Theology and the Early British Gothic 1764 – 1833

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to investigate and outline the ways in which early British Gothic texts, from approximately 1760 – 1830, engage with contemporary theological discourse. Existