiritual terms used in depicting the Widow Sandal stress the underlying mythic implications of her action.

... the widow Sandal, once determined on the end, felt little scruple about the means. Want and envy had given her an unshakeable appetite for the restored splendours of her former state; and false religion had taught her every shade and penumbra of hypocrisy, every meanness of artifice, every obliquity of insinuation. In her varied life she had known the good, and chosen the evil. The widow Sandal was now determined to interpose an insurmountable obstruction to their union.²¹

Like the Marchesa, her own conscience is an inexorable judge and the scene of her confession follows the terrible outworking of her evil.²² She dies in despair, like Carathis, denied of all hope.

When the minister heard to the last the terrible confession of the dying penitent, in the awful language ascribed to Bishop Burnet when consulted by another criminal, - he did her 'almost despair,' and departed.²³

All these feminine figures of evil are mothers or mentors in positions of influence and with decisive control over the lives of their children or charges. All of them exert a baleful influence which causes their dependants great misery,

even death - not only physically but spiritually. Carathis helps Vathek into the Caverns of Eblis, Matilda impels Ambrosio towards Hell, the Widow Sandal drives her son into insanity. All of these Donne Demoniace lose their own souls. They are not only a spiritual threat but in their burning passions they destroy all sense of moral order and control: their machinations are deathly. Madame Cheron seriously disrupts the love between Emily and Valancourt, Matilda helps to poison the love Ambrosio has for Antonia, the Marchesa plots to keep Vivaldi from Ellena even to the point of having her murdered, the Widow Sandal ruins the lives and happiness of Elinor Mortimer and John Sandal.

They form a remarkable set of characters unified in conception and theme - the fallen side of woman's nature that seeks only to ensnare and destroy.

Once again the intensifying vision is clearly discernible - a movement from romance (in the person of Carathis) towards greater realism (as in the Marchesa) which never loses sight of the mythical implications of the type. In the later stages the issues of realism and myth are fused in the Widow Sandal - who in the relationship with her son in modern times briefly but essentially recapitulates the relationship between Carathis and Vathek in legendary times.

5. LOVING FATHERS AND GENTLE MENTORS

The group of Wicked Women (evil mothers and temptresses) has a counterpart in the various good fathers and mentors found in the genre.

i

The Castle of Otranto presents the type in the person of the priest Jerome who establishes a moral norm and is the only man capable of standing up to Manfred's tyrannies.¹

Later Jerome is revealed to be the father of Theodore, and as such shows all the tenderness and compassion of paternal love.

As he stooped, his shirt flipped down below his shoulder, and discovered the mark of a bloody arrow. Gracious heaven! cried the holy man starting, what do I see? It is my child! my Theodore!

The passions that ensued must be conceived; they cannot be painted. Surprise, doubt, tenderness, respect, succeeded each other in the countenance of the youth. He received with modest submission the effusion of the old man's tears and embraces ...²

In Nicolas Falconara, then, are combined both father and mentor, the custodian of all that is morally right.

The type descends from the old Hermit figure of romance, a person of wisdom assisting the lonely pilgrim through life. He actually makes an appearance later in Walpole's novel, in Frederick's narration of his adventures in the Holy Land. The Hermit in fact is the spokesman of Heaven in that his dying injunctions lead to the discovery of the buried sabre which is directly connected with the uncovering of Manfred's crime.³

The Old English Baron contains the characters of Sir Philip Harclay and Father Oswald, both of whom work in the interests of the Young Hero, Edmund.

Sir Philip becomes a surrogate father, a protection in time of need.⁴ Father Oswald is Edmund's spiritual director, encouraging him to turn to God for ultimate justice.

My dear child, put your trust in God: He who brought light out of darkness, can bring good out of evil.⁵

Vathek too has many venerable mentors who at different times urge the Caliph to abandon his proflicacy and profane ambitions of aggrandizement. Perhaps the most impressive of this series is his good Genius who appears to warn him for the last time prior to his entering the realms of Eblis.

One of these beneficent Genii, assuming without delay, the exterior of a shepherd, more renowned for his piety than all the derviches and santons of the region, took his station near a flock of white sheep, on the slope of a hill; and began to pour forth from his flute such airs of pathetic melody, as subdued the very soul, and awakening remorse, drove far from it every frivolous fancy ...

'... Deluded prince! to whom Providence both confided the care of innumerable subjects, is it thus that thou fulfilllest thy mission? Thy crimes are already completed, and art thou now listening towards thy punishment? Thou knowest that, beyond these mountains, Eblis and his accursed dives hold their infernal empire, and seduced by a malignant phantom, thou art proceeding to surrender thyself to them! This moment is the last of grace allowed thee: abandon thy atrocious purpose ... and instead of squandering thy days in voluptuous indulgence, lament thy crimes on the sepulchres of thy ancestors.'⁶

All these early figures are colourless ideas having no real personality of their own: they represent certain opinions and moral norms.

ii

The first substantial character of this kind in the cycle is M. St Aubert in The Mysteries of Udolpho, Emily's father and teacher.

Mrs Radcliffe has endowed him with a benign epicureanism, a melancholic reclusiveness. He is the spokesman of a rational and restrained view of life, the philosophy which Emily inherits and holds to dearly. The opening section, depicting the St Auberts at home and on their Pyrenean journey is an exposition of his personality and opinions. His dying words contain his supreme dictum,

which sums up Mrs Radcliffe's whole attitude to life, and serves as Emily's guiding light throughout her adventures.

"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 our sense of evil is, I fear, more acute than our sense of good, we become the victims of our own feelings, unless we can in some degree command them ... happiness arises in a state of peace, not tumult: it is of a temperate and uniform nature, and can no more exist in a heart that is continually alive to minute circumstances, than in one that is dead to feeling ... though I would guard you against the dangers of sensibility, I am not an advocate for apathy ... I call it a vice because it leads to positive evil. In this, however, it does no more than an ill-governed sensibility, which, by such a rule, may also be called a vice ..."

Emily assured him that his advice was most precious to her, and that she would never forget it, or cease from endeavouring to profit by it.⁷

The Monk offers a fine example of the gentle mentor, this time a woman in the person of Antonia's mother, Elvira Dalfa. Lewis depicts her as a woman, wise through her suffering and anxious to spare her innocent daughter any similar experiences. She becomes the formidable embodiment of parental guidance: her care extends even to Antonia's reading matter, and she censors even the Holy Scriptures.

That prudent Mother, while she admired the beauties of the sacred writings, was convinced, that unrestricted no reading more improper could be permitted a young Woman ... She had in consequence made two resolutions respecting the Bible. The first was, that Antonia should not read it, till she was of an age to feel its beauties, and profit by its morality: the second, that it should be copied out with her own hand, and all improper passages either altered or omitted. She had adhered to this determination and such was the Bible which Antonia was reading.⁸

Ambrosio is only too well aware of Elvira's powers of discernment: when his first attempt at ravishing Antonia is interrupted by Elvira, he is forbidden entrance to her home. Eventually she becomes Ambrosio's victim, murdered when she once again foils his intention to rape her daughter.

'Antonia secure from you? I will secure her! You shall betray no longer the confidence of Parents! Your iniquity shall be unveiled to the public eye: All Madrid shall shudder at your perfidy, your hypocrisy and incontinence.'⁹

In her death she becomes a pathetic figure of suffering humanity.¹⁰

Mrs Radcliffe provides Ellena with a mentor in The Italian, her aunt Bianchi. Like Elvira she is anxious to save Ellena unnecessary suffering and is fearful that any union with Vivaldi will incite the wrath of his family.

She considered that from her own age and infirmities she must very soon, in the course of nature, leave Ellena a young and friendless orphan ... With much beauty and little knowledge of the world, the dangers of her future situation appeared in vivid colours to the affectionate mind of Signora Bianchi.¹¹

Eventually her growing trust of Vivaldi leads her to commit her niece to his love and protection.¹²

Again like Elvira, Bianchi is fated to die for her charge: she is poisoned on the Marchesa's instructions in order to facilitate Ellena's abduction.¹³

iii

The later novels do not present characters as elaborate as M. St Aubert and Elvira Dalfa, but ones who make a brief but moving appeal. The most notable is Alphonse Frankenstein, the father of the scientist. While never playing a very direct part in the story, he remains important as the symbol of Frankenstein's home, the place of innocence and love. His father's noble nature is described in his ideal relationship with his wife.

There was a considerable difference between the ages of my parents, but this circumstance seemed to unite them only closer in bonds of devoted affection. There was a sense of justice in my father's upright mind which rendered it necessary that he should approve highly to love strongly. Perhaps during former years he had suffered from the late-discovered unworthiness of one beloved and so was disposed to set a greater value on tried worth. There was a show of gratitude and worship in his attachment to my mother, differing wholly from the dotting fondness of age, for it was inspired by reverence for her virtues and a desire to be the means of ... recompensing her for the sorrows she had endured, but which gave inexpressible grace to his behaviour to her.¹⁴

The situation of horror that develops after Frankenstein has created his Monster is reflected in the slow decline of his father, as one by one the members

of his family are stricken. In all his sorrows he remains devoted to his fatherly rôle, and when his son is accused of murder in Ireland, travels the great distance to be with him.

We were not allowed to converse for any length of time, for my precarious state of health rendered every precaution necessary that could ensure tranquillity ... But the appearance of my father was to me like that of my good angel, and I gradually recovered my health.¹⁵

Eventually the suffering caused by his son's creation becomes too much to bear: his death marks the nadir in Frankenstein's shattered life.¹⁶

The last father figure in the cycle is the Jew Adonijah in Melmoth the Wanderer. He is by far the most fascinating of all such characters, an ancient and mysterious sage who combines the hermit, alchemist, prophet and father-types. As he sits in the midst of his laboratory he is the prototype of the mad professor, a myth of modern times.

At the end of the table sat an old man, wrapped in a long robe; his head was covered with a black velvet cap ... his spectacles were of such a size as almost to hide his face, and he turned over some scrolls of parchment with an anxious and trembling hand ...¹⁷

But Adonijah is kind and fatherly to the terrified Moncada, and offers him refuge and hospitality. He is the master of every science and secret, and in his possession is the manuscript containing the greater body of the Tales and the ultimate meaning of the Melmoth mystery. His penetration of the secrets of the world is symbolized by his secret subterranean dwelling like the labyrinthine cave of an ancient wizard.¹⁸

In return for his hospitality he commissions Moncada to transcribe the manuscript, and so directly initiates the succeeding series of interwoven tales.¹⁹

Like the Hermit of The Castle of Otranto and St Aubert in The Mysteries of Udolpho, Adonijah is rich in wisdom and important for the development of the plot.

The full implications of the intensifying vision are now realized if the colourless types of Walpole's novel are compared with the affecting humanity of M. Frankenstein and the complex symbolism of Adonijah. The sacrificial beneficence of these characters certainly stands in strong opposition to the group of Wicked Women and contributes towards the inner thematic tensions of the novels.

6. GARRULOUS MAIDS AND TRUSTY HENCHMEN

The many character types in the Gothic novel are predominantly tragic or serious with a small exception of some comic figures who provide this compendious genre with a consistent example of the low-mimetic mode.

i

In the earlier novels this type is confined to the servants. Walpole, in his Preface to the Second Edition of The Castle of Otranto, explained his attitude to character, the perception of a natural social hierarchy, and the deliberate juxta-posing of high- and low-mimetic modes in imitation of Shakespeare.

My rule was nature. However grave, important, or even melancholy the sensations of princes and heroes may be, they do not stamp the same affections on their domestics: at least the latter do not, so should not be made to express their passions in the same dignified tone. In my humble opinion, the contrast between the sublime of the one, and the naïveté of the other, sets the pathetic of the former in a stronger light. The very impatience which a reader feels, while delayed by the coarse pleasantries of vulgar action arriving at the knowledge of the important catastrophe he expects, perhaps heightens, certainly proves that he has been artfully interested in, the depending event. But I had a higher authority than my own opinion for this conduct. That great master of nature, Shakespeare, was the model I copied. Let me ask if his tragedies of Hamlet and Julius Caesar would not lose a considerable share of their spirit and wonderful beauties, if the humour of the grave-diggers, the fooleries of Polonius, and the clumsy jests of the Roman citizens were omitted, or vested in heroics?¹

In his novel he establishes the type of garrulous maid, a firm favourite with the Gothic novelists. Terrified by the ghostly happenings in the Castle, Bianca insists on a precipitate departure showing all the features of the petty bourgeois mentality in her concern for her possessions.

- Oh! the hand! the giant! the hand! - Support me! I am terrified out of my senses, cried Bianca: I will not sleep in the castle to-night. Where shall I go? My things may come after me tomorrow.²

Such interludes give the writers the opportunity to develop the comic element as a measure of light relief in the otherwise unremittingly serious and gloomy

atmosphere of the novels. The comic effect is achieved pre-eminently in the dialogue which contributes to the comic tradition established in the novels of the eighteenth century.

... Well! as I was telling your greatness, I was going by his highness's order to my lady Isabella's chamber: she lies in the watchet-coloured chamber on the right hand, one pair of stairs: so when I came to the great stairs - I was looking on his highness's present here. Grant me patience! said Manfred, will this wench never come to the point?³

Similar situations occur in the later novels, as in The Monk when Ambrosio's patience is sorely tried by Dame Jacintha's profuse ramblings.⁴ In The Italian Vivaldi is in the same situation when Beatrice's elaborations prevent him from hearing the news he most wants to know.⁵

But this servant type has a more serious side, that of the trusty henchman, first developed in The Old English Baron. Joseph, the old family retainer, is the first to recognize in Edmund the long lost Lovel heir, and consistently gives him all the help and encouragement he can.

Ah, dear Sir! said Joseph, I must tell you though I have never uttered it to mortal man before; the striking resemblance this young man bears to my dear Lord, the strange dislike his reputed father took to him, his gentle manners, his generous heart, his noble qualities so uncommon in those of his birth and breeding, the sound of his voice - You may smile at the strength of my fancy, but I cannot put it out of my mind that he is my Master's son.⁶

The first masterly comic creation of this kind is also a staunch retainer, Vathek's chief eunuch, Bababalouk.

Bababalouk was parading to and fro, and issuing his mandates with great pomp to the eunuchs, who were snuffing the lights and painting the eyes of the Circassians.⁷

He is thoroughly his Master's henchman, obedient to the last detail even if it means destroying what is sacred to meet Vathek's extravagant whims.⁸

Mrs Radcliffe's contribution to these types of character was directly in the line of Bianca and Joseph. In The Mysteries of Udolpho, Emily is supported

in her Italian adventures by Annette, her aunt's maid, who in a milder comic manner counterpoints her mistress's experiences. Her relationship with one of Montoni's gallants, Ludovico, is the comic counterpart of Emily's with Valancourt. Annette is the unromantic antidote to the heroine's sentimental excesses as her words about the love-songs of Venice indicate.

'What, ma'amselle, don't you remember Ludovico - who rowed the cavaliere's gondola at the last regatta, and won the prize? Who used to sing such sweet verses about Orlandos; and about the Blackamoors too; and Charly - Charly - magne, - yes, that was the name - all under my lattice, in the west portico, on the moonlight nights at Venice?'

Conversely, Annette is an hysterical influence, the superstitious mind uneducated and uncontrolled by reason and restraint.

It is Ludovico who helps Emily to escape from Udolpho, and who becomes her devoted retainer. His relationship with Annette again follows the pattern of the central lovers, his kidnapping by the robbers separating him from Annette in the same way that Emily was parted from Valancourt by her Italian journey. Eventually their marriage follows on a lower level than that of the romance lovers.¹⁰

This idea of servant retainer sharing his master's heroic experiences on a low-mimetic level is developed even more convincingly in the person of Paulo, Vivaldi's servant in The Italian. Paulo seeks to share his master's life and adventures even to the point of imprisonment.¹¹ In the same way he shares Vivaldi's ultimate triumph.

As a testimony of singular esteem, Paulo was permitted to be present at the marriage of his master, when, as perched in a high gallery of the church, he looked down upon the ceremony ... he could scarcely refrain from expressing the joy he felt, and shouting aloud, O! giorno felice! O! giorno felice!¹²

person of Flora, Elvira's maid. She is one of the servant types who is not conceived in comic terms: in fact she takes the place of Elvira as the custodian of innocence and seeks to protect Antonia against Ambrosio.

Flora obeyed Elvira's injunctions with the most scrupulous observance. She examined every circumstance with an anxious eye likely in the least to prejudice her young Mistress ... Flora quitted not the room for a moment, while the Abbot remained there: She watched his every word, his every look, his every action. He saw that her suspicious eye was always fixed upon him ... He was aware that She doubted the purity of his intentions; that She would never leave him alone with Antonia ...¹³

She is the only true mourner at Antonia's funeral.

The comic element in The Monk is in the person of Leonella, Elvira's ridiculous sister who has pretensions to beauty and thinks herself admired by young men. She is conceived in terms of Restoration Comedy. She writes her preposterous love letters with "sentences ... written in red ink, to express the blushes of her cheek, while She committed an outrage upon her virgin modesty."¹⁴ Her final attitude of despair amounts to a crude satire on the excesses of the literature of sentiment.

She affected the airs of a love-sick Virgin, and carried them all to the most ridiculous excesses. She heaved lamentable sighs, walked with her arms folded, uttered long soliloquies, and her discourse generally turned upon some forsaken maid, who expired of a broken heart! Her fiery locks were always ornamented with a garland of willow; Every evening she was seen straying upon the Banks of a rivulet by Moon-light, and She declared herself a violent Admirer of murmuring Streams and Nightingales.¹⁵

The same sense of parody is used to much greater purpose and with a far more serious intention by Maturin in his depiction of Immalee's stupid and selfish mother, Donna Clara. She is the embodiment of desiccated formality.¹⁶ She is weak and superstitious, the pettiness and triviality of her character standing in contrast with Isidora's beautiful soul, her love and compassion. The author emphasizes Donna Clara's weaknesses in a great comic scene in which she writes a letter to her equally stupid and crabbed husband: the parody is emphasized by the involved conceits used by the author.

The whole of the next day was occupied by Donna Clara, to whom letter-writing was a rare, troublesome, and momentous task, in reading over and correcting her answer to her husband's letter; in which examination she found much to correct, underline, alter, modify, expunge, and new-model, that finally Donna Clara's epistle very much resembled the work she was now employed in, namely, that of overcasting a piece of tapestry wrought by her grandmother ... The new work, instead of repairing, made fearful havoc among the old; but Donna Clara went on, like her countryman at Mr Peter's puttel-show, playing away (with her needle) in a perfect shower of back-strokes, fore-strokes, side-thrusts, and counter-thrusts, till not a figure in the tapestry could know himself again.¹⁷

iv

But the great triumph of the low-mimetic type in the Gothic novel is Maturin's Father José. He is the one character of the cycle who is a worthy successor to the great comic figures of the eighteenth century novel. The author has chosen one stock weakness of the traditionally corrupt Catholic cleric, gluttony, and has used this as the major device of characterization; ultimately it becomes a caricature in the method Dickens was to develop to perfection in his comic characters.

'... I tremble Father, lest those tears be shed for that heathen land, that region of Satan, where her youth was past.' - 'I'll give her a penance,' said Father José, 'that will save her the trouble of shedding tears on the score of memory at least - these grapes are delicious.' - 'But, Father,' pursued Donna Clara, with all the weak but restless anxiety of a superstitious mind, 'though you have made me easy on that subject, I still am wretched... Hush! - I must not hear such sounds, or it might be my duty to take severer notice of these lapses. However, daughter,' continued Father Jose, 'thus far will I venture for your consolation. As sure as this fine peach is in my hand - another, if you please - and as sure as I shall finish this other glass of Malaga' - here a long pause attested the fulfilment of the pledge - so sure' - and Father Jose turned the inverted glass on the table = 'Madonna Isidora has - has the elements of a Christian in her ...'¹⁸

But his character is made more interesting by his sincerity.¹⁹ It is he who is with Isidora when she dies and who promises her the victory of Heaven.

'My daughter,' said the priest, while the tears rolled fast down his cheeks - 'my daughter, you are passing to bliss - the conflict was fierce and short, but the victory is sure - harps are turned to a new song, even a song of welcome, and wreaths of palm are weaving for you in paradise!'²⁰

The use of these low-mimetic grotesque and burlesque types was the Gothic novelists' way of providing light relief in situations too engrossed in the terrific and the horrific. The caricatures thus delay the swiftness of the narration, provide light relief and serve as foils to the primary characters.

Character in the Gothic novel is detailed in conception and all-inclusive. Because it is dominated by theme it is virtually allegorical, hieratic in the different modes and classes of character types. However, the sustained mood of violence, sadism and fear is perhaps a tacit admission that the intellectual impact of allegory is not as important as the emotional impact. This constant concern with emotion is probably the chief motivation for the subsidiary development of verisimilitude, which is always, nevertheless, subservient to the great symbolic issues of the genre.

III

SETTING

The rôle of setting in the Gothic novel is of great importance: much of the colour and power these works convey is vested in the sensitivity displayed by the authors in the evocation of the worlds in which their characters move. The extent and detail of the setting was something new in the development of the novel and contributed to the huge vogue enjoyed by these novels in their time. Indeed the conception of setting in the greatest examples of this genre is a substantial literary achievement.

In the cycle which developed between 1764 and 1820 the same intensifying vision so evident in the conception of character, is again to be perceived. Setting as the flimsiest backdrop, as the evocation of atmosphere, as a powerful symbol, even as the vehicle of an intense religious meaning, grows in dramatic appositeness until it is worthy of the all-embracing designation of space.

1. PALE SHADOWS AND THICKENING TEXTURES

In the archetype of the Gothic novel the whole conception of setting is very weak indeed. The title of this book, The Castle of Otranto, provides the venue of the story and the most important image in the work, the Castle itself. This is the dramatic vehicle containing the whole meaning of the story, the embodiment of Manfred's crime of usurpation and the symbol of Theodore's inheritance eventually restored to him. The Castle is a boding presence, yet one that is hardly dramatically realized. Setting, in fact, is altogether a perfunctory matter, an unrealized potential.

Die Stärke des Buches liegt in der straffen, durch die Motive des Grauens geschickt akzelerierten Handlung, im lebendigen, schlagfertigen Dialog. Das sind Tugenden des Dramas mehr als des Romans, und wir wissen dass Walpoles Sinn nach einem Erfolg im Theater stand. Hieraus

erklärt sich, warum die Bilderwelt der natürlichen Räume, Berge, Wälder, Parklandschaften so gut wie keine Rolle spielt, und warum das vielgerühmte Schloss kaum mehr darstellt als theatralische Kulisse.¹

On occasion there is a brief hint of what was to come, for example when the subterranean passages under the Castle form the background to Isabella's flight from Manfred, and enter her consciousness as a powerful feature in her successfully realized experience of horror.

The lower part of the castle was hollowed into several intricate cloisters, and it was not easy for one under so much anxiety to find the door that opened into the cavern. An awful silence reigned throughout those subterraneous regions, except now and then when some blasts of wind that shook the doors she had passed, and which grating on the rusty hinges were re-echoed through that long labyrinth of darkness. Every murmur struck her with new terror; ...²

The scene is atmospherically effective, but is confined to a functional purpose that neglects to develop the strong symbolic possibilities.

Another interesting feature of future developments is intimated when Isabella contemplates a possible place of refuge.

Yet where conceal herself! How avoid the pursuit he would infallibly make throughout the castle! As these thoughts passed rapidly through her mind, she recollected a subterraneous passage which led from the vaults of the castle to the church of saint Nicholas. Could she reach the altar before she was overtaken, she knew even Manfred's violence would not dare to profane the sacredness of the place.³

From this passage the Castle emerges as a place of insecurity and danger, even crime, while the church is naturally regarded as the place of holiness and refuge, the sanctum. The polarity of Good and Evil in human behaviour is carried over into place. This is a vital factor in understanding the concept of setting throughout the cycle, where the issues of Heaven and Hell are extended into spatial images.

This hint of future developments is made even more interesting by the violation of the sanctuary when Matilda is murdered in the church by Manfred.

Setting here bolsters another common theme of the genre - terrible and ironic reversals of expectation.

On the whole, however, The Castle of Otranto remains poor in setting, a series of actions with only a meagre sketching in of background like the incidental properties of a play.

This lack of a sustained sense of setting is also characteristic of The Old English Baron. Like Walpole, Mrs Reeve provides the odd colourful stage prop.

The sun shone upon his curtains, and, perceiving it was day, he sat up, and recollected where he was ... The sun dazzled his eyes, the birds serenaded him and diverted his attention, and a woodbine forced its way through the window, and regaled his sense of smelling with its fragrance. - He arose, paid his devotions to Heaven, and then carefully descended the narrow stairs, and went out at the door of the cottage.⁴

Only on one significant occasion does she launch into atmospheric evocation, and with considerable success, when she describes the moth-eaten fabrics and decaying furniture of the secret apartments in the Castle.

He then took a survey of his chamber; the furniture, by long neglect, was decayed and dropping to pieces, the bed was devoured by the moths, and occupied by the rats, who had built their nests there with impunity for many generations. The bedding was very damp, for the rain had forced its way through the ceiling; he determined, therefore, to lie down in his clothes. There were two doors on the further side of the room with keys in them; being not at all sleepy, he resolved to examine them; he attempted one lock and opened it with ease; he went into a large dining-room, the furniture of which was in the same tattered condition; out of this was a large closet with some books in it, and hung round with coats of arms, with genealogies and alliances of the house of Lovel; he amused himself here some minutes, and then returned into the bedchamber.⁵

The dilapidated room, the mysterious reputation of the locked suite with its fearful secret establishes an important precedent for other such haunted places in the novels, as if some numinous quality deriving from a crime committed in the precincts had impregnated them with a boding presence of evil.

In Vathek the processes of intensification become dramatically obvious:

its fantastic fairy-tale character demanded a more colourful approach than the straightforward tales of restitution penned by Walpole and Mrs Reeve. Vathek is a riot of colour and exoticism, the effects of which are largely owing to Beckford's imaginative expansion of the role of setting. In The Castle of Otranto and The Old English Baron setting had been restricted to a dramatic background with an occasional concession to atmospheric evocation. Never, however, had setting assumed the significantly symbolic character that it was to in Vathek.

The opening pages of the novel present an elaboration of setting, devoted as they are to a prolonged description of the Caliph's palace, the symbol of his gigantic opulence. The palace is an extension of Vathek's grandiose personality.

He surpassed in magnificence all his predecessors. The palace of Alkoremi, which his father, Motassem, had erected on the hill of Pied Horses ... was, in his idea, far too scanty: he added, therefore, five wings, or rather other palaces, which he destined for the particular gratification of each of the senses.⁶

Vathek epitomizes life lived to the full, in fact to excess: his vast appetite is the sensual counterpart to his outrageous intellectual and theological enquiry. Investigation of the setting will show it to be intimately linked to his spiritual progress, in fact the symbolic mirror of his inverted pilgrimage towards damnation. Once this basic religious implication is appreciated, setting will be found to represent at different times one of the three traditional planes of the spiritual life - Heaven, Purgatory and Hell.

Paradise is only hinted at, as in the description of the mountain plateau near Samarah where Vathek seeks refreshment.

At the distance of a few miles from Samarah stood a high mountain, whose sides were swarded with wild thyme and basil, and its summit overspread with so delightful a plain, that it might have been taken for the Paradise destined for the faithful. Upon it grew a hundred thickets of eglantine and other fragrant shrubs; a hundred arbours of roses, entwined with jessamine and honeysuckle; as many clumps of orange trees, cedar, and citron, whose branches, interwoven with the

palm, the pomegranate, and the vine, presented every luxury that could regale the eye or the taste. The ground was strewed with violets, harebells, and pansies; in the midst of which numerous tufts of jonquils, hyacinths, and carnations perfumed the air.⁷

Later the place of sanctuary to which the good Genius conveys the innocent Gulchenrouz is more than just a foretaste of the heavenly kingdom.⁸

Vathek's journey from Samarah to the Caverns of Eblis is in the nature of a trial in which equal appeal is made to him by both the forces of Good and Evil. This purgatorial testing period is symbolized in the setting which in its problems of physical endurance, arduous terrain, violent weather, and the deprivations of wild beasts challenges the strength of Vathek's determination.

As no long journey had been undertaken since the time of Haroun al Raschid, every one was ignorant which way to turn; and Vathek, though well versed in the course of the heavens, no longer knew his situation on earth ...

The females and eunuchs uttered shrill wailings at the sight of the precipices below them, and the dreary prospects that opened in the vast gorges of the mountains. Before they could reach the ascent of the steepest rock, night overtook them, and a boisterous tempest arose ... The dark clouds that overcast the face of the sky deepened the horrors of the disastrous night ...⁹

Vathek himself sees a spiritual implication in the ardours of his journey.

'Where am I?' cried he: 'What are these dreadful rocks? these valleys of darkness? Are we arrived at the Kaf? Is the Simurgh coming to pluck out my eyes, as a punishment for undertaking this impious enterprise?' Having said this he turned himself towards an outlet in the side of his pavilion; but alas! what objects occurred to his view? on one side, a plain of black sand that appeared to be unbounded; and, on the other, perpendicular crags ...¹⁰

But true to earthly experience, there is some relief and refreshment; this comes as a reward for hesitation in pursuing his evil purposes.¹¹

Indeed all life and comfort is associated with orthodoxy and the rejection of his diabolical ambitions - hence the Giaour's warning to him against accepting any hospitality on his journey, for any generosity is a manifestation of love. Thus the palace of the Emir Fakreddin, both in beauty and as a haven for the faithful, represents the positive aspects of the purgatorial experience of the soul.

They descended, however, unhurt into the valley, by the easy slopes which the emir had ordered to be cut in the rock; and already the murmuring of streams and the rustling of leaves began to catch their attention. The cavalcade soon entered a path, which was skirted by flowering shrubs, and extended to a vast wood of palm trees, whose branches overspread a vast building of freestone. This edifice was crowned with nine domes, and adorned with as many portals of bronze, on which was engraven the following inscription: 'This is the asylum of pilgrims, the refuge of travellers, and the depository of secrets from all parts of the world.'¹²

The Valley of Rocnabad is also of this nature, and the disregard of its beauties, the abuse of its plenitude, is an indication of the spiritual degeneration Vathek has undergone.¹³

Even the experiences of lesser characters like Gulchenrouz and Nouronihar reflect the religious symbolism impregnating the setting. Their proto-death and secret hiding-places in the mountains fixes the traditional image of Purgatory.

This singular lake, those flames reflected from its glossy surface, the pale hues of its banks, the romantic cabins, the bulrushes that sadly waved their drooping heads, the storks whose melancholy cries blended with the shrill voices of the dwarfs - everything conspired to persuade her that the angel of death had opened the portal of some other world.

'... the exterminating angel, who conducted our souls hither after yours, both assured us, that the chastisement of your indolent and voluptuous life shall be restricted to a certain series of years, which you must pass in this dreary abode; where the sun is scarcely visible, and where the soil yields neither fruits nor flowers.'¹⁴

With Paradise hinted at and the purgatorial world developed in great detail, only the domain of Hell remains. This, too, is strongly depicted. In the early stages of the book, the evil Giaour escapes his pursuers by descent into an abyss, thus clearly identifying earthly depths with the practitioners of evil.¹⁵ Later a chasm opens in the midst of a wide plain, from which the Giaour issues his oracle, and demands his hideous human sacrifice. The chasm becomes a terrifying maw of death.¹⁶

What is so clearly depicted as the entrée to Hell is developed with a vigorous and sustained symbolism at the end of the novel, when Vathek reaches

the goal of his desires in the Caverns of Eblis. He is clearly warned at the end of his journey what he is heading for.

Thou knowest that, beyond these mountains, Eblis and his accused
dives hold their infernal empire.¹⁷

However Vathek persists in his resolve and the fearful highpoint is reached in the depiction of his damnation. Vathek and Nouronihar are confronted with the abyss and must experience reception into it.

... the rock yawned, and disclosed within it a stair-case of polished marble, that seemed to approach the abyss. Upon each stair were planted two large torches ... the camphorated vapour of which ascended and gathered itself into a cloud under the hollow of the vault ... As they descended, by the effulgence of the torches, they gazed on each other with mutual admiration, and both appeared so resplendent that they already seemed spiritual Intelligences. The only circumstance that perplexed them was their not arriving at the bottom of the stairs: on hastening their descent with ardent impetuosity, they felt their steps accelerated to such a degree, that they seemed not walking but falling from a precipice.¹⁸

They are destined to wander forever in the terrifying subterranean world where all their optimism is reversed, and eternal punishment their lot. The caverns, chambers and recesses of Eblis's fearful kingdom are evoked in great detail: in fact this scrupulous attention to setting is the prime ingredient in the dramatization of their fate.

The Caliph and Nouronihar beheld each other with amazement at finding themselves in a place which, though roofed with a vaulted ceiling, was so spacious and lofty, that at first they took it for an immeasurable plain. But their eyes at length growing familiar to the grandeur of the surrounding objects, they extended their view to those at a distance, and discovered rows of columns and arcades, which gradually diminished, till they terminated in a point radiant as the sun ... He then conducted them into a long aisle adjoining the tabernacle ... They reached at length, a hall of great extent, and covered with a lofty dome; around which appeared fifty portals of bronze, secured with as many fastenings of iron. A funereal gloom prevailed over the whole scene.¹⁹

Beckford's complicated conception of setting, full of colour and imagination, thickened the texture of the Gothic novel, rendering the earlier creations of Walpole and Mrs Reeve pale shadows by comparison.

Most important of all, however, was the new symbolic implications of

setting, the embodiment in the fictional world of the central issue of salvation and damnation. The world of Gothic fiction had polarized into areas representing Heaven and Hell with an intermediary area of confusion where the interests of both vie unrestrainedly. Setting had become the materialization of meaning, the establishment of an underlying system of identification closer to the symbolic entities of allegory than the neutrality of realism where meanings are subtler and less brutally clear. These developments in the treatment of setting emphasized the religious or quasi-religious deposit that is always characteristic of the Gothic view of the world.

2. THE BALANCED UNIVERSE

Mrs Radcliffe's novels are rich in setting: in fact they present the most complete and unambiguous view of the world, balanced and proportioned in every way. The underlying tripartite division into places of good and evil with a plain of transition between them governs her conception of the world. But Mrs Radcliffe was very much the rational mind of the eighteenth century with the result that the central spiritual concerns of the story are toned down, sometimes even secularized. This should not blind the reader to their very real presence, albeit a submerged one.

Setting is certainly the single most concentrated and inspired aspect of Mrs Radcliffe's fiction. Her affinity with nature, her love of colour, contrast and detail made her an important link between eighteenth century interest in landscape and the Romantic cult of nature.

Die Frische der Landschaftsschilderungen Ann Radcliffes macht es den Kritikern möglich, hinsichtlich der Blässe ihrer Charaktere und der Lockerheit ihren Geschehnisaufbaus Nachsicht zu üben. Dies darf ihnen um so leichter fallen, als die Erzählerin bei allem Umgang mit dem Unheimlichen nie den Erbauungswert der 'romance' aus dem Auge verliert.²⁰

The role of setting in The Mysteries of Udolpho cannot be overestimated: both character and theme are extended symbolically into the world of the novel.

For the authoress the values that give meaning to life are vested in the family living in a world of pastoral simplicity where the principles of virtue, good taste, domesticity and education can be cultivated under optimum conditions. All these qualities, the whole world view, are embodied in the traditional home of M. St Aubert, La Vallée: both the buildings and the grounds are a reflection of the mind and outlook of Emily's father. The house itself is described in some detail, every feature indicating some aspect of a refined view of life.

... (he) retired to a small estate in Gascony, where conjugal felicity and parental duties divided his attention with the treasures of knowledge and the illuminations of genius...

The building as it stood, was merely a summer cottage, rendered interesting to the stranger by its neat simplicity, or the beauty of the surrounding scene; and considerable additions were necessary to make it a comfortable family residence. St Aubert felt a kind of affection for every part of the fabric, which he remembered in his youth, and would not suffer a stone of it to be removed; so that the new building adapted to the style of the old one, formed with it only a simple and elegant residence. The taste of Madame St Aubert was conspicuous in its internal finishing, where the same chaste simplicity was observable in the furniture, and in the few ornaments of the apartments that characterized the manners of its inhabitants.²¹

Much attention is lavished on description of the rooms themselves, each of which - library, greenhouse, studio - represents one or other of the pursuits of a cultivated mind. The value of the building is given an extra dimension by its closeness to the external influences of nature.

Adjoining the eastern side of the greenhouse, looking towards the plains of Languedoc, was a room which Emily called hers, and which contained her books, her drawings, her musical instruments, with some favourite birds and plants. Here she usually exercised herself in elegant arts, cultivated only because they were congenial to her taste ... The windows of this room were particularly pleasant, they descended to the floor, and, opening upon the little lawn that surrounded the house, the eye was led between groves of almond, palm-trees, flowering-ash, and myrtle, to the distant landscape where the Garonne wandered.²²

The power of nature, both in cultivation and wilderness, is of tremendous importance to Mrs Radcliffe. M. St Aubert lavishes care on his garden²³ while Emily finds great satisfaction in the wilder aspects of nature.²⁴

The opening chapter of The Mysteries of Udolpho is an exultation of the life of rural retirement. Mrs Radcliffe is in fact recreating the pastoral in her own terms. Of vital interest to her view of life and the dramatic ordering of her works is the tension between the values of city and country. It emerges on the first page of the novel, where M. St Aubert appears as the protagonist of a wise and simple way of life.

He had known life in other forms than those of pastoral simplicity, having mingled in the gay and in the busy scenes of the world; but the flattering portrait of mankind which his heart had delineated in early youth, his experience had too sorrowfully corrected. Yet, amidst the changing visions of his life, his principles remained unshaken, his benevolence unchilled, and he retired from the multitude

more in pity than in anger, to scenes of simple nature, to the pure delights of literature, and to the exercise of domestic virtues.²⁵

This idea is a recurrent one throughout the novel.²⁶

The very heart of the St Aubert family unity in the country is symbolized by the fishing lodge where art and nature fuse in the venue of retirement and the practice of elegant pursuits: this is the inner sanctuary of their pastoral existence.

Her favourite walk was to a little fishing-house belonging to St Aubert, in a woody glen, on the margin of a rivulet that descended from the Pyrenees, and, after foaming among their rocks, wound its silent way beneath the shades it reflected. Above the woods that screened this glen rose the lofty summits of the Pyrenees, which often burst boldly on the eye through the glades below... Emerging from the deep recesses of the woods, the glade opened to the distant landscape, where the rich pastures and vine-covered slopes of Gascony gradually declined to the plains; and there, on the winding shores of the Garonne, groves, and hamlets, and villas - their outlines softened by distance - melted from the eye into one rich harmonious tint.

This, too, was the favourite retreat of St Aubert, to which he frequently withdrew from the fervour of noon, with his wife, his daughter, and his books; or came at the sweet evening hour to welcome the silent dusk, or to listen to the music of the nightingale. Sometimes, too, he brought music of his own, and awakened every fair echo with the tender accents of his oboe; and often have the tones of Emily's voice drawn sweetness from the waves over which they trembled ...

After employing himself for about an hour in botanizing, dinner was served. It was a repast to which gratitude for being again permitted to visit this spot gave sweetness; and family happiness once more smiled beneath these shades... The green woods and pastures; the flowery turf; the balmy air; the murmur of the limpid stream; and even the hum of every little insect in the shade, seemed to revivify the soul, and make mere existence bliss.²⁷

La Vallée and its environs of Languedoc countryside represent the ideal existence for Mrs Radcliffe: this world of beauty and safety is her earthly idea of Paradise. All outside this enclosed world is an assault on the principles and standards established in this world of paradigms.

St Aubert and his daughter experience something of the contradictory experiences of the world, the majesty and terror of life away from the centre of value. Their journey through the Pyrenees is a movement away from civilization and predictability into the wild unknown. The power of nature affects

them profoundly, even mystically.

Around, on every side, far as the eye could penetrate, were seen only forms of grandeur - the long perspective of mountain tops, tinged with ethereal blue, or white with snow; valleys of ice, and forests of gloomy fir. 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 incredible complacency over their minds. They had no words to express the sublime emotions they felt ... The deep silence of these solitudes was broken only at intervals by the scream of the vultures seen towering round some cliff below, or by the cry of the eagle sailing high in the air; except when the travellers listened to the hollow thunder that sometimes muttered at their feet. While, above, the deep blue of the heavens was unobscured by the lightest cloud, half-way down the mountains long billows of vapour were frequently seen rolling, now wholly excluding the country below, and now opening, and partially revealing its features. Emily delighted to observe the grandeur of these clouds as they changed in shape and tints, and to watch their various effect on the lower world, whose features,

But militating against their pleasure and peace is the danger and uncertainty of the region, the haunt of robbers, smugglers and gypsies who know no law and live by preying on innocent travellers.

The way winding still nearer, they perceived in the valley one of those numerous bands of gypsies, which at that period particularly haunted the wilds of the Pyrenees, and lived partly by plundering the traveller. Emily looked with some degree of terror on the savage countenances of these people shown by the fire ...²⁹

But relief and reassurance comes with the return to gentler regions, where order and the simpler virtues are again the rule, the challenge of life smoothing into serenity as the mountains become plains and coastlands.

It was evening when they descended the lower Alps that bind Rousillon and form a majestic barrier around that charming country, leaving it open only on the east to the Mediterranean. The gay tints of cultivation once more beautified the landscape; for the lowlands were coloured with the richest hues which a luxuriant climate and an industrious people can awaken into life. Groves of orange and lemon perfumed the air, their ripe fruit glowing among the foliage; while, sloping to the plains, extensive vineyards spread their treasures. Beyond these, woods and pastures, and mingled towns and hamlets, stretched towards the sea, on whose bright surface gleamed many a distant sail; while over the whole scene was diffused the purple glow of evening. This landscape, with the surrounding Alps, did indeed present a perfect picture of the lovely and the sublime - of "beauty sleeping in the lap of horror."³⁰

The return to a milder form of life is intensified as the rural scenes become pastoral with the depiction of an idyllic peasant life. The effect is a

movement from Mount Purgatory into the Elysium Fields.

St Aubert, rejoicing in rest, seated himself in an arm-chair, and his senses were refreshed by the cool and balmy air that lightly waved the embowering, and wafted their sweet breath into the apartment. His host, who was called La Voisin, quitted the room, but soon returned with fruits, cream, and all the pastoral luxury his cottage afforded; having set down which with a smile of unfeigned welcome, he retired behind the chair of his guest... The soft moonlight of an autumnal evening, and the distant music which now sounded a plaintive strain, aided the melancholy of her mind.³¹

This movement is a basic pattern in Mrs Radcliffe's novels, and is clearly noticeable in the diverse episodes of The Mysteries of Udolpho. Emily's central experience - her Italian journey - can be divided into sections modelled on this movement in and out of pastoral. The terrifying passes of the Alps give on to the rich plains of Lombardy and the enchanting city of Venice; the gloomy harshness of the Apennines is succeeded by the fertile beauty of the Tuscan seashore.

For all the emphasis on nature and the elaborate descriptions that are a constant feature of the narrative, it is in the buildings that setting finds even more powerful symbols. If La Vallée is an externalization of M. St Aubert's refined character, his sister, Madame Cheron's, coarseness is reflected in the vulgar ostentation of her Toulouse mansion.

... Emily, who had not been there for many years, and had only a faint recollection of it, was surprised at the ostentatious style exhibited in her aunt's house and furniture; the more so, perhaps, because it was so totally different from the modest elegance to which she had been accustomed. She followed Madame Cheron through a large hall, where several servants in rich liveries appeared, to a kind of saloon fitted up with more show than taste ...³²

Likewise the wild recklessness and abandon of Montoni's character is reflected in his dilapidated Venetian palace.³³

But the greatest single symbol of the whole novel is contained in its title: the Castle of Udolpho. If La Vallée is the place of all that is noble and admirable, then Udolpho is the very opposite, a place of ignoble passion,

violence and confusion. It is one of the great symbols of the Romantic Age, the epitome of all that is faraway, isolated and piquant.

"There," said Montoni, speaking for the first time in several hours, "is Udolpho."

Emily gazed with melancholy awe upon the castle, which she understood to be Montoni's; for, though it was now lighted up by the setting sun, the Gothic greatness of its features, and its mouldering walls of dark grey stone, rendered it a gloomy and sublime object. As she gazed, the light died away on its walls, leaving a melancholy purple tint, which spread deeper and deeper as the thin vapour crept up the mountain, while the battlements above were still tipped with splendour. From these, too, the rays soon faded and the whole edifice was invested with the solemn duskiness of evening. Silent, lonely, and sublime, it seemed to stand sovereign of the scene, and to frown defiance on all who dared to invade its solitary reign. As the twilight deepened, its features became more awful in obscurity; and Emily continued to gaze, till its clustering towers were alone seen rising over the tops of the woods, beneath whose thick shade the carriages soon after began to ascend.³⁴

This description of Emily's first sight of the Castle made an indelible impression on the minds of her contemporaries, expressing as it did the new longings of the period for the mysterious.

Emily's sojourn in Montoni's castle marks the culmination of her journey, the furthest point from her home and the world of value that is her natural environment. Emily's experiences of fear, her loneliness and vulnerability, turn Udolpho into a place of terror, the hell to the heaven of her faraway home. Mrs Radcliffe's recreation of the Castle is detailed, its vast halls, great staircases, endless maze of passages, countless chambers, crumbling battlements and dread secrets embodying the mystique of the Romantic experience.

Mrs Radcliffe's universe is thus fully and clearly depicted: setting is impregnated with meaning. The moral cosmos of Paradise, Purgatory and Hell is the underlying principle. Her methods were again convincingly employed in The Italian where there is a dramatic clarification of the symbolism of setting. The clue lies in the words of Paulo, Vivaldi's servant, in the last chapter.

"Ah! my dear master," he said, "do you remember the night when we were travelling on the banks of the Celano, before that diabolical accident happened in the chapel of San Sebastian; don't you remember how those people, who were tripping it away so joyously, by moonlight reminded me of Naples and many merry dances I had footed on the beach here?"

"I remember it well," replied Vivaldi.

"Ah! Signor Mio, you said at the time, that you hoped we should soon be here, and that then I should frisk it away with as glad a heart as the best of them. The first part of your hope, my dear master, you was out in, for, as it happened, we had to go through purgatory before we could reach paradise; but the second part is come at last; - for here I am sure enough! dancing, by moonlight, in my own dear bay of Naples ..."³⁵

The pattern is the same as that of The Mysteries of Udolpho. Ellena di Rosalba lives with her old aunt Bianchi in the Villa Altieri. This house represents all that is noble and tasteful in the heroine's personality as well as enshrining her domestic happiness with her aunt: the resemblances with La Vallée are obvious.³⁶

Ellena's abduction and journey through terrific mountains to her convent prison parallel Emily's various journeys through similar regions. As she approaches San Stefano, the landscape seems impregnated with a psychological colouring symbolizing her agony, sympathizing with her plight.

Ellena followed unresistingly, like a lamb to the sacrifice, up a path that wound among the rocks, and was coolly overshadowed by thickets of almond trees, figs, broad-leaved myrtle, and ever-green rose bushes ... the elegance of the shrubs that tufted ... would have charmed almost any other eye than Ellena's, whose spirit was wrapped in care, or than those of her companions, whose hearts were dead to feeling. Partial features of the vast ediface she was approaching, appeared now and then between the trees... the narrow pointed roofs of the cloisters, angles of the insurmountable walls, which fenced the garden from precipices below ... 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. ..

... The spot where she awaited the return of the ruffian ... overlooked the whole extent of plains ... with the vast chain of mountains, which seemed to form an insurmountable rampart to the rich landscape at their feet.³⁷

Both the physical and emotional demands of her experiences make sense of a purgatorial analogy.

But life takes on an even more terrifying character with her imprisonment and attempted murder in the seaside house. The ghastly purposes to which this house has been put are revealed at different times in the story. It is first mentioned when Schedoni and the Marchesa plot Ellena's murder.

'On the shore of the Adriatic, in the province of Apulia, not far from Manfredonia, is a house that might suit the purpose. It is a lone dwelling on the beach, and concealed from travellers, among the forests, which spread for many miles along the coast.'³⁸

When Ellena is eventually brought to this isolated house, it is clearly a place of evil.

The walls, of unhewn marble, were high and strengthened by bastions; and the edifice had turreted corners, which, with the porch in front, and the sloping roof, were falling fast into numerous symptoms of decay. The whole building, with its dark windows and soundless avenues, had an air strikingly forlorn and solitary. A high wall surrounded the small court in which it stood, and probably had once served as a defence to the dwelling; but the gates, which should have closed against intruders, could no longer perform this office; one of the folds had dropped from its fastenings, and lay on the ground almost concealed in a deep bed of weeds, and the other creaked on its hinges to every blast, at each swing seeming ready to follow the fate of its companion.³⁹

This house is the counterpart of Udolpho, the place of hellish experience.

Mrs Radcliffe's development of symbolic resonance is further illustrated in Vivaldi's parallel experience of terror in the prisons of the Inquisition. The inscription above the door is directly linked with Hell.

Vivaldi, having followed the officer up the staircase, passed through a gallery into an anti-chamber, where ... his conductors disappeared beyond a folding door, that led to an inner apartment. Over this door was an inscription in Hebrew characters, traced in blood-colour. Dante's inscription on the entrance of the infernal regions would have been a suitable to a place, where every circumstance and feature seemed to say, 'Hope, that comes to all, comes not here!'⁴⁰

The final restoration of the lovers to fortune and happiness is naturally conceived in terms of pastoral, a return to a type of Eden, a paradise regained.

The beauty of its situation and its interior elegance induced Vivaldi and Ellena to select it as their chief residence. It was, in truth, a scene of fairy-land. The pleasure-grounds extended over a valley,

which opened to the bay, and the house stood at the entrance of this valley, upon a gentle slope that margined the water, and commanded the whole extent of its luxuriant shores...

The marbles porticoes and arcades of the villa were shadowed by groves of the beautiful magnolia, flowering ash, cedrati, camellias, and majestic palms; and the cool and airy halls, opening on two opposite sides to a colonade, admitted beyond the fresh foliage all the seas and shores of Naples, from the west; and to the east, views of the valley of the domain, withdrawing among winding hills wooded to their summits, except where cliffs of various-coloured granites, yellow, green, and purple, lifted their tall heads, and threw gay gleams of light amidst the umbrageous landscape.⁴⁷

The situation hinted at in The Castle of Otranto and developed in Vathek, has been fully realized in Mrs Radcliffe's masterpieces. Moving from a secular depiction to an increasingly religious one, the realms of Paradise, Purgatory and Hell emerge in the setting. The increasing attention to this aspect of the novel thickened its texture, not only in providing more local colour and interest, but in the exposition of theme, for now characters moved in a balanced universe reflecting the spiritual implications of their destinies.

3. THE GROWING PREPONDERANCE OF HELL

The setting in Mrs Radcliffe's novels is so developed as to be a type of protagonist in itself. In the works which followed it was not the volume of her conception so much as the very clear symbolic properties of her fictional world that were of influence. The sense of balance, the equal emphasis given to all aspects of her imaginative world, was slowly unsettled as the growing involvement in a vision of evil emerged in the handling of setting. This had already been hinted at in Vathek where the Caverns of Eblis retain a massiveness out of all proportion with the rest of the fictional world.

Lewis's Monk indicates the new direction very decidedly. One notices almost immediately that the scale of setting is very much reduced from the elaboration of The Mysteries of Udolpho. There is usually a sense of the circumstances in which the characters move, but this is achieved by a few dramatic strokes of colour rather than a sustained tapestry in the Radcliffe manner. The very opening scene in the Cathedral of St Francis illustrates the point well.

Scarcely had the Abbey-Bell tolled for five minutes, and already the Church of the Capuchins thronged with Auditors...

Whatever was the occasion, it is at least certain that the Capuchin Church had never witnessed a more numerous assembly. Every corner was filled, every seat was occupied. The very Statues which ornamented the long aisles were pressed into service. Boys suspended themselves from the wings of Cherubims; St. Francis and St. Mark each bore a spectator on his shoulders; and St Agatha found herself under the necessity of carrying double. The consequence was that in spite of all their hurry and expedition, our two newcomers, on entering the Church, looked round in vain for places.⁴²

The author's attention is directed at the people and events rather than at the setting. The presence of the Cathedral is felt, and the interior is evoked by reference to the statues, pillars and general size, but none of these details are developed or described to the point where the church becomes a part of the fabric of the action impinging on the minds of both protagonist and reader. The same applies to the Franciscan monastery, the Alsation forest, the Castle

of Lindenburg, the streets of Madrid, the prisons of the Inquisition - all of which are exotic, mysterious and frightening places, but which ostensibly remain part of a vague, if interesting, background. When Lewis's treatment of castles and prisons is compared with Mrs Radcliffe's evocation of Udolpho and the cells of the Roman Inquisition, his handling of setting appears to be almost a relapse to the vague dramatic properties of The Castle of Otranto.

Lewis's seemingly casual handling of setting is deceptive though. In The Monk setting has an ironic function: it is usually not evoked in any spatial detail, but is dramatically important. Even the barest details are mentioned for a purpose. In the novel, places are not used for their ostensible purposes, but conceal frightening secrets that ironically contradict expectation. Thus the Cathedral, properly used for worship, is the refuge of evil clerics, the place of secret assassinations and duels; the very graveyard not only hides the dead but conceals terrifying secret prisons. Much of the inherent tension of the novel is generated by the undeveloped incongruity between the ostensible purpose of places and the actions actually perpetrated there. The fact that the author uses a monk as his central protagonist, and that the story is consequently imbued with ecclesiastical imagery, means that Lewis sought to tap the traditional resonances of this kind of imagery, especially as it applies to setting. The effect is sometimes more dramatic than moral.

Lewis was keenly aware of the atmospheric properties of setting and on occasion used his materials to great effect. There are a few small scenes which stand out from their contexts because of their sudden intensification of description. The scenes are always the preliminary to some tremendous development in the story, and hence serve in the nature of dramatic preludes in which both character and reader are prepared for the event by increasing emotional and sensuous perception. A fine example serves as the introduction to Lorenzo di Medina's dream.

Lorenzo is left alone in the Cathedral after the crowds and Don Christoval

have departed. The section is initiated by the advent of night the darkness emphasized by the absence of artificial lighting, and by a delicate chiaroscuro caused by the moon-beams shining through the stained-glass windows.

The night was now fast advancing. The Lamps were not yet lighted. The faint beams of the rising Moon scarcely could pierce through the gothic obscurity of the Church. Lorenzo found himself unable to quit the Spot. The void left in his bosom by Antonia's absence, and his Sister's sacrifice which Don Christoval had just recalled to his imagination, created that melancholy of mind, which accorded but too well with the religious gloom surrounding him. He was still leaning against the seventh column from the Pulpit. A soft and cooling air breathed along the solitary Aisles: The Moon-beams darting into the Church through the painted windows, tinged the fretted roofs and massy pillars with a thousand various tints of light and colours: Universal silence prevailed around; only interrupted by the occasional closing of Doors in the adjoining Abbey.⁴³

This languorous appeal to sight and sound is coupled with a pensive turn of mind so that the setting echoes and intensifies Lorenzo's melancholy.

The calm of the hour and the solitude of the place contributed to nourish Lorenzo's disposition to melancholy. He threw himself upon a seat which stood near him, and abandoned himself to the delusions of his fancy ... Sleep insensibly stole over him, and the tranquil solemnity of his mind when awake, for a while continued to influence his slumbers.

The whole scene becomes a nocturne inducing sleep. Lorenzo dreams his allegorical vision in this setting; the setting indeed is assumed into the dream landscape. The darkness has been transformed into brilliance, the silence broken by the majesty of ecclesiastical music, the loneliness replaced by a festive crowd.

He still fancied himself to be in the Church of the Capuchins; but it was no longer dark and solitary. Multitudes of silver Lamps shed splendour from the vaulted Roof; Accompanied by the captivating chaunt of distant choristers, the Organ melody swelled through the Church; The Altar seemed decorated for some distinguished feast; It was surrounded by a brilliant Company; and near it stood Antonia arrayed in bridal white ...⁴⁴

Lorenzo awakens from his terrifying dream in the setting in which he first fell asleep, only slightly changed by illumination and the distant sound of the monks celebrating vespers, all on a scale very much less splendid than the dream-transformation.

When He woke, He found himself extended upon the pavement of the Church: It was Illuminated, and the chaunt of Hymns sounded from a distance. For a while Lorenzo could not persuade himself that what He had just witnessed had been a dream ... A little recollection convinced him of its fallacy: The Lamps had been lighted during his sleep and the music which he heard, was occasioned by the Monks, who were celebrating their Vespers in the Abbey-Chapel.⁴⁵

Another such mood-painting preludes Ambrosio's entry into the caverns on his way to violate Antonia. The whole episode is interesting from a psychological rather than a dramatic point of view for it is an attempt to depict the frightened apprehension of spatial detail by a nerve-ridden consciousness.

The section opens with a move from the community to the individual in order to emphasize Ambrosio's apartness and evil intention: his liturgical practices have no more meaning for him.

The Monks quitted the Abbey at midnight. Matilda was left among the Choristers, and led the chaunt. Ambrosio was left by himself, and a liberty to pursue his own inclinations.⁴⁶

He now begins a move in space from the centre of worship and civilization to a place of decadence and barbarism.

Convinced that no one remained behind to watch his motions, or disturb his pleasures, He now hastened to the Western Aisles. His heart beating with hope not unmixed with anxiety, He crossed the Garden, unlocked the door which admitted him into the Cemetery, and in a few minutes He stood before the Vaults. Here he paused.

He is anxious and perceptive of underlying atmosphere, and Lewis depicts his gestures of fear, as when he describes with impressionable sensitivity the sounds of the night which are borne in upon his taut sensibilities.

He looked round him with suspicion, conscious that his business was unfit for any other eye. As He stood in hesitation, He heard the melancholy shriek of the screech-Owl: The wind rattled loudly against the windows of the adjacent Convent and as the current swept by him, bore with it the faint notes of the chaunt of Choristers.

Fear characterizes even his entry into the crypts.

He opened the door cautiously, as if fearing to be overheard: He entered; and closed it again after him. Guided by his Lamp, He threaded the long passages, in whose windings Matilda had instructed

him, and reached the private Vault which contained his sleeping Mistress.

The relative modesty of setting in The Monk should not blind the reader to the symbolic implications underlying the fictional world of the novel. The moral universe is just as much part of the work as it is of Mrs Radcliffe's with, however, some frightening differences.

Firstly, there is the difficulty of finding the place of goodness, of moral right and value. The most obvious one would be the Cathedral of St Francis, the house of God where light and love should be the ruling order: but this is not the case. The Church conceals within her midst men and women of pride, lust and inhumanity, as exemplified in Ambrosio and the Prioress. Antonia and Agnes are victims of ecclesiastical monsters. The home, the place of safety, domestic love and happiness in Mrs Radcliffe, does not serve as the place of security either in this novel. The Dalfa household where Antonia and her Mother live in peace, is infiltrated by the enemy, Ambrosio: he attempts rape and commits murder in Antonia's very bedroom. The inviolable La Vallée has no counterpart in this novel. Ultimate sanctuary can be found only in Heaven and in no earthly approximation: this is the whole import of Lorenzo's symbolic dream in which Antonia is violated and the very altar desecrated by the Monster. Antonia's assumption is the only glimpse of Paradise that the novel provides.

Antonia shrieked. The Monster clasped her in his arms, and springing with her upon the Altar, tortured her with his odious caresses ... Instantly the Cathedral seemed crumbling into pieces, The Monks betook themselves to flight shrieking fearfully; The Lamps were extinguished, the Altar sank down, and in its place appeared an abyss vomiting forth clouds of flame. Uttering a loud and terrible cry the Monster plunged into the Gulph, and in his fall attempted to drag Antonia with him. He strove in vain. Animated by supernatural powers She disengaged herself from his embrace; But her white robe was left in his possession... Instantly a wing of brilliant splendour spread itself from either of Antonia's arms. She darted upwards...

At the same moment the Roof of the Cathedral opened; Harmonious voices pealed along the Vaults; and the glory into which Antonia was received, was composed of rays of such dazzling brightness, that Lorenzo was unable to sustain the gaze. His sight failed, and He sank upon the ground.⁴⁷

The whole world has become a purgatorial plain where Good and Evil contend: the Cathedral itself becomes a microcosm of this plain of contention and the people in it a cross-section of humanity.

There is an added dimension of setting that approximates the third, diabolical aspect of experience, where all law, restraint and order disappear. These places are always associated with enclosures and interiors and characterize the general impression of setting in the novel.

The Monk ist überwiegend ein Buch der Interieurs, der geschlossenen Räume von Burg, Konvent und unterirdische Gewölbe In dieser 'zellulösen' Welt vollzieht sich die eigentliche Bedrohung des Menschen, nicht in der offenen Szenerie des 'natural sublime'.⁴⁸

Raymond de las Cisternas's experiences in the Alsatian woods, the haunt of ferocious robbers, marks this place as one of confusion and horror. The Lindener Hole, a cavern next to the castle, is impregnated with an evil presence - that of the Bleeding Nun who intrudes into Raymond's life with terrifying reality.⁴⁹ It is only when he is lying alone and ill in a remote inn room in Ratisbon that the fearful nocturnal visitations begin.

Restless in my mind, in spite of the fatigue of my body I continued to toss about from side to side, till the Clock in a neighbouring Steeple struck 'One'. As I listened to the mournful hollow sound, and heard it die away in the wind, I felt a sudden chilliness spread itself over my body ... Cold dews poured down my forehead... Suddenly I heard slow and heavy steps ascending the stair-case. By an involuntary movement I started up in my bed, and drew back the curtain. A single rush-light, which glimmered upon the hearth shed a faint gleam through the apartment, which was hung with tapestry. The door was thrown open with violence. A figure entered, and drew near my bed with solemn measured steps.⁵⁰

Undoubtedly, however, the most powerful use of enclosure, the single greatest symbol in the novel and one of the most powerful evocations of setting in the whole Gothic cycle, is the Caverns of St Clare. In the force and detail of his conception, and in the unconscious intuition operating in this creation, Lewis achieved something very remarkable.

Under the beautiful gardens of the Convent of St Clare and the Monastery

of St Francis lie the grim network of passages, caverns and crypts where the dead of both communities are buried.

They reached the foot of the Stair-case, and continued to proceed, feeling their way along the walls. On turning a corner suddenly, they descried faint gleams of light, which seemed burning at a distance. Thither they bent their steps: The rays proceeded from a small sepulchral Lamp, which flamed unceasingly before the Statue of St. Clare. It tinged with dim and cheerless beams the massy Columns which supported the Roof, but was too feeble to dissipate the thick gloom, in which the Vaults were buried.

... She hastened into one of the passages which branched in various directions from the spot, and formed a sort of Labyrinth. Ambrosio was now left alone. Darkness the most profound surrounded him, and encouraged the doubts which began to revive in his bosom... In this fearful dilemma, He would have implored God's assistance, but was conscious that He had forfeited all claim to such protection. Gladly would He have returned to the Abbey; But as He had past through innumerable Caverns and winding passages, the attempt of regaining the Stairs was hopeless. His fate was determined: No possibility of escape presented itself.⁵¹

Entrapment in the labyrinth thus represents Ambrosio's separation from God, his inexorably entangling and tightening association with the forces of evil.

The Caverns, from the very first, have this association with Matilda and her demonism. Her evil instruction of Ambrosio is dramatized in his growing acquaintance with the Vaults: it will be recalled that later on his way to violate Antonia "He threaded the long passages, in whose windings Matilda had instructed him."

The Vaults become the subterranean temple of Satan where Matilda performs her diabolical rites: the association is always with death, with all that is anti-life.

She led him through various narrow passages; and on every side as they past along, the beams of the Lamp displayed none but the most revolting objects; Skulls, Bones, Graves, and Images whose eyes seemed to glare on them with horror and surprize. At length they reached a spacious Cavern, whose lofty roof the eye sought in vain to discover. A profound obscurity hovered through the void. Damp vapours struck cold to the Friar's heart; and He listened sadly to the blast, while it howled along the lonely Vaults.⁵²

It is a place of constraint and horror, where the victims of sick minds are incarcerated in situations of enduring agony, where the Abbess immures Agnes and inflicts unrelenting punishment on her in secret.⁵³ It is the place of violation where Ambrosio is able to give full reign to the wildest sexual abandon in his brutal rape of Antonia.⁵⁴

Perhaps for the first time setting in the Gothic novel has a vitally thematic importance, even more so than in Mrs Radcliffe. The Vaults are a boding presence, the venue of climactic developments in the unfolding of the plot, and certainly not a mere decoration, an elaboration of atmosphere: they are the symbol of a deep truth about the human personality, a truth of archetypal significance. These subterranean chambers become the symbol of the buried recesses of man's mind, the reservoir of his instinctive impulses. It is here that dark inexpressible desires of the secret self find their fulfilment in a world where nightmares become real, a world of ghastly extremes where all restraint and moderation disappear. There are dark and frightening regions beneath familiar relationships and ordinary characters, just as this dark region of caverns and corruption honeycombs the ground beneath the beautiful garden of the religious houses. Ambrosio's fine exterior and abilities conceal a world of desires and impulses too strong to withstand once they have been freed from restraint. Similarly the journey deeper and deeper underground to Agnes's concealed dungeon is in another sense a journey into the hidden recesses of the Prioress's dark and perverted mind.

The erotic implications of the sepulchre and its labyrinth are patent, for it is here, down below the daylight world, that Lewis can indulge the richest, and most sadistic, urgings of his decidedly perverse imagination.⁵⁵

Thus even more than the ethical implications of setting in Mrs Radcliffe, in Lewis space has become an inseparable adumbration of theme. The influence of the Vaults is noticeable in The Italian where the underground prison of the Inquisition is described in detail, but without the archetypal significance

of Lewis's conception.

Lewis's treatment of setting is an elaborating vision from a heaven barely perceived, through a more detailed world of purgatorial suffering, to a dark and overwhelming representation of Hell. The interests of Evil assume an all-absorbing predominance.

4. PARADISE LOST

In the later Gothic novels, the developments in The Monk are carried to a culmination; the thematic contents are mythol⁶³ized to an extent undreamed of by the earlier authors. The growing vision of evil perceived in Lewis's novel continues to intensify so that Mrs Radcliffe's balanced universe is totally destroyed. The evil infiltration of the earthly equivalent of Paradise is so thoroughly accomplished that its loss is complete.

The predominant feature of setting in Frankenstein is apparent in the opening paragraphs of the novel - in Walton's first letter to his sister. He is embarking on an expedition to the frozen wastes of the Arctic, full of burning enthusiasm.⁵⁶ However it is a dangerous and treacherous region where the forces of a gigantic nature can threaten and destroy all man's hopes.

I write to you, encompassed by peril and ignorant whether I am ever doomed to see again dear England and the dearer friends who inhabit it. I am surrounded by mountains of ice which admit of no escape and threaten every moment to crush my vessel.⁵⁷

This is the background to Frankenstein's first appearance and his death: it is the desolate world of the framing situation on which the novel opens and closes. It is also the setting of the central episode of the novel, in which Frankenstein and the Monster meet in the vast glacial snowlands of the Alps. Before the meeting it appears a sublime region.

From the side where I now stood Montanvert was exactly opposite, at the distance of a league; and above it rose Mont Blanc, in awful majesty. I remained in a recess of the rock, gazing on this wonderful and stupendous scene. The sea, or rather the vast river of ice, wound among its dependent mountains, whose aerial summits hung over its recesses. Their icy and glittering peaks shone in the sunlight over the clouds. My heart, which was before sorrowful, now swelled with something like joy.⁵⁸

The Monster's appearance shows this region to be his place of refuge, a bleak wasteland reflecting his anguished isolation. It also becomes the image of Frankenstein's shattered idealism.

'You, my creator, abhor me; what hope can I gather from your fellow creatures, who owe me nothing? They spurn and hate me. The desert mountains and dreary glaciers are my refuge. I have wandered here many days; the caves of ice, which I do not fear, are a dwelling to me, and the only one which man does not grudge. These bleak skies I hail, for they are kinder to me than your fellow beings.'⁵⁹

Remoteness always characterizes the locality of Frankenstein's work.

To find materials for his creature he is forced to visit nature in the most fearful places.

One secret which I alone possessed was the hope to which I had dedicated myself; and the moon gazed on my midnight labours, while, with unrelaxed and breathless eagerness, I pursued nature to her hiding-places. Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay? My limbs now tremble, and my eyes swim with the remembrance...⁶⁰

His laboratory is symbolically separated from the world.

In a solitary chamber, or rather cell, at the top of the house, and separated from all the other apartments by a gallery and staircase, I kept my workshop of filthy creation: my eyeballs were starting from their sockets in attending to the details of my employment. The dissecting room and slaughter-house furnished many of my materials.⁶¹

Later, when at the Monster's behest, he begins the creation of a woman he is similarly driven from society into the faraway isolation in the Orkney Islands. The bleak wretchedness powerfully reflects Frankenstein's desiccation of spirit.

... I traversed the northern highlands and fixed on one of the remotest of the Orkneys as the scene of my labours. It was a place fitted for such work, being hardly more than a rock whose high sides were continually beaten upon by the waves. The soil was barren, scarcely affording pasture for a few miserable cows, and oatmeal for its inhabitants...

On the whole island there were but three miserable huts, and one of these was vacant when I arrived. This I hired. It contained but two rooms, and these exhibited all the squalidness of the most miserable penury. The thatch was fallen in, the walls were unplastered, and the door was off its hinges... I lived ungazed at and unmolested, hardly thanked for the pittance of food and clothes which I gave, so much does suffering blunt even the coarsest sensations of men.

In this retreat I devoted the morning to labour, but in the evening, when the weather permitted, I walked on the stony beach of the sea to listen to the waves as they roared and dashed at my feet. It was a monotonous yet everchanging scene. I thought of Switzerland; it was far different from this desolate and appalling landscape. Its hills are covered with vines, and its cottages are scattered thickly in the plains. Its fair lakes reflect a blue and gentle sky, and when troubled by the winds, their tumult is but as the play of a lively infant when compared to the roarings of the giant ocean.⁶²

His loneliness of mind, the loathesomeness of his occupation, his subsequent disillusionment and suffering find their objective correlatives in the setting. When Frankenstein later tells Walton that he is "chained in an eternal hell"⁶³ one can readily understand the spatial implications: these places have become the Inferno of life because of his ghastly creation, where odious revelations have been vouchsafed him and his soul numbed into desolation.

There is the remembrance of a childhood paradise in the love and gentleness of his home in Geneva. His parents made a benediction of home-life.⁶⁴ The surroundings filled the mind of Elizabeth Lavenza, his wonderful childhood companion, with poetry and stimulated his quest for knowledge.

She busied herself with following the aerial creations of the poets; and in the majestic and wondrous scenes which surrounded our Swiss home - the sublime shapes of the mountains, the changes of the seasons, tempest and calm, the silence of winter, and the life and turbulence of our Alpine summers - she found ample scope for admiration and delight ... The world was to me a secret which I desired to divine. Curiosity, earnest research to learn the hidden laws of nature ... are among the earliest sensations I can remember.⁶⁵

But Frankenstein's home is no sanctuary like La Vallée: rather like Elvira Dalfa's house and the Villa Altieri it is open to the infiltration and deprivations of the enemy, as one by one the members of this precious inner circle fall victim to the Monster's malice: William, Justine, Elizabeth, M. Frankenstein. Once Frankenstein has left his home on his education, its innocence and happiness become a memory, a paradise lost forever.⁶⁶

His education at the University of Ingolstadt leads him to the discovery and creation that transform his personality and his view of the world, the latter becoming the vale of tears, the plain of purgatorial experience where the issues of the Fall contend ceaselessly. The sublime world of nature surrounding his beloved Genevan home no longer has the same meaning it once had in his childhood: this world, like his suffering personality, is now polluted by a foul presence that destroys all security, violates all sanctities and exposes all that is good to the vagaries of evil.

While I watched the tempest, so beautiful yet terrific, I wandered on with a hasty step. This noble war in the sky elevated my spirits; I clasped my hands and exclaimed aloud, 'William, dear angel! This is thy funeral, this thy dirge!' As I said these words, I perceived in the gloom a figure which stole from behind a clump of trees near me; I stood fixed, gazing intently; I could not be mistaken. A flash of lightning illuminated the object and discovered its shape plainly to me; its gigantic stature and the deformity of its aspect, more hideous than belongs to humanity, instantly informed me that it was the wretch, the filthy daemon to whom I had given life ... The figure passed me quickly and I lost it in the gloom. Nothing in human shape could have destroyed that fair child. He was the murderer ... I thought of pursuing the devil, but it would have been in vain, for another flash discovered him to me hanging among the rocks of the nearby perpendicular ascent of Mount Salève ...⁶⁷

Evil has entered the garden of innocence.

Now all will be contention, a situation where Good can offer consolation, but Evil is always lurking. Life becomes a type of desperate pilgrimage of expiation. His first journey of escape ends in the Hell of his meeting with the Monster in the frozen Alps. Then he undertakes to create a companion to mollify the Monster and journeys, sick at heart, down the Rhine, through England and Scotland to the remote Orkneys. Hell awaits him in his bleak laboratory and the nightmare of his Irish experience. The third part of his pilgrimage is a quest of vengeance as he pursues the Monster to kill him. The terrors of this journey are the equivalent of Adam's toil in the fallen world of Cain's accursed wanderings.

I was cursed by some devil and carried about with me my eternal hell; yet still a spirit of good followed and directed my steps and, when I most murmured, would suddenly extricate me from seemingly insurmountable difficulties.⁶⁸

This journey also ends in Hell, that of the Arctic wastes, where exhausted amid the wreck of hope, symbolized in the broken ice floes, he can confess his history and die.

Frankenstein's experiences are reiterated on a smaller scale by the Monster. Among the bewildering emotions and sensations that first assail him on entering the world, the most wonderful is nature, rigorous, but full of mystery.

The moon had disappeared from the night, and again, with a lessened form, showed itself, while I still remained in the forest. My sensations had by this time become distinct, and my mind received every day additional ideas. My eyes became accustomed to the light and to perceive objects in their right forms; I distinguished the insect from the herb, and by degrees, one herb from another. I found the sparrow uttered none but harsh notes, whilst those of the blackbird and thrush were sweet and exciting.⁶⁹

He finds shelter in a hut adjoining the cottage of some French refugees. This becomes a paradisaal haven where the Monster lives protected and undetected.

... I was enchanted by the appearance of the hut; here the snow and rain could not penetrate; the ground was dry; and it presented to me then as divine a retreat as Pandaemonium appeared to the daemons of hell after their sufferings in the lake of fire.⁷⁰

His observation of the cottagers, all he learns from them and his love for them characterize his innocent feelings while he remains in this retreat. To venture forth into the world is to be confronted by hatred, rejection and sorrow. The hut becomes a natal image, a type of the womb of innocence, the world outside it a place of pain and suffering in which the Monster wanders desolately.

My travels were long and the sufferings I endured intense. It was late in the autumn when I quitted the district where I had so long resided. I travelled only at night, fearful of encountering the visage of a human being. Nature decayed around me, and the sun became heatless; rain and snow poured around me; mighty rivers were frozen; the surface of the earth was hard and chill, and bare, and I found no shelter. Oh, earth! How often did I imprecate curses on the cause of my being! The mildness of my nature had fled, and all within me was turned to gall and bitterness.⁷¹

Eventually he is driven in anguish to seek hiding in the Alps where the ferocity of nature mirrors this hellish transformation of his personality.

Mrs Shelley does not develop her setting like Mrs Radcliffe but uses it with a simplicity perhaps all the more powerful for its restraint. Mrs Radcliffe's submerged moral identifications and Lewis's bold vision of Hell have fused into a view of setting where the realistic and symbolic qualities are blended together. However, as with Lewis, the emphasis falls on the dark side, and the issues of evil receive an attention that is totally absorbing.

The developments in Frankenstein find a definitive expression in Melmoth the Wanderer. The suffering Adam in the fallen world is an underlying myth of Mrs Shelley's novel, and the very tissue of Maturin's. A failure to acknowledge the symbolic scheme of the novel, powerfully expressed in setting, is to misunderstand the purpose of the whole novel and, indeed, of the whole Gothic genre.

At the very centre of this novel is a vision of an earthly paradise, the Indian Isle where Immalee lives in archetypal innocence.

The Island, thus left to itself, became vigorously luxuriant, as some neglected children improve in health and strength, while pampered darlings die under excessive nurture. Flowers bloomed, and foliage thickened, without a hand to pluck, a step to trace, or a lip to taste them ... they had beheld a female figure of supernatural loveliness, glide and disappear amid the foliage which now luxuriantly overshadowed the rocks; and, in the spirit of Indian devotees, they hesitated not to call this delicious vision an incarnated emanation of Vishnu, in a lovelier form than ever he had appeared before...⁷²

This is Mrs Radcliffe's secular Garden of Eden re-mythologized, the Paradise of Gulchenrouz and Antonia examined more closely. However, it is destined to be visited by the incarnation of accursed man, Melmoth himself. His revelation to Immalee of the world, tears the veil of innocence from her, and causes her to lose Paradise: from him she receives the curse-blessing of the knowledge of Good and Evil.

She had, indeed, tasted of the tree of knowledge, and her eyes were opened, but its fruit was bitter to its taste.⁷³

As with Frankenstein, it is a world lost forever and exchanged for something lonely and harsh, the world of earthly realities. Melmoth tells her of the world that awaits her.

'And will you go without a canoe across the dark sea?' said Immalee. - 'We shall meet again, and meet in the world of suffering,' said the stranger. - 'Thank you - oh, thank you,' repeated Immalee, as she saw him plunge fearless amid the surf. The stranger answered only, 'We shall meet again.' Twice, as he parted, he threw a glance at the beautiful and isolated being; a lingering of humanity trembled round his heart, - but he tore the withered rose from his bosom, and to the waved arm and angel-smile of Immalee, he answered, 'We shall meet again.'⁷⁴

Immalee is destined to experience suffering in all its forms; indeed her life

in Spain is as far from her previous existence as earth is from heaven.

She felt no refreshment from the bath, or from her prayers - she sought it at her casement, but there also in vain. The moon was as bright as the sun of colder climates, and the heavens were all in a blaze with her light. She seemed like a gallant vessel ploughing the bright and trackless ocean alone, while a thousand stars burned in the wake of her quiet glory, like attendant vessels pursuing their course to undiscovered worlds, and pointing them out to the mortal eye that lingered on their course, and loved their light.

Such was the scene above, but what a contrast to the scene below! The glorious and unbounded light fell on an inclosure of stiff parterres, cropped myrtles and orange trees in tubs, and quadrangular fonds, and bowers of trellis-work, and nature tortured a thousand ways, and indignant and repulsive under her tortures every way.

Isidora looked and wept. Tears had now become her language when alone - it was a language she dared not utter before her family.⁷⁵

The designation "the world of suffering" is a key one: the contemplation of it is the central vision of the novel. One by one people in different parts of the world are depicted in various types and stages of suffering. The intensity of the experience finds much of its power in the elaboration of setting which is never a mere dramatic prop, but an essential element of the symbolic fabric of the work. The madhouse, the convent, the Jewish house, the Aliaga Palace, the Walberg hovel, the Mortimer Castle all become extensions of personality, the externalization of various inner agonies and metaphysical prisons.

It is singular that Stanton read on without suspicion of his own danger, quite absorbed in the album of a mad-house, without ever reflecting on the place where he was, and which such compositions too manifestly designated.

It was after a long interval that he looked round, and perceived that his companion was gone... He proceeded to the door, - it was fastened. He called aloud, - his voice was echoed in a moment by many others, but in tones so wild and discordant that he desisted in involuntary terror. As the day advanced, and no one approached, he tried the window, and then perceived for the first time that it was gated. It looked out on the narrow flagged yard, in which no human being was; and if there had, from such a being no human feeling could have been extracted.

Sickening with unspeakable horror, he sunk rather than sat down beside the miserable window, and 'wished for day.'

* * *

At midnight he started from a doze, ...

He was in complete darkness; the horror of his situation struck him at once, and for a moment he was indeed almost qualified for an inmate of that dreadful mansion. He felt his way to the door, shook it with desperate strength, and uttered the most frightful cries, mixed with

expostulations and commands. His cries were in a moment echoed by a hundred voices. In maniacs there is a peculiar malignity, accompanied by an extraordinary acuteness of some of the senses, particularly in distinguishing the voice of a stranger. The cries that he heard on every side seemed like a wild and infernal yell of joy, that their mansion of misery had obtained another tenant.⁷⁶

The details of setting accumulate to achieve the constant atmosphere of doom and decay, the tone of pessimism. The opening and closing chapters of the novel have an Irish background - the world of the narrative present, as in Frankenstein. This world is evoked in such richness of detail, with such keenness of spatial perception, as to be a lesson to the realist novelists of the nineteenth century: it is small wonder that Balzac and Flaubert learned much from Maturin.

It was an evening apt for meditation, and Melmoth had his fill of it before the messenger returned. The weather was cold and gloomy; heavy clouds betokened a long and dreary continuance of autumnal rains; cloud after cloud came sweeping on like the dark banners of an approaching host, whose march is for desolation. As Melmoth leaned against the window, whose dismantled frame, and pierced and shattered panes, shook with every gust of wind, his eye encountered nothing but the most cheerless of all prospects, a miser's garden, - walls broken down; grass-grown walks whose grass was not even green, dwarfish, doddered, leafless trees, and a luxuriant crop of nettles and weeds rearing their unlovely heads where there had once been flowers, all waving and bending in capricious and unsightly forms, as the wind sighed over them. It was the verdure of the church-yard, the garden of death. He turned for relief to the room, but no relief was there, - the wainscoting dark with dirt, and in many places cracked and starting from the walls, - the rusty grate, so long unconscious of a fire, that nothing but a sullen smoke could be coaxed to issue from between its dingy bars, - the crazy chairs, their torn bottoms of rush drooping inwards, and the great seat displaying the stuffing round the worn edges, while the nails, while they kept their places, had failed to keep the covering they once fastened, - the chimney-piece, which, tarnished more by time than by smoke, displayed for its garniture half a pair of snippers, a tattered almanack of 1750, a time-keeper dumb for want of repair, and a rusty fowling-piece without a lock. - No wonder the spectacle of desolation drove Melmoth back to his own thoughts, restless and uncomfortable as they were.⁷⁷

The stories within the novel take on this essential bleakness not only from their grim content but also from the setting of the particular narrator himself.⁷⁸

Melmoth is the dominant force in the novel, the agent freely moving through time and space, unbounded by either. He appears wherever suffering is acutest, where earth has become Hell. But more than this he seems to know Hell itself, not only its earthly approximation. In his conversations with Innalee he

describes his kingdom which is nothing less than the Inferno itself.⁷⁹ One of the closing pictures of the novel is "The Wanderer's Dream" in which Melmoth dreams of his infernal destiny in the same apocalyptic terms as those which characterized Lorenzo's dream in The Monk.

He dreamed that he stood on the summit of a precipice, whose downward height no one could have measured but for the fearful waves of a fiery ocean that lashed, and blazed, and roared at its bottom, sending its burning spray far up, so as to drench the dreamer with its sulphurous rain. The whole glowing ocean below was alive - every billow bore an agonizing soul, that rose like a wreck or a putrid corpse on the waves of earth's oceans - uttered a shriek as it burst against that adamantine precipice - sunk - and rose again to repeat the tremendous experiment! Every billow of fire was thus instinct with immortal and agonizing existence - each was freighted with a soul, that rose on the burning wave in torturing hope, burst on the rock in despair, added its eternal shriek to the roar of that fiery ocean, and sunk to rise again - in vain, and - for ever!

... he fell, and falling grasped at aught that might save him. His fall seemed perpendicular - there was nought to save him - the rock was as smooth as ice - the ocean of fire broke at its foot! Suddenly a groupe of figures appeared, ascending as he fell. He grasped at them successively; first Stanton - then Walberg - Elinor Mortimer - Isidora - Moncada - all passed him, - to each he seemed in his slumber to cling in order to break his fall - all ascended the precipice. He caught at each in his downward flight, but all forsook him and ascended.

His last despairing reverted glance was fixed on the clock of eternity - the upraised arm seemed to push forward the hand - it arrived at its period - he fell - he sunk - he blazed - he shrieked! The burning waves loomed over his sinking head, and the clock of eternity rung out its awful chime - 'Room for the soul of the Wanderer!' - and the waves of the burning ocean answered, as they lashed the adamantine rock - 'There is room for more!' - The Wanderer awoke.⁸⁰

Setting in the Gothic novel is of immense significance, not only for its colour and dramatic atmosphere, but for its symbolic resonance. The intensifying vision develops from the dramatic backgrounds in the early novels, through increasingly elaborate detail, to the allocation of moral values to different places. In Mrs Radcliffe setting becomes a cult; the interests of Good and Evil are balanced. However, in Lewis, and even more so in Mrs Shelley and Maturin, setting is pared, but of even greater symbolic appositeness. The balanced moral cosmos maintained by Mrs Radcliffe is upset, since the emphasis of these later authors is increasingly involved in the vision of Evil.

IV

PLOT

Plot in the Gothic novel is by no means a simple sequence of events. The stories, indeed, have a careful shape and direction: their purpose is to expose the problem of Good and Evil. In this ageless struggle much suffering is caused, out of which emerges the particularly pessimistic perceptions of the genre. As the cycle develops, these perceptions emerge less from a nexus of cause and effect and more from the intellectual considerations arising from subtler forms of actions on a more metaphysical plane of contention.

The conception of plot in the Gothic novel reveals the unity of inspiration working on the minds of the novelists, and gives evidence as convincing as that of character and setting of the intensifying vision marking the progression of the genre between 1764 and 1820.

All the novels have a very definite and distinctive pattern governing their overall structure. Again, each of these patterns characterizes a particular stage in the development of the cycle, early, middle and late. Each of these patterns was further subsumed into the succeeding development, a type of accumulative action demonstrable in the apotheosis of the intensifying vision as found in Melmoth the Wanderer.

1. THE GROWING CRESCENDO

The archetypal works of Walpole and Mrs Reeve follow the simplest pattern, a movement from an initial point through a process of complications and clarification to a highpoint which brings complete resolution. Both The Castle of Otranto and The Old English Baron are tales of crime and restitution, in which the Young Hero who has been done out of his rightful inheritance by the

Villain-Hero is restored to his legitimate position. In both cases this is symbolized by a castle which has fallen into wrong hands. The growing crescendo follows a double pattern - the positive augmentation of the Young Hero's fortunes and the sympathetic diminution of the Villain-Hero's, culminating in his humiliation and punishment.

The disconsolate company retired to the remaining part of the castle. In the morning Manfred signed his abdication of the principality, with the approbation of Hippolita, and each took on them the habit of religion in the neighbouring convents. Frederic offered his daughter to the new prince... but Theodore's grief was too fresh to admit the thought of another love; and it was not till after frequent discourses with Isabella, of his dear Matilda, that he was persuaded he could know no happiness but in the society of one with whom he could forever indulge the melancholy that had taken possession of his soul.¹

The climax of The Old English Baron is spread over a longer period, beginning with Lord Lovel's defeat in combat and the discovery of the bones of Edmund's parents; the final picture leaves no doubt as to the rightness of the developments and the vindication of morality.

That Walter, commonly called Lord Lovel, had entered into the service of the Greek emperor, John Paleologus, not bearing to undergo a life of solitude and retirement; that he made up a story of his being compelled to leave his native country by his relations, for having accidentally killed one of them, and that he was treated with great cruelty and injustice; that he had accepted a post in the emperor's army, and was soon after married to the daughter of one of the chief officers in it... Edmund Lord Lovel lived to old age, in peace, honour and happiness, and died in the arms of his children.

Sir Philip Harclay caused the papers relating to his son's history to be collected together; the first part of it was written under his own eye in Yorkshire, the subsequent parts by Father Oswald at the Castle of Lovel. All these, when together, furnish a striking lesson to posterity, of the over-ruling hand of Providence, and the certainty of RETRIBUTION.²

These highpoints stand as the culmination of a long series of events, each of which begins at a point of generation. In The Castle of Otranto it is the sudden death of Manfred's heir by the supernatural descent of a great helmet.³ In The Old English Baron the moment is when Sir Philip Harclay discovers that his old friend Lord Lovel has long been dead.⁴ These dramatic events are clinched almost immediately by the appearance of the Young Hero who,

unknown to all, will be the central agent in the advent of a new and better world. The Young Hero serves to accelerate the pace of the plot. Theodore has the effect of ruffling Manfred's conscience while Edmund draws the attention of Sir Philip by his noble bearing.

The plot pulses outwards from these initial dramatic situations in ever stronger waves, and in a two-part development. The first is the period of complication in which the Young Hero is unjustly persecuted, and undergoes various privations. Theodore is imprisoned by Manfred, Edmund is the victim of the jealous cabals of the Baron's relatives. The complications continue until the intervention of a powerful external agent who helps the Young Hero to a type of liberty and so changes the tide of his fortunes. Theodore is rescued by the noble Princess Matilda who engineers his escape.⁵ Edmund is expelled from Lovel Castle and so is forced to seek the help of his benefactor who undertakes decisive action on his behalf, action leading to the denouement.⁶

Once this decisive midpoint in the Young Hero's career has been reached, the second period - that of clarification - begins. One by one events accumulate that slowly but inexorably reveal the guilt of the Villain-Hero and the rights of the Young Hero. Under the protection of Count Frederick and with the help of Father Jerome, Theodore's ability and nobility is vindicated, supernatural agency directly intervenes to circumvent the implementation of Manfred's plots. Finally he becomes the victim of his own evil when he accidentally murders his daughter by the processes of a relentless nemesis. The moment of Manfred's fall is that of Theodore's triumph.

The clarification of the mystery, the web of intrigue and illegality surrounding Edmund and his birthright, is marked by a similar course of swiftly-moving events: his enemies in the Baron's household are uncovered, the combat with Lord Lovel is won in his favour, the confession of the usurper's crime, the legal steps, the discovery of his parents' remains, the marriage to Emily - are all steps leading to his vindication and success.

For Walpole and Mrs Reeve plot was a simple progression from a lowpoint of poverty and ignorance, through discovery to a highpoint of knowledge, riches, and total restitution.

Beckford's plan for Vathek is modelled along the lines of a growing crescendo as well. From beginning to end the story follows one unwavering line, the course of the Caliph's career from his first meeting with the Indian Giaour to the fulfilment of his search for the Palace of Subterranean Fire. This is the progression to a highpoint ironically inverted in that the "reward" of his evil quest is damnation - eternal remorse in the Caverns of Eblis.

Such was, and such should be, the punishment of unrestrained passions and atrocious deeds! Such shall be the chastisement of that blind curiosity, which would transgress those bounds the wisdom of the Creator has prescribed to human knowledge; and such the dreadful disappointment of that restless ambition, which aiming at discoveries reserved for beings of a supernatural order, perceives not, through its infatuated pride, that the condition of man upon earth is to be - humble and ignorant.⁷

There is also a very definite point of generation, as in the two earlier novels; for the appearance and promise of the Indian sets the plot into action and sends Vathek on his quest.

The earth trembled beneath him, and a voice came forth, the voice of the Giaour, who in accents more sonorous than thunder, thus addressed him: 'Wouldst thou devote thyself to me? adore the terrestrial influences, and abjure Mohomet? On these conditions I will bring thee to the Palace of Subterranean Fire. There shalt thou behold, in immense depositories, the treasures which the stars have promised thee; and which will be conferred by those Intelligences whom thou shalt thus render propitious.'⁸

The first part of the story is complicated, as the vicissitudes of Vathek's journey are depicted. But again there is a definite midpoint after which the action moves on relentlessly to the climax. After this midpoint has been reached, Vathek is confirmed more than ever in his evil ways, his spiritual perversion having clarified in intention. It is his meeting with Nouronihar that fixes his ambition, for she too has fallen prey to the bait of spiritual aggrandizement, and so becomes his inverted muse.⁹ Carathis's arrival further

helps to spur him on to the Caverns where he meets his destiny. As with Mrs Reeve this fearful highpoint provides a fitting occasion for a moral.

The first stage of the development of the genre found a simple pattern of crescendo best suited to the straightforward tales which move without deviation or narrative elaboration to a definite climax. The brevity of these novels, and their uninterrupted progression, emphasized in that neither The Old English Baron nor Vathek have chapter divisions, is another feature characterizing this simple and direct structure.

2. THE PERFECT CIRCLE

Mrs Radcliffe's long and slowly-expanding stories called for a different approach, a leisurely unfolding of a detailed plot.

Her patterns are elaborate and closely related to theme. It has already been shown how in setting her novels reveal a consistent drive towards pastoral: the experience of her heroines may be summarized as Paradise lost and Paradise regained with the challenging experience of a fallen world between. This pattern is hardly a climactic one, but rather a circular one, a return to origins.

Emily St Aubert's career - which is what the novel is about - can be plotted in its outlines from La Vallée, through Udolpho, and back to La Vallée. She returns to her ancestral home wiser, richer, her outlook on life vindicated and her happiness consolidated in marriage. The meaning and values of her ancestral home are thus magnified on her return.

... but since both Valancourt and herself preferred the pleasant and long-loved shades of La Vallée to the magnificence of Epourville, they continued to reside there...

... the bowers of La Vallée became once more the retreat of goodness, wisdom, and domestic blessedness!

Oh! useful may it be to have shown, that though the vicious can sometimes pour affliction on the good, their power is transient and their punishment certain; and that innocence, though oppressed by injustice, shall, supported by patience, finally triumph over misfortune.¹⁰

The same overall pattern characterizes the course of Ellena di Rosalba's career. She is forced to leave her lovely home, the Villa Altieri, and its beautiful surroundings, and embark on a series of adventures which carry her further from this fixed point until the remotest situation is reached in the Apulian sea house. After this the course of events turn back in a perfect semi-circle that carries her once more to the beautiful Neapolitan world of

her home that becomes a fairy-tale when her return is permanently institutionalized in marriage.

The beauty of its situation and its interior elegance induced Vivaldi and Ellena to select it as their chief residence. It was, in truth, a scene of fairy-land.¹¹

In both her great novels this central experience of the Angelic Heroine is repeated in pianissimo and in smaller dimensions by that of the Young Hero. Valancourt passes out of the innocent countryside of Languedoc into the snares of city-life in Paris and re-gains equanimity and honour only when he returns to his home; Vivaldi leaves Naples to find Ellena, experiences the horror of the Roman prisons, and returns to his home in honour.

This is the plot-pattern in Mrs Radcliffe's novels in the broadest outlines: they are just as distinct on a smaller scale. Indeed much of the shape and coherence of The Mysteries of Udolpho is the miniature organization of the parts along the same patterns as the whole. The novel can be divided into three parts, a French, an Italian and a further French section. Each of these parts in turn reflects the overall movement of the work - a circular movement from a pastoral situation through exile back into the pastoral situation. The first of these subdivisions centres on Emily's early experiences in association with her home and parents: she moves from La Vallée into the wild Pyrenees and then into the pastoral lands of Rousillon, finally returning to La Vallée. The second depicts Emily's experiences in Italy where she moves from the pastoral of Venice and the Brenta into the Apennines and Udolpho, then into the rural idyll of the Tuscan coast. The third centres on Emily's experiences in Rousillon at the Château de Villeroi. The movement into anti-pastoral is undertaken by Emily's surrogate Blanche who, with her father, travels to La Vallée via the Pyrenees where they experience fearful adventures with robbers, echoing the similar journey of the St Auberts in the early part of the book, and counterpointing dramatically Emily's more sedate return to her home.

This is a simplification of the intricate inner movements of the novel, but nevertheless an accurate account of the dominant trend governing plot-pattern.

Everything about the plot subtly reflects the standard eighteenth century principles of balance. A consideration of the central Italian episode will illustrate the care and elaboration of Mrs Radcliffe's design. Montoni's party travels from the Alps across Lombardy to Venice. A later excursion takes the same party out of the city, up the Brenta and back again. The second period in Venice is interrupted by the major departure for Udolpho, a journey through the Apennines. The castle experience is the heart of Emily's adventure, the core of the Italian sojourn. However, even as the earlier period prior to her arrival at the Castle was characterized by a smaller local journey, so this later period is balanced by another such limited movement. When Udolpho is threatened by warfare, Emily is conducted away from the violence, out of the mountains, down to the beautiful Tuscan coastlands, so echoing the pastoral experience along the Brenta. Even as she returned to Venice from this excursion, so her sojourn at the sea is terminated by return to Udolpho. The precipitate flight from the city is repeated in her dramatic escape from the Castle.

Thus the whole Italian experience is framed by two long and arduous journeys through the Alps, and across the Mediterranean. The central experience itself is characterized by a double movement to and from a fixed place: the beautiful yet dangerous city of Venice and the sublime but threatening Castle of Udolpho. Each of these large places has a nearby rural retreat that is the destination of smaller inner journeys. Each of the two sub-sections is terminated by sudden flight.

These inner movements are circular, as is the whole Italian episode which begins and ends in France. The whole middle section thus reiterates in various degrees of intensity and obviousness the basic plot-pattern of the

novel, which by the structural use of the circle, the figure of perfection, reflects the positive nature of the heroine's experiences, the vindication of values and the optimism of Mrs Radcliffe's world view.

Within this great circular pattern, something of the climactic arrangement is to be detected in the careers of the villains whose experience of life by its very nature cannot include the beneficent attainment of the pastoral vision. Consider the experiences of Madame Cheron and the Marchesa di Vivaldi: both begin in prosperity but follow a path of ever-increasing pressure and distress until the fateful catastrophe of death brings their careers to a sad climax. Both of them pass through experiences of suffering and there is a type of moral in their passing.

The stories of Montoni and especially Schedoni move in similarly climactic patterns. It is true that the latter part of Montoni's life is presented indirectly, by report; however, his loss of power, imprisonment, trial and death mark an end to his career befitting his adventurous life. Schedoni's fate is depicted in great detail, and his last hours in the prisons of the Inquisition containing his public confession and bizarre death by poison, come as a fittingly gloomy culmination to his dark and stormy life.

There is a definite sense of moral appropriateness in the deaths of these characters and its reflection in the structure of the novels. The climactic nature of their careers is not the positive vindication of Good as in Walpole and Mrs Reeve; it is more like Beckford's stern admonition of evil. The deprivation of light and life in wild or terrifying circumstances, in states of mind afflicted by sickness, grief or poison represents a total loss of value and beauty. The very fact that Mrs Radcliffe's villains must face death in the midst of the fallen world and all its bleak absence of refinements, without the hope of recovery and restitution, represents the worst form of dereliction and abandonment that the authoress can imagine. That they die

in exile without seeing the promised land is in itself a condemnation, the experience of total destitution and the loss of hope paralleling that of Vathek, Nouronihar and Carathis in the Caverns of Eblis. All this is reflected in the crescendo pattern of their stories: they are denied the circle of perfection.

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Lewis's Monk continues the elaborate plot-patterns used by Mrs Radcliffe in The Mysteries of Udolpho with adaptations to the unique needs of the story. In many ways, however, this novel is the culmination of plot-patterns established in the earlier examples of the genre, combining with great skill and fairly equal emphasis the crescendo and circular patterns.

The novel is admirably constructed. The division into three volumes which, in The Mysteries of Udolpho, had been purely perfunctory was in this novel used functionally. The volumes indeed reflect the overall crescendo pattern governing the novel, each of the three being longer than its predecessor and each containing a larger number of chapters than its predecessor. The first volume has three chapters, the second four and the third five. The effect is an intensification of action, a swirl of frenetic events as the action hastens towards the highpoint.

Each of these volumes represents a distinct stage in the unfolding of the plot. The first is in the nature of an exposition with a few long and detailed chapters that slowly unfold the static situations at the beginning of the novel. The second volume is the development in which the actions initiated in Volume One are elaborated and mixed together in dramatic complications. The final volume is a great finale arranged as a set of variations - on the theme of death - that carries the plot through a series of horrific events in rapid succession to the grim climax of Ambrosio's death.

The complication of the pattern is in the three different plots that make up the story. These centre firstly on Ambrosio and his relations with Matilda, secondly Antonia and her relations with her mother, Lorenzo and Ambrosio, and thirdly on the love story of Raymond and Agnes. The first of these is the main strand around which the others are woven. The second is more an ancillary to the first, as the two flow in and out of each other until the second is eventually subsumed into the first in the rape scene in the Vaults. The last of the stories runs an almost independent course to the other two except for a vital link between Ambrosio and Agnes which makes the Monk the indirect agent of Agnes's fate. All the stories begin at a common point - in the Cathedral of St Francis in the first chapter of the novel, from which they all span out, each on its own course, intersecting, intertwining, eventually flowing together for a brief but determinative moment at a mystical point in time when all the protagonists are drawn together in the terrifying Vaults of St Clare after the riot and destruction of the convent.

After deliberating upon their proceedings, it was resolved that to prevent losing time, the Archers should be divided into two bodies: That with one Don Ramirez should examine the cavern, while Lorenzo with the other might penetrate into the further Vaults. This being arranged, and his Followers being provided with Torches, Don Ramirez advanced to the Cavern. He had already descended some steps, when He heard people approaching hastily from the interior part of the Sepulchre...

'Do you hear foot-steps?' said Lorenzo; 'Let us bend our course towards them. 'Tis from this side, that they seem to proceed.'

At that moment a loud and piercing shriek induced him to quicken his steps.

'Help! Help, for God's sake!' cried a voice, whose melodious tone penetrated Lorenzo's heart with terror.

He flew towards the cry with the rapidity of lightning, and was followed by Don Ramirez with equal swiftness ...

She clasped her hands, and sank lifeless upon the ground. Lorenzo in agony threw himself beside her... At length his force being exhausted, He suffered himself to be led from the Vault, and was conveyed to the Palace de Medina scarcely more alive than the unfortunate Antonia.

In the mean while, though closely pursued, Ambrosio succeeded in regaining the Vault. The Door was already fastened when Don Ramirez arrived, and much time elapsed ere the Fugitive's retreat was discovered... Though so artfully concealed, the Door could not escape the vigilance of the Archers. They forced it open, and entered the Vault to the infinite dismay of Ambrosio and his Companion. The Monk's confusion, his attempt to hide himself, his rapid flight, and the blood sprinkled upon his cloaths, left no room to doubt his being Antonia's Murderer.

But when He was recognized for the immaculate Ambrosio, 'The Man of Holiness', the Idol of Madrid, the faculties of the Spectators were chained up in surprize, and scarcely could they persuade themselves that what they saw was no vision.¹²

Ambrosio is Lewis's great creation, and it is his presence that dominates the whole novel. Like Vathek, the novel traces the protagonist's path through various temptations and progressively increasing involvement with evil to the final catastrophic advent of damnation, which, as in Vathek, is vividly dramatized as the horrific climax of the novel.

Lightly echoing this growing crescendo is the fate of Antonia which moves inexorably through the meetings with Lorenzo and Ambrosio, the death of her Mother and the warnings of Elvira's ghost to the climaxes of her pseudo-death and terrifying "resurrection" to rape and murder. The movement is one sympathetic to the course of Ambrosio's actions since he becomes the evil genius casting a malign influence over Antonia's life.

However, cutting through this linear progression of Ambrosio's story and the related one of Antonia, is the famous tale of Raymond and Agnes. The progression of their fate emerges principally from two great blocks of narration that take up nearly one third of the novel and interrupt the flow of Ambrosio's story substantially. Each of the two parts belongs to one of the lovers and each story depicts a harrowing experience of separation and isolation that echoes the sufferings of the other. Each story is circular, beginning with the lovers together and ending with their reunion, so anticipating in miniature the overall pattern of their story. Their love begins in rural peace at the Castle of Lindenburg, but they are separated by the supernatural invasion of the Bleeding Nun. Their separation is emphasized even more strongly by Agnes's vows which, in Raymond's absence, she is forced to honour. The conclusion of Raymond's History, as well as the first and imperfect re-union of the lovers, is their meeting in the Convent-gardens where their love is consummated. The tragic developments in Agnes's life are literally generated

in this scene. Her agony and isolation begin here, and are recounted in her own History, which, although shorter, is the thematic and structural counterpart of Raymond's. Her entombment, the birth and death of her child, are the equivalents of Raymond's captivity by the Bleeding Nun. With her rescue comes her rehabilitation, restitution of home and family and final reunion with Raymond, symbolized in marriage and prosperity. Like the Radcliffian heroes and heroines, Raymond and Agnes, and the lesser characters Lorenzo and Virginia, embody the world of value and ordinary healthy existence: after their trials comes their reward which is enduring and serene.

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. The exquisite sorrow with which they had been afflicted, made them think lightly of every succeeding woe. They had felt the sharpest darts in misfortune's quiver. Those which remained appeared blunt in comparison. Having weathered Fate's heaviest Storms, they looked calmly upon its terrors: or if ever they felt Affliction's casual gales, they seemed to them gentle as Zephyrs, which breathe over summer seas.¹³

In Mrs Radcliffe this is the view of life that exultantly prevails, but in Lewis this is the limited view that reaches its conclusion some time before the novel ends. The last pages are the minute depictions of a mind collapsing under a weight of fear and pain, and finally destroyed in the outworking of the processes of evil. This was a secondary interest for Mrs Radcliffe, embodied in the fate of Montoni, but for Lewis it was the absorbing interest.

Lewis's crescendo pattern differs radically from the simple type used by Walpole, Mrs Reeve and Beckford. The ostensible purpose of their grand conclusions is a moral one - the depiction of Evil punished and Good triumphant. Lewis's novel does show the happy survival of the human lovers - but not as the closing vision. His Angelic Heroine is destined for Heaven - but not in this world where she is alien and must die. His aim is not even a moral one, even if he imagined it was. Ambrosio's career, his crime and punishment, does warn against the fatal consequences of pride and lust, but it is an unspoken moral: real interest lies in a satanic depiction of evil. When

public outcry forced him to modify his diabolical apotheosis of horror, he substituted a moral of the conventional sort. It is an enigmatic paragraph that diffuses Lewis's power and ruins his intentions by breaking off into platitude before the final orgy of destruction - perhaps the most tremendous piece of horror writing in English literature. Trite morality was never Lewis's aim, but an apprehension of the power of Hell.

Haughty lady, why shrunk you back when yon poor frail one drew near?
Was the air infected by her errors? Was your purity soiled by her
passing breath? Ah, lady! smooth that insulting brow: strifle the
reproach just bursting from your scornful lip: wound not a soul that
bleeds already! She has suffered, suffers still. Her air is gay,
but her heart is broken; her dress sparkles, but her bosom groans.

Lady, to look with mercy on the conduct of others is a virtue no less
than to look with severity on your own.¹⁴

This inane and almost incomprehensible comment cannot bear comparison with the dark and perverse inspiration of Lewis's original conception, the depiction of Ambrosio's sufferings.

The care with which Lewis handles the plot of his novel is noticeable not only in the virtuosic treatment of the three plots, but in the dramatic and thematic function to which he often adapts the structure. This is clearly illustrated in the purpose of the Raymond and Agnes story in the overall meaning of the novel.

The great fame enjoyed by The Monk was largely owing to the vogue enjoyed by this sub-plot. Raymond's story appealed to a sense of adventure and of mystery and was anthologized, dramatized and imitated in innumerable ways. It has been viewed very differently by critics, some seeing it as a piece of sustained Gothic extravagance decorating the narrative but interrupting unnecessarily the flow of the main plot. Coleridge, however, admired it.

The larger part of the three volumes is occupied by the underplot, which, however, is skilfully and closely connected with the main story, and is subservient to its development. The tale of the bleeding nun is truly terrific; and we could not easily recollect a bolder or more happier conception than that of the burning cross on the forehead of the wandering Jew (a mysterious character which,

though copied as to its more prominent features from Schiller's incomprehensible Armenian, does, nevertheless, display great vigour of fancy).¹⁵

Apart from his misjudging of its length, Coleridge's reactions were remarkably sensitive to the true function of the story.

Richard Harter Fogle feels differently.

I am concerned here, however, primarily with Coleridge's praises of The Monk, and above all with his admiration of its plot structure. Critics have almost invariably been struck with Lewis's conception of his chief character Ambrosio, but have been less impressed by the novel as a whole. Coleridge is in fact too generous to the "underplot"; this is an amiable foible, however, and also most suggestive. Both the Ambrosio story and the underplot are conducted with care and skill, and as Coleridge says, the two are very nicely connected. Nevertheless, there is simply too much of the latter; it is an intrigue-plot, ingenious rather than imaginative, a masterly job of carpentry by a master joiner.¹⁶

Fogle makes the mistake of seeing the sub-plot only as a grandiose embellishment, well-handled and interesting in its neat relation to Ambrosio's story.

Coleridge comes closer to the real function of this sub-plot when he says that it is "closely connected with the main story."

The key to an understanding of the importance is to be found in the conclusion of the second chapter and its relation to what follows. The chapter abruptly ends with the first major crisis of the novel, as Ambrosio succumbs to Matilda's seductions. Ambrosio's story is then suspended for more than one hundred pages as Raymond's story unfolds, an interruption that seems quite unnecessary since the interpolated story appears to have no relation to the main plot. This is not merely a structural device for building up narrative tension: the point is that there is a relation, and a significantly thematic one. When Ambrosio's story is resumed as though there had been no interruption, the fictional world has in fact been transformed out of all recognition by the events contained in the History of Don Raymond.

An essential aspect of The Monk is the vision of the numinous that emerges slowly but inexorably and involves the destruction of the rational presuppositions of society and manners characteristic of the eighteenth century and its fiction.

There are hints of this hidden world of dark forces and mysterious powers in Volume One. Here the ordinary everyday world of Madrid and the norms of rational society prevail. Ambrosio's sexual fall is the first serious tearing of the social fabric, the rent increasing in size with Raymond's frightening experience in the forests of Alsace.

Raymond sets forth on his travels in a world where the proper study for man is mankind. But this ordinary journey of education turns into a nightmare when the simple peasants of the forest are revealed to be blood-thirsty thieves. The same happens when the world of polite manners in the Bavarian Castle undergoes a frightening change as Donna Rudolpha's passion becomes malignant.

By now a situation exists that is pregnant with the potential of development. This takes place in the transformation of the threat which has so far been very ordinary. The highpoint of horror in Raymond's story is the appearance of the Bleeding Nun. It is with her that the supernatural enters the world of nature and is shown to be a terrifying dimension of existence: the numinous becomes a fearful reality.

It is in fact possible to specify within this episode the point of intersection of the natural world and the supernatural, the moment at which the natural yields, cedes, gives way to the imperative solicitations of the supernatural. The moment of passage comes as Raymond waits for the stroke of one o' clock and the appearance of what he expects to be Agnes, and will in fact be the ghost.

"While I sat upon a broken ridge of the hill, the stillness of the scene inspired me with melancholy ideas not altogether unpleasing. The castle which stood full in my sight, formed an object equally awful and picturesque. Its ponderous walls

tinged by the moon with solemn brightness, its old and partly ruined towers, lifting themselves into the clouds, and seeming to frown on the plains around them; its lofty battlements overgrown with ivy; and folding gates, expanding in honour of the visionary inhabitant, made me sensible of a sad and reverential horror."¹⁷

The passage exploits the Gothic emotion - a delectation in chiaroscuro, in the experience of ruin, mystery, awe - in order to imply the capacity and aptitude of the natural world to receive and produce the supernatural.¹⁸

While Raymond recounts these events, Ambrosio's story hangs in suspension, he and Matilda locked in the embrace of love, open in the primitive call of the body to primordial perceptions of the unconscious. Even as the intervening story is about the demonic intrusion into the natural order, so the moment Ambrosio succumbs to the succuba, the demonic irresistibly enters his life. Raymond's love for Agnes has called up a ghost, Ambrosio's passion for Matilda the powers of Hell.

The subplot thus mirrors the thematic implications of the main story.

The intercalated narrative of Don Raymond, then, is not simply a vestigial intrusion from the *roman à tiroirs*, with its successive narrators and tales, but a necessary breakthrough within the novel itself, from a world which has, despite dreams and grandiose passions, up to this point been largely natural and social.¹⁹

Lewis's dramatic use of plot is also noticeable in the organization of individual chapters, each of which is carefully planned around a central event. Most of the chapters are modelled on the lines of a dramatic parabola, with a preliminary action slowly building up to a highpoint and a subsequent action that ebbs quietly (and often quickly too) away from this central event. The very opening chapter illustrates this pattern well. This lengthy prelude falls into a natural division of three, each associated with one of the three plots, and each built around a central highpoint: firstly Ambrosio's appearance and sermon, secondly Lorenzo's dream and thirdly the Gypsy's prediction of Antonia's fortune. Nearly all the chapters of the last volume are similarly constructed, centring as they do on a succession of ghastly events:

the murder of Elvira, the appearance of the warning ghost, the pseudo-death of Antonia, the murder of the Prioress and destruction of the Convent, the rape and murder of Antonia, the death of Ambrosio.

Thus the plot of The Monk which may at first appear disjointed, incidental and simply sensationalistic, is in fact constructed with great care and a remarkable thematic unity.

Dennoch lässt sich für The Monk eine tiefere Einheit der Handlungsstruktur geltend machen, als sie in Radcliffes Werk zu finden ist. Denn auf jeder seiner Erzählebenen wiederholt Lewis abgewandelt die Thematik des Kerngeschehens um Ambrosio.²⁰

The apparently unconnected strands of action achieve an accumulative effect. They raise the demonic beyond the projection of a neurotic individual consciousness and make it an existential characteristic of the entire realm of action.

3. THE DEEPENING RECESS

The Monk had powerfully synthesized the two dominant plot patterns characterizing the Gothic genre to that time. Lewis's control of his elaborate narrative had served as an example to Mrs Radcliffe who in her Italian retains the structural principle adumbrated in The Mysteries of Udolpho but with a more careful control over the length and elaboration of her plot: the later novel is simpler and directer in its appeal.

The book itself is stark and bare in its outlines and lack of adornment, quite without the clutter and complications of her earlier novels.²¹

As always, the later novels showed an adaption to new directions while at the same time gathering all the characteristics of their predecessors and presenting them in a final and definite apotheosis.

Frankenstein typifies the pattern governing these late novels. This might be called a process of recessing, or a series of variations on the same theme. As in The Monk there are really three plots. These are arranged quite differently from Lewis's work though, since they are not interwoven but encased, the one within the other. The outermost of these plots, the frame or Rahmengesichte, is the story of Captain Walton, the Arctic explorer. It is in the form of an epistolary diary, as he periodically reports on his progress in letters to his sister. He begins and ends the novel, for it is into his world that Frankenstein steps on his northward pursuit of the Monster. He begins a prolonged account of his life story which Captain Walton carefully notes down. This is the greater body of the novel.

He then told me he would commence his narrative the next day when I should be at leisure... I have resolved every night to record, as nearly as possible in his own words, what he has related during the day... This manuscript will doubtless afford you the greatest pleasure.²²

However, Frankenstein's dictated autobiography contains deep within itself the Monster's Narration - the account given to Frankenstein in the Alps of the creature's experience in the world.

'Hear my tale; it is long and strange, and the temperature of this place is not fitting to your fine sensations; come to the hut upon the mountains...'. The air was cold, and the rain again began to descend; we entered the hut, the fiend with an air of exultation, I with a heavy heart and depressed spirits. But I consented to listen, and seating myself by the fire which my odious companion had lighted, he thus began his tale.²³

This is both the literal and figurative heart of the novel.

This arrangement of concentric plots is not a narrative extravagance, but a system of variations that moves from a brief intimation of theme, through progressive elaborations, to a sharp and lucid enunciation. The letters of Robert Walton are a light exposition presaging the serious issues of the novel. In the first he speaks of his idealism, and his desire to achieve some great benefit for mankind.

But supposing all these conjectures to be false, you cannot contest the inestimable benefit I shall confer on all mankind to the last generation, by discovering a passage near the pole to those countries, to reach which at present so many months are requisite.²⁴

For this he has trained himself by a long and arduous apprenticeship.

Six years have passed since I resolved on my present undertaking. I can, even now, remember the hour from which I dedicated myself to this great enterprize. I commenced by inuring my body to hardship. I accompanied the whale-fishers on several expeditions to the North Sea; I voluntarily endured cold, famine, thirst, and want of sleep; I often worked harder than common sailors during the day, and devoted my nights to the study of mathematics, the theory of medicine, and those branches of physical science from which a naval adventurer might derive the greatest practical advantage.²⁵

The reader is prepared for the noble aspirations and long scientific training of Frankenstein, and for the original idealism and painful education of the Monster.

The second letter speaks about Walton's desire for a friend.

But I have one want which I have never yet been able to satisfy; and and the absence of the object of which I now feel as a most severe evil. I have no friend... I have no one near me, gentle yet courageous, possessed of a cultivated mind, whose tastes are like my own, to approve or amend my plans.²⁶

His need looks forward to the meeting with Frankenstein and the friendship which develops between them. More significantly it prefigures Frankenstein's friendship with Clerval, and the Monster's passionate desire to be loved.

The second letter concludes with a strange statement.

I am going to unexplored regions to 'the land of mist and snow,' but I shall kill no albatross, therefore do not be alarmed for my safety or if I should come back to you as worn and woeful as the 'Ancient Mariner.' You will smile at my allusion, but I will disclose a secret. I have often attributed my attachment to, my passionate enthusiasm for, the dangerous mysteries of ocean to that production of the most imaginative of modern poets.²⁷

Walton's allusion to the Ancient Mariner summons up a mythical theme of crime and isolation preparing the reader for Frankenstein's accursedness, the Monster's agonized loneliness and the universal implications of their actions.

The third letter depicts Walton's optimism in his venture.

But success shall crown my endeavours. Wherefore not? Thus far I have gone, tracing a secure way over the pathless seas, the stars themselves being witnesses and testimonies of my triumph.²⁸

This anticipates the determination and radiant humanism that initially characterize Frankenstein's intentions and scientific experiments.

All these issues come into sharp focus the moment Frankenstein appears: he refers to a blasted idealism, to a noble friendship, to lost hope. The opening section thus contains a distillation of all the thematic essences of the novel. But these concerns are also the pre-occupations of the Monster's story: his life is the concentration of all that Walton and Frankenstein experience in their different ways. He lives accursed, having lost his natural impulses of idealism, hope and love.

Believe me, Frankenstein, I was benevolent, my soul glowed with love and humanity; but am I not alone, miserably alone? You, my creator, abhor me; what hope can I gather from your fellow creatures, who owe me nothing? They spurn and hate me. The desert mountains and dreary glaciers are my refuge. I have wandered here many days; the caves of ice, which I only do not fear, are a dwelling to me, and the only one which man does not grudge.²⁹

Rejected and feared because of his ugliness, his existence has been soured. The Monster's sad story of disappointment and disillusionment is concise and rich in mythic resonances.

The effect of the plot-pattern is of moving deeper and deeper into an inner recess where situations are revealed in all their harsh reality. Once the situation has been perceived and understood, there is a movement outwards again. Frankenstein experiences anguish more fully and Walton himself knows something of the bitter ashes of disillusionment as he loses both ideal and friend.

The elements of the crescendo and the circle are still operative in the plot-pattern. The final pages show the sad climax of the careers of Frankenstein and his creature, as both meet their tragic ends. Further, the use of the frame device is circular by nature, a return after prolonged narration to the present time in which the story is told. This is purely dramatic, however, and lacks the thematic implication of Mrs Radcliffe's use of the perfect circle.

The Vampyre once again illustrates succinctly the characteristics of this last period of the genre. The plot follows the same pattern as that of Frankenstein, divided as it is into three distinct sections, two framing parts set in London enclosing a central episode which describes Aubrey's experiences in Europe. The opening events depict the mystery surrounding Lord Ruthven, and Aubrey's growing insight into his evil ways. The Greek episode is the mystical core of the story elaborating the Vampire myth: his experience in

the hut in the wood, the spiritual horror of his conflict with Lord Ruthven assumes a mythical resonance, an agelessness allegory of evil. The rest of the Greek episode adumbrates the terrifying Vampire lore, indirectly establishes Lord Ruthven's supernatural character and his demonic elusiveness. Aubrey does not understand what he experiences, but the rest of the story, the movement from Greece back to England and his life there, translates these mythical intimations derived in a remote and exotic setting, into a frightening secular reality of anguish and death in an unromantic everyday situation.

Melmoth the Wanderer stands as the culminating peak of the cycle; this is particularly true of the plot. Maturin's novel has a structure as elaborate and detailed as a Hindu temple. All the other novels, including even The Mysteries of Udolpho with its intricacy of design, are models of simplicity by comparison. The deepening recess is the characteristic pattern of this work. The novel is an investigation of many of Melmoth's appearances to various people at different times and places, an epic survey of the whole world, a set of variations on the agony of mankind.

As with Frankenstein and The Vampyre there is a strong outer frame containing the essence of the narration. The bleak Irish setting, the symbol of death, decay, misery and mediocrity provides the requisite background for the succession of grim tales that are soon to follow. Even the narrative techniques used later in the novel are to be found in this frame situation. Melmoth's portrait and actual brief appearance parallel his constant presence in the tales; the sibyl's account and Stanton's tale, read from a faded manuscript, presage the nature of the stories and the methods by which they are told. Eventually, at the other end of the novel, Melmoth himself intrudes into the present narrating time, his agony, dream and actual death highlighting his spiritual turmoil throughout the novel, and powerfully resolving the whole plot.

The parallels with the Rahmengeschichte of Frankenstein are obvious:

there the Arctic setting symbolically echoes the wasted hopes of the story, Walton's idealism hints at the crisis of soul of both Frankenstein and the Monster; the narrative situation in which Frankenstein tells his story to Walton is also developed in the novel. The latter part of the frame story contains the whole crisis of the novel in the death of Frankenstein, and the grief and departure of the Monster.

The elaborate recessing process in Melmoth the Wanderer begins with the arrival by shipwreck of the Spanish monk, Moncada, who initiates the process with his lengthy tale. His escape to the Jews and his refuge in the laboratory of Adonijah results in his transcription of a manuscript containing a whole series of histories. In his conversation with the old Jew, Moncada becomes aware that he is one of a community of victims all of whom have been fearfully tempted in their anguish by Melmoth: this is the whole thematic implication in the structure of the novel.

'In the days of my childhood, a rumour reached mine ears, even mine, of a being sent abroad on the earth to tempt Jew and Nazarene, and even the disciples of Mohammed... with offers of deliverance at their utmost need and extremity, so that they would do that which my lips dare not utter... On my return to my country, even Spain, if a Jew can be said to have a country, I set myself down on this seat, and, lighted by this lamp, I took in my hand the pen of a scribe, and vowed by a vow, that this lamp should not expire, nor this seat be forsaken, nor this vault be untenanted, until that the record is written in a book... Then vowed I a vow unto the God of Israel, who had delivered me from their the Inquisition's thralldom, that none but he who could read these characters should ever transcribe them... Thus I prayed - and my prayer was heard, for behold, thou art here.'

As I heard these words a horrid foreboding, like a nightmare of the heart, hung heavily on me. I looked alternately at the withering speaker, and the hopeless task. To bear about that horrible secret inured in my heart, was not that enough? but to be compelled to scatter its ashes abroad, and to take into the dust of others for the same purpose of unhallowed exposure, revolted me beyond feeling and utterance. As my eye fell listlessly on the manuscripts I saw they contained only the Spanish language written in the Greek characters - a mode of writing that I easily conceived, must have been as unintelligible to the officers of the Inquisition as the Hieroglyphics of the Egyptian priests... So they returned the papers to Adonijah, and, in his own language, 'Behold, he abode in safety.' But to me this was a task of horror unspeakable. I felt myself as an added link to the chain, the end of which, held by an invisible hand, was drawing me to perdition; and I was now to become the recorder of my own condemnation.

As I turned over the leaves with a trembling hand, the towering form of Adonijah seemed dilated with preternatural emotion.

'And what dost thou tremble at, child of the dust?' he exclaimed, 'if thou hast been tempted, so have they - if they are at rest, so shalt thou be... Miserable link of necessity, that binds together minds so uncongenial!... dost thou still hesitate to record the story of those whose destiny a link wondrous, invisible, and indissoluble, has bound to thine ...'³⁰

The actual transcription of the manuscript is a penetration into confraternity of pain, a mystical confrontation with the spirit of a suffering community.

It was a night of storms in the world above us; and, far below the surface of the earth as we were, the murmur of the winds, sighing through the passages, came on my ears like the voice of the departed, - like the pleadings of the dead. Involuntarily I fixed my eye on the manuscript I was to copy, and never withdrew till I had finished its extraordinary contents.³¹

The manuscript contains the "Tale of the Indians", the extended account of Immalee on her Indian Isle and later as Isidora in Spain. This story includes within itself two others, the "Tale of Guzman's Family" and "The Lovers' Tale," both of which are told to Isidora's father, Francisco di Aliaga, on a journey, one by a fellow traveller and the other by Melmoth himself. Melmoth's account of the English Lovers describes his own entrance into their lives and the relating of his own history, the nature of his sin and the aim of his eternal quest, which up to this point has remained an enigma. Thus Melmoth's account of himself lies at the heart of the innermost narrative recesses of this huge novel: to emerge it requires a shipwreck, an escape from the Inquisition, a flight into a hidden laboratory, a mysterious document and a series of four narrators; the omniscient authorial voice reporting the narrative Moncada is telling John Melmoth, which the Spaniard in his turn read in Adonijah's document recounting the Lovers' story in which Melmoth speaks of himself to d' Aliaga. The triple narrative of Frankenstein is simple by comparison.

This method of embedded narrations, variations on the central experience of the novel, makes its first appearance in The Mysteries of Udolpho. The last third of the novel has the extended account of the de Villeroi family

which in many ways is a replica of the St Auberts. Blanche de Villeroi, certainly is a brunette variation of Emily: her tastes and experiences are identical to Emily's as are her relations and adventures with her father. The story flows into the mainstream of the narration when Emily arrives, and is even more dramatically integrated when later events reveal the de Villerois to be close relatives of the St Auberts.

The same thematic counterpointing is present in The Monk, where the experiences of Raymond and Agnes are dramatic variations on incidents in Ambrosio's life. Further, Raymond's story contains the embedded tale of Beatrice de las Cisternas which is in every way parallels Ambrosio's story.

But the structure of Melmoth the Wanderer contains other patterns, even if these are subsidiary to the predominant one of recession. Certainly the gradual revelation of Melmoth's character can be traced along crescendo lines, as it emerges from mystery and clarifies progressively, culminating in the final penetration of the Wanderer's consciousness and the resolution of his fate. This is the old pattern of the careers of Vathek and Ambrosio, ending, as theirs do, with a vision of damnation.

The story also has a circular pattern, working in the opposite direction to Mrs Radcliffe's. Instead of beginning and ending in a type of Paradise as her novels do, Maturin's moves from a setting of gloom into the world of the dark tales and back into the same setting of gloom with a final vision of desolation. The heavenly Indian Isle is the great central vision of the novel but not the dominant one which is of Paradise lost. The novel moves to and from this isle, but opens and closes in bleak Ireland.

The novel is further symmetrically plotted around the central island incident. The plot moves from Ireland through Stanton's English story and

the Spanish tale of Moncada, to the central Indian incident; then the plot moves back again through the Spanish tales of Isidora and Guzman's family through another English story back to the Ireland of the narrating present.

Melmoth the Wanderer epitomizes the detailed attention to plot in the Gothic cycle. By its sheer volume and intricacy it could hardly be developed further, for not only did it elaborate the recessed pattern of the late Gothic novel but also included the patterns characterizing the early and middle periods. It is, in plot as in other characteristics, the grand synthesis, the final word on the roman noir.

All the novels are structured according to distinctive patterns, but they all share one of the oldest and most universal of motifs - that of the Journey.

The two earliest examples contain journeys that are incidental to the general development of the story. In The Castle of Otranto Isabella flees into the forest and Theodore escapes there too, while the arrival of various visitors at the Castle heralds new developments in the story. In The Old English Baron Sir Philip Harclay's return from the Holy Land sets the plot into motion, while the various small journeys of Edmund, especially his expulsion from Lovel Castle and his searching out of Sir Philip, are a dramatic progression towards his ultimate victory.

With Vathek, however, comes a major change. The long journey from Samarah to the Caverns of Eblis shapes the whole plot and is more than simply a movement from one place to another, but represents the outworking of the Caliph's eternal destiny. This is the essential meaning of the Journey as it occurs in all the novels which follow: it becomes the central spiritual experience of the principal characters. All Mrs Radcliffe's novels are built around journeys which provide her heroes and heroines with the opportunity of experiencing life and vindicating their values. In The Monk Raymond has

a long and highly adventurous journey of great thematic importance. However, the central one, that of Ambrosio, is his abstract progression towards damnation.

In Frankenstein and Melmoth the Wanderer the literal journey is described in great detail, but is always a type of pilgrimage. Frankenstein travels from his home to the University of Ingolstadt, from his home into the Alps to escape from himself, across Europe to the Orkneys to create a companion for the Monster, into Italy with his bride and finally half way across the world in pursuit of the Monster. Melmoth traverses the world in search of a willing victim to take his burden of guilt upon himself.

The endless journeying in the Gothic novel is involved in the moral implications of the universe, the relation of places to Heaven, Hell and Purgatory. The movements symbolize the Journey of the Soul, confronting the issues of salvation and damnation in a testing ground where the celestial and the infernal are in ceaseless conflict. Characters, setting and plot are thus inextricably enmeshed in the world view prevailing in this genre.

The great common theme of the Gothic novel is that of salvation and damnation, the ageless conflict between Good and Evil, the basic idea of contrast and conflict in the universe. Maturin himself spoke clearly of this basic pre-occupation of the cycle in his Preface to Melmoth the Wanderer:

The hint of this Romance (or Tale) was taken from a passage in one of my Sermons, which (as it is to be presumed very few have read) I shall here take the liberty to quote. The passage is this.

'At this moment is there one of us present, however we may have departed from the Lord, disobeyed his will, and disregarded his word - is there one of us who would, at this moment, accept all that man could bestow, or earth afford to resign the hope of his salvation? - No, there is not one - not such a fool on earth, were the enemy of mankind to traverse it with the offer!'

This passage suggested the idea of 'Melmoth the Wanderer'. The Reader will find that idea developed in the following pages, with what power or success he is to decide.¹

Perhaps the simplest point differentiating this type of novel from other romantic and later imitations is this fundamental pre-occupation and the unashamedly forthright nature of its presentation.

1. THE REGISTER OF HEAVEN AND HELL

From the discussions of character, setting and plot it must now be clear just how completely the concepts of Heaven and Hell imbue the fictional universe. The assertion of Robert Hume that there is moral confusion in the Gothic novel, that Good and Evil have become ambiguous,² seems inaccurate: the characters of Ambrosio and Victor Frankenstein may indeed be complicated by considerations of education and expressions of personality that defy simple analysis, but ultimately the moral issues bearing on their destinies are quite clear. Much of the mysterious appeal exerted by these works, their profound archetypal fascination,

is largely owing to this clarity of their highly symbolic worlds.

Character, setting and plot emphasize the numerous ways in which the resonances of these worlds are evoked. However, there is also a register of Good and Evil existing in all the novels without any symbolic transmutation or ambiguity which reinforces the eschatological implications of the theme quite plainly. All the novels have references to the Four Last Things: Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell.

When Manfred expresses his desire for Isabella in The Castle of Otranto, he challenges the whole universe of moral law.

Look, my lord! see heaven itself declares against your impious intentions! - Heaven nor hell shall impede my designs, said Manfred, advancing again to seize the princess. At that instant the portrait of his grandfather, which hung over the bench where they had been sitting, uttered a deep sigh and heaved its breast.³

A decisive rôle is played in the novel by holy men of God in the guise of hermits who provide information vital to the working out of divine justice. Information from such a hermit leads to the discovery of the sabre on which is inscribed a prophecy of the triumph of Good.

But a highpoint of this register of images comes in the ghostly apparition of Alphonso at the end of the novel, a terrifying vision that reveals all truth and prefigures the Day of Judgment.

A clap of thunder at that instant shook the castle to its foundations; the earth rocked, and the clank of more than mortal armour was heard behind. Frederic and Jerome thought the last day was at hand... The moment Theodore appeared, the walls of the castle behind Manfred were thrown down with a mighty force, and the form of Alfonso, dilated to an immense magnitude, appeared in the centre of the ruins. Behold in Theodore, the true heir of Alfonso! said the vision: and having pronounced those words, accompanied by a clap of thunder, it ascended solemnly towards heaven, where clouds parting asunder, the form of saint Nicholas was seen; and receiving Alfonso's shade, they were soon wrapt from mortal eyes in a blaze of glory.⁴

This fantastic strain is continued in Vathek. The issue of salvation is quietly broached in the first paragraph of the novel.

Being much addicted to women and the pleasures of the table, he thought by his affability to procure agreeable companions... for he did not think, with the Caliph Omar Ben Abdalaziz, that it was necessary to make a hell of this world to enjoy Paradise in the next.⁵

Later Mohammed himself is depicted in Heaven.

The Giaour plays the rôle of evil mentor, the opposite of the Hermit in The Castle of Otranto: he possesses the talismanic sabres which contain the prophecy of Vathek's evil destiny. The good counterpart appears later in the novel as the disguised Genius who, as a concession of providence, tries to warn Vathek from his fatal path. The positive vision of judgment that brings Walpole's novel to a climax is inverted by Beckford who replaces it by a vision of Hell; St Nicolas becomes Eblis, an oriental demon.

... upon a globe of fire, sat the formidable Eblis. His person was that of a young man, whose noble and regular features seemed to have been tarnished by malignant vapours. In his large eyes appeared both pride and despair: his flowing hair retained some resemblance to that of an angel of light. In his hand, which thunder had blasted, he swayed the iron sceptre that causes the monster Oyrabad, the afrits and all the powers of the abyss to tremble.⁶

Opposed to this phantasmagoria in the early stage of the Gothic novel is Mrs Reeve's less colourful The Old English Baron. This work too contains the register of Heaven and Hell but in the milder form of pious expressions, as when Father Oswald reaffirms Edmund's faith.

Continue to observe the same irreproachable conduct; and be assured that Heaven will defend your innocence, and defeat the unjust designs of your enemies.⁷

Even Lord Lovel sees his crimes in an eschatological light when confessing his fault.⁸

Mrs Reeve's method is glorified by Mrs Radcliffe in The Mysteries of Udolpho. As has already been established, the moral implications in this work are largely secularized, and the universe of Heaven and Hell must be

interpreted from the ordinary world she depicts. On occasion, however, she approaches something like a discussion of Evil.

Emily again mused upon her own situation, and concerning the motives of Montoni for involving her in it. That it was for some evil purpose towards herself she could not doubt; and it seemed that, if he did not intend to destroy her, with a view of immediately seizing her estates, he meant to reserve her awhile in concealment, for some more terrible design, for one that might equally gratify his avarice, and still more his deep revenge.⁹

It is only in The Italian that Mrs Radcliffe becomes bolder in her evocation of the spiritual implications of experience, as when she describes the effect of the various physiognomies of the assembled nuns of San Stephano in eschatological terms.

Nor was the contrast of countenances less striking; the grave, the austere, the solemn, and the gloomy, intermingling with the light, the blooming, and the debonaire, expressed all the various tempers, that render life a blessing or a burden, and, as with the spell of magic, transform this world into a transient paradise or purgatory.¹⁰

Later the abductors of Ellena and Vivaldi are envisaged as "some terrible messengers of evil",¹¹ while the servants of the Inquisition are aligned very definitely with Evil.

Inquisitors, in their long black robes... crossed the hall to other avenues. They eyed the prisoners with curiosity, but without pity. Their visages, with few exceptions, seemed stamped with the character of demons.¹²

It will be recalled that the prisons themselves are likened to Hell.

The whole experience of the novel is ultimately summarized in these ideas, in Paulo's words at the end of the story.

... as it happened, we had to go through purgatory before we could reach paradise; but the second part is come at last.¹³

Lewis continues and intensifies the more fantastic approach of Walpole and Beckford. The Monk is impregnated with a sense of Good and Evil. Lorenzo's dream clearly depicts both salvation and damnation, and introduces a fearsome

being, perhaps a fusion of Satan and his minion, Ambrosio. This appearance of the monster introduces a series of supernatural apparitions. If Satan approximates the Giaour in Vathek, then when he appears at Matilda's evocation in the Vaults he is undoubtedly modelled on Eblis.

... He beheld a Figure more beautiful, than Fancy's pencil ever drew. It was a Youth seemingly scarce eighteen of whose form and face were unrivalled. He was perfectly naked: A bright star sparkled upon his fore-head; Two crimson wings extended themselves from his shoulders; and his silken locks were confined by a band of many-coloured fires, which played round his head... Yet however beautiful the Figure, He could not but remark a wildness in the Daemon's eyes, and a mysterious melancholy impressed upon his features, betraying the Fallen Angel.¹⁴

At his final horrific appearance to Ambrosio in his death-cell, it is in all the apocalyptic horror of his infernal majesty, as he prepares to carry Ambrosio off to damnation.

But He came not, as when at Matilda's summons He borrowed the Seraph's form to deceive Ambrosio. He appeared in all that ugliness, which since his fall from heaven had been his portion: His blasted limbs still bore marks of the Almighty's thunder: A swarthy darkness spread itself over his gigantic form: His hands and feet were armed with long Talons: Fury glared in his eyes, which might have struck the bravest heart with terror: Over his huge shoulders waved two enormous sable wings; and his hair was supplied by living snakes, which turned themselves round his brows with frightful hissings.¹⁵

Ambrosio's Hell begins on earth when Satan casts him into the ravine where his prolonged agonies recall the tortures of the Inferno.

There are other supernatural beings in this work - all of them relating to the central theme. Beatrice de las Cisternas, the Bleeding Nun who haunts Raymond, leads an existence of unending purgatorial agony: she epitomizes death in life.

I beheld before me an animated Corse. Her countenance was long and haggard; Her cheeks and lips were bloodless; The paleness of death was spread over her features, and her eye-balls fixed steadfastly upon me were lustreless and hollow.¹⁶

The Wandering Jew himself, doomed to wander the earth until Judgment Day, is the only one who can exorcize Raymond's life of her evil presence. He does so in a scene of great ritual significance, the positive counterpart of Matilda's elaborate demonic evocation later on.

He then opened his Chest. The first thing which He produced, was a small wooden Crucifix. He sank upon his knees... He seemed to be praying devoutly. At length He bowed his head respectfully, kissed the Crucifix thrice, and quitted his kneeling posture. He next drew from the Chest a covered Goblet: With the liquor which it contained, and which appeared to be blood, He sprinkled the floor, and then dipping in it one end of the Crucifix, He described a circle in the middle of the room. Round about this He placed various reliques, skulls, thigh-bones etc; I observed, that He disposed them all in the forms of Crosses. Lastly He took out a large Bible, and beckoned me to follow him into the Circle.¹⁷

Only the rites of the Church can bring peace to Beatrice's tortured spirit.

... collect my mouldering bones, and deposit them in the family vault of his Andalusian Castle. Then let thirty Masses be said for the repose of my Spirit, and I trouble this world no more.¹⁸

But the register of Heaven and Hell is represented on a very ordinary earthly plane in the depiction of Ambrosio's career and his choice for or against God. He is initially sorely tempted and turns to prayer when he fears his resistance weakening.¹⁹ Once he has fallen, he seeks to compromise with truth by enjoying sin without losing all hopes of salvation. But the law of God is absolute, a fact Ambrosio chooses to forget.²⁰ However it is only when in prison and facing imminent death that the issue of his salvation becomes unbearably acute.

'Matilda, your counsels are dangerous: I dare not, I will not follow them. I must not give up my claim to salvation. Monstrous are my crimes; But God is merciful and I will not despair of pardon.'²¹

References to Heaven and Hell infuse the later works, intensifying the basic theme and bolstering the mythologizing process characteristic of this last period of development.

The salient features are hinted at in miniature in The Vampyre. Ianthe is depicted in terms of Heaven.

Under the same roof as himself, existed a being, so beautiful and delicate, that she might have formed the model for a painter, wishing to portray on canvas the promised hope of the faithful in Mohomet's paradise...²²

Lord Ruthven is characterized by an evil influence and philosophy, and by a

type of satanic ritual upon which his supernatural existence and evil affiliation depend.

Rising early in the morning, he was about to enter the hovel in which he had left the corpse, when a robber met him and informed him it was no longer there, having been conveyed by himself and his comrades ... to the pinnacle of a neighbouring mount according to the promise they had given his lordship, that it should there be exposed to the first cold ray of the moon that rose after his death.²³

His destruction of pure life is an archetypal victory of Evil over Good.

The guardians hastened to protect Miss Aubrey; but when they arrived, it was too late. Lord Ruthven had disappeared, and Aubrey's sister had glutted the thirst of a VAMPYRE!²⁴

In Frankenstein this register underlies Frankenstein's crisis of soul.

His education, the pursuit of his great ambition, are depicted in eschatological terms.

When I look back, it seems to me as if this almost miraculous change of inclination and will was the immediate suggestion of the guardian angel of my life - the last effort made by the spirit of preservation to avert the storm that was even then hanging in the stars and ready to envelope me. Her victory was announced by an unusual tranquillity and my gladness of soul which followed the relinquishing of my ancient and latterly tormenting studies. It was thus that I was taught to associate evil with their prosecution, happiness with their disregard.

It was a strong effort of the spirit of good, but it was ineffectual. Destiny was too potent, and her immutable laws had decreed my utter and terrible destruction.²⁵

The horror of his work seems to imply a loss of soul, and when the Monster itself is finally created, it is associated with Hell immediately - the image intensified by reference to Dante. Life itself becomes a type of Inferno.²⁶

The world seems imbued with moral meaning, a great apocalyptic emblem of Good and Evil.

Night also closed around, and when I could hardly see the dark mountains, I felt still more gloomily. The picture appeared a vast and dim scene of evil, and I foresaw obscurely that I was destined to become the most wretched of human beings.²⁷

His eventual task of destruction becomes a heaven-sent mission, the dramatization of the eternal struggle between Good and Evil.

At such moments vengeance, that burned within me, died in my heart, and I pursued my path towards the destruction of the daemon more as a task enjoined by heaven, as the mechanical impulse of some power of which I was unconscious, than as the ardent desire of my soul.²⁸

As with Ambrosio, Hell begins for Frankenstein in life as soon as the Monster has been created, and remains his enduring inner condition until his death.

I am chained in an eternal hell.²⁹

The register of Heaven and Hell colours nearly every page of Melmoth the Wanderer. Like Mrs Radcliffe and Lewis, Maturin links many of the religious with Evil, and devotes much of the novel to exposing their wicked practices and double standards.

'Embrace, my dear child, the monastic life; this will accomplish the views of all who love you, ensure your own salvation, and fulfil the will of God, who is calling you at this moment by the voices of your affectionate parents, and the supplications of the minister of heaven, who is now kneeling before you.' And he sunk on his knees before me.

This prostration, so unexpected, so revolting, and so like the monastic habit of artificial humiliation, completely annihilated the effect of his language. I retreated from his arms which were extended towards me. 'My father, I cannot, - I will never become a monk.' 'Wretch! and you refuse then to listen to the call of your conscience, the adjuration of your parents, and the voice of God?' The fury with which he uttered these words, - the change from a ministering angel to an infuriated and menacing demon, had an effect just contrary to what he expected.³⁰

The issue of salvation becomes the ultimate crisis in every one of the stories in the novel. Moncada in prison is tempted to barter his soul for freedom.³¹ The condition of release offered to each of Melmoth's victims is so terrifying, that it is refused in each case: indeed the victim would rather die than contemplate it.

I was sustained by a power that enabled me to embrace objects so terrible to nature, sooner than escape them at the price of my salvation. The choice was offered me, and I made my election, - and so would I do were it to be offered a thousand times, though the last were at the stake, and the fire already kindling.³²

This is the experience of Moncada, Stanton, Adonijah, Walberg, Anne Mortimer, Isidora - all of whom are Melmoth's chosen victims. Everything in the novel

centres around the Wanderer and his relation to Hell: his credo is that of the fallen angels.

'I believe in a God,' answered Melmoth, in a voice that froze her blood; 'you have heard of those who believe and tremble, - such is he who speaks to you!'³³

His kingdom is the Inferno itself. This novel too has the fantastic eschatological apotheosis as developed by Walpole, Beckford and Lewis: it comes in the form of "The Wanderer's Dream" in which Melmoth sees his fate in visionary terms - his descent to damnation and the heavenward movement of those who resisted him for love of the Kingdom of Heaven.

2. THE DEMONIC INTRUSION AND THE CHAOS THAT LIES CONCEALED

An essential extension of the register of Heaven and Hell is the Gothic experience itself, the events of evil, that affect all the main characters at some time in the unfolding of the stories. The Gothic novels are justly famous for their 'horrors', although the conception of these in the popular imagination is distorted and wrongly emphasized. The terror and frisson were part of the movement away from the predictable and rational ethos of the eighteenth century. At best they opened a new imaginative realm to the creative mind, a world of supernaturalism and mystery. At worst they represent over-stimulation of emotion characteristic of the less desirable aspects of Romanticism.

Most significantly, however, the terror aspect of the genre is an integral thread in the thematic tapestry of Good and Evil: it is the prime manifestation of the demonic in the ordinary world, the frightening irruption of evil into everyday rational existence.

As always, the power and detail of conception intensify as the dimensions of the genre increase. In the earliest novels, these episodes are isolated and melodramatic, but they point to later, more exciting developments.

The Castle of Otranto has three such incidents, all of which, while terrifying, are connected with the prevention of some evil plan. The first is when Manfred's persecution of Isabella is interrupted by the portrait which comes to life.

At that instant the portrait of his grandfather, which hung over the bench... uttered a deep sigh and heaved its breast ... Manfred advanced some steps after her, still looking backwards on the portrait, when he saw it quit its pannel, and descend on the floor with a grave and melancholy air.¹

The second is when the statue of Alphonso bleeds as a warning that Frederic

is not to have Matilda in marriage.

As he spoke these words three drops of blood fell from the nose of Alfonso's statue. Manfred turned pale and the princess sunk on her knees. Behold! said the friar: mark this miraculous indication that the blood of Alfonso will never mix with Manfred.²

The third is the spectral visitation of the Hermit who in his turn warns Frederic to avoid union with Manfred's family.

Pushing open the door gently, he saw a person kneeling before the altar. As he approached nearer, it seemed not a woman, but one in a long woollen weed, whose back was towards him. The person seemed absorbed. The marquis was about to return when the figure rising, stood some moments fixed in meditation ... And then the figure, turning slowly round, discovered to Frederic the fleshless jaws, and empty sockets of a skeleton, wrapt in a hermit's cowl.³

The incidents are fantastic, but crudely powerful in their contexts.

The Old English Baron similarly uses the supernatural in the interests of good: as when Edmund's shabby accusers are driven from the haunted apartments by supernatural visitation.

... on a sudden they were alarmed with a dismal groan from the room underneath. They stood like statues petrified by fear ... A second groan increased their consternation; and, soon after, a third completed it. They staggered to a seat, and sunk upon it, ready to faint; presently all the doors flew open, a pale glimmering light appeared at the door from the staircase, and a man in complete armour entered the room. He stood with one hand extended, pointing to the outward door; they took the hint, and crawled away as fast as fear would let them.⁴

From Vathek onwards, however, the tone of the terrors assumes a more sinister inflexion. A good example of the demonic intrusion is the temptation of Nouronihar. Drawn mysteriously on by a strange light, she undergoes a frightening experience.

At length she arrived at the opening of the glen; but, instead of coming up to the light, she found herself surrounded by darkness ... She stopped a second time: the sound of waterfalls mingling their murmurs, the hollow rustlings among the palm-branches and the funereal screams of the birds from their rifted trunks, all conspired to fill her soul with terror. She imagined every moment, that she trod on some venomous reptile. All the stories of malignant dives and dismal Ghoules thronged into her memory.⁵

This is only the prelude to the actual demonic vision which fills her with new ideas of aggrandizement and results in a transformation of her character.

Mrs Radcliffe's handling of this sort of event is more restrained and realistic. There are several mildly frightening experiences, but the most famous is Emily's investigation of the chamber in Udolpho with its mysterious veiled portrait: her discovery purports to be horrific.

This brought to her recollection the veiled picture which had attracted her curiosity on the preceding night, and she resolved to examine ... But a terror of this nature, as it occupies and expands the mind, and elevates it to high expectation, is purely sublime, and leads us, by a kind of fascination, to seek the object from which we appear to shrink.

Emily passed on with faltering steps ... and went towards the picture ... that hung in a dark part of the room. She paused again, and then with a timid hand lifted the veil; but instantly let it fall - perceiving that what it concealed was no picture; and before she could leave the chamber she dropped senseless to the floor.⁶

But in Mrs Radcliffe's rational system, all ostensible mysteries have a perfectly comprehensible explanation: much later it is revealed that what Emily takes for a putrid corpse is in fact a waxen momento mori.

But more significant than this famous mystery is Emily's experience in the tower, when, fearing her aunt's murder, she ventures out on a midnight search for her; in a remote tower she discovers a corpse that in her horror she takes to be that of her aunt.

It was a spacious room whose walls ... showed no casement but the grated one Emily had left ... The feeble rays of the lamp, however, did not allow her at once to see its full extent; she perceived no furniture, except, indeed, an iron chair fastened in the centre of the chamber, immediately over which, depending on a chain from the ceiling hung an iron ring ... she next observed iron bars below, made for the purpose of confining the feet, and on the arms of the chair were rings of the same metal. As she continued to survey them, she concluded that they were instruments of torture; and struck her that some poor wretch had once been fastened in this chair, and had there been starved to death ... She was chilled by the thought; but what was her agony when, in the next moment, it occurred to her that her aunt might have been one of those victims, and that she herself might be the next! An acute pain seized her head, she was scarcely able to hold the lamp; and, looking round for support, was seating herself, unconsciously, in the iron chair itself: but suddenly perceiving where she was, she started from it in horror, and sprung towards a remote end of the room.

Here again she looked round for a seat to sustain her, and perceiving only a dark curtain, which, descending from the ceiling to the floor was drawn along the whole side of the chamber. Ill as she was, the appearance of this curtain struck her, and she paused to gaze upon it in wonder and apprehension.

It seemed to conceal a recess of the chamber; she wished, yet dreaded, to lift it, and discover what it veiled; twice she was withheld by a recollection of the terrible spectacle her daring hand had formerly unveiled in an apartment of the castle, till, suddenly conjecturing that it concealed the body of her murdered aunt, she seized it in a fit of desparation, and drew it aside. Beyond appeared a corpse stretched on a kind of low couch, which was crimsoned with human blood, as was the floor beneath. The features, deformed by death, were ghastly and horrible, and more than one livid wound appeared in the face. Emily, bending over the body, gazed, for a moment, with an eager, frenzied eye, but, in the next, the lamp dropped from her hand, and she fell senseless at the foot of the couch.⁷

This event is at the very heart of the novel: it is the central experience of horror, and the heroine's most terrifying ordeal, in many ways the prototype of the Gothic experience. The scene makes powerful use of symbols: the sense of past suffering, the violence and lawlessness, are epitomized in the lonely venue, and in the instrument of torture, emblems of all that is alien to Emily's world of gentleness and civilization. This is the closest Mrs Radcliffe comes to the demonic experience.

Lewis's Monk presents the most various types of this demonic experience. Nearly every character becomes the victim of some ghastly occurrence that brings the reality of evil into their unsuspecting lives. Raymond travelling innocently in the Alsatian woods finds himself among thieves. Later, when hoping to elope with his beloved Agnes, his life is subtly invaded by the terrifying ghost of an ancestress. The nightly haunting by the Bleeding Nun literally embodies the demonic intrusion. Fearful reversal of expectation is also the experience of Agnes, who is eventually entombed in the secret cells under the Convent of St Clare, to bear her child in shame and ignominy. Her agonized bewilderment speaks for the many characters in Gothic fiction who suddenly find their lives turned upside down by fearful reversals, and a yawning gulf opening under familiar and reassuring circumstances.

As I threw a look of terror round my prison, as I shrunk from the cutting wind which howled through my subterranean dwelling, the change seemed so striking, so abrupt, that I doubted its reality. That the Duke of Medina's Niece, that the destined Bride of the Marquis de las Cisternas, One bred up in affluence, related to the noblest families in Spain, and rich in a multitude of affectionate Friends, that She should in one moment become a Captive, separated from the world for ever, weighed down with chains, and reduced to support life with the coarsest aliments, appeared a change so sudden and incredible, that I believed myself the sport of some frightful vision. Its continuance convinced me of my mistake with but too much certainty. Every morning my hopes were disappointed. At length I abandoned all idea of escaping: I resigned myself to my fate, and only expected Liberty when She came the Companion of Death.⁸

Elvira and Antonia find their peaceful home penetrated with evil when Ambrosio forces himself into their lives, eventually to murder them both. But Ambrosio himself undergoes the most harrowing demonic experience: he kills Elvira but the event is enough temporarily to cripple him emotionally and psychologically.

Those agonies were at length over. She ceased to struggle for life. The Monk took off the pillow and gazed upon 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.

This horrible act was no sooner perpetrated, than the Friar beheld the enormity of his crime. A cold dew flowed over his limbs; his eyes closed; He staggered to a chair, and sank into it almost lifeless, as the Unfortunate who lay extended at his feet.⁹

The reversal of expectation and the demonic intrusion are dramatized in Matilda, a demon incarnate, who intrudes into Ambrosio's life, and inexorably subjugates his will for Hell by stirring his latent tendencies.

In the later novels, this demonism, this chaos that lies concealed, are exhausting in their spiritual implications. It is illustrated in the nightmarish central episode in The Vampyre: Aubrey wrestles in the darkness with the terrifying unknown - really Lord Ruthven who has been slowly draining Ianthe of life.

The animal at last, through fatigue, stopped, and he found, by the glare of lightning, that he was in the neighbourhood of a hovel that hardly lifted itself up from the masses of dead leaves and brushwood which surrounded it ... As he approached, the thunder for a moment

silent, allowed him to hear the dreadful shrieks of a woman mingling with the stifled, exultant mockery of a laugh ... he was startled: but, roused by the thunder which again rolled over his head, he, with a sudden effort, forced open the door of the hut. He found himself in utter darkness ... He found himself in contact with some one, whom he immediately seized ... and he felt himself grappled by one whose strength seemed superhuman ... he struggled; but it was in vain: he was lifted from his feet and hurled with enormous force against the ground: - his enemy threw himself upon him, and kneeling upon his breast, had placed his hands upon his throat ...¹⁰

The experiences are not only more powerful, but also more numerous. Frankenstein's whole career, from the creation of the Monster onwards, is a succession of terrifying incidents that sear his soul. His discovery of Clerval's corpse is enough to cause mental and physical collapse.

I entered the room where the corpse lay and was led up to the coffin. How can I describe my sensations of beholding it? I yet feel parched with horror, nor can I reflect on that terrible moment without shuddering and agony ... I saw the lifeless form of Henry Clerval stretched before me. I gasped for breath ... The human frame could no longer support the agonies that I endured, and I was carried out of the room in strong convulsions.¹¹

With Melmoth the Wanderer these experiences become the central events of the many narrations. The proliferation of Evil is total, the burden of suffering almost insupportable. Young Walberg agonized in the moonlight is a gruesome example. When exposed to torment on this scale, hope diminishes, resistance is weakened, and the moment ripe for Melmoth's appearances. Here, as in The Monk, the demonic intrusion is personified and Hell present in its agent.

3. THE DISCIPLES OF HELL AND THE MYTH OF THE SOUL

The references to the universes of Good and Evil are thus reiterated at every level in the Gothic novel. The authors of this genre were particularly engrossed by the vision of evil: for all their careful emphasis on both aspects of their moral worlds, the great interest and power lies in the delineation of darkness especially as it is expressed in the Villain-Heroes and their milieux. The issues of salvation and damnation clarify themselves in their careers.

An investigation of the actual sins of the villains reveals the typical processes of intensification characterizing the development of the cycle. The early villains are guilty of straightforward crimes of ambition and power. Manfred and Lord Lovel, Montoni and Schedoni have all murdered and usurped to gain power and prestige. Their condemnation arises out of their contravention of the natural law.

With Vathek many new dimensions open and guilt becomes a more complicated matter. He has no need of material power or popular prestige, because, as Caliph, these are his already. His crime lies in his colossal search for self-gratification, both physical and intellectual.

He had studied so much for his amusement in the lifetime of his father, as to acquire a great deal of knowledge, though not a sufficiency to satisfy himself; for he wished to know everything; even sciences that did not exist.¹

Eventually the two aspects of his desire fuse so that his sensual indulgence becomes the opportunity of expressing his metaphysical passions - both of which entail a rejection of traditional social, moral and religious values.

He gave full scope to the joy of these golden tidings; and betook himself to drinking anew. Carathis, whose antipathy to wine was by no means insuperable, failed not to pledge him at every bumper he ironically quaffed to the health of Mohomet. This infernal liquor

completed their impious temerity, and prompted them to utter a profusion of blasphemies. They gave loose to their wit, at the expense of the ass of Balaam, the dog of the seven sleepers, and the other animals admitted into the Paradise of Mahomet.²

The moral of his story is strongly emphasized.

Such was, and such should be, the punishment of unrestrained passions and atrocious deeds! Such shall be the chastisement of that blind curiosity, which would transgress those bounds the wisdom of the Creator has prescribed to human knowledge.³

Vathek is a very important figure for Romanticism: he was a hero of Byron. He is the source of all the dark criminal passions characterizing the Villain-Hero in differing aspects.

Ambrosio develops the sensual traits of Vathek's personality: like the Caliph, he has power and prestige enough to be above coveting them. His sin is his gigantic pride that causes him to feel almost superhuman, above the weaknesses of other men.

He was no sooner alone, than He gave free loose to the indulgence of his vanity. When He remembered the Enthusiasm which his discourse had excited, his heart swelled with rapture, and his imagination presented him with splendored visions of aggrandizement. He looked round him with exultation, and Pride told him, loudly, that He was superior to the rest of his fellow-Creatures.⁴

This too is the source of all Vathek's evil.⁵

Ambrosio's pride blinds any self-awareness of his huge physical appetite, stirred into activity by Matilda's demonic catalyst. As with Vathek, his quest for new stimulation leads him into an ever-widening net of evil that does not stop at conspiracy, demonic collusion, treachery, murder and rape in order to find satiety. Pride, lust and inhumanity are interrelated as sins that exult the ego at the expense of others who become mere pawns or objects in the selfish pursuit.

Frankenstein and Melmoth develop the metaphysical aspects of Vathek's personality. Like him, both are consumed by a giant intellectual curiosity.

Vathek refuses to accept his ordained place in the universe: the stars themselves are a challenge to his grandeur.

He consoled himself, however, for this intruding and unwelcome perception of his littleness, with the thought of being great in the eyes of others; and flattered himself that the light of his mind would extend beyond the reach of his sight, and extort from the stars the decrees of his destiny.⁵

For Frankenstein too, no natural challenge can be ignored, the world must hold no mysteries for him.

So much has been done, exclaimed the soul of Frankenstein - more, far more will I achieve ... I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation.⁶

His discoveries lead him into disillusionment, agony and death.

For Melmoth too, only the meaning of the ultimate secrets of the future will satiate his huge curiosity.

Mine was the great angelic sin - pride and intellectual glorying!
It was the first mortal sin - a boundless aspiration after forbidden knowledge.⁷

His sin has repeated the archetypal violation of the Divine Law and he is doomed to pay the price that all the Villain-Heroes must pay - the loss of salvation.

The disintegration of all these villains is an abandonment of the garden of selfless joys, where the imagination is exercised creatively, for a path of selfish illusions. The ego is dragged on by its own ever-increasing gravity, until whirling out of control in the ever-widening gyre, it is sucked down into the abyss of infinite extension that ends only in total annihilation.

This can be viewed as the clash between impulse and control with the ultimate victory of impulse. This clash intrigued some of the great minds

living at the same time as most of the Gothic novelists. Schiller would have called it the clash between Pflicht and Neigung; ⁸ Blake would have seen it as the clash between Heaven and Hell, Good and Evil, Love and Hate, Energy and Reason. ⁹ The principle is a universal one and understanding of it has progressively developed. Freud called it the clash between the id and the superego.

Schiller's pre-occupation with beauty led him to consider at length the attainment of an inner spiritual beauty, or harmony. The attainment of inner harmony is the subject of his aesthetic discourse Briefe über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen (Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man) (1795).

Schiller saw two contrary forces working in man: firstly, an unending, compulsive urge towards life, boundless and expansive: the Stofftrieb or Neigung (the impulse towards content, or inclination); secondly, a striving to limit or enclose oneself, a moral force: the Formtrieb or Pflicht (the impulse of form, or duty). The great task in life is to unite these two impulses into a Spieltrieb or working principle (literally, an impulse to play), or to achieve a state of inner harmony between the impulses of the body and soul. A man attains harmony only when he has brought the Stofftrieb and Formtrieb into union, and Neigung (inclination) and Pflicht (duty) correspond. He then becomes an erhabene Mensch, or sublime person. To this purpose works the mission of art in that a perfect or "classical" work of art is nothing less than the working principle generated out of an ideal compromise between content and form. The great aim of Schiller's art was the reconciliation of the essential divisions in mankind. This inner clash he variously called nature and reason, will and intellect, immanence and transcendence, animal and spiritual nature.

This clash is most effectively dramatized in The Monk. Lewis by no

means consciously expounds a theory. The career of Ambrosio, however, so clearly exemplifies the theory developed by Schiller that the Monk almost becomes its literary embodiment.

When the reader first meets Ambrosio he is an admirable man: life for him is placidly regulated by the Rule of St Francis and the order of his monastic life. His ego is lulled into complacency since his natural impulses are curtailed by the external disciplines of poverty, chastity and obedience. Put differently, the call of Hell, his instinctive inclinations, his id, are dammed up and disciplined by the demands of Heaven, the control of reason, the superego. To his conscious self, Ambrosio has attained perfection; to the admiring onlooker he represents an ideal - that of the erhabener Mensch in whom the internal inclinations accord perfectly with the obligations imposed by the code to which he has submitted. But Ambrosio is not in perfect equanimity: his pride is the antithesis of the humble spirit his way of life should instil. The Evangelical Counsels exist to eradicate the assertion of the ego: pride is the extension and exultation of the ego. It finds its primitive and compulsive manifestation in the sexual drive, and it is not until Ambrosio's sexuality is inflamed that the flood-gates of the reservoir of his subconscious desires are burst open and his id asserts itself with irresistible compulsion. The clash between Pflicht and Neigung is initiated, ruining all hope of achieving the Spieltrieb. With Ambrosio, the clash represents the growing failure of the forces of authority and social pressure to curb the excesses of his impulses. His superego fails to rise to consciousness on critical occasions and police his personality; it manifests itself only in the maintenance of the facade of respectability that he has built up in response to the authoritarian pressures of his society and education. His implementation of the Pflicht without the inner volition of the Neigung is hypocritical, an empty gesture, form without content. His career from this point on is a progressive destruction of all active vestiges of the superego, a complete liberation of the id. First he destroys the rules of his religious

way of life, desecrating his sacred vows in his promiscuous relationship with Matilda. The next stage is the destruction of the norms of humanity, those taboos which maintain the order of civilized society. His murder of Elvira and rape of Antonia are a primitive retrogression. Having destroyed all social, emotional and ethical restraints, his final gesture of defiance is the destruction of all the spiritual values. In turning to Satan, he rejects God and his need for Him: he sentences his own soul to death by cutting off all hope of grace: the sin of pride has led to the sin of despair. He has recklessly released all his energies and given himself over to uncontrollable forces which whirl him into the abyss of destruction, a spiritual fall given symbolic physical reality. Ambrosio's death is the advent of chaos.

Matilda and Satan both initially present fair exteriors that hide their true identities as representatives of chaos. They are a type of objective correlative representing aspects of Ambrosio's personality, the chaos of his inner self that first his ignorance of himself, and then his deliberate hypocrisy conceal.

In Ambrosio's career, the advent of chaos dramatizes the implications of selfish energy unrestrained, of the deadly vortex caused by the boundless and expansive consequences of Neigung unmodified by the obligations of Pflicht. In Blakean terms it is the triumph of Evil over Good, the victory of Hell over Heaven.

These thematic pre-occupations are ultimately nothing other than the enactment of the archetypal myth of the soul. The soul leaves its home in Paradise through its own free-will in order to descend into the realm of generation where experience is ultimately only an illusion. The soul becomes a prisoner of creation as opposed to the glorious liberty, and eternal,

loving ecstasy of Paradise. In the valley of exile the soul is forced to wander, looking here and there for its lost path of return, learning that the supreme reality of generation is the transitory nature of all experience and things. The senses can be recognized as gateways of virtue, the emotions as flames of purification, and reason as a mirror of intellectual vision. In this way, the soul's visionary faculties can thaw and regain wings to return to the source of spiritual life.

Five windows light the caverned Man; through one he breathes the air;
 Through one hears music of the spheres; through one the eternal vine
 Flourishes, that he may receive the grapes; through one can look
 And see small portions of the eternal world that ever groweth;
 Through one himself pass out what time he please, but he will not,
 For stolen joys are sweet, and bread eaten in secret pleasant.¹⁰

It is only in The Mysteries of Udolpho that his myth is fully represented, although disguised under a secular veil. St Aubert's reflections on the city-country division and the novel's pull to the pastoral are at the most significant level of meaning, simply the archetypal search for Eden, the soul's mystic longing for Paradise, for the return to beauty and innocence away from the danger of experience in the world.

Emily St Aubert's and Ellena di Rosalba's lives follow the pattern of the myth of the soul. Their careers fall into three parts: the life of innocence in which norms and values are established; the life of experience in which they venture forth into the world where all that is precious, the vision of youth, becomes a memory, and mystery, darkness, licence and violence threaten to engulf them. Only their intense sensuous, emotional and reasonable apprehension of life secure them transcendence; thus Ellena loses the consciousness of her prison in the Convent of San Stefan,

... while her eyes ranged over the wide and freely-sublime scene without ... She perceived that this chamber was within a small turret ... and suspended, as in air, above the vast precipices of granite, that formed part of the mountain.¹¹

The third section depicts their return to Paradise, wiser and more appreciative

for the experience. This return to beginnings is at a higher level, and becomes a permanent state consummated in definite binding actions like marriage and ownership, the civilized exultation of the senses, emotions and reason.

The fight has been between civilization and chaos, values and anarchy, marriage and concubinage, La Vallée and Udolpho, cultured Naples and the wild Apennines - ultimately between light and darkness, ordered reason and dis-tempered imagination. There is a curious resemblance between the career of a Radcliffe heroine and Blake's Little Lyca.

THE LITTLE GIRL LOST

In futurity
I prophetic see
That the earth from sleep
(Grave the sentence deep)

Shall arise and seek
For her maker meek
And the desert wild
Become a garden mild.

In the southern clime,
Where the summer's prime
Never fades away
Little Lyca lay.

Seven summers old
Lovely Lyca told;
She had wandered long
Hearing wild bird's song.

"Sweet sleep come to me
Underneath this tree.
Do father, mother weep:
'Where can Lyca sleep?'

"Lost in desert wild
Is your little child.
How can Lyca sleep
If her mother weep?

"If her heart doth ache,
Then let Lyca wake;
If my mother sleep,
Lyca shall not weep.

"Frowning, frowning night,
O'er this desert bright,
Let thy moon arise
While I close my eyes."

Sleeping Lyca lay,
 While the beasts of prey,
 Come from caverns deep,
 Viewed the maid asleep.

The kingly lion stood
 And the virgin viewed,
 Then he gambooled round
 O'er the hallowed ground.

Leopards, tigers play
 Round her as she lay,
 While the lion old
 Bowed his mane of gold.

And her bosom lick,
 And upon her neck,
 From his eyes of glame
 Ruby tears there came,

While the lioness
 Loosened her slender dress,
 And naked they conveyed
 To caves the naked maid.¹²

Death is an essential stage of Experience through which the soul must pass on its return home, even as Christ descended first into Hell before he rose again from the dead to secure Heaven for mankind.

This meaning, the whole myth of the soul, is allegorically enacted in Blake's poem. Lyca, the wandering soul or mankind, moves out of the first Garden of Innocence, through the desert and sleep of Experience, into the third stage or second Garden of Paradise, the garden of the sublime innocence of the Resurrection.

Thus the experience of the soul is a spiral of descent and ascent; she may ascend in order to descend, or descend in order to ascend. When the selfish soul (Vathek, Ambrosio, Frankenstein, Melmoth) ascends, it must fall in its own pride. When the selfless soul descends (as do all the Angelic Heroines) it will be taught humiliation and suffering but afterwards will come an ascension, perhaps even a perception of the mysteries of the Transfiguration and the Resurrection: the Radcliffe heroines and Little Lyca vindicate

a type of meaning-giving action, or salvation. To the loving, perceptive imagination, all in life is related to tonality, rhythm, melody, order, and beauty is the external manifestation of grace: the ancient idea of the music of the spheres will no longer be scorned.

Five windows light the caverned Man ...
Through one hears music of the spheres ...¹⁰

This is why Mrs Radcliffe's Villain-Heroes are blind to the beauty of the world.

Some people seek for meaning in the labyrinth of Hell through which everyone must pass if he is to comprehend the ascent of Mount Purgatory. Very few ascend through the heavens drawn on by the Divine Vision: most are content with a limbo of half-truths. This is true of the Gothic villains whose careers also follow the basic myth but in a truncated and perverted form. Instead of seeking the lost paths of return by cleansing the imagination in love, they are trapped in the Vale of Generation and lose the memory of the lost Paradise. The sorrow of earthly existence, with its illusion of true experience, loses its relative position on the journey home and becomes an absolute aim in itself, an all-absorbing domain of self-expression.

There is no more lucid an expression of the central theme of salvation and damnation, with the attendant myth of the soul, in the Gothic cycle than in Frankenstein. The relationship between Frankenstein and his Monster is a type of that between God and Man, with ironic complications, however, as Frankenstein is as much part of fallen creation as the Monster. The Monster becomes the symbol of the soul trapped in the coils of generation.

Believe me, Frankenstein, I was benevolent; my soul glowed with love and humanity; but am I not alone, miserably alone? You, my creator, abhor me; what hope can I gather from your fellow creatures, who owe me nothing? They spurn and hate me. The desert mountains and dreary glaciers are my refuge. I have wandered here many days.¹³

Here is the whole Creation and Fall in miniature. The Monster's reference to Paradise Lost develops this idea further.

But Paradise Lost excited different and far deeper emotions ... It moved every feeling of wonder and awe that the picture of an omnipotent God warring with his creatures was capable of exciting. I often referred the several situations, as their similarity struck me, to my own. Like Adam, I was apparently united by no link to any other being in existence; but his state was far different from mine in every other respect. He had come forth from the hands of God a perfect creature, happy and prosperous, guarded by the especial care of his Creator; he was allowed to converse with and acquire knowledge from beings of a superior nature, but I was wretched, helpless and alone. Many times I considered Satan as the fitter emblem of my condition, for oftener, like him, when I viewed the bliss of my protectors, the bitter gall of envy rose within me. ¹⁴

The Monster's experiences in the world, tantamount to Adam's experience of sin and its attendant consequences, drive him into a frenzy of hatred and defiance of his maker; he learns the reality of generation, the transitory bitter-sweet nature of things, pain and suffering.

One day, when I was oppressed by cold, I found a fire which had been left by some wandering beggars, and was overcome with delight at the warmth I experienced from it. In my joy I thrust my hand into the live embers, but quickly drew it out again with a cry of pain. How strange, I thought, that the same cause should produce such opposite effects! ¹⁵

His miserable experiences do not represent for him the mercy of God, providing him with a stay against total annihilation. Rather they appear only the arbitrary whim of a tyrannical creator, and his life becomes obsessed with the wreaking of vengeance, or the indulgence of a selfish intention that threatens the order of the world.

I, like the arch-fiend, bore a hell within me, and finding myself unsympathized with, wished to tear up the trees, spread havoc and destruction around me, and then to have sat down and enjoyed the ruin. ¹⁶

Senses, emotion and reason are squandered pervertedly, the soul's energy abused and gradually whirling out of control into useless action that eventually spins him into destruction. Locked in the labyrinth of his personal hatred, he loses the visionary faculty that is the pre-requisite for the successful pilgrimage of the soul, that could transfigure the conditions of existence and place them in a light relative to the divine destiny of the cosmos. Thus he cannot thaw the icy grip on his imaginative faculties and attain transcendence: his departure into exile and death in the ice-wastes of the Arctic is the

ultimate picture in desolation - the death of hope recalling Caspar David Friedrich's ghastly painting, and the frozen recesses at the lowest depth of the Inferno.¹⁷

The crimes of Vathek, Ambrosio, Frankenstein and Melmoth thus assume great ontological significance. All the Villain-Heroes are consumed by an irresistible passion, in whatever variation it might be. Frankenstein's words to Walton serve as the warning to them all.

... One man's life or death were but a small price to pay for the acquirement of the knowledge which I sought, for the dominion I should acquire and transmit over the elemental foes of our race. As I spoke, a dark gloom spread over my listener's countenance ... I paused; at length he spoke in broken accents: 'Unhappy man! Do you share my madness? Have you also drunk of the intoxicating draught? ... You seek for knowledge and wisdom, as I once did; and I ardently hope that the gratification of your wishes may not be a serpent to sting you, as mine has been.'¹⁸

It will be recalled that Ambrosio is literally bitten by a serpent in the monastery garden, undoubtedly planted there by the agent of Hell.¹⁹ This is the archetypal symbol of Satan in Eden, or the voice and poison of sin that entered the garden of selfless joys and adoring vision, destroying its meaning by ignoring the will of God which had been its purpose, turning the vision into the ego^{and}/its gratification. The problem with them all is pride, complete self-absorption.

The outrage dramatized in this novel (Frankenstein) is not ... directed against genius or ambition or idealism. The enemy is an egoism which, when carried to the extreme, annihilates life around it and finally destroys itself.²⁰

The meaning of the careers of the Villain-Heroes, these Disciples of Hell, is related to a development that has characterized the movement of Western civilization since the Renaissance, the first terrifying perception of which emerged clearly in the works of some late eighteenth century and Romantic minds, including Dr Samuel Johnson (in his Journals) and the Gothic novelists.

With the advent of the 'scientific' method, Western man has gradually lost his metaphysical perception of the world which formerly gave a total unity to life.

But for western intellect, all mysteries have become mere puzzles or dirty secrets - and we tear them apart with a fury of curiosity, only to find they are "nothing but" ... "nothing but" ... "nothing but" ... Goethe's Faust characterizes the reductionist investigator nearly:

He digs for riches with greedy hands
And revels to turn up a worm.²¹

His discoveries become subject to the pursuit of his shadow self, and he begins to consider himself as the mean and measure of all creation. Accompanying this erosion of the contemplative centre is an erosion of his understanding of the utopian dream (which is nothing more than the yearning for the lost Paradise) which is no longer centred on the Divine Vision, but is associated completely with evolutionary materialism. The result of the advent of this modernity has been the de-mythologizing of the universe, the de-sacralizing of nature and the gradual opening of the universe as man's plaything: Manfred, Montoni and Schedoni must control lives of men; Vathek and Ambrosio must achieve every new sensation whatever the cost; for Vathek again, Frankenstein and Melmoth there must be no secret too sacred for profane investigation.

I will pioneer a new way, explore unknown powers, and unfold to the world the deepest mysteries of creation.

All this has serious implications for the faculties of the soul. The soul's pilgrimage may be likened to a tree rising out of the earth of sensuality, emotion, and opinion towards the sun's light and warmth. The trunk, branches, flowers and seeds are formed by the marriage between the will and imagination. Personal opinions and selfish desires which emerge from the senses and emotions are no more than dust and earth from which the true man is to grow. The fruit produced in this marriage has a shell (the will) and a kernel (the imagination) which if left enclosed and insulated is useless in itself: it is the equivalent of Blake's Pebble and his Rose, both secure in selfhood.

THE CLOD AND THE PEBBLE

"Love seeketh not Itself to please,
 Nor for itself hath any care,
 But for another gives its ease
 And builds a Heaven in Hell's despair."

So sang a little Clod of Clay,
 Trodden with the cattle's feet,
 But a pebble of the brook
 Warbled out these metres meet:

"Love seeketh only Self to please,
 To bind another to its delight,
 Joys in anothers loss of ease
 And builds a Hell in Heaven's despite."

THE LILY

The modest Rose puts forth a thorn
 The humble sheep a threat'ning horn;
 While the Lily white shall in love delight,
 Nor a thorn not a threat stain her beauty bright.²³

To be of value the shell must be broken, the kernel poured out, or the petals opened and the fragrance proliferated: the soft yielding nature of the Clod, the open purity of the Lily, are the qualities of selfless love. Like the Sunflower,²⁴ they seek "after that sweet golden clime" of the Divine Vision.

These symbols, the hard Pebble, the involuted Rose, represent the Gothic villains very accurately: they are enclosed in their private worlds, they have a selfish vision.

A selfish pursuit had cramped and narrowed me.²⁵

Within this private world they assiduously develop the illusion of true experience, but in fact enmesh themselves in a maze of selfishness, and so build "a Hell in Heaven's despite."

Their crisis, reflected with alarming accuracy in Romanticism, and ultimately the crisis of modern Western civilization, lies in the loss of meaning in the creation, in the universe, the family or life. Without the traditional teachings concerning the creation, the artist faces crisis.

Every one of the Villain-Heroes rejects the values of his society, all of which are modelled on traditional lines. Alienated from their sources, they fall prey to their own subjectivity and individualism.

And yet - what shrewd premonitions these Romantics had. They were the first to gaze into the abyss of nature disenchanting, the first to discover in the scientist's worldview that sense of cosmic abandonment which has become the obsession of contemporary existentialism ... With Keats, they had seen how

'... all charms fly

At the mere touch of cold philosophy.'

Similarly, long before the demonic possibilities of science had become clear for all to see, it was a Romantic novelist who foresaw the career of Dr Frankenstein - and so gave us the richest (and darkest) literary myth the culture of science has produced. Above all, in the Romantic's loathing for system, abstraction, routine, in their passion for free self-fulfilment, we hear the cry of the heart that sounds whenever the world of industrial necessity proves to be "too much with us."²⁶

In spite of this, Roszak's words alert one to the negative aspects of Romanticism, increasingly obvious as the nineteenth century progressed. For the Romantics were not only acutely sensitive to the crisis, but in so many instances the victims of it themselves. In their "loathing for system ... and passion for free self-fulfilment" there is grave danger, as again the Villain-Heroes of the Gothic novel illustrate. If Classicism had become an outworn tradition (and Mrs Radcliffe is the only Gothic novelist who had affiliations with it), then the antidote was perhaps not satisfactorily to be found in Romanticism, which, with its intense individualism and stimulation of emotion, was in many ways symptomatic of the crisis. Faced with a discarded tradition, Romanticism increasingly led to change for change's sake. Romanticism, which at its best had presented a re-evaluation of life (as in Frankenstein's noble and ideal hopes, his Promethean dreams of glory), contained within itself the quickly germinating seeds of disillusionment and decadence (as his discovery, creation and subsequent suffering show). Goethe strangely likened Romanticism to a disease.

Klassisch ist das Gesunde, romantisch das Kranke.²⁷

The Romantic desire to stir up as one pleases in realizing selfish

emotions and aims would soon look to the figure of Dr Faustus, and to idealize the rôles of Don Juan and Manfred as true heroes, all of whom like the Gothic Villains, lack a spiritual vision. It is small wonder that Byron so admired Vathek, and produced the prototype of the Romantic Hero in Manfred. The dark mystery and secret agony of Montoni and Schedoni found their devoted admirers, while Ambrosio came to father a whole generation of imitations. Frankenstein and Melmoth are the new myths of Romanticism.

These Disciples of Hell are protagonists in a drama of spiritual life and death: their destinies are damnation, for their selfishness effectively kills the life of the Spirit in the soul. Their careers all centre around the destruction of the anima.

4. THE ANGELS OF LIGHT AND THE DESTRUCTION OF ROMANTIC LOVE

One of the most tragic and sustained themes of the Gothic cycle is the destruction of the anima, the fate of pure womanhood, the attack on the hallowed tradition of romantic love.

Romantic love is universal and perennial: at the very centre of the circle around which the romantic values are described one finds the cult of the adoration of woman. The Christian, Medieval, Romantic values - they are all in essence the same thing - revolve around the idealization and idolization of woman, as exemplified in the cult of the Virgin, in the love of the troubadour Jaufré Rudel for the Princess of Tripoli (whom he had never seen), in the mystic passion of Dante for Beatrice, of Petrarch for Laura, in the conceptions of the Ewig-Weibliche (Eternally Feminine) of Goethe, the Idée Fixe of Berlioz, and the various redemptresses of Wagner.

i

An important aspect of the myth of the soul is the soul's wandering in search of the Beloved. Once the soul has been separated from its source and born into generation it seeks nostalgically for the lost unity and harmony. In this condition the soul may become selfish, aware of imperfections, but projecting these on to others rather than recognizing them within itself. Otherwise the soul may be at peace through the crucifixion of self-will, when it opens like a flower to the light, radiating love. This love especially fixes itself on the Beloved who becomes the true object of love in which all emotions and interests are united.

Man will create his own comedy of life according to his understanding of love. It is only when the Spirit has transfigured his limited love that the earthly Beloved becomes the focal point of discovery and revelation, where the

rays of love from below and of grace from above converge. Hence the Beloved is the fundamental principle lying behind all sacraments - that of freely giving and receiving. She represents an earthly sanctuary and in the eyes of the beholder she may become a mirror to the Divine. This is perfectly symbolized in the Virgin who contains the whole sacramental principle within herself: indeed it is within all women. The physical rôle of generating human life is the literal, obvious image of womanhood; the most intense union man may know is the conjugal act. The literal, physical act of childbearing is simply an external pointer to a higher spiritual rôle. For even as the Virgin bore the Messiah in her womb, so in creation womanhood is the symbol of the incarnation of Christ within our hearts. From the divine perspective motherhood is not limited to woman since in relation to the Creator all creation is feminine, including man.

Once Christ has been born within our hearts, the union with the Beloved becomes mystical: the more Dante beheld Beatrice, the higher he ascended through the Heavens and the greater became his understanding of the celestial secrets. This is the great tradition of romantic love, the love which inspired Chaucer's Troilus, and which drew him who loved so purely into the heart of love in the highest Heaven at his death. This love characterizes the relation between Othello and Desdemona. It is the meaning for Frankenstein of Elizabeth Lavenza, whose presence sheds light and sanctification on him and his home.

The saintly soul of Elizabeth shone like a shrine-dedicated lamp
in our peaceful home.¹

This nature is shared by all the Angelic Heroines of Gothic fiction, by Matilda, Lady Emma, Emily St Aubert, Ellena di Rosalba, Antonia, Ianthe and Immalee-Isidora. The Young Heroes find in them an ideal of love and sanctity. Mrs Radcliffe indeed, actually relates Emily and Valancourt to each other in the traditional images of romantic love, as the poet and his beloved.

She sought for one (a book) in which Valancourt had been reading the day before, and hoped for the pleasure of retracing a page over which the eyes of a beloved friend had lately passed, of dwelling on the passages which he had admired, and of permitting them to speak to her in the language of his own mind, and to bring himself to her presence. On searching for the book she could find it nowhere, but in its stead perceived a volume of Petrarch's poems, that had belonged to Valancourt, whose name was written in it, and from which he had frequently read passages to her with all the pathetic expressions that characterized the feelings of the author.

She hesitated in believing ... that he had purposely left this book instead of the one she had lost, and that love had prompted the exchange; but having opened it with impatient pleasure, and observed the lines of his pencil drawn along the various passages he had read aloud, and under others more descriptive of delicate tenderness than he had dared to trust his voice with, the convictions came at length to her mind.

For some moments she was conscious only of being beloved, then, the recollection of all the variations of tone and countenance with which he had recited these sonnets, and of the soul which spoke in their expression, pressed to her memory, and she wept over the memorial of his affection.²

Romantic love is the wisdom which extinguishes the ego and burnishes the soul back to its original brightness. By dying to the usurpation of the soul by the selfhood which suffocates the life of the spirit, the soul becomes transparent and increasingly clearer, until as a bright mirror, it reflects its source: it becomes salt to its environment, as does Elizabeth Lavenza in the Frankenstein household.

In order to reach this stage of spirituality the soul puffed up with self must become a servant of childlike devotion. There can be no compromise between the two states of the soul; one is the ego's abyss of selfishness, the other a servant's mirror to God. Man's desire to know (the cause of the Fall) attracts to himself the full consequences of his self-absorbed, desiring will. The selfhood desires to have and to hold the infinite possibilities of experience, as do Vathek, Ambrosio and Frankenstein. When the soul is burnished as a servant of the Divine Will, it opens itself to assimilate and reflect life. When the soul is lost in the realm of sensual experience it closes itself to absorb and retain. It is only man's pride and covetousness which isolates and insulates him from the Divine Influx

upholding Creation: this is masculinity, the idol of the selfhood. The ultimate meaning of the Fall is the recognition of the literal alone: life's great mysteries are hidden from the profane glare of the ego. Perhaps the greatest mystery to be so hidden is the traditional understanding of womanhood, which can only exist in relation to true manhood. Knowing and experiencing are not the end, but only the beginning of life: only love and its quest have the necessary qualities to penetrate the great mysteries. When the spirit or anima is dead in the soul, the search can never even begin.

It is in the light of such symbolism that the Angelic Heroines and Villain-Heroes must be regarded. The most interesting sections in the novels are the relationships between these two types - relationships that epitomize the eternal conflict of Good and Evil. This is most dramatically symbolized in the destruction by the Villain-Hero of the tradition of romantic love, characteristic of the communion between the Angelic Heroine and the Young Hero.

ii

One of the most influential stimuli of the whole Romantic movement was the famous ballad "Lenore" (1773) by Gottfried Auguste Bürger. This describes the experiences of a young girl waiting for her lover to return from the Seven Years' War. He has been killed in battle, but returns apparently alive and carries her away on a wild night ride to be married. But this is all a cynical jest of death, because her cathedral is a graveyard, the wedding guests a ghostly company, her nuptial bower a grave and her bridegroom himself a skeleton in the final demonic transformation of the situation. The poem is a frightening comment on romantic love, its rapturous progress and the bliss of its consummation. Lover, Life and Death, however, deceive the suffering heroine: her fate is the ravaging of romantic love in a nightmare world. The poem dramatizes the destruction of a beautiful and ageless tradition in a whirlpool of chaos.

Rasch auf ein eisern Gittertor
 Ging's mit verhängtem Zügel.
 Mit schwanker Gert ein Schag davor
 Zersprengte Schloss und Riegel.
 Die Flügel flogen klirrend auf,
 Und über Gräber ging der Lauf.
 Es blinkten Leichensteine
 Rundum im Mondenscheine.

Ha sieh! Ha sieh! Im Augenblick,
 Huhu! ein grässlich Wunder!
 Des Reiters Koller, Stück für Stück,
 Fiel ab wie mürber zunder
 Zum Schädel ohne Zopf und Schopf,
 Zum nachten Schädel ward sein Kopf,
 Sein Körper zum Geriffe
 Mit Stundenglas und Hippe.

Hoch bäumte sich, wild schob der Rapp!
 Und sprühte Feuerfunken;
 Und hui! war's unter ihr hinab
 Verschwunden und versunken.
 Geheul! Geheul aus hoher Luft,
 Gewinsel kam aus tiefer Gruft.
 Lenorens Herz mit Beben
 Rang zwischen Tod und Leben.

Nun tanzten wohl bei Mondenglanz
 Rundum herum im Kreise
 Die Geister einen Kettentanz
 Und heulten diese Weise:
 „Geduld! Geduld! Wenn's Herz auch bricht!
 Mit Gott im Himmel hadre nicht!
 Des Leibes bist du ledig;
 Gott sei der Seele gnädig!“³

Whether directly or indirectly, the situations in "Lenore" were of great importance for the Gothic genre. Their influence can be traced to the most fascinating and horrific scenes in the novels.

The pattern is established in The Castle of Otranto, when Manfred kills Princess Matilda and is thus responsible for the destruction of the love union existing between her and Theodore. Her murder in the church is one of the great scenes in the novel.

In The Old English Baron the love between Edmund and the Lady Emma is the seal of his chivalry and the mark of his unknown nobility. Significantly,

Edmund's enemies try to keep them apart, and while their allegations are unproven they are successful. Only with his innocence and heritage established can they come together, in a consummation of all that is right and good.

Mrs Radcliffe dramatizes the Villain-Heroes' destruction of romantic love very lucidly: Montoni and Schedoni are both the enemy who threatens and interrupts the ideal love relationship. The effective affinity, the marriage of true minds that exists between Emily and Vivaldi is contrasted sharply with the loveless relationship of ambition between Madame Cheron and Montoni.

... she received a summons to attend Madame Cheron immediately, and had scarcely entered the dressing-room when she observed with surprise the dejection of her aunt's countenance, and the contrasted gaiety of her dress. "So, niece!" said Madame, and she stopped short under some degree of embarrassment - "I sent for you; I - I wished to see you: I have news to tell you: from this hour you must consider the Signor Montoni as your uncle - we were married this morning" ... Emily made a feeble attempt to congratulate her on these apparently imprudent nuptials.⁴

Montoni indeed stops Emily's intended marriage with Valancourt: he threatens and breaks the harmony of romantic love.

"... Signor Montoni is gone to acquaint Madame Clairval of our journey, and to say that the proposed connexion between the families must be thought of no more."

The unfeeling manner in which Madame Montoni thus informed her niece that she must be separated, perhaps for ever, from the man with whom she was on the point of being united for life, added to the dismay with which she must otherwise have suffered at such intelligence. When she could speak, she asked the cause of the sudden change in madame's sentiments towards Valancourt; but the only reply she could obtain was, that the signor had forbade the connexion, considering it to be greatly inferior to what Emily might reasonably expect.

... "You are ill, Emily," said he - "They will destroy us both! Forgive me, that I dared to doubt your affection."⁵

In The Italian occurs one of the most splendidly conceived scenes in all Gothic literature. This is the interruption of the marriage ceremony between Ellena and Vivaldi in the Chapel by Lake Celano by the agents of Schedoni.

The venerable priest took his station at the altar, and opened the book. Vivaldi placed himself on his right hand, and with looks of anxious love, endeavoured to encourage Ellena ...

The priest had begun the ceremony, when a noise from without again alarmed Ellena, who observed the door once more cautiously opened, and a man bend forward his gigantic figure from behind it. He carried a torch, and its glare as the door gradually unclosed, discovered other persons in the passage beyond, looking forward over his shoulder into the chapel. The fierceness of their air, and the strange peculiarity of their dress, instantly convinced Ellena that they were not inhabitants of the Benedictine convent, but some terrible messengers of evil. Her half-stifled shriek alarmed Vivaldi, who caught her as she fell to the ground ... the sudden rush of footsteps made him turn, when he observed several men armed, and very singularly habited, advancing towards the altar ...

'What sacrilegious footsteps,' cried the priest, 'thus rudely violate this holy place?'

... a voice tremendous from its loudness, like bursting thunder, dissipated the cloud of mystery.

'You Vincentio di Vivaldi, and of Naples,' it said, 'and you Ellena di Rosalba, of Villa Altieri, we summon you to surrender, in the name of the most holy Inquisition!'⁶

Nothing could illustrate better the destruction of romantic love than Ellena being dragged away from the altar rails.

But with the inevitable process of intensification and the deepening perception of theme characteristic of the cycle, the destruction of romantic love becomes more terrifying. Ambrosio's lust for Antonia parallels his growing involvement with Hell, and finds ultimate expression in rape and murder. The scene in the crypts depicts the total denegation and besmirching of the ideal of womanhood by the frenziedly selfish ego.

... taking advantage of her situation, the Ravisher threw himself by her side: He clasped her to his bosom almost lifeless with terror, and faint with struggling. He stifled her cries with kisses, treated her with the rudeness of an unprincipled Barbarian, proceeded from freedom to freedom, and in the violence of his lustful delirium, wounded and bruised her tender limbs. Headless of her tears, cries and entreaties, He gradually made himself Master of her person, and desisted not from his prey, till He had accomplished his crime and the dishonour of Antonia ...

... The Unfortunate had fainted ere the completion of her disgrace: She only recovered life to be sensible of her misfortune. She remained stretched upon the earth in silent despair: The tears chased each other slowly down her cheeks, and her bosom heaved with frequent sobs. Oppressed with grief, She continued for some time in this state of torpidity.⁷

This ghastly development was given stronger mythical resonance by the

later writers. Nothing conjures up the terrifying deprivations of evil more effectively than Lord Ruthven's destruction of innocent Ianthe in the nightmare landscape of the lonely Greek wood: her life-blood is his feast. Aubrey's agony is that of romantic love destroyed.⁸

The murder of Elizabeth Lavenza by the Monster repeats the situation in Polidori's Novelle. The issues of romantic love and its destruction become clearer than ever in this story. Frankenstein's only light and hope in his misery has been this saintly woman, and he has hoped to salvage something of his shattered self in his love for her, a love sacramentalized in marriage. It is on the very night of their wedding that this pledge of the Divine Love is brutally murdered on the marriage bed that she has not yet tried.

... I discovered no trace of him and was beginning to conjecture that some fortunate chance had intervened to prevent the execution of his menaces when suddenly I heard a shrill and dreadful scream. It came from the room into which Elizabeth had retired. As I heard it, the whole truth rushed into my mind, my arms dropped, the motion of every fibre and muscle was suspended; I could feel the blood trickling in my veins and tingling in the extremities of my limbs. This state lasted but for an instant; the scream was repeated, and I rushed into the room.

Great God! Why did I then not expire! Why am I here to relate the destruction of the best hope and purest creature of earth? She was there, lifeless and inanimate, thrown across the bed, her head hanging down and her pale and distorted features half covered by her hair. Every where I turn I see the same figure - her bloodless arms and relaxed form flung by the murderer on its bridal bier. Could I behold this and live? Alas! Life is obstinate and clings closest where it is most hated ... I fell senseless to the ground.

... I rushed towards her and embraced her with ardour, but the deadly languor and coldness of the limbs told me that what I now held in my arms had ceased to be the Elizabeth whom I had loved and cherished. The murderous mark of the fiend's grasp was on her neck, and the breath had ceased to issue from her lips.

While I still hung over her in the agony of despair, I happened to look up ... The shutters had been thrown back, and with a sensation of horror not to be described, I saw at the open window a figure the most hideous and abhorred. A grin was on the face of the Monster; he seemed to jeer, as with his fiendish finger he pointed towards the corpse of my wife.⁹

Does Frankenstein see something of himself when he looks up to see the Monster leering in at him?

If we take the monster to be one side of Frankenstein's nature, an alter-ego, then we see his physically potent self as brutish, ugly, and destructive, completely unintegrated with his gentle spirit ...

The importance of the wedding night scene lies in its sexual connotation insofar as that provides the basic and concrete context in which once again, to exemplify the hero's withdrawal from physical and emotional contact with living human beings. There are earlier instances of his separating himself from his family and from his friend Clerval, even while protesting as he has with Elizabeth, that he continues to love them in spirit.¹⁰

Melmoth too is responsible for the death of the beautiful and self-sacrificing Immalee-Isidora. She loves him as the first mortal to teach her the joys of human companionship, and even her tempter is deeply moved by the purity of her soul.¹¹ Yet he haunts her, fostering her love for him in situations that parallel the perfect love of Romeo and Juliet,¹² and persuades her to marry him in one of the most chilling scenes in all literature, a scene that in its demonism and deception, in its parody of the sacrament of holy matrimony, is an insidious inversion of romantic love. These hideous nuptials are an English prose counterpart to Lenore's ghostly marriage ride, only here the situation is weightier and the agony acuter.

At this moment they were ascending the fractured and rugged steps that led to the entrance of the chapel, now they passed under the dark and ivied porch, - now they entered the chapel, which, even in darkness appeared ... ruinous and deserted ... a faint and watery moon-beam breaking at that moment through the heavy clouds, threw its light on the objects around her. There was a window, but the stained glass of its compartments, broken and discoloured, held rare and precarious place between the fluted shafts of stone. Ivy and moss darkened the fragments of glass, and clung around the clustered pillars. Beneath were the remains of an altar and crucifix, but they seemed like the rude work of the first hands that had ever been employed on such subjects. There was also a marble vessel, that designed to contain holy water, but it was empty ... She gazed on the window still like one who loved the light of nature, and drank health and truth from its beams ...

... the moon ... sunk behind a cloud, and every thing was enveloped in darkness so profound, that Isidora did not recognize the figure of Melmoth till her hand was clasped in his, and his voice whispered, 'He is here - ready to unite us.' The long protracted terrors of this bridal withal, and she leaned on the arm that she felt, not in confidence, but for support. The place, the hour, the objects, were all hid in darkness, She heard a faint rustling as of the approach of another person, - she tried to catch certain words, but she knew not what they were, - she attempted also to speak, but she knew not what she said. All was mist and darkness with her, - she knew not what was muttered, - she felt not that the hand of Melmoth grasped hers, - but she felt that

the hand that united them, and clasped their palms within his own, was as cold as that of death.¹³

Ultimately Melmoth seeks only to deceive Isidora into taking his damnation upon herself: she must suffer the concealment of her pregnancy and the deception of her family, the grief of public humiliation and imprisonment. But Isidora is truly a mirror of Divine Love and her gentle wounded heart is Melmoth's greatest defeat.

... he is yet to be subdued by a foe that he deemed of all others the least invincible - the withered energies of a broken heart. He has traversed the earth in search of victims, 'Seeking whom he might devour,' - and has found no prey, even where he might seek for it with all the cupidity of infernal expectation. Let it be your glory and crown of rejoicing, that even the feeblest of his adversaries has repulsed him with a power that will always annihilate his.¹⁴

All this proves true of Isidora: Melmoth has tried to destroy her and the meaning of romantic love with her, but in death the victory is hers.

The rôles of the Angelic Heroine and the Young Hero and their victimization by the Villain-Hero adumbrates the myth of the soul - the essential thematic preoccupation of the genre. But the symbolic importance of other characters becomes clearer when they are considered in relation to the central myth. This is especially noticeable in the other female characters. Their significance was already obvious in the discussion of character, but it must now be directly related to the myth.

iii

Before the loss of Paradise, Man and Woman were one flesh: Woman discovered her independence through Adam falling asleep. Woman, man's glory, the mirror in which Paradise is beheld, was externalized through the Divine Mercy, for man's comfort and companionship. As the Eden story illustrates, Woman having lost her total union with Man, was drawn into multiplicity, and desired knowledge for herself. This liberty proved only an illusion, a falsity - hence her inability to forgive Man, and her desire to dominate and destroy.

The Fall offered mankind the free choice of the three realms of spiritual manifestation, Hell, Purgatory and Paradise. Man's knowledge of Woman thus became related to these three realms. She who in the Garden was his glory became in his Fall the victim of his fate. Certainly the Medievals had no qualms concerning woman: she could be the prisoner of Hell (the Donna Demoniaca) whose power of gravity attracts and traps her mates like flies in a web; she could become the way of purgation once the webs of her illusions were severed through love (the Donna Umanata); or she could be Paradise and become once more man's glory (the Donna Angelicata). As Paradise she shares the Virgin's secret and finds a sword piercing her own heart: this wound is the gateway of her purification and transparency which leads man back through the veils of illusion to behold the ecstatic vision once again. This is the transcendent, if agonizing, experience of Othello as he views the murdered body of Desdemona.

... Whip me ye devils
 From the possession of this heavenly sight!
 Blow me about in winds! Roast me in sulphur!
 Wash me in steep down gulfs of liquid fire!
 ... then, must you speak
 Of one that lov'd not wisely but too well;
 Of one not easily jealous, but, being wrought,
 Perplex'd in the extreme; of one whose hand,
 Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away,
 Richer than all his tribe;
 Of one whose subdu'd eyes
 Albeit unused to the melting mood
 Drop tears, as fast as the Arabian trees
 Their med'cinable gum.¹⁵

The growing tragedy of Western civilization, so clearly discernible in Romanticism, is the death of this tradition that points the way to transcendence. In the Gothic cycle the decay of the tradition is dramatized, the wound is inflicted, the Angels of Light are pierced, but the purgation cannot be achieved: the barren soul is entrapped in the coils of the ego, in the labyrinth of selfishness. The loss of the soul is epitomized in the destruction of the traditional image of womanhood.

Man exiled in the Vale of Generation is an extinguished sun. Without this Divine Light mediating through manhood, Woman turns to darkness and is unable to discover her identity: her nature becomes perverted and destructive. This is the sign of crisis, the judgment, the stars fall into chaos.

This type of womanhood is portrayed fantastically in Carathis and Matilda, and realistically in the Widow Sandal. They all misuse their womanhood and are dominated by a masculine will. Carathis assumes a powerful dominance over her licentious and easy-going son, and spurs him on to ultimate damnation. Matilda too assumes a dominance over Ambrosio. Her power over him, her understanding of his weakness, hastens his destruction. The Widow Sandal, lastly, can bend her son to her will in implementing her evil designs. The discovery of her treachery contributes to her son's death.

All these women, like the Villain-Heroes, have been engulfed in the illusion of the self which carries a destructive fate. Carathis and Matilda are condemned to Hell; the Widow Sandal is torn apart by remorse. If Melmoth has parodied the marriage service, Carathis and Matilda have inverted the ritual of worship in their devilish rites.

But Matilda also desecrates the sanctity of love. Her first aim is to cause Ambrosio's sexual fall, and her temptations make irresistible appeal to his grosser instincts, which are fully indulged in their prurient encounters - the very debasement of the conjugal act.

As she spoke, her eyes were filled with a delicious langour. Her bosom panted: She twined her arms voluptuously round him, drew him towards her, and glewed her lips to his. Ambrosio again raged with desire. The die was thrown: His vows were already broken; He had already committed the crime, and why should He refrain from enjoying the reward? He clasped her to his breast with redoubled ardour. No longer repressed by the sense of shame, He gave a loose to his intemperate appetites: While the fair Wanton put every invention of lust into practice, every refinement in the art of pleasure, which might heighten the bliss of her possession, and render her Lover's transports still more exquisite. Ambrosio rioted in pleasures till then unknown to him ...¹⁶

In the true love relationship sexuality becomes so burnished by the Spirit that it ceases to exist in the flesh and becomes the intimation of the Divine Life itself, the last attainable vestige of the lost Paradise: at the climax of sexual consummation Man for one brief moment of rapture dies to the corporeal senses and experiences the bliss of the first innocence of his prelapsarian state.¹⁷ In all true love sexuality is transfigured, as Blake realized most acutely:

I cry, Love! Love! Love! happy happy Love! free as the
mountain wind!¹⁸

Once womanhood no longer inspires the highest love, Man is lost and in Hell. Lost in the labyrinth of the ego, ^{only the literal can be recognized,} only the cloying call of the flesh, as spirituality - the whole man, body and soul - degenerates into sensuality characteristic of the lower man. Ambrosio shows something of his nobler self in his initial admiring devotion to Antonia, but this passes rapidly into a purely lustful attraction. The image of pure womanhood becomes the object of his passion.

At first He bounded his wishes to inspire Antonia with friendship: But no sooner was He convinced that She felt that sentiment in its fullest extent, than his aim became more decided, and his attentions assumed a warmer colour. The innocent familiarity with which she greeted him, encouraged his desires: Grown used to her modesty, it no longer commanded the same respect and awe: He still admired it, but it only made him more anxious to deprive her of that quality, which formed her principal charm.¹⁹

Ambrosio's hidden personality is linked to tremendous primitive urges, and his ignorance of himself leads only to disaster. The flood of his desires carries him out of control: he violates the sanctuary, turning it into a vile brothel. Even before he had fallen, this tendency is hinted at in his adoration of the picture of the Virgin whom he loads with sensual fetishes.

'I must accustom my eyes to Objects of temptation, and expose myself to the seductions of luxury and desire. Should I meet in that world which I am constrained to enter some lovely Female, lovely ... as you Madona ...!'

As he said this, He fixed his eyes upon a picture of the Virgin, which was suspended opposite him: This for two years had been the Object of

his increasing wonder and adoration. He paused, and gazed upon it with delight.

'What Beauty in that countenance! ... How softly her cheek reclines upon her hand! Can the Rose vie with the blush of that cheek? Can the Lily rival the whiteness of that hand? Oh! if such a Creature existed, and existed but for me! Were I permitted to twine round my fingers those golden ringlets, and press with my lips the treasures of that snowy bosom! Gracious God, should I then resist the temptation?'²⁰

Antonia, an earthly type of the Virgin, is brutally raped and then murdered.

Blake realized the need to know and humour the lower nature, otherwise the old serpent of fallen nature will only break down the door of the sanctuary and violate the sacred mysteries of love.

I saw a chapel all of gold,
That none did dare to enter in,
And many weeping stood without,
Weeping mourning worshipping.

I saw a serpent rise between
The white pillars of the door,
And he forced and forced and forced,
Down the golden hinges tore.

And along the pavement sweet,
Set with pearls and rubies bright,
All his slimy length he drew,
Till upon the altar white.

Vomiting his poison out
On the bread and on the wine,
So I turned into a sty
And laid me down among the swine.²¹

The phallic serpent of thwarted desire tears down the doors of the chapel, a symbol of female chastity, and defiles the sacraments, or joyful love.

Womanhood abused finds Man in Hell. Certainly in the Gothic novel affinities between sexuality and the demonic are very real indeed. If Carathis and her Negresses consort with ghouls,²² Matilda is a succuba, the personification of hellish pleasures - the Princess of Voluptuousness.

In Lewis's portrayal of Ambrosio's "black and tangled" mind²³ and his bold

depiction of the terrifying power of sex in the lives of men, he shows himself a kindred spirit with the Marquis de Sade. What epitomizes more acutely the debasement of sex and the humiliation of womanhood than this indecent proposal from Justine which perverts the natural law?

"Oh, Therese!" he continued, "is it not foolish to pretend with us you're so pure? If it wasn't for the interests of the gang do you think we'd have let you remain a virgin long? You know very well that we let you keep your charms to catch suckers ... give yourself to me ... and I'll save you from the sad life ahead of you."

"I, sir!" Justine cried, "I become the mistress of a ..."

"Come on, don't be afraid - say it! A robber, is it not? I admit that; but I can't offer you anything else. You're aware that people like myself never marry. Marriage is a sacrament, and all sacraments are hateful to us. But is it not better ... to give yourself up to one man who will become your lover and protector than prostitute yourself with all?"

"But why must I do either?" she asked.

"Because right is with the strong, and you are weak. Besides, isn't it ridiculous for you to set so high a price on such a trifle! How can a girl be so simple to believe that virtue depends upon a little more or less skin! The intentions of nature are that all living creatures should perform the duties they were designed for. And since woman was formed for man's enjoyment, it is criminal in the scheme of things for her to resist. This virtue of yours, my dear, then, far from serving nature, tends to hinder it. But never mind all this, dear girl. I only desire to please you, and will not take advantage of your weakness, and steal from you that which you value so highly. A woman has more than one favour to bestow upon a man, and I shall be content with the smallest one. Need I say more to you, Therese? We will find therein the needs for our happiness. Please try, Therese, please try and we shall be happy!"

"Oh, sir!" Justine replied, "I don't understand what its all about; but if it's what I think it is, it is an outrage to womanhood! It most grievously offends nature and the hand of Heaven avenges it in this world!"

"What rot, my dear, what rot! Who taught you all this nonsense? If the seed of life is put in us for the sole purpose of propagation, I grant you then that the misplacing of it is an offense to nature. But if nature created the seed for other reasons, which is quite obvious, then what difference does it make if it is lost in one place or another? Moreover, the ability we have in misplacing the vital fluid proves conclusively that it does not offend nature. The limitation of offspring, the destruction of seed, Therese, are in the eyes of nature but imaginary crimes."²³

The link between sex and demonism is thoroughly developed in The Monk; indeed dark and terrifying mysteries are attendant upon the expression of love in this novel. Ambrosio's ruin is accomplished largely in sexual actions: his lustful nature draws a succuba to himself. But equally the pure attachment of Raymond to Agnes conjures up the numinous force of the Bleeding Nun.

The theme is crucial to the whole Gothic view of the world, and has found a modern and highly intellectual expression in Thomas Mann's Doctor Faustus.

... whenever the subject was the power of demons over human life, sex always played a prominent role. How could it have been otherwise? The daemonic character of this sphere was a chief appurtenance of the 'classical psychology', for there it formed the favourite arena of the demons, the given point of attack for God's adversary, the enemy and corrupter. For God had conceded him greater magic power over the venereal act than over any other human activity; not only on account of the outward indecency of the commission of this act, but above all because of the depravity of the first father passed over as original sin to the whole human race. The act of procreation, characterized by aesthetic disgustingness, was the expression and the vehicle of original sin - what wonder that the Devil had been left an especially free hand in it? Not for nothing had the angel said to Tobias: 'Over them who are given to lewdness the demon wins power.' For the power of the demons lay in the loins of man, and these were meant, where the Evangelist said: 'When a strong man armed watcheth his palace his goods remain in peace.' That was of course to be interpreted sexually; such a meaning was always to be deduced from enigmatic sayings, and keen-eared piety always heard it in them.

But it was astonishing how lax the angelic watch had always been in the case of God's saints, at least so far as 'peace' came in question. The book of the Holy Fathers was full of accounts to the effect that even while defying all fleshly lust, they have been tempted by the lust after women, past the bounds of belief. 'There was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me.' That was an admission, made to the Corinthians, and though the writer possibly meant something else by it ... in any case the godly interpreted it in their own way and were probably right after all, for their instinct very likely did not err when it darkly referred to the demon of sex in connexion with the temptations that assailed the mind.²⁴

Mrs Radcliffe, for all her propriety, was not unaware of the demonic implications of sexual abandon. Udolpho, the very embodiment of lawlessness, is also the place of sexual immorality, a fact she hints at very definitely.

In the evening ... she walked for air in the gallery adjoining her chamber; on reaching the farther end of which she heard distinct sounds of merriment and laughter. It was the wild uproar of riot, not the cheering gaiety of tempered mirth; and seemed to come from the part of the castle where Montoni usually was ...

As she listened, she thought she distinguished female voices mingling with the laughter, and this confirmed her worst surmise concerning the character of Signora Livona and her companions. It was evident that they had not been brought hither by compulsion; and she beheld herself in the remote wilds of the Apennine, surrounded by men whom she considered to be little less than ruffians, and their worst associates, amid scenes of vice from which her soul recoiled in horror.²⁵

This is part of the authoress's genteel vision of Hell. For her, meaning and

value lie in an ordered and beautiful world, consummated in pure love, sanctioned in marriage. For her lovers, life is related to rhythm and melody.

Mrs Radcliffe depicted the ultimate attainment of transcendence in romantic love, but the later Gothic novelists did not: in the works of Lewis, Polidori, Mrs Shelley and Maturin the Angels of Light are killed and the beautiful tradition of romantic love destroyed. The pessimism of these authors and their visions of despair are the first nightmare stirrings symptomatic of the West's rejection of a traditional view of the world, when the arts fragment and music is plunged into the void of atonality and satanic sound. In this void wander the lost souls of Montoni, Schedoni, Vathek, Ambrosio, Frankenstein and Melmoth - all victims of the same perilous subjectivism that has killed the life of the Spirit in their souls.

5. THE LOST GARDEN

The tone of the Gothic novels is essentially a depressing one, and the vision pessimistic, even though the authors were imbued with the spirit of Romanticism. Indeed in the creative period prior to 1850, the themes of melancholia, suffering and fate were perennial problems. At one time the West had been grounded in a tradition with a teaching of Creation totally inclusive and capable of bestowing a complete meaning on life. Since the Renaissance, the West, largely Christian only in name, had strayed from the contemplative centre which had preserved this tradition. With the advent of the "scientific method" Western man had gradually lost the metaphysical understanding which gave unity to life. All was eventually to be explained in terms of monkeys, rats and dogs so that man could plot his origins, habits and civilization, according to his own findings. Modern man, in glorifying himself, has ironically lowered himself at the same time, making nonsense of Holy Scripture and caricaturing the Psalmist's assessment of man as a little lower than the angels and a little higher than the animals.

When I look at thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
the moon and the stars which thou hast established:

what is man that thou art mindful of him,
and the son of man that thou dost care for him?

Yet thou hast made him little less than God,
and dost crown him with glory and honour.

Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands;
thou hast put all things under his feet,

all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,

the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the sea.

O Lord, our Lord,
how majestic is thy name in all the earth.¹

According to the neglected Christian tradition of the West, loss of the fundamental doctrine of the Incarnation, the interpenetration of God and Man, has

meant a destruction of the original unity of creation, man becoming the enemy of nature and no longer the gardener of Paradise. Maturin, in describing Melmoth and Immalee on the Indian isle, expresses the whole truth of the myth.

The ocean, that lay calm and bright before them as a sea of jasper, never reflected two more different countenances, or sent more opposite feelings to two hearts. Over Immalee's, it breathed that deep and delicious reverie, which those forms of nature that unite tranquillity and profundity diffuse over souls whose innocence gives them a right to an unmingled and exclusive enjoyment of nature. None but crimeless and unimpassioned minds ever truly enjoyed earth, ocean, and heaven. At our first transgression, nature expels us, as it did our first parents, from her paradise for ever.

To the stranger the view was fraught with far different visions. He viewed it as a tiger views a forest abounding with prey ...²

Modernity opens the universe as a plaything for man's selfhood. The resultant wilderness causes a rupture between the two realms of the physical and the spiritual, the consequence being a limited, constricting vision, a pessimism with attendant suffering, pain and death.

In the tradition, Adam's sin was not simply an individual falling out of relationship with the Creator, but a cosmic event involving the whole of creation when

... the stars threw down their spears
And watered heaven with their tears ...³

Adam carried within him the seed of humanity when he fell into the abyss; he also took with him something of the creative energies he once enjoyed in the Garden. With the Fall the energies were bound in a mortal clay and could open outwards only in the senses, the windows of perception and the doorway to the liberating imaginative faculty.

If the doors of perception were cleansed, every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite.

For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things through narrow chinks of his cavern.⁴

Man must participate in nature, he cannot be separated from it, for it is the mirror of his relation to the Creator. Even as he once walked in his Eden in harmony with God and nature, he may now pollute it, or once again become its

gardener. Thus through the Fall of Man, suffering and pain went into the realm of nature, and man became a partaker in knowledge of Good and Evil, a faculty which makes him a little less than God.

The Gothic novels are full of Eden archetypes that constantly reiterate man's moral position, the inevitability of his Fall and its consequences: here whispers the ancient voice of temptation urging him to seek out the knowledge of Good and Evil and all the pain that this will entail.

Vathek seeks refuge and refreshment from his consuming ambitions in a type of Paradise where he is irresistibly tempted to continue his self-destructive search.

Four fountains, not less clear than deep, and so abundant as to slake the thirst of ten armies, seemed purposely placed here, to make the scene more resemble the garden of Eden watered by four sacred rivers. Here, the nightingale sang the birth of the rose, her well-beloved, and, at the same time, lamented its short-lived beauty: whilst the dove deplored the loss of more substantial pleasures; and the wakeful lark hailed the rising light that reanimates the whole creation ...

One day, when this unhappy Prince had been long lying in so debasing a posture, a voice, hoarse but strong, thus addressed him: 'Why dost thou assimilate thyself to a dog, O Caliph, proud as thou art of thy dignity and power? ... Drink ... this draught,' said the stranger, as he presented to him a phial of a red and yellow mixture: 'and, to satiate the thirst of thy soul as well as of thy body ...'⁵

Vathek is tempted intellectually, but Ambrosio sensually. Ambrosio too seeks refuge from excessive emotion in a garden beautiful enough to call up memories of the lost Paradise: the instinct to seek sensual oblivion, which is the only way for fallen man momentarily to re-experience Eden, exercises a powerful subconscious compulsion on Ambrosio:

He descended into the Abbey-Garden. In all Madrid there was no spot more beautiful or better regulated. It was laid out with the most exquisite taste; the choicest flowers adorned it in the height of luxuriance, and though artfully arranged, seemed only planted by the hand of Nature. Fountains springing from basons of white Marble cooled the air with perpetual showers; and the Walls were entirely covered by Jessamine, vines and Honeysuckles. The hour now added to the beauty of the scene. The full Moon ranging through a blue and cloudless sky, shed upon the trees a trembling lustre, and the waters

of the fountains sparkled in the silver beam: A gentle breeze breathed the fragrance of Orange-blossoms along the Alleys; and the Nightingale poured forth her melodious murmur from the shelter of an artificial wilderness ...

In the bosom of this little Grove stood a rustic Grotto, formed in imitation of an Hermitage ... Buried in himself the Monk approached the spot. The universal calm had communicated itself to his bosom, and a voluptuous tranquillity spread languor through his soul.⁶

This garden image is more complicated than at first appears. The Eden archetype is here, but it has been tarnished by the consequences of the Fall. In its specious aestheticism this garden parodies the eighteenth century cult of landscape gardening, and even more, the escapist world of pastoral beloved by Mrs Radcliffe. It hints at the Garden of Innocence, but the rosebush at its centre shows it to be the fallen Garden of Seduction. Ambrosio's emotions are also fallen and can be perverted into brutal craving. His temptress is waiting in the "rustic Grotto" to begin a process that will initiate him into an acute perception of the evil fruit of the Fall. When he is bitten by a phallic serpent hidden in the rosebush he has re-enacted the tragedy of Eden in emblematic terms. The sublime faculty of sexuality is debased into a brutish lust, the poison of which will permeate his being ever more strongly until it destroys him.

'What shall I give you?'

'Something. - Anything. - One of those flowers will be sufficient.'
(Here she pointed to a bush of Roses, planted at the door of the Grotto.)

... He quitted the Hermitage. He approached the Bush, and stooped to pluck one of the Roses. Suddenly He uttered a piercing cry, started back hastily, and let the flower, which He already held, fall from his hand ...

'I have received my death!' He replied in a faint voice, 'Concealed under the Roses ... A Serpent ...'⁷

The Old Serpent himself appears in variation in Melmoth the Wanderer. He brings a burden of knowledge to all his victims: to take it from him completely would be the equivalent of accepting Hell, or the ultimate outcome of the rejection of God implied in the Fall. To Immalee, (innocent, unfallen mankind), he brings the ironic admixture of joy and sorrow, good and evil until her soul is burdened under the weight of intellectual and sensual knowledge.

Melmoth on Immalee's island is like Satan in Paradise.

It was the first of his intended victims he had ever beheld with compunction. The joy too which Immalee received him, almost brought back human feelings to a heart that had long renounced them; and, for a moment, he experienced a sensation like that of his master when he visited paradise, - pity for the flowers he resolved to wither for ever.⁸

He has come to destroy the peace of innocence, for once Immalee has experienced the joy and sorrow of his presence, she has entered the Vale of Generation and must progress as a fallen creature, even if it means suffering, as it surely does. Ambrosio's rose and serpent are not forgotten in Melmoth's pernicious lessons.

Of passion, she said she knew nothing, and could propose no remedy for an evil she was unconscious of. She had seen flowers fade with the season, but could not imagine why the flower should destroy itself. 'But did you never trace a worm in the flower?' said the stranger, with all the sophistry of corruption.⁹

The knowledge of Good and Evil automatically bans her from Paradise. All the characters in this novel act upon dim, unconscious intimations from the common dream of humanity for the lost Garden, as do the members of Guzman's family.

At the close of the prayer, the family rose and saluted each other with that affection that has not its roots in earth, and whose blossoms, however diminutive and colourless to the eye of man in this wretched soil, shall yet bear fruit in the garden of God.¹⁰

In loving they have reflected the Divine Image through the tarnishing of their fallen natures: in this way they have again become the spiritual gardeners of Paradise. For Frankenstein, however, there can never be a return to the Garden.

Sweet and beloved Elizabeth! ... some softened feelings stole into my heart and dared to whisper paradisiacal dreams of love and joy, but the apple was already eaten, and the angel's arm bared to drive me from all hope.¹¹

Melancholia is closely associated with the doctrine of creation. The mystery of creation has a sadness at its heart (lacrimae rerum), and all the Sacred Names and Attributes reveal compassion and sadness: compassion because

they yearn for man's return to his true centre; sadness, because through the Fall and sin they will remain unknown and isolated from Man in whom they should have life.

In Mrs Radcliffe's novels, melancholy is a highly valued emotion. It is experienced only by those with souls sensitive to the hidden mysteries of nature: landscape becomes an ethical symbol breathing its sad secrets to the soul.

Before them extended the valley they had quitted: its rocks and woods to the left, just silvered by the rays, formed a contrast to the deep shadow that involved the opposite cliffs, whose fringed summits only were tipped with light; while the distant perspective of the valley was lost in the yellow mist of moonlight. The travellers sat for some time wrapt in the complacency which such scenes inspire.

"These scenes," said Valancourt, at length, "soften the heart like the notes of sweet music, and inspire that delicious melancholy which no person, who had felt it once, would resign for the gayest pleasures. They waken our best and purest feelings: disposing us to benevolence, pity, and friendship ...

... "Yes ... the memory of those we love - of times for ever past! - in such an hour as this steals upon the mind like a strain of distant music in the stillness of night - all tender and harmonious as this landscape, sleeping in the mellow light ..."12

Ellena di Rosalba is also a sensitive soul and in the air-washed vantage of her suspended turret, her soul expands in spite of herself; in her emotional intensity she is responsive to the melancholic charge latent in nature.

To Ellena, whose mind was capable of being highly elevated, or sweetly soothed, by scenes of nature, the discovery of this little turret was an important circumstance. Hither she could come, and her soul, refreshed by the views it afforded, would acquire strength to bear her, with equanimity, through the persecutions that might await her. Here, gazing on 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 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 ... Thus man, the giant who now held her in captivity, would shrink to the dimutiveness of a fairy; and she would experience, that his utmost force was unable to enchain her soul, or compel her to fear him, while he was destitute of virtue.¹³

Mrs Radcliffe was most alert to the potential of nature as an emotional catalyst opening the understanding to many deep mysteries. The landscape is in itself the metaphor for Creation, since the cosmos originated in Divine Love. Contemplation of nature elevates the mind to God, inculcates the sublime emotion of enthusiasm, and stimulates the faculties into an action of love, or creation: frequently in Emily's case such contemplation leads to the writing of poetry.

The wind was high, and as she drew near the château, she often paused to listen to its awful sound as it swept over the billows that beat below or groaned along the surrounding woods, and while she rested on a cliff a short distance from the château; and looked upon the wide waters seen dimly beneath the last shade of twilight, she thought of the following address ...¹⁴

Then follows one of her poem compositions: the contemplation of Creation has led to creation.

It is ironic that the most elaborate act of creation in the Gothic novel, that of Frankenstein's Monster, because of what it represents, cannot be part of the harmony of nature. The scientist's impulses arise not out of a love for and contemplation of God, but out of his arrogant self-creating ego which has opened the universe as his plaything: the stupendous secrets of life are embodied in his abortive creature. Thus, unlike the Radcliffe heroine who derives inspiration from submission, Frankenstein finds that the mysterious communion with nature is broken as long as he is involved in his hideous occupation.

A human being in perfection ought always to preserve a calm and peaceful mind and never allow passion or a transitory desire to disturb his tranquillity. I do not think the pursuit of knowledge is an exception to this rule ... Winter, spring, and summer passed away during my labours; but I did not watch the blossom or the expanding leaves - sights which before always yielded me supreme delight - so deeply was I engrossed in my occupation. The leaves of the year had withered before my work drew near to a close ... But my enthusiasm was checked by my anxiety, and I appeared rather like one doomed by slavery to toil in the mines ... than an artist occupied by his favourite employment. Every night I was impressed by a slow fever, and I became nervous to a most painful degree; the fall of a leaf startled me, and I shunned my fellow creatures as if I had been guilty of a crime.¹⁵

Only when his soul is released from the shackles of his self-imposed task can he regain something of his servanthood, symbolized in a delighted apprehension of Nature.

By very slow degrees, and with frequent relapses that alarmed and grieved my friend, I recovered. I remember the first time I became capable of observing outward objects with any kind of pleasure, I perceived that the fallen leaves had disappeared and that the young buds were shooting forth from the trees that shaded my window. It was a divine spring, and the season contributed greatly to my convalescence.¹⁶

Nature not only has a symbolic link with Frankenstein's home, childhood, innocence, and health of soul, but also with his love. Elizabeth Lavenza has already fused Frankenstein's home and natural surroundings in mystical union.

'Little alteration, except the growth of our dear children, has taken place since you left us. The blue lake and snow-clad mountains - they never change; and I think our placid home and our contented hearts are regulated by the same immutable laws.'¹⁷

Creation indeed becomes the mirror in which he sees his beloved reflected as is illustrated by the beautiful commentary Nature provides for their wedding journey.

'Observe how fast we move along and how the clouds, which sometimes obscure and sometimes rise above the dome of Mont Blanc, render this scene of beauty still more interesting. Look also at the innumerable fish that are swimming in the clear waters, where we can distinguish every pebble that lies at the bottom. What a divine day! How happy and serene all nature appears!'¹⁸

It is likewise in nature that the terrible fate of their love is presaged, the darkness of suffering and despair wrecking their happiness.

The wind, which had fallen in the south, now rose with great violence in the west. The moon had reached her summit in the heavens and was beginning to descend; the clouds swept swifter than the flight of the vulture and dimmed her rays, while the lake reflected the scene of the busy heavens, rendered still busier by the restless waves that were beginning to rise. Suddenly a heavy storm of rain descended.¹⁹

The perception of the Beloved in nature is touchingly developed in "The Lovers' Tale" in Melmoth the Wanderer. When Elinor Mortimer first sees John Sandal she falls in love with him, he becoming her beloved rather than

vice versa. Their love immediately generates a complex set of images: when they walk together in the woods it is as if their inner serenity elicits from their surroundings a mysterious sympathy.

As they approached the Castle, the scene became glorious beyond the imagination of a painter, whose eye has dreamed of sun-set in foreign climes. The vast edifice lay buried in the shade, - all its varied and strongly characterized features of tower and pinnacle, bartizan and battlement, were melted into one dense and sombrous mass. The distant hills, with their conical summits, were still clearly defined in the dark-blue heaven, and their peaks still retained a hue of purple so brilliant and lovely, that it seemed as if the light had loved to linger there, and, parting, had left that tint as the promise of a glorious morning. The woods that surrounded the Castle stood as dark, and apparently as solid as itself. Sometimes a gleam like gold trembled over the tufted foliage of their summits, and at length, through a glade which opened among the dark and massive boles of the ancient trees, one last rich and gorgeous flood of light burst in, turned every blade of grass it touched emerald for a moment, - paused on its lovely work - and parted. The effect was so instantaneous, brilliant and evanishing, that Elinor had scarce time for a half uttered exclamation, as she extended her arm in the direction where the light had fallen so brightly and briefly. She raised her eyes to her companion, in that full consciousness of perfect sympathy that makes words seem like counters, compared to the sterling gold of a heart-minted look.²⁰

Similarly when the progression of this tender union is treacherously interrupted, the death of love evokes the melancholia, the inherent compassion and sadness that ancient tradition purported to find in nature.

It was the very evening after this conversation, that Elinor whose habit was to wander among the woods that surrounded the Castle unattended, met with John Sandal. It was a glorious autumnal evening, just like that on which they had first met, - the associations of nature were the same, those of the heart alone had suffered change. There is that light in an autumnal sky, - that shade in autumnal woods, - that dim and hallowed glory in the evening of the year, which is undefinably combined with recollections ... They walked on together, - together they watched the last light on the purple hills, the deep repose of the woods, whose summits were still like 'feathers of gold' ... The thoughts of other days rushed on Elinor, - she ventured to raise her eyes to that countenance which she once more saw 'as it had been that of an angel.' The glow and the smile that made it appear like a reflexion of heaven, were there still, - but that glow was borrowed from the bright flush of the glorious west, and that smile was for nature, - not for her. She lingered till she felt it fade with the fading light, - and a last conviction striking her heart, she burst into an agony of tears ... She had trusted to nature, and to this scene of their first meeting, to act as interpreter between them ... As ... he turned away from her, the last light of day faded from the hills - the sun of both worlds set on her eye and soul - she sunk on the earth, and notes of faint music that seemed designed to echo the words - 'No, - no - no - never - never more!' trembled in her ears. They ... were played ... by a peasant boy who was wandering in the

woods. But to the unfortunate everything seemed prophetic, and amid the shades of evening ... the breaking heart of Elinor accepted the augury of these melancholy notes.²¹

The music of the peasant boy recalls the sadness at the heart of Creation, the grief of the lover spurned by the beloved.

Immalee lives alone and paradissally on her island which is suffused by the compassion of Creation, and all live in sympathetic harmony.

The first time he had beheld her, she was embowered amid flowers and odours, amid all the glorious luxuries of vegetable and animal nature, the roses and the peacocks seemed emulous which should expand their leaves or their plumes, as a shade to that loveliness.²²

Only when Fallen Man enters this prelapsarian world is compassionate unity lost and Immalee's world filled with sudden melancholia and sadness.

Now she stood as if deserted even by nature, whose child she was ... she seemed, by an anticipation of her destiny, to make alliance with all that is awful and ominous. She had begun to love the rocks and the ocean, the thunder of the wave and the sterility of the sand, - awful objects, the incessant recurrence of whose very sound seems intended to remind us of grief and of eternity.²³

The betrothal of Immalee and Melmoth is similarly reflected in nature for what it really is - a marriage between Heaven and Hell. The great movements of sky and sea symbolically presage the sacrifice of Immalee's innocence to Melmoth's infernal intentions - a sacrifice that will be dramatized in the world of 'civilization.'

She burst from him - she rushed into the light of nature, whose glory seemed like the promise of redemption, gleaming amid the darkness of the fall ...

'Wed me by this light,' cried Immalee, 'and I will be yours for ever!' ... At that moment a trifling phenomenon interfered to alter her destiny. A darkened cloud at that moment covered the moon - it seemed as if the departed storm collected in wrathful haste the last dark fold of tremendous drapery, and was about to pass away for ever.

The eyes of the stranger flashed on Immalee the brightest rays of mingled

fondness and ferocity. He pointed to the darkness, - 'WED ME BY THIS LIGHT!' he exclaimed, 'and you shall be mine for ever and ever!'²³

In The Monk the vision of nature is curtailed: Lewis developed nothing of the cult of Mrs Radcliffe, Mrs Shelley and Maturin in whose novels nature becomes a great mystic force. In this novel nature is hardly beneficent, but rather infested with malignant forces. The carriage journey away from Lindenburg is the transition from the world of ordinary, predictable events to another frightening world where forces normally hidden from everyday perception erupt from nature, introducing a reality too much for the human mind to bear. The carriage hurtling out of control encloses Raymond as a prisoner: he cannot escape the experience. The limits of nature are exceeded in the supernatural speed of the horses and the sinister explosion of the tempest. Raymond's humanity cannot contain the experience without damage to itself.

Uttering a loud shriek, the Drivers were hurled upon the ground. Immediately thick clouds obscured the sky: The winds howled around us, the lightning flashed, and the Thunder roared tremendously. Never did I behold so frightful a Tempest! Terrified by the jar of contending elements, the Horses seemed every moment to increase their speed. Nothing could interrupt their career; They dragged the Carriage through Hedges and Ditches, dashed down the most dangerous precipices, and seemed to vye in swiftness with the rapidity of the winds ... The Carriage was shattered to pieces ... I had broken two of my ribs in the fall; My arm being dislocated hung useless by my side, and my left leg was shattered so terribly, that I never expected to recover its use.²⁴

The most sustained evocation of Creation is the closing section of the novel in which Ambrosio sees only his own terror reflected in the terrifying natural features of the Sierra Morena. Twisted images and harsh sounds assail his senses, intimating death.

The disorder of his imagination was increased by the wildness of the surrounding scenery; By the gloomy Caverns and steep rocks, rising above each other, and dividing the passing clouds; solitary clusters of Trees scattered here and there, among whose thick-twined branches the wind of night sighed hoarsely and mournfully; the shrill cry of the mountain Eagles, who had built their nests among these lonely Deserts; the stunning roar of torrents, as swelled by late rains they rushed violently down tremendous precipices; and the dark waters of a silent sluggish stream which faintly reflected the moon-beams,

and bathed the Rock's base on which Ambrosio stood. The Abbot cast round him a look of terror.²⁵

His descent into the ravine is the advent of his damnation, the dramatization of his Fall. Far from finding consolation in nature, Ambrosio experiences agony, fracture, mutilation and decomposition. The natural gardener of Paradise has become the victim of the Creation he should have ruled: his hideous death traces the dissolution of his body, the very reversal of Creation, over six significant days, until on the seventh the tempest, apocalyptic symbol of God's wrath, at last sweeps him away.

Headlong fell the Monk through the airy waste, The sharp point of a rock received him, and He rolled from precipice to precipice, till bruised and mangled He rested on the river's banks. Life still existed in his miserable frame: He attempted in vain to raise himself; His broken and dislocated limbs refused to perform their office ... The Sun now rose above the horizon, Its scorching beams darted full upon the head of the expiring Sinner. Myriads of insects were called forth by the warmth; They drank the blood which trickled from Ambrosio's wounds; He had no power to drive them from him, and they fastened upon his sores, darted their stings into his body ... and inflicted on him tortures the most exquisite and insupportable. The eages of the rock tore his flesh piecemeal, and dug out his eyeballs with their crooked beaks. A burning thirst tormented him, He heard the river's murmur as it rolled beside him, but strove in vain to drag himself towards the sound. Blind, maimed, helpless and despairing ... six miserable days did the Villain languish. On the Seventh 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 corse of the despairing Monk.²⁶

This view of nature, this despair and pessimism, is the dominant tone of the Gothic novel. The black despair of Ambrosio's death and the last journey of the Monster fuse in the closing picture of Melmoth the Wanderer where both the abyss image and the extinction of hope form a gloomy tone poem of pessimism.

Through the furze that clothed this rock at most to its summit, there was a kind of tract as if a person had dragged, or been dragged, his way through it, - a down-trodden track, over which no footsteps but those of one impelled by force had ever passed. Melmoth and Moncada gained at last the summit of the rock. The ocean was beneath - the wide, waste, engulfing ocean! On a crag beneath them, something hung as floating to the blast. Melmoth clambered down and caught it. It was the handkerchief which the Wanderer had worn about

his neck the preceding night - that was the last trace of the Wanderer!

Melmoth and Moncada exchanged looks of silent and unutterable horror, and returned slowly home.²⁷

Man has brought suffering upon himself in the Fall, and through him pain has affected the whole of nature.

The theme of fate governing the Gothic world is now clear. A man's thoughts and deeds demand that he choose either Good or Evil. He becomes the prisoner or master of his realm, according to his choice. To open oneself in servanthood is to perceive the mysteries of nature, its mirroring relation to the Divine; the world becomes bright and crystal in its reflections, especially when servanthood is realized in pure love. The Angels of Light like Elizabeth Lavenza and Immalee-Isidora find this to be so; so do the Young Heroes on a lower plane. But to choose ostensible masterhood as do the Villain-Heroes is to have an opaque view of Creation, to enclose oneself in a labyrinth of selfish interests and to release ungovernable energies that drag the ego downwards to a fate opening before it like an abyss.

Thus the Gothic novel expresses a pessimistic view of fate in the careers of the Villain-Heroes; the whole cycle is imbued with the pessimism so characteristic of Romanticism, and depicted so accurately by the Italian poet Leopardi in his "Canto notturno di un pastore errante dell' Asia."

Vecchierel bianco, infermo,
mezzo vestito e scalzo,
con gravissimo fascio in su le spalle,
per montagna e per valle,
per sassi acuti, ed alta rena, e fratte,
al vento, alla tempesta, e quando avvampa
l'ora e quando poi gela,
corre via, corre, anela,
varca torrenti e stagni,
cade, risorge, e più e più s' affretta,
senza posa o ristoro,
lacerato, sanguinoso; infin ch'arriva
colà dove la via
e dove il tanto affaticar fu volto:
abisso orrido, immenso,
ov'ei precipitando, il tutto obblia.
Vergine luna, tale,
è la vita mortale.²⁸

Only by pursuing love's ideal can a thread woven into the fibre of man's fate be found which can lead to eternity, right through the very abisso orrido immenso of death to Paradise.

I give you the end of a golden string,
Only wind it into a ball,
It will lead you in at Heaven's gate,
Built in Jerusalem's wall.²⁹

The tragedy in the Gothic novel is that those who find this thread are struck down in an iron age, and engulfed by the dark waters of a despairing world view.

6. THE AGONIZED WORLD, THE FRENZIED MIND

Suffering and fallen Creation in the Gothic novel are manifested further in the depiction of destructive elements in nature. The northern Romantics rarely understood the fierceness sometimes expressed in the natural world, as did the Italian Romantics who lived near Etna and Vesuvius and knew the meaning of earthquakes: they were aware of the ugly power which can eliminate life as quickly as it can generate it.¹

i

The expression in the genre of the vast forces in nature is varied. In Vathek it comes as the fire in Carathis's tower, and the tempest, the attacks of the wild animals on Vathek's entourage, and the subsequent fire among the caravans.

... a boisterous tempest arose ... The dark clouds that overcast the face of the sky deepened the horrors of this disastrous night ...

To increase the general misfortune, the frightful uproar of wild beasts resounded at a distance; and they were soon perceived in the forest they were skirting the glaring of eyes ... Wolves, tigers and other carnivorous animals, invited by the howling of their companions, flocked together from every quarter. The crashing of bones was heard on all sides, and a fearful rush of wings over head; for now vultures also began to be of the party ...

One of the forests of cedar that bordered their way took fire; and the branches that overhung the path, extending their flames to the muslins and chintzes which covered the cages of the ladies obliged them to jump out ...²

Mrs Radcliffe does not elaborate this violent aspect of nature: nevertheless it is present in her novels. Emily gazes on a storm from the windows of Udolpho.³ Later she is trapped in a dry storm with her villainous conductors.

... heavy clouds, whose lower skirts were tinged with sulphurous crimson, lingered in the west, and threw a reddish tint upon the pine forests, which sent forth a solemn sound as the breeze rolled over them. The

hollow moan struck upon Emily's heart, and served to render more gloomy and terrific every object around her - the mountains, shaded in twilight - the gleaming torrent, hoarsely roaring - the black forests, and the deep glen ... the thunder, whose deep volley was heard afar, rolling onward till it burst over their heads in sounds that seemed to shake the earth to its centre ... Between the boles of the trees the blue lightning flashed and quivered along the ground while ... the mountains beyond frequently appeared to be clothed in vivid flame.⁴

The fury of her surroundings echo the tumult of her emotions. In much the same inspiration is the incandescent violence of nature prior to the abortive wedding ceremony of Ellena and Vivaldi in The Italian, as though the world itself were alerted to the imminent manifestation of evil.

They walked in silence towards the chapel of San Sebastian. The scene appeared to sympathize with the spirits of Ellena. It was a gloomy evening, and the lake which broke in dark waves upon the shore, mingled its hollow sounds with those of the wind, that bowed the lofty pines, and swept in gusts among the rocks. She observed with alarm the heavy thunder clouds, that rolled along the sides of the mountains and the birds circling swiftly over the waters, and scudding away to their nests among the cliffs ...

As they approached the chapel, Ellena fixed her eyes on the mournful cypresses which waved over it, and sighed. 'Those,' she said, 'are funeral momentos ... Think you not they are portentous of future misfortune? ...'⁵

From here it is a small step to the tempest in The Monk which heralds the intrusion of the supernatural into Raymond's life.⁶

But it is in Melmoth the Wanderer that the idea of this ugly power is developed. The first instance is the destruction of the Spanish lovers by lightning.⁷ Later, and more elaborately, comes the tremendous storm and shipwreck by which Moncada is washed ashore on the Irish coast, and the whole series of interlocking stories comes to be told. At the height of the storm comes the full thematic implication of the fury.

At this moment, a tremendous wave breaking over the deck of the hulk, extorted a cry of horror from the spectators; they felt as if they were echoing that of the victims whose corpses were in a few moments to be dashed against their feet, mangled and lifeless.

... When the cry had ceased, Melmoth heard a laugh that chilled his blood. It was from the figure that stood above him. Like lightning that glanced on his memory the recollection of that night in Spain, when

Stanton first encountered that extraordinary being, whose charmed life, 'defying space and time,' held such fatal influence over his, and when he first recognized his supposed demoniac character by the laugh with which he hailed the spectacle of the blasted lovers.⁸

In the midst of the agony of creation stands Melmoth unscathed and triumphant, in his natural element. This becomes a reiterated image of the novel, powerfully evoked in the huge fire of the Inquisitorial prisons. Again Melmoth triumphs in the midst of destruction.

Perhaps it is amid the moments of despair, that imagination has most power, and they who have suffered, can best describe and feel. In the burning light, the steeple of the Dominican church was as visible as at noon day ... my whole attention was rivetted to a human figure placed on a pinnacle of the spire, and surveying the scene in perfect tranquillity. It was a figure not to be mistaken ... At that very moment, the archway of the court opposite to us gave way, and sunk in ruins at our feet, dashing, as it fell, an ocean of flame against us. One wild shriek burst from every lip ...⁹

This ugly power of nature reaches a tremendous climax when Melmoth comes to lay symbolic suzerainty over Immalee. All Creation seems lashed into apocalyptic fury at his approach.

The stranger approached her unobserved; his steps were unheard amid the rush of the ocean, and the deep, portentous murmur of the elements, but, as he advanced, he heard sounds that perhaps operated on his feelings as the whispers of Eve to her flowers on the organs of the serpent. Both knew their power, and felt their time. Amid the fast approaching terrors of the storm ... the poor Indian, unconscious or perhaps insensible of its dangers, was singing her wild song of desperation and love to the echoes of the advancing storm ... the elements seemed all sworn to the destruction of every living thing, and marched on from heaven to the accomplishment of their purpose, with *Vae victis* written and legible to every eye, and the broad unfolded banners of that resplendent and sulphurous light seemed to display the day of hell ...¹⁰

The contortion of nature is the externalization of Melmoth's twisted soul: fallen nature is the mirror of his despair.

'... amid thunder I wed thee - bride of perdition! mine shalt thou be forever! Come and let us attest our nuptials before the reeling altar of nature, with the lightnings of heaven for our bed-lights, and the curse of nature for our marriage-benediction ... Come ... while darkness yet is witness to our ineffable and eternal union.'¹¹

The compassion of Immalee secures for her the golden thread that leads to

Paradise: nature for her is the placid mirror of a redeemed world. She is concerned with the soul's salvation through suffering while exiled in the vale of misery.

... the bright moon burst forth with a glory unknown in European climes. The heavens were as blue as the waves of the ocean ...; and the stars burst forth with a kind of indignant and aggravated brilliancy, as if they resented the usurpation of the storm, and asserted the eternal predominance of nature over the casual influences of the storms that obscured her. Such, perhaps, will be the development of the moral world. We shall be told why we suffered, and for what; but a bright and blessed lustre shall follow the storm, and all shall yet be light.¹²

ii

The ugly power manifested in nature is the sympathetic consequence of the Fall; it is a reflection of the fragmentation into which the man has fallen now that the return to Paradise is guarded by the flaming sword of the Angel. Man is not only divided from his neighbour in contention, but suffers division with himself, and tragedy in his loves, be it Lorenzo's loss of Antonia, Frankenstein's neglect of Elizabeth Lavenza, or Melmoth's callous treatment of Immalee. The fragmentation causes anger, the anger incarnating a perverted version of the Divine Wrath, as portrayed in the stories of the Old Testament. The Fall caused this anger to be introduced into time and space because of man's loss of his true centre through the assertion of the selfhood. To live in a state of anger has become his natural condition.

Vathek is full of such frenzied confusion, such useless expenditure of energy like the compulsive urge to pursue the Giaour which seizes the populace of Samarah and leads them out of the city in a confused mass.

... the crowd ... continued to increase in so surprising a manner that scarcely an inhabitant was left in Samarah except the aged ...; in a word, the confusion that universally prevailed, rendered Samarah like a city taken by storm ... At last, the cursed Indian, who still preserved his rotundity of figure, after passing through all the streets and public places ...¹³

This is a wild and pointless fizzling of energy, but there are other instances

that pointedly illustrate the operating of the Divine Wrath and vengeance in the fallen world. The most stupendous example occurs in The Monk: it is the public denunciations of the evil Prioress, and the consequent indignation of the mob which leads them to murder her brutally.

The Rioters heeded nothing but the gratification of their barbarous vengeance. They refused to listen to her: They showed her every sort of insult, loaded her with mud and filth, and called her by the most approbrious appellations. They tore her one from another, and each new tormentor was more savage than the former. 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. At length a Flint ... struck her full upon the temple. She sank upon the ground bathed in blood, and in a few minutes terminated her miserable existence. Yet though she no longer felt their insults, the Rioters still exercised their impotent rage upon her lifeless body. They beat it, trod upon it, and ill-used it, till it became no more than a mass of flesh ... shapeless, and disgusting.¹⁴

The scene, although terrible, contains an element of justice: the inhumanity of the Prioress had revolted the crowd and they take retribution into their own hands. Their frenzied orgy of cruelty releases primitive forces within themselves that rapidly whirl into uncontrol and anarchy.

The Rioters poured into the interior part of the Building, where they exercised their vengeance upon everything which found itself in their passage. They broke the furniture into pieces, tore down the pictures, destroyed the reliques ... others ... again setting fire to the ... valuable furniture ... The consequences of their action were more sudden, than themselves had expected or wished. The Flames rising from the burning piles caught part of the building, which being old and dry, the conflagration spread with rapidity from room to room. The Walls were soon shaken by the devouring elements: 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.¹⁵

A very similar scene occurs in Melmoth the Wanderer when the Parricide, who has sought refuge from justice in a monastery, takes part in a religious procession. He is recognized by the crowd who respond in fury and execute their own vengeance; very soon the scene is one of frightening chaos.¹⁶

The Abbess and the Parricide are both monsters of cruelty, who have profaned the sanctuary and must be lashed out by the Divine Wrath. The link with

the Old Testament manifestations is clear: consider the rôles of the Assyrians and the Babylonians in the history of Israel where the instrument of God's chastisement has been used in punishing a recalcitrant people, but in its frenzy has eventually brought destruction on itself. Like all the characteristics of the Fall, this anger is a poor reflection of the celestial paradigm, the broken image reflected in fallen creation.

But this wrath of men is expressed in other ways that are less understandable, which only intensify the plight of man's suffering and prove that anger has become the natural condition of man. Vivaldi in the prisons of the Inquisition reflects with grief on "the frenzied wickedness that man prepared for man."¹⁷ In Frankenstein this frenzy expresses itself in man's cruelty and unthinking prejudice. The Genevan court sentence the innocent Justine to death on a charge of murder that can hardly be substantiated.

... but how misery has come home, and men appear to me as monsters thirsting for each other's blood ... Every body believed that the poor girl to be guilty ...¹⁸

The Monster in his initial idealism and search for love is blindly spurned by a contemptible humanity.

The whole village was roused; some fled, some attacked me, until, grievously bruised by stones and many other kinds of missile weapons, I escaped to the open country and fearfully took refuge in a low hovel.¹⁹

The anger of men infects the Monster and causes him to turn on his persecutors.

The feelings of kindness and gentleness which I had entertained but a few moments before gave place to hellish rage and gnashing of teeth. Inflamed by pain, I vowed eternal hatred and vengeance to all mankind.²⁰

Something of this same senseless frenzy is shown to lie behind much religious practice. Vathek depicts the excesses of certain Mohammedan zealots;²¹ but the most over-powering alignment of religion with the anger of men comes in Melmoth's great central monologue in which he propounds his ironic view of the world. Mankind seems gripped by violent energies which propel him into a freneticism,

a Totentanz, or dance of death: for anger leads him into destruction - the end product of which is death and desolation. His hideous vision of Juggernaut in the exposition of world faith represents this delirium at fever pitch where self-sacrifice, or a voluntary plunge into the vortex, crowns the wild exultation.

Close to this fearful scene, came on a pageant, whose splendour, made a brilliant and terrible contrast to the loathsome and withering desolation of animal and intellectual life, amid which the pomp came towering, and sparkling, and trembling on. An enormous fabric, more resembling a moving palace than a triumphal car, supported the inshrined image of Juggernaut, and was dragged forward by the united strength of a thousand human bodies, priests, victims, brahmins, faqueers and all. In spite of this huge force, the impulse was so unequal, and the whole ediface rocked and tottered from time to time, and this singular union of instability and splendour, of trembling decadence and terrific glory, gave a faithful image of the meretricious exterior, and internal hollowness, of idolatrous religion. As the procession moved on, sparking amid desolation, and triumphant amid death, multitudes rushed forward from time to time, to prostrate themselves under the wheels of the enormous machine, which crushed them to atoms in a moment, and passed on; - others 'cut themselves with knives and lancets after their manner,' and not believing themselves worthy to perish beneath the wheels of the idol's chariot, sought to propitiate him by dying the tracks of those wheels with their blood; - their relatives and friends shouted with delight as they saw the streams of blood dye the car and its line of progress...

Such was the picture ... of joy and suffering, - of crushed flowers and mangled bodies, - of magnificence calling on torture for its triumph, - and the stream of blood and the incense of the rose, inhaled at once by an incarnate demon, who rode amid the wrecks of nature and the spoils of the heart.²²

The agony of the groaning world and the frenzy of fallen man unite in this ghastly tableau of suffering.

7. THE SPIRIT OF NEGATION AND THE CAVERN OF DARKNESS

The one common feature to emerge from all the expressions of anger is ultimate destruction, or transformation from a state of unlimited and ever-increasing expansion, to one of complete contraction. This loosed energy, both in nature's ugly power and in the anger of men, is anarchical, characteristic of the fallen world.

The figure who unites both forces in nature and man is Satan in The Monk. His first appearance is heralded by the world in violence and contortion.

A loud burst of Thunder was heard; The prison shook to its very foundations; A blaze of lightning flashed through the Cell; and in the next moment, borne upon sulphurous whirl-winds, Lucifer stood before him ... Still the lightning flashed around him, and the Thunder with repeated bursts, seemed to announce the dissolution of Nature ...

'For what am I summoned hither?' said the Demon in a voice which sulphurous fogs had damped to hoarseness -

At the sound Nature seemed to tremble: A violent earthquake rocked the ground, accompanied by a fresh burst of thunder ...¹

"Dissolution" is the key-word: he is monstrously ugly, his presence threatens destruction of the natural world, while his demonic personality displays all the worst features of anger.

'Fool!' exclaimed the disappointed Daemon, darting looks so furious as penetrated the Friar's soul with horror; 'Thus am I trifled with? ... Summon me a second time to dismiss me thus idly, and these Talons shall rend you into a thousand pieces!'²

Eventually he carries Ambrosio away and hurls him into the abyss, where hurtling through space, Ambrosio experiences uncontrollable energy or expansion, the gyre whirling into oblivion. His slow death, the "salvation" promised by Satan, is a process of dissolution or ever tightening contraction, as one by one his sensory perceptions, his contacts with the world, are destroyed and he is enclosed within himself in helplessness and pain.³

Satan is just what Goethe described him as being: "the Spirit who denies."

Ich bin der Geist, der stets verneint!
 Und das mit Recht; denn alles, was entsteht,
 Ist wert, dass es zugrunde geht;
 Drum besser wär's, dass nichts entstünde.
 So ist denn alles, was ihr Sünde,
 Zerstörung, kurz das Böse nennt,
 Mein eigentliches Element.⁴

The same idea emerges with even greater clarity in Arrigo Boito's Mefistofele.

Son lo spirito, che nega
 sempre tutto; l'astro, il fior ...
 Voglio il Nulla e del Creato
 la ruina universal.
 E atmosfera mia vital
 ciò che chiamasi peccato,
 Morte e Mal
 Rido e avvento questo sillaba:
 'No.'⁵

(I am the Spirit who denies
 everything always: the stars, the flowers ...
 I want Nothingness and the
 universal ruin of Creation.
 My vital atmosphere is
 what is called Sin
 Death and Evil!
 I laugh and snarl this monosyllable
 'No.')

The great satanic figures in the Gothic novel are all variations of this Spirit that Denies: Satan in The Monk, the Giaour in Vathek, the Monster in Frankenstein, Lord Ruthven in The Vampyre and Melmoth the Wanderer. All are associated with destruction, death and dissolution. The Giaour appears to Vathek in a great seismic disturbance, the opening of a cleft in the earth, and demands human sacrifice of children as a propitiation. The Monster slowly destroys everything precious to Frankenstein; Lord Ruthven plays the same malignant and pernicious rôle in Aubrey's life. Melmoth appears as the Prince of Destruction, revelling in the advent of horror and death. Nothing conveys this meaning with more affecting symbolism than Melmoth's actions in Isidora's garden.

... Melmoth, as he spoke, flung himself on a bed of hyacinths and tulips that displayed their glowing flowers, and sent up their odorous breath right under Isidora's casement. 'Oh you will destroy my flowers!' cried she, while a reminiscence of her former picturesque existence, when flowers were the companions alike of her imagination and her pure heart, awoke her exclamation. 'It is my vocation - I pray you pardon me!' said Melmoth, as he basked on the crushed flowers, and darted his withering sneer and scowling glance at Isidora. 'I am commissioned to trample on and bruise every flower in the natural and moral world - hyacinths, hearts, and bagatelles of that kind, just as they occur.'⁶

"Son lo spirito che nega sempre tutto, l'astro, il fior ..." - the spirit of negation is passed on to the disciples of these terrible beings, as when Vathek and Nouronihar, totally dedicated to the service of the Giaour, become purveyors of destruction themselves: their viciousness is depicted in the despoiling of flowers and the infliction of pain.

... the horses, camels, and guards wantoned over their tulips and other flowers, and made a terrible havoc amongst them ... Nouronihar and the Caliph mutually contended who should most enjoy so degrading a sight. They burst out in peals of laughter to see the old men and their asses fall into the stream. The leg of one was fractured, the shoulder of another dislocated; the teeth of a third dashed out.'⁷

The point of return in all dissolution is the earth, the dust to which all dust returns. The affinity between the earth and the Spirit of Negation is dramatized in the actions of Carathis who, as a passionate disciple of the Giaour, becomes the minister of his cult which expresses the mystery and dark attraction of the subterranean. Darkness and secrecy characterize the practice of her foul ritual.'⁸

Similarly when Matilda exercises her rôle as highpriestess of Satan, it is at night, underground in an inner recess of a labyrinth of subterranean passages.

She had quitted her religious habit: She was now cloathed in a long sable Robe, on which was traced in gold embroidery a variety of unknown characters ... on every side as they past along, the beams of the Lamp displayed none but the most revolting objects: Skulls, Bones, Graves, ... At length they reached a spacious Cavern, whose lofty roof the eye sought in vain to discover. A profound obscurity hovered through the void. Damp vapours struck cold to the Friar's heart; and he listened sadly to the blast, while it howled along the lonely Vault ...

The Monk beheld her with anxious curiosity. Suddenly she uttered a loud and piercing shriek. She appeared to be seized by an access

of delirium; She tore her hair, beat her bosom, used the most frantic gestures, and drawing the poignard from her girdle plunged it into her left arm. The blood gushed out plentifully...⁹

That the worship of Evil, and the accompanying cult of the subterranean, was part of the shared symbolism of the period can be gauged from the description in Justine, of the high temple of Mota, the headquarters of a fanatical and perverted sect which

like Gilles de Rais, the famous Bluebeard ... found an exulted enjoyment in murder and mutilation. The monks were in the habit of enjoying only through suffering, revelling in tortures and torments; and in murder they sought the same way of reaching the complete and perfect expression of the mad delirium of their senses ...

It was almost impossible for any of the girls to escape: had it been possible, they would often have attempted it. The pavilion was laid out like a fortress. Behind the temple proper, in the back of the altar, a door concealed in the wainscoting and opened by a hidden spring led to a long and dark trench, through which on the first night of her arrival, Justine was taken from the temple to the secret pavilion. This trench passed under a deep moat. On the other side it rose again to a level about six feet underground and ran along in zig-zagging curves some distance until it reached the subterranean parts of the pavilion.

The pavilion was a very low structure, and was completely lost to view among rows of high thick bushy hedges that ran round all its sides. The roof of the pavilion was very thick and surmounted on the outside by a cistern full of clay in which evergreen shrubs matching the surrounding hedges were planted giving one the complete illusion of a single dense thicket.

There was but one story above the ground which contained the two main seraglios, but underground were three more floors.

This inaccessible retreat gave the hermits complete assurance, which greatly stimulated their ferocity.¹⁰

The service of the Spirit of Negation requires enclosure, and drives its adherents underground - to the traditional location of Hell: indeed Dante's Inferno convolutes downwards into the earth, twisting ever more restrictedly until at the narrow bottom all is frozen in complete encapsulation. This is the externalization of the selfish ego closed in upon itself. All humans by needs limit themselves: the very reality of the flesh with all its pains and passions is a curtailment of the expression of the soul, turning the

attention of the self inwards to the yearnings of the body.

The Divine Comedy depicts the states of becoming which man must choose as examples for his own soul. Most choose Hell because they desire to possess, to live for themselves and so selfishly enclose themselves; to this category belong the personifications and disciples of the Spirit of Negation. Some choose Purgatory because they recognize the dangerous pull of earth and its destructive consequences and yet yearn to aspire to the Spirit; the more human heroines and the suffering heroes belong here. Only a few choose Paradise, the free-ranging realm of the spirit, because they seek only the contemplation and knowledge of love; here belong the beautiful souls of the Angelic Heroines.

The pull then is between Heaven and Hell, with Purgatory between. Man has his feet on earth and his head in the sky: he must choose between static contraction or free expansion, between immanence or transcendence. Ambrosio chooses immanence, or the earth, hence his deeds take place underground in the Caverns of Darkness, the spatial embodiment of immanence: Ambrosio surrounds himself with earth, as do all who seek selfishly for themselves. In enclosing themselves they bury themselves in the womb of Mother Earth and, thus insulated, are no longer able to respond to the call of the spiritual vision, or the poetic imagination as personified by the Bard.

Hear the voice of the Bard!
 Who Present, Past and Future sees,
 Whose ears have heard
 The Holy Word
 That walked among the ancient trees,
 Calling the lapsed Soul
 And weeping in the evening dew,
 The might control
 The starry pole
 And fallen, fallen light renew!
 O Earth, O Earth, return!
 Arise from out the dewy grass;
 Night is worn,
 And the morn
 Rises from the slumbrous mass.

Turn away no more;
 Why wilt thou turn away?
 The starry floor
 The wat'ry shore,
 Is given thee till the break of day.¹¹

When Carathis at last reaches the Caverns of Eblis she thinks she has found the consummation of her dreams of aggrandizement. But her indulgence of every power ends only too soon and the palace of pleasure becomes the Cavern of Darkness, the eternal dungeon of the incarcerated self where her heart burns forever with the fire of the passions locked within her. When Ambrosio rapes Antonia in the hidden crypt, he achieves the satisfaction his gross appetites have longed for. But the violation leads only to consuming remorse. His murder of Antonia, his anima, in the Caverns of Darkness symbolizes the death of the Spirit in his soul.

Association with God means light, selflessness, love, creation, free-will, limitless expansion. Satanic alignment brings darkness, selfishness, hatred, destruction, compulsion, crushing contraction.

Parte son d'una latebra
 del gran Tutto: Oscurità, ...
 Son figliuol della Tenèbra
 che Tenèbra tornerà ...
 poco andrà la sua tenzon,
 v'è sul Sol e sulla Terra
 Distruzion!
 Rido e avvento questo sillaba:
 'No.'¹²

(I am part of the innermost
 recesses of the great All: Obscurity ...
 I am the child of Darkness
 who will return to Darkness ...
 over the Sun and over the Earth
 there hovers
 Destruction!
 I laugh and snarl this monosyllable:
 'No.')

This is symbolized in the contracts the Spirit of Negation always demands of his victims: that between Faust and Mephistopheles is the prototype.

Vathek must satiate the Giaour's blood-lust before he can secure his co-operation; Ambrosio must sign away his freedom in his own blood; Frankenstein must create a companion for the Monster before his persecution will cease; Melmoth's numerous victims can secure release from their agonies only if they will accept his unspeakable condition. The price in every case is always the same in the end: the victims' eternal souls, that priceless faculty of expansion in the Spirit. Once this contract is entered into, the victim is bound to the letter. Significantly, the contract is invariably made in circumstances of restriction: when Ambrosio is in chains awaiting imminent death; when Stanton is incarcerated in a madhouse; or Walberg has reached the limit of his deprivation. The prison, the madhouse, the hidden cell, become the antechambers to the abyss which, in its turn, leads into the earth, the Cavern of Darkness or the eternal dungeons of damnation.

The way of God is open and free: no conditions are laid, no time span restricts the period of the joy it brings. God is the dispenser of mercy, and with Him life is one of constant renewal. This is the great truth perceived by Ambrosio even on the brink of damnation: he seeks to benefit by this mercy but is too late: he is constrained by conditions of his devilish pact.

On hearing this sentence, dreadful were the feelings of the devoted Wretch! He sank upon his knees, and raised his hands towards heaven. The Fiend read his intention and prevented it -

'What?' He cried, darting at him looks of fury: 'Dare you still implore the Eternal's mercy? ... Villain, resign your hopes of pardon. Thus I secure my prey!'¹³

Frankenstein experiences the effects of spiritual expansion and contraction. Before the torrential advent of his selfish ambitions, life was full of light.

I feel exquisite pleasure in dwelling on the recollections of childhood, before misfortune had tainted my mind and changed its bright visions of extensive usefulness into gloomy and narrow reflections upon self.¹⁴

While the work on the Monster lasts, Frankenstein is dead to love in the freedom of his family and friend. Only when able to unfold the involuted rose of

selfhood to the light and warmth of love can his spirit hope for rebirth.

Excellent friend! How sincerely did you love me ...! A selfish pursuit had cramped and narrowed me until your gentleness and affection warmed and opened my senses.¹⁵

Ultimately, the key concept in the life of the Spirit in the soul of man is HOPE. The tragedy at the heart of the Caverns of Eblis is the overwhelming sadness of the destruction of hope.

Their hearts immediately took fire, and they, at once, lost the most precious gift of heaven - HOPE.¹⁶

This is also the supreme sorrow of Ambrosio, of Frankenstein, of Melmoth, for whom there is no opening to the future. It is also in this respect that the Inquisition is depicted as an agency of the Spirit of Negation: for all hope dies in the dark recesses of their subterranean prisons.

Over this door was an inscription in Hebrew characters, traced in blood-colour. Dante's inscription on the entrance of the infernal regions would have been suitable to a place, where every circumstance and feature seemed to say, 'Hope, that comes to all, comes not here!'¹⁷

This absence of hope is characteristic of the most fearful of Gothic experiences: inescapable and prolonged agony, or Burgverliess. The Gothic novelists, Lewis, Maturin, Mrs Shelley and Polidori particularly, depict mankind in extreme situations of suffering. They capture their characters in inescapable situations, pin them down in privation, and linger over their harrowing experiences. This is the basic situation in the novels of the Marquis de Sade, as the description of the Temple of Mota above has indicated. This scrutiny of inescapable suffering has its archetype in Dante's Inferno, especially in the story of Ugolino.¹⁸ The same theme is used in the Sturm und Drang by Gerstenberg in his drama Ugolino (1768): the tower in which he is starved to death has given literature the term Burgverliess. It is the embalming of the present into an ageless moment of pain, devoid of all hope.

But literal imprisonment is only one aspect of the variations of incarceration in the cycle. In The Monk, the plea of the Bleeding Nun is for the

peace of the grave, while the Wandering Jew is sentenced to unending life, the horror of never being able to die.

'She was doomed to suffer during the space of a Century. The period is past. Nothing now remains but to consign to the Grave the ashes of Beatrice. I have been the means of releasing you from your visionary Tormentor; and amidst all the sorrows which oppress me, to think that I have been of use to you, is some consolation. Youth, farewell! May the Ghost of your Relation enjoy that rest in the Tomb, which the Almighty's vengeance has denied me for ever!'¹⁹

This is Melmoth's pain too, who to secure great knowledge has become an ageless being, worn and anguished by the burden of never-ending existence, like Dorian Gray after him.

... time seems to have forborne to touch him from terror. By what means or power he is thus enabled to continue his posthumous and preternatural existence, it is impossible to conceive ...²⁰

Eventually even sanity can become a curse for it retains the conscious perception of the senses and allows them to dwell on the agony of life. The cry of Stanton in the madhouse is terrifying: the senses have ceased to be the gateway of liberation for the spirit and have become instead the aggravation of the plight of fallen man.

They are revived every morning by some delicious of cunning madness, soothing them with the hope of escaping ... my sanity precludes all such hope. I know I never can escape, and the preservation of my faculties is only an aggravation of my sufferings.²¹

But by far the most despairing cry is that of Frankenstein's Monster who, suddenly endowed with life, becomes heir to the burden of knowledge.

'I cannot describe to you the agony of these reflections inflicted upon me; I tried to dispel them, but sorrow only increased with knowledge. Oh, that I had forever remained in my native wood, nor known, nor felt beyond the sensations of hunger, thirst and heat!'²²

This takes one back once more to the myth of the soul, of the sensitive consciousness caught and twisted in the coils of generation: to know is to feel the pain of the world, to be sensitive to the sorrow at the heart of fallen Creation. It is the knowledge of Good and Evil into whose mysteries Immalee too must be initiated: she suffers like the Monster, but it is her mentor, Melmoth, on

whom the burden of the knowledge of centuries rests, whose soul the agony of the world has seared. His central narration is the core of all Gothic literature, the exposition of the work of the Spirit of Negation in the world, a terrible indictment of fallen Creation and the depravity of man.

8. SUPERSTITION, CATHOLICISM, AND THE INEBRIATION OF THE SOUL

Subjugation by the Spirit of Negation manifests itself further in both emotional and legal restrictions, which bind and hamper imaginative perception and contribute to the death of the spirit.

i

The first and less important of these restrictions is superstition, a secondary thematic pre-occupation of both The Mysteries of Udolpho and The Monk. Certainly for Mrs Radcliffe the power of superstition and fear over the minds of men was an intolerable assault against reason and human dignity - which are her secular terms for qualities of the soul. To fall victim to such fears is to lose the sovereignty of reason, to become something less than human.

It was lamentable that her excellent understanding should have yielded, even for a moment, to the reveries of superstition, or rather to those starts of imagination which deceive the senses into what can be called nothing less than momentary madness. Instances of this temporary failure of mind had more than once occurred since her return home.¹

Superstition is the sign of a "distempered imagination", and is pictured as a disease.

Emily smiled, and remembering how lately she had suffered herself to be led away by superstition, determined now to resist its contagion ...²

Lewis gives the prevalence of superstition in Madrid a serious spiritual implication. It is the substitution of a broken system of frightening taboos for the unity and reassurance of faith in a loving God. This is another instance in which humans limit themselves in the service of dark powers: indeed, they even transfer their own limitations to the concept of God. Superstition is a restrictive force, the contraction and fragmentation of evil working on the minds of man: in confining the power of God it destroys a boundless, true relationship with him. Consider the actions of Agnes Medina's parents

who are described as "superstitious"; they bind their yet unborn child to service of the Church as a type of bargain with God - anthropomorphized into a divine barterer.³ Agnes's mother has robbed her daughter of free-will; the vow, in its superstitious hold over the parents, has become a fetish, a restriction in the life of Agnes. The evil lies in the parents' binding action on the child in their neurotic fear of punishment.

The fragmentation caused by superstition provides the opportunity for the negative aspects of human nature to express themselves. This is seen in vacillation and weakness of the Madrid crowd.

Do not encourage the idea that the Crowd was assembled either from motives of piety or thirst for information. But very few were influenced by those reasons; and in a city where superstition reigns with such despotic sway as in Madrid, to seek for true devotion would be a fruitless attempt. The Audience now assembled in the Capuchin Church was collected by various causes, but all of them were foreign to the ostensible motive.⁴

Superstition is linked with the satanic in the words and actions of Matilda and the insidious philosophy she teaches Ambrosio. Matilda is the personification of the inverted principles of evil: like Milton's Satan her view is "Evil, be thou my good." For her the broken world of dark fears and numinous forces is the right world, while the unified world of natural and moral law, God and Goodness, is the wrong one. Hence for her the service of God is superstition.

'The fault lies not in me, but in yourself, my Ambrosio! You are still too much the Monk. Your mind is enslaved by the prejudices of Education; And Superstition might make you shudder at the idea of that, which experience has taught me to prize and value.'⁵

The most powerful references to superstition in the novel link it with the Catholic Church. For the Protestant society of Lewis's time and country, the rich vestments, elaborate rituals and processions were the meaningless

symbols of an empty and superstitious cult. For Lewis, the Catholic imagery he uses is not simply a gesture of anti-Catholic prejudice, but rather a means for illustrating aspects of character and superstition. Hidden behind the splendid accoutrements are souls, ambitious and wretched. The characters which Ambrosio and the Prioress present to the world are ultimately facades, impostures that conceal the frightening realities of the self and the chaos of the hidden personality.

Lorenzo's thoughts while witnessing a religious procession epitomize the relation between superstition and Catholicism very aptly.

While listening to the Music, whose melody distance only seemed to render sweeter, the Audience was wrapped up in profound attention. Universal silence prevailed through the Crowd, and every heart was filled with reverence for religion. Every heart but Lorenzo's. Conscious that among those who chaunted the praises of God so sweetly, there were some who cloaked with devotion the foulest sins, their hymns inspired him with detestation at their Hypocrisy. He had long observed with disapprobation and contempt the superstition, which governed Madrid's Inhabitants. His good sense had pointed out to him the artifices of the Monks, and the gross absurdity of their miracles, wonders, and suppositious reliques. He blushed to see his Countrymen the Dupes of deceptions so ridiculous, and only wished for an opportunity to free them from their monkish fetters. That opportunity, so long desired in vain, was at length presented to him. He resolved not to let it slip, but to set it before the people in glaring colours, how enormous were the abuses but too frequently practised in Monasteries, and how unjustly public esteem was bestowed indiscriminately upon all who wore a religious habit. He longed for the moment destined to unmask the Hypocrites, and convince his Countrymen, that a sanctified exterior does not always hide a virtuous heart.⁶

The attitude is adumbrated in the exploration of the Vaults of St Clare and the discovery of Agnes's cell. Superstition is used by the Prioress to hold the weak minds of her nuns in terrified subjugation, and serves as the elaborate cover for her evil deeds. The false statue hides the secret dungeon and is part of the symbolism of concealment and restriction.⁷

For Mrs Radcliffe too, the link between superstition and Catholicism was a strong one. The famous mystery of the Black Veil and its ghastly secret in The Mysteries of Udolpho are explicable in terms of Catholic superstition.

Had she dared to look again, her delusion and her fears would have vanished together, and she would have perceived that the figure before her was not human, but formed of wax. The history of it is somewhat extraordinary, though not without example in the records of that fierce severity which monkish superstition has sometimes inflicted on mankind. A member of the house of Udolpho having committed some offense against the prerogative of the Church, had been condemned to the penance of contemplating, during certain hours of the day, a waxen image, made to resemble a human body in the state to which it is reduced after death. This penance, serving as a memento of the condition at which he must himself arrive, had been designed to reprove the pride of the Marquis of Udolpho, which had formerly so much exasperated that of the Romish Church, and he had not only superstitiously observed this penance himself, which he had believed was to obtain a pardon for all his sins, but had made it a condition of his will, that his descendants should preserve the image on pain of forfeiting to the Church a certain part of his domain ...⁷⁸

Mrs Radcliffe and Lewis have both introduced substantial pre-occupations of the Gothic novel - morbid fascination with the mysteries of Catholicism. It is one of the most persistent symbols used in the cycle and undergoes, as always, the characteristic intensifying processes. Certainly all the Gothic novelists wrote from a Protestant point of view; Maturin indeed was a Church of Ireland clergyman and passionately anti-Catholic on theological grounds: he even produced a tract on the dangers of Catholicism.⁹

Mrs Radcliffe and Lewis were without the theological perspectives of Maturin. Mrs Radcliffe certainly wrote with a firm disapproval and yet with a lingering, almost caressing fascination. The result is a highly ambiguous approach: she dismisses abuses and questionable practices but at the same time has her heroines seek restful asylums in Convents. Lewis's approach is even more ambiguous: at one moment he speaks rather movingly of the heavy responsibility of Ambrosio's vows.¹⁰ Satan's words at the end of the novel show that their spiritual validity is a real one.¹⁰ Yet when discussing Ambrosio's education at the hands of the monks, nothing could be more derisive, as he depicts the evil and hypocrisy of the religious life.¹¹

On the whole the Church is depicted as the Scarlet Woman, the Whore of Babylon, the embodiment of the anti-Christ. The clearest hint lies in the

images of contraction and restraint used in connection with the Church - always a sure warning in the Gothic world of the presence of evil. For Lewis and Maturin especially, the ecclesiastical laws appear monstrous and inhuman: they are aligned with all that is anti-life. Agnes di Medina's planned entry into the sisterhood is envisioned in terms of burial and imprisonment.¹² The love between Raymond and Agnes is frustrated by the Church, and when Agnes falls pregnant she and her baby are doomed to a ghastly death, the immuring becoming a literal truth in the Vaults under the Convent Gardens.¹⁴³

In Melmoth the Wanderer Catholicism is again linked with the anti-life forces. In a world of artificiality and restraint, the desperate Moncada seeks the relief of nature.

The garden, with its calm moon-light beauty, its innocence of heaven, its theology of the stars, was at once a reproach and a consolation to me. I tried to reflect, to feel, - both efforts failed; and perhaps it is in this silence of the soul, this suspension of all the clamorous voices of the passions, that we are most ready to hear the voice of God. My imagination suddenly represented to me the august and ample vault above me as a church, - the images of the saints grew dim in my eyes as I gazed on the stars, and even the altar over which the crucifixion of the Saviour of the world was represented, turned pale to the eye of the soul, as I gazed on the moon 'walking in her brightness.' I fell on my knees. I knew not to whom I was about to pray, but I never felt so disposed to pray.¹⁴

But even nature is manipulable by devious ecclesiastical means, and it is in images of death that a miracle is engineered in the garden in the hope of winning Moncada over to a true vocation.

The fountain was dried up, and the tree was withered. I stood speechless with astonishment, while every voice around me repeated, 'A miracle! a miracle! - God himself has sealed your vocation with his own hand.'¹⁵

Later Moncada learns of the hypocritical trickery behind the event.

'I performed that miracle myself,' he said with all the calmness, and, alas! something of the triumph of the deliberate imposter. 'I knew the reservoir by which the fountain was supplied - by consent of the Superior it was drawn off in the course of the night ...' 'But the tree -' 'I was in possession of some chemical secrets ... I scattered a certain fluid over the leaves of the poplar that night, and they appeared withered by the morning ...' 'They are.' 'And why did you deceive me thus?' He struggled for a short time at this question, and then rising almost upright in his bed, exclaimed, 'Because I was a monk, and wished for victims of my imposture to gratify my pride!

and companions of my misery, to soothe its malignity! ... I suffered you to sit beside me, because I thought, from your repugnance to the monastic life, you might be a willing hearer of its deceptions, and its despair.¹⁶

Like the Prioress, the Father Superior is seen as the enemy of love and procreation. The lovers who enter the monastery in disguise are discovered in their bliss and cursed as foul criminals.

The wretched husband and wife were locked in each others arms. You may imagine the scene that followed. Here I must do the Superior reluctant justice. He was a man (of course from his conventual feelings) who had no more idea of the intercourse between the sexes, than between two beings of a different species. The scene that he beheld could not have revolted him more, than if he had seen the horrible loves of the baboons and the Hottentot women, at the Cape of Good Hope ...¹⁷

The destruction of romantic love demands the death of those who dare to love: they are incarcerated alive and the ideal beauty of their love is torn apart by the pangs of starvation, as their noble humanity is brutalized.¹⁸

iii

There is an even subtler way in which Catholicism is depicted as a force of evil. This is in the havoc wreaked on the minds of those who submit themselves to its control. At its mildest it could be called boredom. Mrs Radcliffe describes this in The Mysteries of Udolpho.

"Who could first invent convents?" she said, "and who could first persuade people to go into them? and to make religion a pretence, too, where all that should inspire it is so carefully shut out? God is best pleased with the homage of a grateful heart; and when we view His glories, we feel most grateful. I never felt so much devotion, during the many dull years I was in the convent, as I have done in the few hours that I have been here, where I need only to look all around me - to adore God in my inmost heart!"^{20 19}

Lewis saw the religious life as effecting a change of personality, a type of pitiful transmutation.

She painted in their true colours the numerous inconveniences attached to a Convent, the continued restraint, the low jealousies, the petty intrigues, the servile court and gross flatteries expected by the Superior.²⁰

But for Maturin it was something infinitely terrifying: it was a draining of the life force. The vitality and resilience of the soul ossifies; the mind becomes a cell restricting and eventually suffocating animation.

It is a theme relating back to the great underlying concern of salvation and damnation, or the life and death of the Spirit in the soul. This is ultimately the meaning of all the novels from The Castle of Otranto to Melmoth the Wanderer, occurring in differing degrees of intensity and clarity.

Maturin as always gives the theme a highly intellectual expression. It is far more than a vendetta against Catholicism: indeed in the "Tale of the Spaniard" it emerges as the theme which all the other stories develop. Moncada's experiences presage that of many others in the novel. The monastery is only a facet of the whole, a microcosm of a universal problem. Lethargy is found outside the conventual walls, in fact permeates the artificial glories of Spanish high society.

It is certain that the gloomiest prospect presents nothing so chilling as the aspect of human faces, in which we try in vain to trace one corresponding expression; and the sterility of nature is luxury compared to the sterility of human hearts, which communicate all the desolation they feel.²⁴

It confronts Walberg and his family in their sufferings.

There is a withering monotony in the diary of misery, - 'one day telleth another.'²⁵

The monotony is an intensification of the experience of man trapped in the Vale of Generation, unable to escape, fallen Man transfixed in the contemplation of his wretchedness. The Wandering Jew and Melmoth the Wanderer, for example, exemplify the metaphysical aspect of this curse of life. The only way out of the petrified condition is transcendence, or the activation of the life of the Spirit. Melmoth describes the plight of wretched men crawling on the face of the earth, so dependent on his physical needs that, like Esau, he finds himself bartering his birthright for a bowl of potage. In greed and cruelty he becomes

part of the ugly power of the animal world.

The family collected around her, and raised - a corse. 'Thank God!' exclaimed her son, as he gazed on his mother's corse. - And this reversion of the strongest feeling of nature, - this wish for the death of those for whom, in other circumstances, we would ourselves have died, makes those who have experienced it feel as if there was no evil in life but want, and no object of rational pursuit but the means of avoiding it. Alas! if it be so, for what purpose were hearts that beat, and minds that burn, bestowed on us? Is all the energy of intellect, and all the enthusiasm of feeling, to be expended in contrivances how to meet or shift off the petty but torturing pangs of hourly necessity? Is the fire caught from heaven to be employed in lighting a faggot to keep the cold from the numbed and wasted fingers of poverty. ²⁴

This is Walberg's sorrow when Melmoth makes his unspeakable proposal, and here it is that the reader gains lucid perception of what the Gothic novel is all about.

'... I still feel, that death at the stake would be mercy compared to the lingering tortures of protracted famine, - to the death that we die daily - and yet do not die! ... I sit to hear their young sleep broken by dreams of hunger, while for a word's speaking I could pile this floor with mountains of gold, and all for the risk of' - 'Of what?' - said Ines, clinging to him, - 'of what? - Oh! think of that! - what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? - Oh! let us starve, die, rot before your eyes, rather than you should seal your perdition by that horrible' - 'Hear me, women!' said Walberg, turning on her eyes almost as fierce and lustrous as those of Melmoth, and whose light, indeed, seemed borrowed from his; 'Hear me! - My soul is lost! They who die in the agonies of famine know no God, and want none - if I remain here to famish among my children, I shall surely blaspheme the Author of my being, as I shall renounce him under the fearful conditions proposed to me! - Listen to me Ines, and tremble not. To see my children die of famine will be to me instant suicide and impenitent despair! But if I close with this fearful offer, I may yet repent, - I may yet escape! - There is hope on one side - on the other there is none - none - none! ...' ²⁵

Walberg is trapped in the world of experience, his senses so dulled by the "death he dies daily" that they are no longer apertures for the perception of life's mysteries that help the pilgrim soul on its arduous journey. In other words he has lost God's great gift, hope. Maturin calls this quality of mind the inebriation of the soul. Only by opening the self-creating ego to love, to the contemplation and adoration of something outside oneself can the deadly bonds be broken. Life must be full to overflowing - even if the action means death. To linger in dreary sobriety means restriction, desolation, death in life - a reality that will prove insupportable. Moncada briefly

experiences this drunkenness after the purported miracle.

I gave myself up to the intoxication of the day, - I did verily believe myself the favourite of the Deity for some hours.²⁵

There is often an imperfect realization of the inebriation of the soul among the religious.

Those who are possessed of what may be called the religious character, that is, who are visionary, weak, morose, and ascetic, may elevate themselves to a species of intoxication in the moments of devotion ... They may, while kissing the crucifix, believe that they hear celestial voices pronouncing their pardon; that the Saviour of the world extends his arms to them, to invite them to beatitude; that all heaven is expanded to their view, and the harmonies of paradise are enriched to glorify their apotheosis. But this is mere inebriation that the most ignorant physician could produce in his patients by certain medicines. The secret of this ecstatic swoon may be traced to an apothecary's shop, or purchased at a cheaper rate. The inhabitants of the north of Europe procure this state of exultation by the use of liquid fire - the Turks by opium - the Dervises by dancing - and Christian monks by spiritual pride operating on the exhaustion of a macerated frame. It is all intoxication, with this difference only, that the intoxication of men of this world produces always a self-complacency - that of men of the other world, a complacency whose supposed source is derived from God.²⁶

The theme finds important expression in almost secular terms in "The Lovers' Tale". It is the tragedy of a sensitive personality in a world where mediocrity predominates, of the soul trapped in the coils of generation. Elinor is doomed to live in obscurity in the country with a stern Puritan aunt.

Elinor, accustomed too much to that fatal excitement of the heart, which renders all other excitement as faint and feeble as the air of heaven to one who has been inhaling the potent inebriation of the strongest perfumes, wondered how this being, so abstracted, cold, and unearthly, could tolerate her motionless existence. She rose at a fixed hour, - at a fixed hour she prayed, - at a fixed hour received the godly friends who visited her, and whose existence was as monotonous and apathetic as her own, ... - yet she prayed without unction, and fed without appetite, and retired to rest without the least inclination to sleep. Her life was mere mechanism, but the machine was so well wound up, that it appeared to have some quiet consciousness and sullen satisfaction in its movements.

Elinor struggled in vain for the renewal of this life of cold mediocrity, - she thirsted for it as one who, in the deserts of Africa, expiring for want of water, would wish for the moment to be an inmate of Lapland, to drink of their eternal snows, - yet at that moment wonders how its inhabitants can live among SNOW. She saw a being far inferior to herself in mental power, - of feelings that hardly deserved the name - tranquil, and wondered that she herself was wretched. - Alas! she

did not know, that the heartless and unimaginative are those alone who entitle themselves to the comforts of life, and who can alone enjoy them. A cold and sluggish mediocrity in their occupations or amusements, is all they require - pleasure has with them no meaning but the exemption from actual suffering, nor do they annex any idea to pain but the immediate infliction of corporeal suffering, or of external calamity - the source of pain or pleasure is never found in their hearts - while those who have profound feelings scarce ever look elsewhere for either. So much the worse for them, - the being reduced to providing for the necessities of human life, and being satisfied when that provision is made, is perhaps the best condition of human life - beyond that, all is the dream of insanity, or the agony of disappointment.²⁷

It is no wonder that this Gothic novel was loved by Baudelaire. Was not his central, cosmic preoccupation the intoxication of man by wine, woman, or religion?

Il faut être toujours ivre. Tout est là: c'est l'unique question. Pour ne pas sentir l'horrible fardeau du Temps qui brise vos épaules et vous penche vers la terre, il faut vous enivrer sans trêve. Mais de quoi? De vin, de poésie ou de vertu, à votre guise. Mais enivrez-vous.

Et si quelquefois, sur les marches d'un palais, sur l'herbe verte d'un fossé, dans la solitude morne de votre chambre, vous vous réveillez l'ivresse déjà diminuée ou disparue, demandez au vent, à la vague, à l'étoile, à l'oiseau, à l'horloge, à tout ce qui fuit, à tout ce qui gémit, à tout ce qui roule, à tout ce qui chante, à tout ce qui parle, demandez quelle heure il est; et le vent, la vague, l'étoile, l'oiseau, l'horloge, vous répondront: "Il est l'heure de s'enivrer! Pour n'être pas les eschaves martyrisés du Temps, enivrez-vous, enivrez-vous sans cesse! De vin, de poésie ou de vertu, à votre guise."²⁸

Without transcendence life is threatened by a terrible enemy whose repulsiveness is vividly conjured up in Robert Lowell's startling translation of "Au Lecteur."

Among the vermin, jackals, panthers, lice,
gorillas and tarantulas that suck
and snatch and scratch and defecate and fuck
in the disorderly circus of our vice,

there's one more ugly and abortive birth.
It makes no gestures, never beats its breast,
yet it would murder for a moment's rest,
and willingly annihilate the earth.

It's BOREDOM. Tears have glued its eyes together.
You know it well, my Reader. This obscene
beast chain-smokes yawning for the guillotine -
you - hypocrite Reader - my double - my brother!³⁰²⁹

Intoxication is the only means of escaping this oppressive enemy, this agony

of mundane existence.

Aujourd' hui l'espace est splendide!
 Sans mors, sans éperons, sans bride,
 Partons à cheval sur le vin
 Pour un ciel féérique et divin!

. . .

Ma soeur, côte à côte nageant,
 Nous fuirons sans repos ni trêves
 Vers le paradis de mes rêves!³⁰

Is not Elinor Mortimer's plight, the universal plight perceived by Maturin and Baudelaire, the same as that of Dorothea Brooke married to Mr Casaubon in Middlemarch? Her experience is a daily death, a terrible sense of restriction and enclosure.

How was it that in the weeks since her marriage, Dorothea had not distinctly observed but felt with a stifling depression, that the large vistas and wide fresh air which she had dreamed of finding in her husband's mind were replaced by anterooms and winding passages which seemed to lead no-whither.³¹

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The Gothic novel examines the fate of the soul from every point of view: from the mythological agonies of the Wandering Jew to the everyday trials of a young but idealistic girl. Whatever the guise, the intention is the same: the issue of salvation and damnation. Underlying many of the ideas, themes and symbols in these novels is the myth of the soul, the ageless clash between Good and Evil. The growing fascination with darker experiences, and the gradual denial of transcendence, places these works in the category of demonic literature. The characteristic tone is one of pessimism: in this and in the reflection of a changed attitude to ancient traditions, the genre intimated many developments in art in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Already the cleansing melancholia of early Romanticism was passing into the neurotic sentiment and introspection of Wilde and Proust. In an age torn by

revolution, political and social upheaval, the Gothic novel added a terrifying dimension to literature: in the present age, with the passing of Victorian Gemütlichkeit this vision should be more appreciated.

MEANINGS FOR MODERN TIMES :SOME FINAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE GOTHIC GENRE1. THE GOTHIC NOVEL AS FICTION

The form and tradition characterizing the Gothic novel after its half-century of exploratory development are adumbrated in the KOSMOS of the novelists of this school. Characters, setting, plot, world view and tone are intimately linked and characterized by a common inspiration that progressively intensifies in detail, lucidity and symbolic resonance. A consideration of these individual elements that together constitute the fictional world can teach the reader much about the actual nature of fiction. Each of the elements is strongly represented in all the novels, with a simplicity and directness that renders each aspect almost prototypical. This is a feature of the compendious nature of the genre, its utilization and re-processing of existing models and its production of new ones. Indeed, to the reader wishing for an introduction to the practical application of the theory of fiction, nothing more to the point could be recommended than the Gothic novel.

i

A consideration of character alone reveals the fusion within one genre, often within one novel, and in Ambrosio's case within one character, of the various literary modes and types discussed by Northrop Frye in Anatomy of Criticism. From the paragons and villains of romance, through the tragic heroes of the high-mimetic and the suffering protagonists of the low-mimetic, through to the new myths of the ironic, all the features of the whole cycle of Western literature, from the early middle ages to modern times, are contained within the genre. The gradual unfolding of the modes parallels a movement

from the static or emblematic character types, through the more dynamic and detailed evocations of character, back to the static type where big symbolic issues are the chief concerns of character. The return to origins, noticeable in the later novels, is at a much higher level and has very substantial intellectual and aesthetic intentions that show a complete understanding of characterization and a mastery of the form and tradition of the Gothic novel, as it had been developing over forty years. It was as though the greater novelists of the school had drawn together all the types and methods of characterization at their disposal from world literature, and used them in unique creations. Certainly character, ranging from the primitive to the sophisticated, is the single most important ingredient of the fictional world of the genre. The whole gamut of character and characterization is present, stopping short only of the more modern techniques of figural narration. Indeed to have appreciated the full implications and detail of character in the Gothic novel is to learn much of the abstract theories of character.

ii

The Gothic novel proffers excellent examples of the rôle of setting in the recreation of the fictional world. Again the usual patterns of increasing intensity are evident as the cycle progresses. The dramatic props of Walpole and Mrs Reeve expand in Mrs Radcliffe's works into great blocks of elaborate setting in which the authoress's concern for the natural world and its meanings results in a type of nature cult. She perhaps illustrates perfectly romantic description which aims at establishing and maintaining a mood, as opposed to the naturalistic description which in its documentation recreates the illusion of reality. The atmosphere of romantic description is important for the heavy symbolic resonance carried by setting in its relation, veiled or openly identified, with the three spiritual realms of Heaven, Purgatory and Hell. In Mrs Radcliffe's successors, setting might not always be as sustained or detailed, but its atmospheric and symbolic charge increases in power and pointedness.

Setting is the environment of the fictional characters and is usually a metaphoric expression or extension of character. Again Mrs Radcliffe is keenly aware of this as in The Mysteries of Udolpho where the issues of her story are embodied in the buildings La Vallée, the place of reason and civilization, and Udolpho, that of romantic superstition and chaos. This is characteristic of the whole genre in which castle, convent, city, forest, mountain, plain, sea and island all possess a symbolic function echoing the central thematic concerns of the cycle. Setting in many ways becomes the projection of a spiritual intention and the human will.

iii

The handling of plot can similarly teach the reader much about the nature of fiction: the theoretical issues of plot reveal themselves in the consideration of narrative structures of the novels.

Essentially the plots are romantic, even though they initially might appear more realistically loose and diffuse. This is a deceptive view because every one of the novels has a carefully structured pattern governing the narrative. The crescendo, the circle and the recess, each in its turn, characterize the plot patterns of the novels. Moreover these patterns are not simply a shapely organization of a story-line made up of a mere series of causal events. The overall patterns, rather, relate very carefully and symbolically to the plot line - the crescendo characterizing the movement towards an uncovering of the truth with its attendant punishments and rewards; the circle marking the vindication of an enlightened and perfect way of life; the recess illustrating a progressive stripping away of layers of legend and experience until the meaning of the central myth is exposed at the heart of the narrative. The thematic concerns appear to arise out of the narrative developments: in fact the narrative is the enactment of weighty metaphysical problems. The shape of the plot is indicative of the dominant tone of the work - which in the Gothic cycle is predominantly a pessimistic one. The

end desolation of stories in the crescendo pattern (like Vathek), the bleak and tragic discoveries made in those of the recess pattern (like Melmoth the Wanderer) contrast overwhelmingly with the optimistic, positive drive of Mrs Radcliffe's stories and their circular pattern.

The prototypical nature of the Gothic novel reveals itself fully in the consideration of plot and its ramifications. The smaller narrative structures working within the overall plot patterns are imbued with the primitive motifs of folk-tales. The most obvious of these operate strongly in the earlier novels of the cycle. These are usually hidden relationships and mistaken identities such as the discovery that Theodore and Edmund are the true heirs, or the family connections between the St Auberts and the Villerois, the discovery by Ellena of her mother in the mysterious nun of San Stephano, and of her uncle in Schedoni, or the revelation at the end of The Monk that Ambrosio is in fact the son and brother of the two victims of his passion. Such motifs link the Gothic novel very definitely with ancient narrative sources: but the genre was strong and original enough to produce its own motifs. Time and again the heroes and heroines find themselves in situations of abandonment, isolation, confronting some crisis, some agony in desolation and grief. Unwittingly they are forced into situations lonely and terrifying where they come to some primordial intuition or realization.

Plot in the Gothic novel further illustrates the basic clash between the protagonist and antagonist very well, even if it is always the antagonist (in this case the Villain-Hero) who is the dynamic active agent while the protagonist (both the Angelic Heroine and the Young Hero) plays a passive rôle of suffering. The essential conflict is present in the inherent values and non-values represented by both groups.

The actual propulsion within the stories is sometimes provided by intrigue, as in the plotting of Lord Lovel's bad sons against Edmund, or more powerfully

still, in the plan devised by the Marchesa and Schedoni to separate Ellena and Vivaldi. By far the chief device of plot progression is the stimulation of suspense, often over a short period, but, more characteristically over longer ones, sometimes indeed covering nearly the span of the entire novel. The mystery of the black veil and its connection with the heroine is an example from The Mysteries of Udolpho. The enigma of Ambrosio's origins and kinship similarly spans the whole course of The Monk, from Lorenzo's narrative in Chapter One, to Satan's revelation in the last. The unexpectedness of Melmoth's appearances, the mystery of his identity, the truth of his story and the final advent of his fate are all arcs of tension spanning the whole of Maturin's novel.

Thus the multiplicity of events and actions in novels like The Mysteries of Udolpho and Melmoth the Wanderer are by no means diffusive, but intertwined by an underlying unity of intention. All the recessed stories of the latter novel are apparently independent of each other but are, in fact, closely linked by a community of victimhood and unfold rather like a set of variations on a common theme of suffering. When subplots occur, as in The Monk, they do not vitiate the effect of the narrative or the unity of action. Rather they broaden the perspective on the main plot and enhance the thematic implications of the story by skilful analogy with the main plot.

iv

The use of language in the Gothic novel, the careful attention to style and its adaption to theme, can again tell the observant reader much about the nature of fiction. The primitive nature of The Castle of Otranto and The Old English Baron is reflected in the dull and routine nature of the language which is undisturbed by the need to express any intense metaphysical burdens. With Vathek comes a change: Beckford's detailed and exotic imagination called for a corresponding intensification of the style, in the expression of detail

and variety.

The most dramatic change comes in the work of Mrs Radcliffe. In The Mysteries of Udolpho her language, with its stately expansiveness, formal constructions, Latinate vocabularies and rhetorical devices like balancing and catalogues, is a verbal embodiment of the authoress's essentially classical temperament. The elaboration of description, especially in the nature passages, reflect her concern with her particular world view. Her characteristic style is seen to even better advantage in The Italian. The reduction in plot is reflected in a paring of language, with a consequent acceleration in the pace of the narrative. This growing concern for lucidity and compression is developed by Mrs Shelley in Frankenstein. Her style is solemn, even formal, her vocabulary abstract, but there is no sense of inflation and the careful tailoring of description serves to heighten the inherent drama of the story and its thematic appositeness.

The Monk and Melmoth the Wanderer develop the precedents established in Vathek. Lewis's language is a strange mixture of the rhetorical and the melodramatic: it is always clear, however, and if sometimes too emphatic, has a certain Baroque ornateness. The swift movement of the novel is reflected in the language which lingers only occasionally to describe a scene or situation, or to depict a process of mind. At moments of importance the author uses a highly organized style - as on the first appearance of Ambrosio and the account of his death. Devices of repetition, parallelisms, ellipses, chiasmus, inversion and accumulation are used to effect. Emphasis is perhaps the key to his style: abstractions are personified in true eighteenth century poetic tradition, adjectives are constantly used in triplets and there is a Germanic tendency to stress certain words by use of capital letters.

Lewis's approach is adapted and sublimated by Maturin whose novel reflects complexity of theme in an overpowering use of language: an expansive, detailed

rhetoric characterized by striking phrases, original similies, and a vocabulary that intensifies every situation in colour and imagination. A constant use of italics heightens the emphasis.

v

The use of narrators in the Gothic novel is also diverse enough to teach the reader much about their use in fiction. Most of the novels are recounted by a discreet omniscient narrator who reveals himself very impersonally in the morals sometimes drawn at the end of the novels. Otherwise he is a guiding hand, who is almost forgotten, especially as the dramatic element in the Gothic novel is particularly developed in the dialogue used in all the novels. Sometimes, as in The Monk and Melmoth the Wanderer, there are substantial presages of developments to come, when, in concern for psychological verisimilitude, the narrating voice seems almost imperceptibly to merge with the actual dramatization of characters' minds: Ambrosio and Immalee-Isidora provide the best examples of this tendency.

The dramatic strain in the genre also emerges in the numerous instances of first-person narration. In The Monk there is both first-person central narration, as when Raymond and Agnes tell their stories, and first-person peripheral, when Sr St Ursula denounces the Prioress's crimes. First-person central is used in the "Spaniard's Tale" in Melmoth the Wanderer. Frankenstein is all first-person narration as Walton, Frankenstein and the Monster each tells his own story. This novel, indeed, uses the devices of journals, diaries, letters and anecdotes - the origins of prose fiction - as parts of the narrative tissue. The practice is echoed in Melmoth the Wanderer where the story emerges from a succession of narrators who either recall events in an anecdotal situation, or read them from manuscripts and other ancient records.

vi

Authors like Mrs Radcliffe and Lewis indicate, perhaps unconsciously, the romantic ideal of the Gesamtkunstwerk, or completely unified work of art.

In The Monk there is an attempt at fusing the lyric, epic and dramatic genres by the interpolation of poems, autonomous prose narratives and dialogue in the body of the text. The tendency is particularly noticeable in the inclusion of the poems, many of which, like Lorenzo's serenade and Antonia's bedtime hymn,¹ are meant to be sung. In The Mysteries of Udolpho the composition of poems is an attempt to dramatize the artistic experience and its relation to life and nature. The nocturnal scene in Venice in the gondola with the accompanying serenade is an attempt at melting imagination, poetry, music and nature into a whole experience.² Similar appreciations of architecture, furniture, fabrics and other artefacts, as well as the tendency to compare natural beauty with the works of painters, all regular and recurrent features of Mrs Radcliffe's novels, reiterate the aesthetic experience and its relation to life.

... it is certain ... that they (the Gothic novelists) were greatly concerned with such aesthetic problems as landscape gardening, poetry, and artistic appreciation - an education of the sensibilities which is more truly aesthetic than the éducation sentimentale ... In fact, the Gothic novelists were the first English novelists to incorporate their characters' aesthetic interests as a viable part of the narrative.³

The fictional world of the Gothic novel is thus fully recreated, each of its constituent parts of characters, setting and plot being developed in elaborate prose styles, and illustrating the nature of the elements that make up a fictional entity.

All these aspects are related to the metaphysical qualities of the works, the world view which contains all the serious themes and ideas embodied in the novels.

The elements are conceived with power and imagination, the result being novels with a colourful appeal. If the colours sometimes become lurid, and the devices melodramatic, this should not blind the reader to some of the vital ideas which the novels contain. Many of these ideas are parables of our times.

2. THE AESTHETIC OF HORROR, OR LEWIS AND FREUD

In order to understand tone and world view in the Gothic novel, it is important to grasp the essentially poetic and mythic qualities of the genre. The basis for this understanding goes back to the distinction between novel and romance, first successfully defined by Clara Reeve in 1785.

The Novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the time in which it is written. The Romance, in lofty and elevated language, describes what never happened nor is likely to happen.⁴

Her description is adumbrated by René Wellek and Austin Warren, who go on to quote Hawthorne on the matter.

The novel is realistic; the romance is poetic or epic: we should now call it 'mythic' ... The romance, ... the continuator of the epic and the medieval romance, may neglect verisimilitude of detail ... addressing itself to a higher reality, a deeper psychology. 'When a writer calls his work a Romance,' writes Hawthorne, 'it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude both as to its fashion and its material ...' If such a romance is laid in past time, it is not in order to picture with minute accuracy that past time, but to secure, in Hawthorne's words elsewhere, 'a sort of poetic ... precinct, where actualities would not be insisted upon ...'⁵

The concerns of the Gothic novels, properly romances, are thus not everyday or realistic ones. Indeed, once this 'poetic precinct' had been established where actualities are not insisted upon, appeal can be made to the 'higher reality' and the 'deeper psychology'. Both terms point to a unique fictional world of very deliberate meanings, often highly symbolic, where characters are sometimes personifications of values or incarnations of some mythic personality.

The Gothic Romance did not reflect real life, or reveal character, or display humour. It was full of sentimentality, and it stirred the emotions of pity and fear.⁶

i

One of the most interesting features of the fictional Gothic world of higher realities is the use of terror and horror as a prime characteristic of experience, indeed as an essential aesthetic ingredient. The terms are

very much the product of the eighteenth century concepts of the sublime. Indeed there was a very clear aesthetic distinction between the terms; it is important to grasp this in trying to understand the novels written between 1764 and 1820. Mrs Radcliffe herself distinguished between the two terms.

Terror and horror are so far opposite, that the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes and nearly annihilates them ... neither Shakespeare nor Milton by their fictions, nor Mr Burke by his reasoning, anywhere looked to positive horror as a source of the sublime, though they all agree that terror is a very high one.⁷

This is the general definition determining the difference between terror and horror, between the works of Mrs Radcliffe and Lewis. Mrs Radcliffe's art works by suggestion in that events present situations of fear although the potential of evil is never realized. Horror, as exemplified in The Monk, passes beyond suggestion to a confrontation of the evil itself in all its repulsive detail.

The origins of the new concern with the frightening come firstly as part of the general late eighteenth century reaction against desiccated reason and excessive sentimentality. Discovery of the sublime in art became a major preoccupation of poet and novelist with Burke's famous "A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful" (1765) serving as a manifesto.

Even more significant was the impact of the age on the minds of men and the nature of their expectations from literature. De Sade's famous assessment of the Gothic novel sees them as the fruit of the French Revolution which rocked all Europe. For those who knew the misery the wicked can inflict on mankind, the novel became as difficult to write as it became boring to read. Hell was consequently called in to help the novelist and interest the reader, so that in the literary re-creation of nightmare one could find a reflection of the ordinary events in an age of iron.

If today the Tale of Terror is told for its own sake, satisfying the human desire for new sensations without experiencing actual danger, its function in its own day was perhaps a little more complex. It genuinely stirred pity and fear, reflecting the tumults of the times and provided a refreshing source of excitement to those cloyed by the over-refined atmosphere of the novels of manners and sentiment.

Terror and horror in the Gothic novel are more than simply the cultivation of fear and pain as stimulants in themselves. Rather they are important elements, an artistic experience particular to the genre and suitably designated "aesthetic Gothic horror." The idea is discussed by Rictor Norton in his article of this name. He points out that the traditionally accepted distinctions made by Burke and Mrs Radcliffe between terror and horror are perhaps artificial. Most Gothic novelists used the terms interchangeably, with "horror" serving as the intensification of "terror". Terror is the psychological reaction the victim experiences when danger is still at some distance from himself and the possibility of escape still exists: the emotional and imaginative faculties are strained to the limit by the potential eruption of evil. Horror ensues when the feared object comes into closer proximity with the victim who now has no possibility of escaping it. The actual collision of the feared object and the victim carries the situation to its inevitable conclusion, and necessitates a superlative term for the moment when the evil consequences so feared are realized: that of disgust. Horror thus almost always follows terror and precipitates disgust. The whole experience is brought about by a succession of structured and ever-tightening enclosures that relates the nature of the experience to the Spirit of Negation and the Cavern of Darkness.

The Monk contains several examples of this tripartite and intensifying concept of fear. The murders in the last volume of the novel are all structured along such developments. When Elvira interrupts Ambrosio's attempted

rape of Antonia, a situation of terror ensues in the confrontation between mother and rapist. Elvira still has the opportunity of escaping. When, however, Ambrosio begins a physical attack on her the situation becomes horrific and inescapable. Finally, the murder is accomplished and the last condition of disgust is reached.

Her face was covered with a frightful blackness ... 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 Corse, cold, senseless and disgusting.⁸

Elvira is locked in the grim ugliness of death, this emphasizing the enclosure of the little room and the covering blanket of night. The same sort of experience characterizes the denunciation, abuse and murder of the Prioress: there is terror in the menaces of the crowd, horror in their frenzied assault, and disgust in the outcome of their actions.

She sank upon the ground bathed in blood, and in a few minutes terminated her miserable existence. Yet though She no longer felt their insults, the Rioters still exercised their impotent rage upon her lifeless body. They beat it, trod upon it, and ill-used it, till it became no more than a mass of flesh, unsightly, shapeless, and disgusting.⁹

With the understanding of the terms "terror" and "horror" expanded, one can try to assess in greater detail the actual nature of this essential Gothic experience.

ii

For Burke the highest state of sublimity is created by the juxtapositioning of opposite extremes.¹⁰ This principle of contrast is central to the aesthetic of the Gothic novel: the novels are virtually generated out of an overriding pre-occupation with violent contrasts. Mrs Radcliffe's novels are full of them: beautiful heroines and dark villains, pastoral valleys and rugged mountains, places of elegance and refinement and those where crudity and barbarism hold sway. It is The Monk which best illustrates the practice, for harsh and sharp contrasts is one of the major themes of Lewis's novel. Antonia's angelic personality, her innocence and virtue, put Matilda's satanic

self, her experience and evil, into a sharp perspective. Ambrosio's saintliness and fasting intensify his fall into demonic lust and satiation. It is a novel which regards the Bible at one moment as the scriptures and at another as "the annals of a Brothel."¹¹

The tension is always between something appealing, and an opposed repellent image. The latter is designated "sublime" because of the almost physical dimension of the experience, an onslaught on the mind, which in its positive manifestations can elevate and sometimes purify the emotions. A strong contrast in qualities impregnates the situation with an inner drama, especially when the beautiful is contrasted with the sublime. Antonia lying asleep in the crypts is a fine example.

The Gate was slightly fastened on the outside: He raised it, and placing the Lamp upon its ridge, bent silently over the Tomb. By the side of three putrid half-corrupted Bodies lay the sleeping Beauty. A lively red, the fore-runner of returning animation, had already spread itself over her cheek; and as wrapped in her shroud She reclined upon her funeral Bier, She seemed to smile at the Images of Death around her.¹²

The feeling derived from a contemplation of such a situation constitutes the essential Gothic experience. The experience is a neat illustration of the thesis-antithesis-synthesis formula of much art, in which the sublime (the awesome, terrifying, horrible and disgusting) is opposed by the beautiful (the heroic, noble, bright) with subsidiary gradations of the macabre and grotesque respectively. The outcome can be admiration, elevation, purification (as when a Radcliff heroine views a beautiful landscape from a sublime situation of travel or imprisonment) or more usually in the cycle, one of horror (the agony and death experiences of the victims in The Monk). Interestingly, this horror is more an aesthetic experience of the union of opposites than a psychological reaction of intense fear. The horrific moment in Gothic fiction is highly ambiguous - an amalgum of revulsion and attraction, of fear and fascination. The horrific situation is elaborately developed: when it finally explodes upon the reader, the climax of the Gothic experience is

achieved - and just as quickly passes. The moment, while it lasts, is perversely attractive and involves the reader's interest, often against his will. Repelled, he nevertheless lingers in contemplation of forbidden things, inadmissible in the world of ordinary gentilities. There is thus a relishing of the faraway and forbidden in the Gothic novel, the enjoyment of an experience not directly related to ordinary, often uneventful, existence. But the Gothic novel does not reflect real life: its refined medium has mysterious affinities with the lower recesses of man's mind and, ironically, with deep metaphysical issues peculiar to modern developments in Western civilization.

Gothic horror lends itself to a psychoanalytical approach. Rictor Norton sees in the psychic content of horror "sublimated Eros and the death instinct."¹³ He goes on to discern repressed genitality in the many Gothic incest motifs; the oral phase of pre-genitality in werewolves, vampires and blood-sucking creatures; the anal phase in decay and vermin; the narcissistic phase in the ego-maniacal villains and mad scientists; the death-instinct in the murders; a mixture of Eros and the death-instinct in the sado-masochism of the Inquisition.

The helpless stupefaction in the experience of horror is also very interesting from this psychoanalytical point of view. This freezing paralysis familiar from nightmares, expresses the ambiguity of the ego's compulsive attraction to the desires of the id, desires repelled by the restraints and fears of the superego. This is dramatically illustrated in Ambrosio's confusion at Matilda's revelation of herself as a woman.

While She spoke a thousand opposing sentiments combated in Ambrosio's bosom. Surprise at the singularity of this adventure, Confusion at her abrupt declaration, Resentment at her boldness in entering the Monastery, and Consciousness of the austerity with which it behoved him to reply, such were the sentiments of which He was aware; ...¹⁴

These are the restraining imperatives of the Reality Principle. But Lewis also has a crude intuition of the assertions of the Pleasure Principle.

But there were others also which did not obtain his notice. He perceived not, that his vanity was flattered by the praises bestowed upon his eloquence and virtue ... Still less did He perceive that his heart throbbed with desire, while his hand was pressed gently by Matilda's ivory fingers.

In waking life the ambiguous dilemma is resolved by repressing forbidden hates and desires to the latent unconscious and sublimating acceptable emotions like love to the manifest and conscious level. But the Gothic novel is a world in which the reality is that of dreams and nightmares so that no such repression-sublimation occurs; horror is a bewildering emotional conflict. The result is the puzzling union of opposites like "fearful joy" so common in the experience of characters in this genre.

The intuitive depiction of psychological truth in the Gothic novel explains, perhaps, its attraction and subsequent exploitation by imitators of its terror, horror and disgust.

The Gothic genre in the twentieth century is best exemplified by the horror film, and Gothic pulp fiction explicitly recognizes a definite audience more than any other type of fiction: the prefatory warnings that we are about to shudder help to achieve a state of comfort, security, and familiarity which will relax the critical faculty of the ego so that horror can come as close as possible to tranquillity and enable us to experience dreadful pleasure in a realm of aesthetic wonder.

We should appreciate this as the intrinsic achievement of the Gothic novel, rather than take the hindsight view that it is "the forerunner of" or "contains the germs of" something else, be it romanticism, surrealism, science fantasy or anything else.¹⁵

Most people who have written "Gothic" works and the undiscriminating public who consume these products, have no strong notion of the self. Such an artistic experience is an opportunity of fishing frightening things out of the unconscious, of viewing them fascinatedly at a distance, and of discarding them when curiosity has been satisfied. The experience of unconscious intimations accompanying the creation and reading of such works is a reassuring process, the discovery in aesthetic terms of an objective correlative for disturbing emotions and compulsions. Hence the writing or reading of such a work is a type of defence, a self-protection which is not explored. One

is invited to respond, but rarely is the invitation accepted: to think too deeply about the ultimate implications of the Gothic novel is to strip away layers of the self, to inspect the sewers after the reassuring motions of a purge, and so be confronted with revolting reality.

One author, closely associated with the Gothic school, indeed the diviner and generator of the more frightening dimensions of Romanticism, the Marquis de Sade, did pursue the Gothic perception to its grim conclusion: he tore the cover from the cesspool and turned the glare of inspection on the id. In so doing he rather demythologized the very real poetry of the Gothic novel, but also proved that the facts are almost impossible to endure when forced to rise from their primordial depths which is, by providential wisdom, their natural lurking place. To respond too fully, to perceive too deeply, is a very discomfoting experience.

If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the otherside of silence. As it is, the quickest of us walk about well wadded with stupidity.¹⁶

3. FAIRY TALES AND GOTHIC NOVELS

The appeal to primitive impulses and sources reflected in the Gothic novel is interestingly revealed in the strong affinity of the genre with fairy tales. This is not so much true of the more obvious and traceable features, although some of the basic motifs of the folk-tale, like those of the lost heir and hidden family relationships, are used regularly in the Gothic novel. The influence is subtler and shows itself mainly in attitudes and general situations. A common misapprehension about fairy tales, is that they are benign and romantic. The fact is that most events in fairy tales are remarkably unpleasant. The same misconception applies, albeit somewhat differently, to the Gothic novel. The term "romance" is inclined to dull the attitude of most readers who are inclined to substitute an idea of cloying sentiment and a risible chamber of horrors for the harsh events and implications depicted in the fictional Gothic world. Indeed, as in many fairy-tales, there is no happy ending, while the hero and heroine do not even escape with life. This is true of the Gothic novel despite Mrs Radcliffe's persistent impulse towards romantic pastoral.

i

One of the basic situations of the fairy tales is the identification of the hidden identity at the climax of the action, a revelation that is rarely a fairy transformation, but simply reality made evident. Cinderella is the most famous instance of this: she is by right her father's heir and is not transformed into a princess because in her beauty and inner purity she has always been what her royal marriage eventually acknowledges. This is the principle operating in The Castle of Otranto and The Old English Baron in which Theodore and Edmund are respectively true heirs who at last come into their own. Mrs Radcliffe's heroines are always of higher station, and inherit positions of rank and wealth as a matter of course. Ambrosio, of unknown

origins, has great aptitude and ability but is anyway eventually shown to be the scion of a noble house. Even the Vampire, Ruthven, is a nobleman, a fitting companion for Aubrey and the high-society he moves in, and upon whom Ruthven preys with a nonchalant and insolent contempt. Perhaps Polidori, used to feeling the odd man out among lords and poets, was more socially satirical in making Ruthven a nobleman than he was conscious of being. Frankenstein and Melmoth, though not emanating from royalty or the nobility, are representatives of a wealthy, powerful class, be it merchant or landowning. Frankenstein's brilliant scientific ability is no long struggle for achievement, but only the natural efflorescence of a great mind matured under optimum conditions. Similarly the two most powerfully developed heroines, Elizabeth Lavenza and Immalee-Isidora, are carefully pedigreed for the rôles they are to play. Elizabeth, although an orphan, must in her pure nature and noble birth provide fitting companionship for Frankenstein's genius. In the same way Immalee, untarnished child of nature, is fitted for her rôle as Isidora, self-sacrificing paragon, by her noble Spanish ancestry when she is brought back to civilization.

The Gothic novel, indeed, is rigidly class conscious. As in the most loved fairy tales, noble people may be brought low by enchantment or human callousness; the lowly are seldom made noble. Snow White and Sleeping Beauty are princesses, the Beast and the Frog are transmogrified princes. The rigidity of established order in the Gothic novel is emphasized by a similarly stringent and hieratic attitude to character. The Villain-Hero, Young Hero and Angelic Heroine move in a metaphysical world of extreme and symbolic implications, remote and unattainable to the numerous smaller types, serious and grotesque, who people the novels. Thus the Gothic novel, like the fairy tale, is not like the popular romance, in that it seldom enacts dream wishes realized in magical class transformations.

Like the fairy tale, the Gothic novel is peopled on occasion by magical and mythological beings (like the Wandering Jew and Satan in The Monk) who

perform both good and evil deeds. Yet it is seldom that such deeds carry the meaning of the tales or novels in themselves: indeed the message of many fairy tales is that transformation to a state of bliss is not effected by magic but by the perfect love of one person for another (as Snow White, The Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, The Frog Prince and Beauty and the Beast show). The same situation applies in the Gothic novel, where the fantastic is not cultivated for its own sake: its message, partly conveyed in this magical dimension, is the same as that of the fairy tale only with an additionally terrifying development. The life-giving actions of love, embodied in the meaning-making characters of the cycle (particularly the Angelic Heroines), are constantly threatened and even destroyed by the representatives of evil and selfishness. The Gothic novel makes the point of love but shows the priceless treasure fearfully endangered.

ii

The prolonged tests that constitute the body of the fairy tale, and the harrowing ordeals of the protagonists, are similarly the stuff of the Gothic novel. The sorrow of the innocent Angelic Heroines and the unaccountable suffering of the Young Heroes parallel the experiences of the paragons of the fairy tale. In their struggle towards the truth of love, they represent a spirit of youth and vitality, of freshness and hope, buffeted by the harsh realities of the world. Their association with love links them with spring and new beginnings, the universal symbols of youth.

As in the fairy tale where these protagonists often suffer inexplicably as the youngest members of a family, and are invariably abandoned, orphaned, deformed or treacherously injured, so in the Gothic novel they suffer as the innocent victims of malignant forces magnetically attracted to them in the universal struggle between Good and Evil.

All the suffering protagonists of fairy tales are at some time faced with

a crisis of identity when they are forced to ask "Who am I?" as their understanding about themselves becomes confused with the changes heralding the emergence of reality. Many are straightforward issues like the discovery of Rumpelstiltskins's name; others are more complex matters of hidden identity that must slowly emerge by trial and discovery, as with Cinderella. Still others are even more terrifying, with their true selves hidden in animal forms and their release dependent on a freely-given gesture of love, like the Frog Prince.

The Gothic novel is full of such identity crises. The early ones deal with simple situations of discovery and restitution. But beginning with Mrs Radcliffe, the matter becomes more complicated as characters like Schedoni hide their real selves and their histories behind elaborate facades. The gradual emergence of his story as the novel progresses, the appearance of a distinct personality, then a name, and finally a history, is a movement from shadowy villainy into tragic identity. In the later Gothic novel this question of identification is central, indeed underlies the thematic issues in the novels. Ambrosio's career veers from saintliness to sinfulness: under Matilda's fearful influence he is no longer certain of anything as the predictable aspects of his personality give way in the flood of new suggestions, emotions and experiences. Matilda's identity is inconstant as it adapts itself to every new nuance of temptation. Frankenstein's life is a constant search for his true identity, the sense of which he loses completely during his work on the Monster and can never fully recover in his subsequent sufferings. The whole aim of Melmoth's ceaseless quest is to lose his identity, to free himself of the burden of his personality and the sin he carries, by hoping to find a victim prepared to assume his responsibilities, his identity, in return for rescuing them from situations of suffering.

The crisis of identity, for the Villain-Heroes anyway, is a matter of great import that penetrates to the heart of meaning of the Gothic novel.

Their identity confusion is because of a perception within themselves of a demonic element that is almost impossible to regard as natural. The issue is whether this element is of the world, of nature, or whether they are confronted with the preternatural in themselves. The experience of an enlightened person feeling haunted by a demonic self is central to the Gothic novel. Constantly the characters in this type of fiction are forced to ask "What manner of being is this?"

This is given a literal physical representation in Frankenstein where the scientist, horrified with what he has done, sees the Monster as a demon. Is it a demon, or simply a hideous man? The Monster sees himself as a natural being living in the world and yearning for love. No one believes him or accepts his appeal: his creator assures Walton that the Monster is telling hellish lies.

Melmoth is similarly ambiguous: is he a man or a demon? All his victims are thrilled by the ghastly suspicion that they are tormented by a demon, while Melmoth himself is tormented by the knowledge that he is possessed by a "demon of superhuman misanthropy."

To these characters dark forces may well say 'You are not who you think you are. You are really an extension of us: you are really living our lives.'

This is succinctly expressed by Emily Brontë in Wuthering Heights - the novel that illustrates the fusion of the fairy and Gothic themes and motifs ideally. All Heathcliff's victims in this novel are haunted by the suspicion that he is a demon. Isabella Linton asks the key question of Nelly Dean:

Is Mr Heathcliff a man? If so, is he mad? And if not, is he a devil?¹⁷

The maintenance or achievement of full identity in the fairy tale usually

costs much: it is the crucial testing point. G.K. Chesterton understood the matter well.

If you really read the fairy tales, you will observe that one idea runs from one end of them to the other - the idea that peace and happiness can only exist on some conditions. This idea, which is the core of ethics, is the core of the nursery-tales.¹⁸

The condition demanded is often no less than the possibility of death: certainly death is a constant feature of the fairy tale and again of the Gothic novel. Snow White and the Sleeping Beauty both undergo types of death because of the machinations of wicked forces: their prince-rescuers must risk death to restore them. The Angelic Heroine of the Gothic novel are all victims of evil.

There is a second even more persistent pattern of death in the fairy tale, however: the severe and cruel punishment suffered by evil doers. These deaths are not to be understood as individual incidents, but rather as a pattern in which the personification of evil dies. This pattern is the negative counterpart to the outworking of good characteristic of the fairy tale.

In the Gothic novel, this frightening pattern of death is discernible in the fate of the Villain-Heroes, all of whom die as part of the eradication of the principle of evil. The deaths of Montoni and Schedoni are straightforward, but with the latter Gothic villain the death pattern is coloured by eschatological overtones. The deaths of Ambrosio and Melmoth are morbidly intense, and bring the pessimistic atmosphere, so dominant in the genre, to gloomy highpoints. The closing pages of Melmoth the Wanderer are a tone painting in desolation.

Death in both the fairy tale and Gothic novel is related to the Last Four Things. Death comes as the judgment bringing either Heaven or Hell. If pointing to Heaven, death is of positive value; if to Hell, as is more

often the case, death becomes the advent of nihilism. Death can never be, as it was for Nietzsche,¹⁹ the end of life without transcendence, devoid of all philosophical and religious attitudes; or as it was for Jean-Paul Sartre an external event negatively interrupting the course of life. In the Gothic novel death is never final: the fate of characters is virtually involved in what comes after death. The death situation in the cycle corresponds more with the view held by Karl Jaspers who regarded death as the great existential test of life. Confronted with this final test, life presents to a personality the opportunity for making decisions that are all his own. Death can either be accepted in its entirety, the opening to a glorious but frightening freedom, as it is by the Angelic Heroines, or becomes merely the end of a life unrestricted by responsible decisions. This would be the case with the Villain-Heroes who make wrong and selfish decisions, for whom death is only the intensification of bondage rather than liberation from it.

While Martin Heidegger felt it to be outside his scope to ask what may happen after death, death for him was the starting point influencing one's attitude to life, stressing the relationship of death to every single moment in life; this is more traditional than at first might be imagined. His attitude lacks the eschatological overtone, but nevertheless recalls the Christian practice of using the momento mori as a constant reminder of the imminence of death and the consequent need to live fruitfully.

The pure characters in the Gothic novel never fear death: because of their alignment with the heavenly kingdom, their sense of direction is definite. Death for them is not dispossession (as Sartre considered it to be) or the final encounter with the absurd (as depicted by Camus), but the opportunity of finding the ultimate meaning of existence.

Further, because of its pessimistic strain and its register of morbid images, the Gothic novels constantly present the reality of death. The genre

itself is a type of great momento mori, while its thematic preoccupations never shirk the challenge of Charlotte Bronte's "sentient target of death."

4. FEELING AND THINKING: THE HISTORICAL AND AESTHETIC APPROACHES

In the end, just how is the Gothic novel to be assessed? Is it trivial, a collection of risible conventions, or is it profound, reflecting some primordial instinct, literary mystery, or surreal quest? The first attitude persists in finding the cycle an aesthetic failure, while the second emphasizes its historical importance.

The reader must carefully distinguish between the historical and aesthetic approaches. The former is conditioned by numerous fortuitous circumstances, the latter exists outside time and is subject to laws that are eternal and conditions that are changeless. The qualities which go to make a great work of art do not intrinsically differ from one age to another. Consequently there should be no more difficulty in distinguishing what is good from what is bad in any age. At the same time there is no reason why every attempt should not be made to reconcile two usually separate approaches. The Gothic novel is of great historical importance and of considerable aesthetic interest. Walpole's statement

Life is a tragedy to the man who feels and a comedy to the man who thinks²⁰

perhaps contains the whole problem of the divergent attitude elicited by the genre.

The Gothic novel with its pessimism and even grief, its unique blend of beauty and sublimity, the picturesque and the grotesque, the horrific and the sentimental, can make a moving appeal to a tolerant and impressionable reader; but to the intolerant and satirical reader these very features are incongruous, jarring, ludicrous. The rigorously aesthetical nature of the latter approach disregards the substantial intellectual implications of much of the material in the Gothic novel which the authors, often unawares, and

with underdeveloped technique, were trying to express. Only a sensitive historical perspective can determine the place of the genre in the unfolding of literary history, as both a topical and prophetic reflection of trends of the age. For the Gothic novel itself is an amalgum of the aesthetic and the historic, of tragedy and comedy, of feeling and thought. The irony of the usual critical assessments of the Gothic genre is that its incidental absurdities blind the reader to the intellectual issues implicit in this fictional world and so divert him that he is no longer able to perceive its real if limited metaphysical dimension.

5. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE LEVELS OF MEANING

The central truth of the Gothic novel is its perception in heavily mythological terms of the frightening advent of a new age, the nightmare vision of a world in which values lose their meanings and things begin to fall apart. The problem of the Western world, conceived in the Renaissance with its Reformation and Age of Science and Enlightenment, dramatized terrifyingly in the advent of political and industrial revolution at the end of the eighteenth century, cet âge de fer, implied the death in slow degrees of the values and systems that always used to give meaning and coherence to the Western mind. Dr Schumacher describes this well:

The classical-Christian culture of the late Middle Ages supplied man with a very complete and astonishingly coherent interpretation of signs, i.e. a system of vital ideas giving a most detailed picture of man, the universe, and man's place in the universe. This system, however, has been shattered and fragmented, and the result is bewilderment and estrangement ...²¹

The dramatic acceleration of the Age of Revolution and its implications, were ruthlessly and systematically implemented in the nineteenth century, with the deification of scientific methods of reductionism and the destruction of all mystery and sanctity in man and nature. A system of scientific education was established that taught and teaches technicalities and methods but fails to help people understand life and their place in the world. By doing away with metaphysics the nineteenth century substituted "a bad, vicious life-destroying type of metaphysics."²² The subsequent discovery of man has been acutely expressed by Byron.

Sorrow is knowledge; they who know the most
Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth,
The Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.²³

This is the experience of Immalee being taught by Melmoth, it is the anguish of the Monster and the realization that destroys the life of the Spirit in

Frankenstein's soul.

The revolutions in all their social, political, religious, moral and aesthetic ramifications have annihilated a central meaning-giving concept.

While the nineteenth century ideas deny or obliterate the hierarchy of levels in the universe, the notion of an hierarchical order is an indisputable instrument of understanding. Without the recognition of 'Levels of Being' or 'Grades of Significance' we cannot make the world intelligible to ourselves nor have we the slightest possibility to define our own position, the position of man, in the scheme of the universe. It is only when we can see the world as a ladder, and when we can see man's position on the ladder, that we can recognise a meaningful task for man's life on earth.²⁴

This destruction of the hierarchical order is the sin of the self-creating ego, the obsessed behaviour of all the Gothic villains. Ambrosio overturns every sanctity in his lustful abandon, Melmoth seeks after forbidden knowledge and Frankenstein tries to usurp the place of God.

Every age thinks in certain concepts expressed in particular metaphors. Certainly this idea of denying different levels of significance was a central assumption of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a conception dramatized in the world view of the Gothic novel. The highly developed idea of fear in the Gothic cycle with its pernicious destruction of system, value and sacrosanct levels of meaning in the universe, leads straight to Darwin and feeds directly into the despairing and materialistic view of the world, one that has allowed crude economics and politics to take over as the only measure of significance. The destruction of the traditional world view, represented so strongly in the tarnishing of idealism and beauty in the Gothic novel, is an impoverishment that will overwhelm the entire Western civilization if the current tendencies continue. The outcome can only be the advent of chaos, the final Gothic vision.

In its archetypal struggle between Good and Evil the Gothic novel

reflects the tendency to deny and obscure the levels of significance. The pernicious philosophies of the Villain-Heroes, their temptations and actions are all anarchistic gestures of defiance reflecting

... the destruction of ethics which is based on the distinction of good and evil, claiming that good is higher than evil.²⁵

6. REVOLUTION AND THE ADVENT OF CHAOS

The fervour of the age of turmoil at the end of the eighteenth century produced in many writers a sense of mission,²⁶ the discovery of an inner discord reflecting the outer chaos of the times, and the need to find the authentic self, natural, genuine, and spontaneous as opposed to all artificial calculating and conventional posturing. Their desire for the purified self extended to a concern for a cleansing and transformation of society. The longing for regeneration, which in religion refers naturally to spiritual rebirth, was transferred to political, social and aesthetic spheres. The destruction of the dehumanized enemy in whatever form he came promised the advent of a golden age of peace and love. However, the cleansing process always entails a violent upheaval, a catastrophe in which the old world passes away and a new one dawns. Many of the visionary artists depicted such an apocalypse in all the traditional eschatological images of blood, fire, storm and flood.

Very often in the use of these images one detects a certain note of complacency in the contemplation of impending doom, a wallowing (almost) in the idea of destruction, the cataclysmic night of upheaval and disaster that precedes purification and the freshness of the new dawn. There comes a moment when destruction is virtually welcomed in order to hasten the hour of release. This note becomes more and more marked as time goes on and as the romantic imagination revels in the sheer excitement of images of disaster, hurricanes, earthquakes.²⁷

This tendency is the obvious connection the Gothic novelists have with the revolutionary attitude. They were never conscious visionaries who used their art to expound revolutionary view points. They were rather prophets, almost unconsciously recording inner impulses generated by the age, unaware often of the full implications of their intuitive perceptions. Their novels do not carry a creed, but rather mythological reflections on the age of iron. They preach no optimistic message of hope that looks forward to a new and liberated age: only Mrs Radcliffe does this. Their vision is a pessimistic one, a perception of encroaching evil. They depict cataclysmic

convulsions but remain entrapped in this situation and can never pass beyond it into the new heaven and the new earth.

What the Gothic novel does is to mythologize the consequences of the move from reason into revolutionary unreason; it is a type of reflection on the terror Pope feared would follow the dissolution of order, the destruction of those sanctified levels of existence.²⁸ Its negative world view and complete pessimism set the aesthetic tone, always intensifying, of the century that followed, from the still-purgatory melancholy of early Romanticism to the self-indulgent neuroses of the Symbolists. A consideration of Villiers d'Isle Adam's dramatic poem, Axel (1890), which is imbued with fin de siècle decadence, and uses in concentrated form every device of the Gothic school, reveals the over-refinement, suffocation and introversion so characteristic of a degenerate tradition.

The Romantic as an individual was still contended with gestures of defiance against the society and norms he defied. A proselytizing zeal, a fervid objective desire to purge and change societies made the Romantic poet "an unacknowledged legislator."²⁹ The Symbolist has abandoned society altogether, determined to cultivate his uniqueness far beyond the point to which the Romantics were prepared to move. He has become a languid purveyor of selfish dreams of an enclosed subjective world view that proffers an esoteric hope to the initiated few.

There is a difference between Proust's cork-lined bedroom and Alfred de Vigny's ivory tower. Vigny was dealing, even in his art, with that active life of the world in which he had participated, but the post-Romantic writer who sleeps by day has lost touch with that world so completely that he too no longer knows precisely what it is like.³⁰

The Gothic novel is, as was said in the introduction to this study, an unappreciated genre, a watershed between the changing worlds of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; it is a microcosm of many of the major trends and

patterns in world literature that have unfolded sometimes over centuries. The genre is a mythology for modern times, perceptive of the spirit of disillusionment and dissatisfaction which runs throughout the entire art of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries like a Leitmotif, a kind of spiritual malady, variously ascribed by literary critics and historians to the collapse of the intellectual solidarity of the preceding age and the failure to realize the great ideals of the Revolution, to the destructive philosophy of Kant, to the exhaustion and apathy following the Napoleonic wars, and to the rapid growth of modern industrialism. The art of the period, whether it reverts to the ideals of the past, offers a prospect for the future, or returns to nature, is all an attempt to escape from present actualities, to build up again in art the realities, or the illusions of which humanity has been deprived in life. Art provides an escape from reality, a sanctuary from the forces of science, commercialism and materialism.

Cecil Gray has seen a great flourishing in music as a characteristic of a civilization in decay, while architecture, painting and literature mark its growth, development and culmination. For him the great age of music was the nineteenth century, the swan song of an age.

All romantic art is a swan-song, the final expression of a civilization, the rich autumn tints of decay, the writing on the wall, the flaming comet heralding the approach of anarchy and dissolution known to Plato and called by him the 'rebellious principle'. And it is interesting to note that the nature of this rebel art (in the Republic) are almost identical with the confession of faith of the great romantic leader, Victor Hugo, in the famous preface to his Cromwell.³¹

The Gothic novel is one of the first and most important literary voices in this swan-song. The mistake is to view it from a narrowly aesthetic viewpoint as an incongruous genre, or historically as simply a highly influential force in literary history. As exaggerated as it may seem, it is the well-spring of much nineteenth and twentieth century literature. It is not of a limited pre-romantic interest: in some ways it is a moment in literary

history when manifold ideas flowed together and secured an (admittedly tenuous) union, and then separated again into diverse and incalculably influential strands.³² It is the strangest amalgum of the most ancient and the most modern, of fairy tales, and situations of great interest to psychoanalysis. The school never achieved aesthetic immortality because it produced no single transcendant genius.

Between 1764 and 1820 the Gothic novel underwent development, a process of intensification, from a latent intimation of the unconscious and demonic in the world and the minds of men, to an overt recognition of these powerful forces of evil. The genre dimly perceives the nightmare of the lost modern world that Yeats prophesied in "The Second Coming".

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
 The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
 Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
 Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
 The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
 The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
 The best lack all conviction, while the worst
 Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
 Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
 The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
 When a vast image-out of Spiritus Mundi
 Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
 A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
 A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
 Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
 Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
 The darkness drops again; but now I know
 That twenty centuries of stony sleep
 Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
 And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
 Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?³³

The Gothic novel depicts this falling apart, this fragmentation in the advent of the slouching beast, and ultimately predicts the imminence of the Age of Antichrist.

NOTES

I THE GOTHIC NOVEL: AN UNDERESTIMATED GENRE

i. AMUSED PATRONAGE

1. These editions form part of the Oxford English Novels series whose general editor is James Kinsley, Professor of English Studies in the University of Nottingham. The Old English Baron appeared in 1967, The Mysteries of Udolpho in 1970, The Italian in 1971, Melmoth the Wanderer in 1972, The Monk in 1973.
2. The complicated series of events surrounding the appearance of Lewis's novel is exhaustively dealt with by André Parreaux in The Publication of 'The Monk': A Literary Event, 1796-1798.
3. Matthew Gregory Lewis, The Monk (London, 1973) pp. 198-199.

ii. CET ÂGE DE FER

4. D.A.F. de Sade, Idée sur les Romans (Paris, 1800), quoted by Mario Praz in his Introduction to Three Gothic Novels (Penguin Books, 1968), p.14.

'This genre was the inevitable product of the revolutionary shocks with which the whole of Europe resounded. For those who are acquainted with all the ills that are brought upon men by the wicked, the romantic novel was becoming somewhat difficult to write, and merely monotonous to read: there was nobody left who had not experienced more misfortunes in four or five years than could be depicted in a century by literature's most famous novelists: it was necessary to call upon hell for aid in order to arouse interest, and to find in the land of fantasies what was common knowledge from historical observation of man in this iron age. But this way of writing presented so many inconveniences! The author of The Monk failed to avoid them no less than did Mrs Radcliffe; either of these two alternatives was unavoidable; either to explain away all the magic elements, and from then on to be interesting no longer, or never raise the curtain, and there you are in the most horrible unreality.'
5. J.M.S. Tompkins, The Popular Novel in England 1770-1800, p.251.
6. See E. Legouis and L. Cazamian, A History of English Literature, pp. 935-943.
7. See Eino Railo, The Haunted Castle, Ch.1, and Tompkins, Appendix III, "Mrs Radcliffe's Sources."
8. The Monk, Advirtisement, p. 6. See Parreaux, pp. 26-31 and Otto Ritter, "Studien zu M.G. Lewis's Roman Ambrosio, or The Monk" for additional sources not listed by Lewis.
9. Siegbert Praver ed., The Romantic Period in Germany, pp.8-9.
10. See Edith Birkhead, The Tale of Terror, ch. 9-12 for a general discussion of the influence on English literature.
11. See Frederick Garber's Introduction to The Italian (London, 1971), p. xiv for a concise survey of the influence on European literature.

iii. UNCONSCIOUS URGINGS

12. Birkhead, p.86.
13. Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence, I, 88, cited in Kiely, The Romantic Novel in England, p.27.
14. Mary Shelley, Author's Introduction to the Standard Novels Edition of Frankenstein, cited in Three Gothic Novels, pp.263-264.
15. Louis F. Peck, A Life of Matthew G. Lewis, p.19.
16. *Ibid.*, p.20.
17. So termed by T.J. Mathias in The Pursuits of Literature (1794), cited in Tompkins, p.248.

iv. LES CHEFS D'OEUVRES

18. The so-called "Northanger Novels" listed by Jane Austen in her novel are excellent examples of the sub-species of the Gothic genre. See Michael Sadleir, "The Northanger Novels."
19. These works are by Charlotte Dacre, Sophia Lee, Mary-Anne Radcliffe and Eleanor Sleath.
20. Walpole's Preface to the Second Edition of The Castle of Otranto, cited in Three Gothic Novels, p.44.
21. Clara Reeve's Preface to the Second Edition of The Old English Baron, cited in the Oxford Edition (1967), pp.4,5.
22. Ann Radcliffe, The Mysteries of Udolpho, (London : J.M. Dent and Sons, 1969), 2 Vols., II, 220.
23. An interest in Oriental literature had been awakened early in the eighteenth century by Antoine Galland's epoch-making translations of The Arabian Nights (1704-1717), The Turkish Tales (1708) and The Persian Tales (1714), which were all translated into English during the reign of Queen Anne, the first appearing between 1704 and 1708 and known as the "Grubs Street Version."
24. See Mario Praz's Introduction to the Three Gothic Novels, p.23.
25. Richard Harter Fogle, "The Passions of Ambrosio," p.36

v. THE GOTHIC CYCLE

26. Karl Beckson and Arthur Ganz, A Reader's Guide to Literary Terms, pp. 76-77.
27. M.H. Abrams, A Glossary of Literary Terms, p.69.
28. Robert D. Hume, "Gothic versus Romantic: a Revaluation of the Gothic Novel," p.290.

II CHARACTER

1. Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, pp.33-67.
2. Ibid., pp.50-51.

1. THE VILLAIN HEROi. The Inscrutable Tyrant

3. Ibid., p.39.
4. The Castle of Otranto, pp.93-94.
5. Ibid., p.59.
6. Frieda Fordham, An Introduction to Jung's Psychology, p.49
7. Ibid., pp.53-54.
8. The Mysteries of Udolpho, I, 160-161.
9. Ibid., I, 185.
10. Ibid., I, 274.
11. Ibid., I, 175.
12. Ibid., II, 27.
13. Ibid., I, 175.
14. Ibid., I, 231.
15. Ibid., I, 234.
16. Ibid., II, 240.
17. Clara F. McIntyre, "The Later Career of the Elizabethan Villain-Hero," pp.874,880.
18. William Beckford, Vathek, (Penguin Books, 1968), pp.214,215.
19. Ibid., pp.214,215.
20. Ibid., pp.226-227.
21. Ibid., p.239.

ii. The Criminal Monk

22. The Monk (London, 1973), p.17.
23. Ibid., p.20.
24. Ibid., p.236.
25. Fogle, p.37.
26. Archer Taylor, "The Three Sins of the Hermit."
27. The Monk, p.41.
28. McIntyre, Ann Radcliffe in Relation to Her Times, pp.93-94.
29. The Monk, pp.39-40.
30. Ibid., p.257.
31. Ibid., p.59.
32. Ibid., p.62.
33. Ibid., p.223.

34. The Monk, p.237.
35. Ibid., p.256.
36. Ibid., pp.425-427.
37. John Berryman, Introduction to The Monk (New York, 1952), p.13.
38. Francis Russell Hart, "The Experience of Character in the English Gothic Novel," p.100.
39. Frederick Garber, Introduction to The Italian (London, 1971), pp.xi-xii.
40. The Italian, p.34.
41. Ibid., pp.34-35.
42. Ibid., p.109.
43. Ibid., p.110.
44. Ibid., p.225.
45. Ibid., p.234.
46. Garber, pp.xiv-xv.

iii. The Accursed Wanderer

47. Frankenstein, p.296.
48. Ibid., pp.307-308.
49. Ibid., p.285.
50. Ibid., p.285.
51. Ibid., pp.315-316.
52. Ibid., p.353.
53. Ibid., p.474.
54. Ibid., p.342.
55. Ibid., p.312.
56. Ibid., pp.338-339.
57. Ibid., pp.385-386.
58. Ibid., p.496.
59. Hume, p.286.
60. John Polidori, The Vampyre (Penguin Books, 1973), p.290.
61. Charles Robert Maturin, Melmoth the Wanderer (London, 1972), p.27.
62. Ibid., pp.44-45.
63. Ibid., p.299.
64. Ibid., p.298.
65. Ibid., p.303.
66. Ibid., pp.304,306.
67. Ibid., pp.498-499.

2. THE YOUNG HERO

1. The Castle of Otranto, p.88.
2. Ibid., p.118.
3. Ibid., p.108.
4. Ibid., p.109.
5. Frye, pp.41,42.
6. The Mysteries of Udolpho, I, 31.
7. Ibid., I, 32.
8. Ibid., I, 37.
9. Ibid., II, 186-187.
10. Ibid., II, 293.
11. The Monk, p.24.
12. Ibid., pp.95,96-97.
13. Ibid., p.160.
14. Ibid., p.294.
15. The Italian, p.14.
16. Ibid., pp.121-122.
17. Ibid., p.198.
18. Ibid., p.199.
19. Ibid., p.320.
20. Frye, p.42.
21. The Vampyre, p.288.
22. Ibid., pp.301,304.
23. Frankenstein, p.296.
24. Ibid., pp.296-297.
25. Ibid., p.425.
26. Ibid., p.331.
27. Ibid., p.447.
28. Melmoth the Wanderer, p.468.
29. Ibid., p.493.
30. Ibid., p.424.
31. Ibid., p.422.
32. Ibid., p.71.
33. Ibid., p.88.
34. Ibid., p.88.
35. Ibid., p.94.
36. Ibid., p.161.
37. Ibid., p.234.
38. Ibid., p.108.
39. Ibid., p.215.

3. THE ANGELIC HEROINE

1. The Castle of Otranto, p.80.
2. *Ibid.*, p.105.
3. *Ibid.*, p.141.
4. *Ibid.*, p.143.
5. *Ibid.*, p.144.
6. *Ibid.*, p.109.
7. The Mysteries of Udolpho, I, 5-6.
8. *Ibid.*, I, 275.
9. *Ibid.*, I, 187.
10. *Ibid.*, II, 35.
11. *Ibid.*, I, 34.
12. *Ibid.*, I, 48.
13. *Ibid.*, I, 102.
14. *Ibid.*, II, 105.
15. *Ibid.*, I, 110.
16. *Ibid.*, II, 296-297.
17. *Ibid.*, II, 344.
18. The Monk, p.130.
19. *Ibid.*, p.415.
20. *Ibid.*, p.9.
21. *Ibid.*, pp.210,264.
22. *Ibid.*, pp.253,255.
23. *Ibid.*, p.249.
24. *Ibid.*, p.261.
25. *Ibid.*, p.308.
26. *Ibid.*, p.384.
27. *Ibid.*, p.393.
28. The Italian, pp.11-12.
29. *Ibid.*, p.60.
30. *Ibid.*, p.125.
31. *Ibid.*, p.181.
32. Frankenstein, p.292.
33. *Ibid.*, p.292.
34. *Ibid.*, p.293.
35. *Ibid.*, p.297.
36. *Ibid.*, p.461.
37. The Vampyre, p.293.
38. *Ibid.*, p.294.
39. *Ibid.*, p.296.

40. Melmoth the Wanderer, p.282.
41. Ibid., p.295.
42. Ibid., p.297.
43. Ibid., p.309.
44. Ibid., p.312.
45. Ibid., p.328.
46. Ibid., p.329.
47. Ibid., p.334.
48. Ibid., pp.340-341.
49. Ibid., p.358.
50. Ibid., p.363.
51. Ibid., pp.363-365.
52. Ibid., p.366.
53. Ibid., pp.372-373.
54. Ibid., pp.530-531.
55. Ibid., pp.531,533.
56. Ibid., p.408.
57. Ibid., p.459.
58. Ibid., p.457.
59. Ibid., pp.461-463.
60. Ibid., pp.472-486.
61. Ibid., pp.485-486.
62. Ibid., p.495.

4. THE DEMONIC WOMAN

1. Vathek, p.157.
2. Ibid., pp.175-176.
3. Ibid., p.183.
4. Ibid., pp.253-254.
5. The Mysteries of Udolpho, I, 112-113.
6. Ibid., II, 33.
7. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "The Monk, A Romance," p.371.
8. The Monk, p.440.
9. Ibid., p.41.
10. Ibid., p.89.
11. Ibid., pp.231-232.
12. Ibid., pp.268-269.
13. Ibid., pp.274-275.
14. Ibid., p.429.
15. Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony, p.201.

16. The Italian, p.7.
17. Ibid., pp.169-170.
18. Ibid., p.291.
19. Ibid., p.376.
20. Melmoth the Wanderer, p.469.
21. Ibid., p.470.
22. Ibid., p.463.
23. Ibid., p.494.

5. LOVING FATHERS AND GENTLE MENTORS

1. The Castle of Otranto, p.81.
2. Ibid., p.91.
3. Ibid., p.114.
4. The Old English Baron, p.19.
5. Ibid., p.35.
6. Vathek, pp.240-241.
7. The Mysteries of Udolpho, I, 82.
8. The Monk, pp.259-260.
9. Ibid., p.302.
10. Ibid., p.304.
11. The Italian, p.25.
12. Ibid., p.39.
13. Ibid., p.55.
14. Frankenstein, pp.290-291.
15. Ibid., p.452.
16. Ibid., p.470.
17. Melmoth the Wanderer, p.263.
18. Ibid., p.266.

6. GARRULOUS MAIDS AND TRUSTY HENCHMEN

1. Preface to the Second Edition of The Castle of Otranto, pp.44-45.
2. Ibid., p.135.
3. Ibid., p.136.
4. The Monk, p.323.
5. The Italian, p.43.
6. The Old English Baron, p.52.
7. Vathek, p.182.

8. Vathek, p.328.
9. The Mysteries of Udolpho, I, 250-251.
10. Ibid., II, 344.
11. The Italian, p.190.
12. Ibid., p.411.
13. The Monk, p.328.
14. Ibid., p.202.
15. Ibid., p.246.
16. Melmoth the Wanderer, p.330.
17. Ibid., p.377.
18. Ibid., p.332-333.
19. Ibid., p.332.
20. Ibid., p.533.

III SETTING1. PALE SHADOWS AND THICKENING TEXTURES

1. Klaus Poenicke, "Schönheit im Schlosse des Schrekens," p.3.

'The strength of the book lies in the taut action, skillfully accelerated by the horror-motive, and in the lively, quick-witted dialogue. These are more qualities of the drama than of the novel, and we know that Walpole intended to achieve theatrical success. From this it should be understandable why the natural world of spaces, mountains, forests, parklands play virtually no rôle and why the famous castle is hardly more than a stage prop.'

2. The Castle of Otranto, p.61.
3. Ibid., p.61.
4. The Old English Baron, p.14.
5. Ibid., p.42.
6. Vathek, p.151.
7. Ibid., pp.161-162.
8. Ibid., pp.234-236.
9. Ibid., pp.189-190, 191.
10. Ibid., p.193.
11. Ibid., p.194.
12. Ibid., p.197.
13. Ibid., pp.237-238.
14. Ibid., p.219.
15. Ibid., p.167.
16. Ibid., pp.170,173.
17. Ibid., p.241.
18. Ibid., p.244.
19. Ibid., pp.245,247.

2. THE BALANCED UNIVERSE

20. Poenicke, pp.4-5.

'The freshness of Ann Radcliffe's landscape paintings makes it possible for the critics to treat in retrospect the paleness of her characters and the looseness of her structure indulgently. This is made all the easier for them when the authoress in all her dealings with the uncanny, never loses the edifying worth of romance.'

21. The Mysteries of Udolpho, I, 2.
22. Ibid., I, 2-3.
23. Ibid., I, 4.
24. Ibid., I, 6.
25. Ibid., I, 1.

26. The Mysteries of Udolpho, I, 6.
27. Ibid., I, 6-8.
28. Ibid., I, 43-44.
29. Ibid., I, 40.
30. Ibid., I, 56.
31. Ibid., I, 68.
32. Ibid., I, 121.
33. Ibid., I, 182.
34. Ibid., I, 230.
35. The Italian, p.413.
36. Ibid., p.6.
37. Ibid., pp.64-65.
38. Ibid., p.175.
39. Ibid., pp.210-211.
40. Ibid., p.200.
41. Ibid., p.413.

3. THE GROWING PREPONDERANCE OF HELL

42. The Monk, pp.7-8.
43. Ibid., p.26.
44. Ibid., p.27.
45. Ibid., pp.28-29.
46. Ibid., p.378.
47. Ibid., p.28.
48. Poenicke, pp.14-15.

'The Monk is overwhelmingly a book of interiors, of enclosed spaces, of castle, convent and subterranean caverns. The threat against man is realized in this cellular world, not in the open scenery of the natural sublime.'

49. The Monk, p.153.
50. Ibid., p.159.
51. Ibid., pp.272-273.
52. Ibid., p.275.
53. Ibid., pp.368-369.
54. Ibid., pp.378-379.
55. Peter Brooks, "Virtue and Terror: The Monk," p.258.

4. PARADISE LOST

56. Frankenstein, p.269.
57. Ibid., p.485.
58. Ibid., p.362.

59. Frankenstein, p.364.
60. Ibid., p.315.
61. Ibid., p.315.
62. Ibid., pp.432-433.
63. Ibid., p.484.
64. Ibid., p.296.
65. Ibid., p.295.
66. Ibid., p.460.
67. Ibid., pp.337-338.
68. Ibid., p.476.
69. Ibid., pp.368-369.
70. Ibid., p.370.
71. Ibid., p.407.
72. Melmoth the Wanderer, p.273.
73. Ibid., p.308.
74. Ibid., p.287.
75. Ibid., p.342.
76. Ibid., pp.47-48.
77. Ibid., pp.25-26.
78. Ibid., p.398.
79. Ibid., pp.349,350,351.
80. Ibid., pp.538-539.

IV PLOT1. THE GROWING CRESCENDO

1. The Castle of Otranto, p.148.
2. The Old English Baron, p.153.
3. The Castle of Otranto, p.52.
4. The Old English Baron, p.9.
5. The Castle of Otranto, p.105.
6. The Old English Baron, p.86.
7. Vathek, p.254.
8. Ibid., p.169.
9. Ibid., pp.212,213.

2. THE PERFECT CIRCLE

10. The Mysteries of Udolpho, II, 344.
11. The Italian, p.412.
12. The Monk, pp.375-376, 393.
13. Ibid., p.420.
14. Ibid., p.453, note 442.
15. Coleridge, pp.370-371.
16. Fogle, p.37.
17. The Monk, p.154.
18. Brooks, pp.254-255.
19. Ibid., pp.255-256.
20. Poenicke, p.17.

'Moreover there is a deeper unity of action than in Mrs Radcliffe's work. For on every level of his narrative Lewis repeats in variation the theme of Ambrosio's central experience...'

3. THE DEEPENING RECESS

21. Garber, p.xiv.
22. Frankenstein, p.286.
23. Ibid., pp.365-366.
24. Ibid., p.270.
25. Ibid., p.271.
26. Ibid., p.273.
27. Ibid., p.276.
28. Ibid., p.277.
29. Ibid., p.364.
30. Melmoth the Wanderer, pp.269-271.
31. Ibid., pp.271-272.

V WORLD VIEW

1. Melmoth the Wanderer, p.5.

1. THE REGISTER OF HEAVEN AND HELL

2. Hume, p.285.
3. The Castle of Otranto, p.59.
4. Ibid., p.145.
5. Vathek, p.151.
6. Ibid., p.246.
7. The Old English Baron, p.36.
8. Ibid., p.105.
9. The Mysteries of Udolpho, II, 77.
10. The Italian, p.130.
11. Ibid., p.156.
12. Ibid., p.197.
13. Ibid., p.413.
14. The Monk, p.277.
15. Ibid., p.433.
16. Ibid., p.160.
17. Ibid., p.171.
18. Ibid., p.172.
19. Ibid., p.67.
20. Ibid., p.227.
21. Ibid., p.430.
22. The Vampyre, p.293.
23. Ibid., p.300.
24. Ibid., p.307.
25. Frankenstein, p.301.
26. Ibid., pp.319-320.
27. Ibid., p.336.
28. Ibid., p.477.
29. Ibid., p.484.
30. Melmoth the Wanderer, p.83.
31. Ibid., p.155.
32. Ibid., p.264.
33. Ibid., p.389.

2. THE DEMONIC INTRUSION AND THE CHAOS THAT LIES CONCEALED

1. The Castle of Otranto, p.60.

2. The Castle of Otranto, p.130.
3. Ibid., p.139
4. The Old English Baron, p.78
5. Vathek, p.211.
6. The Mysteries of Udolpho, I, 252.
7. Ibid., II, 17-18.
8. The Monk, p.411.
9. Ibid., p.304.
10. The Vampyre, p.296.
11. Frankenstein, p.447.

3. THE DISCIPLES OF HELL AND THE MYTH OF THE SOUL

1. Vathek, pp.152-153.
2. Ibid., p.182.
3. Ibid., p.254.
4. The Monk, p.38.
5. Vathek, p.154.
6. Frankenstein, p.308.
7. Melmoth the Wanderer, p.499.
8. See Friedrich Schiller: Briefe über die Aesthetische Erziehung des Menschen.
9. See William Blake: The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, pp.123-138.
10. Blake : Europe : A Prophecy (1794), Plate iii, p.151.
11. The Italian, p.90.
12. Blake, pp.36-37.
13. Frankenstein, p.364.
14. Ibid., p.396.
15. Ibid., p.369.
16. Ibid., p.403.
17. Caspar David Friedrich: Eismee (Arctic Shipwreck), 1824.

'The idea that we are, in life, also in the midst of death, the recognition that man is ephemeral and the cosmos so vast that the consciousness of the Absolute must imply the extinction of the individual self - such seems to be the gloomy, indeed the nihilistic message of a painting like Arctic Shipwreck (Eismee), 1824, which shows the ship of Hope almost totally engulfed by huge blocks of ice.' (Roger Cardinal, German Romantics in Context, p.71).

Dante Alighieri: L'Inferno, Canto 34.

18. Frankenstein, pp.283-284,285.
19. The Monk, p.71.
20. Robert Kiely, The Romantic Novel in England, p.166.
21. Theodore Roszak, Where the Wasteland Ends, p.249.

22. Frankenstein, p.308.
23. Blake, pp.34-35,43.
24. *Ibid.*, p.42.
25. Frankenstein, p.331.
26. Roszak, p.279.
27. Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Kunst und Künstler, 1803, from Maximen und Reflexionen in Goethes Werke, Band XII (Hamburg, 1953), p.487.

4. THE ANGELS OF LIGHT AND THE DESTRUCTION OF ROMANTIC LOVE

1. Frankenstein, p.297.
2. The Mysteries of Udolpho, I, 59.
3. Gottfried Auguste Bürger, "Lenore" in Echtermeyer Deutsche Gedichte, pp.168-169.

'With loose reins he rode straight for an iron-barred-gate, a blow from his pliant switch burst lock and bolt. The gates flew open with a clatter, and on they rode over graves. All round grave-stones glittered in the moonlight.

'Ah look, ah look! In that moment ugh!
A gruesome miracle! The horseman's uniform,
piece by piece, dropped off like rotten timber.
His head turned into a skull, a naked skull
without scalp or queue; his body became a
skeleton with hour-glass and scythe.

'The black horse reared high and snorted wildly and gave off sparks of fire; and in a trice it had sunk away and disappeared under her. Shrieking! Shrieking came from high in the air, wailing came from deep in the tombs. Lenore's quaking heart battled between life and death.

'Now the spirits danced indeed by the light of the moon, a round dance, hand in hand, and wailed these words: 'Patience, patience, even if your heart breaks! Do not quarrel with God in Heaven. Your body you have lost, may God have mercy on your soul.'

(Prose translation by Leonard Forster in The Penguin Book of German Verse, pp.189-190).

4. The Mysteries of Udolpho, I, 145-146.
5. *Ibid.*, I, 148, 150.
6. The Italian, pp.185-186.
7. The Monk, p.348.
8. The Vampyre, pp.296-297.
9. Frankenstein, pp.467-468.
10. Kiely, p.166.
11. Melmoth the Wanderer, p.285.
12. *Ibid.*, p.342.
13. *Ibid.*, pp.393-394.
14. *Ibid.*, p.501.
15. William Shakespeare, Othello, Act 5, sc.2, 11.280-283, 345-354.

16. The Monk, p.224
17. Otto Schwarz, The Psychology of Sex, p.161.
18. Blake, Visions of the Daughters of Albion (1793), Plate 7, p.148.
19. The Monk, p.256.
20. Ibid., p.41.
21. Blake, from the Rossetti Manuscript, pp.52-53.
22. Vathek, p.230.
23. Marquis de Sade, Justine ou les Malheurs de la Vertu (1791), pp.36-37.
24. Thomas Mann, Doctor Faustus, p.103.
25. The Mysteries of Udolpho, II, 53.

5. THE LOST GARDEN

1. Psalm 8, 3-9.
2. Melmoth the Wanderer, p.299.
3. Blake, "The Tyger," p.41.
4. Blake, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Plate 14, p.131.
5. Vathek, pp.162-163.
6. The Monk, p.50.
7. Ibid., p.71.
8. Melmoth the Wanderer, p.285.
9. Ibid., p.286.
10. Ibid., p.406.
11. Frankenstein, p.460.
12. The Mysteries of Udolpho, I, 46.
13. The Italian, pp.90-91.
14. The Mysteries of Udolpho, II, 312-313.
15. Frankenstein, pp.316-317.
16. Ibid., p.323.
17. Ibid., p.326.
18. Ibid., p.464.
19. Ibid., p.466.
20. Melmoth the Wanderer, p.467.
21. Ibid., pp.488-489.
22. Ibid., p.312.
23. Ibid., p.324.
24. The Monk, pp.156-157.
25. Ibid., p.439.
26. Ibid., pp.441-442.
27. Melmoth the Wanderer, p.542.

28. Giacomo Leopardi, "Canto notturno di un pastore errante dell'Asia," stanza 2, in The Penguin Book of Italian Verse, p.280.

'Shrunken old man, white-haired, failing, half-naked, and bare-foot, with a most heavy burden upon his shoulders, who runs through valleys and over mountains, over sharp stones, deep sand, and brakes, in wind, in storm, when the hour is burning, and when it freezes - runs on, panting, crosses torrents and marshes, falls, rises again, and hurries more and more, without rest or refreshment, torn and bleeding; until he arrives where the road and all his travail have led: a horrible vast abyss into which he falls headlong, and forgets everything. Virgin moon, such is mortal life.'

(Prose translation by George R. Kay.)

29. Blake, Jerusalem: The Emanation of The Giant Albion (1804-1820), Plate 77, p.462.

6. THE AGONIZED WORLD AND THE FRENZIED MIND

1. Leopardi expresses this ugly power in his poem "Il Ginestra," p.290.
2. Vathek, pp.189-191.
3. The Mysteries of Udolpho, II, 44.
4. Ibid., II, 76, 79-80.
5. The Italian, pp.183-184.
6. The Monk, p.50.
7. Melmoth the Wanderer, p.30.
8. Ibid., p.30.
9. Ibid., p.242.
10. Ibid., p.315,317.
11. Ibid., p.323.
12. Ibid., p.323.
13. Vathek, p.167.
14. The Monk, p.356.
15. Ibid., pp.357-358.
16. Melmoth the Wanderer, pp.256-257.
17. The Italian, p.198.
18. Frankenstein, p.356.
19. Ibid., p.371.
20. Ibid., pp.408-409.
21. Vathek, p.203.
22. Melmoth the Wanderer, p.293.

7. THE SPIRIT OF NEGATION AND THE CAVERN OF DARKNESS

1. The Monk, p.433.
2. Ibid., p.435.
3. Ibid., pp.441-442.
4. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Faust, Teil 1, Studienzimmer, 11. 1338-1344.

'The Spirit I, that endlessly denies.
 And rightly, too; for all that comes to birth
 Is fit for overthrow, as nothing worth;
 Wherefore the world were better sterilized;
 Thus all that's here as Evil recognized
 Is gain to me, and downfall, ruin, sin
 The very element I prosper in.'

(Translation by Philip Wayne in Faust, Part One, Penguin Books, p.75.)

5. Arrigo Boito, Mefistofele (1868), Act 1, sc.2. Translation by Gwynn Morris.
6. Melmoth the Wanderer, p.346.
7. Vathek, pp.238,239.
8. Ibid., pp.178-
9. The Monk, pp.274-275, 276.
10. De Sade, Justine, pp.88,89-90.
11. Blake, Introduction to The Songs of Experience (1794), p.33.
12. Mefistofele, Act 1, sc.2.
13. The Monk, p.441.
14. Frankenstein, p.297.
15. Ibid., p.331.
16. Vathek, p.254.
17. The Italian, p.200.
18. Dante, L'Inferno, Canto 33.
19. The Monk, p.176.
20. Melmoth the Wanderer, p.500.
21. Ibid., p.57.
22. Frankenstein, p.386.

8. SUPERSTITION, CATHOLICISM AND THE INEBRIATION OF THE SOUL

1. The Mysteries of Udolpho, I, 161.
2. Ibid., II, 161.
3. The Monk, p.7.
4. Ibid., p.234.
5. Ibid., pp.345-346.
6. Ibid., pp.364,366,367.

7. The Mysteries of Udolpho, II, 334-335.
8. Five Sermons on the Errors of the Roman Catholic Church (1824).
9. The Monk, p.227.
10. Ibid., p.440.
11. Ibid., p.239.
12. Ibid., p.25.
13. Ibid., p.403.
14. Melmoth the Wanderer, pp.117-118.
15. Ibid., p.104.
16. Ibid., p.113.
17. Ibid., p.207.
18. Ibid., p.213.
19. The Mysteries of Udolpho, II, 147-148.
20. The Monk, p.396.
21. Melmoth the Wanderer, p.331.
22. Ibid., p.417.
23. Ibid., p.418.
24. Ibid., pp.428-429.
25. Ibid., p.105.
26. Ibid., p.114.
27. Ibid., pp.475-476.
28. Charles-Pierre Baudelaire, Petits poemes en Prose, quoted in Castex and Surer, Manuel des Etudes Littéraires Francaises xixe siècle, p.269.

One must always be drunk. Therein lies everything: it is the only question. In order not to feel the horrible burden of time which weighs your shoulders and bows you towards the ground, you must be drunk without respite. But on what? On wine, on poetry or on virtue, as you please. But intoxicate yourself.

And if sometimes, on the steps of a palace, on the green grass of a ditch, in the dull solitude of your room, you wake to find that the rapture has already diminished or disappeared, ask of the wind, of the wave, of a star, of a bird, of a clock, of anything which moves, of anything which grows, of anything that rolls, of anything which sings, of anything which speaks, ask what the time is; and the wind, the wave, the star, the bird, the clock, will answer you: "It is time for you to be drunk." In order not to be the martyred slaves of time, inebriate yourself; inebriate yourself ceaselessly. On wine, on poetry, or on virtue, as you please.

29. Baudelaire, Stanzas 8-10 of "Au Lecteur", Ibid., pp.15-16. Translation "To the Reader" by Robert Lowell, Imitations, p.47.
30. Baudelaire, Stanza 1+4 of "Le Vin des Amants," Poem CVIII of Le Vin from Les Fleurs du Mal, p.127.

How splendid is space today!
 Let us without bit or spur or rein,
 Ride off on horseback, on the wine
 For a fairy firmament beyond all praise! (Contd.)

My companion, floating side by side,
We shall flee without rest or respite
To the paradise of my dreams.

(Translation by Dr Beverly Brooks.)

31. George Eliot, Middlemarch, ch.20, p.172.

VI MEANINGS FOR MODERN TIMES: SOME FINAL PERSPECTIVES ON
THE GOTHIC GENRE

1. THE GOTHIC NOVEL AS FICTION

1. The Monk, p.297 and p.253.
2. The Mysteries of Udolpho, I, 188.
3. Rictor Norton, "Aesthetic Gothic Horror," p.32.

2. THE AESTHETIC OF HORROR, OR LEWIS AND FREUD

4. Clara Reeve, Progress of Romance (London, 1785), quoted in Wellek and Warren, Theory of Literature, p.216.
5. Nathaniel Hawthorne, Prefaces to The House of Seven Gables (1851) and The Marble Faun (1860), quoted in Wellek and Warren, p.216.
6. Birkhead, p.223.
7. Ann Radcliffe in the New Monthly Magazine, Vol. VII (1826), quoted in Hume, p.282.
8. The Monk, p.304.
9. Ibid., p.379.
10. Burke, III, 27.
11. The Monk, p.62.
12. Ibid., p.379.
13. Norton, p.36.
14. The Monk, p.62.
15. Norton, pp.38-39.
16. George Eliot, Middlemarch, ch.20, p.172.

3. FAIRY TALES AND GOTHIC NOVELS

17. Emily Brontë, Wuthering Heights, p.173.
18. G.K. Chesterton, "All Things Considered"(1908), quoted in Iona and Peter Opie, The Classic Fairy Tales, p.9.
19. Horst Ruthrof, Death Situations in the Short Story: a Study in Structure, Chapter 5, "Remarks on Death Concepts in Existentialist Philosophy," pp.170-192.

4. THINKING AND FEELING: THE HISTORIC AND AESTHETIC APPROACHES

20. Horace Walpole, Letter to Horace Mann, Dec.31, 1769, quoted by R.S. Sewall, The Vision of Tragedy, p.4.

5. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE LEVELS OF ORDER

21. E.F. Schumacher, Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered, p.69.
22. Ibid., p.74.
23. Gordon Lord Byron, Manfred, Act 1 sc.i 22.10-12, p.380.
24. Schumacher, pp.78-79.
25. Ibid., p.81.

6. REVOLUTION, AND THE ADVENT OF CHAOS

26. Renee Winegarten, Writers and Revolution: the Fatal Lure of Action, pp. xxiv-xxv.
27. Ibid., p.xxxiii.
28. This is a major theme of the Dunciad (1728).
29. Percy Bysshe Shelley, A Defence of Poetry.
30. Edmund Wilson, Axel's Castle: A Study in the Imaginative Literature of 1870-1930, pp.212-213.
31. Cecil Gray, A Survey of Contemporary Music, p.18.
32. Norton, p.39.
33. William Butler, Yeats, p.210.

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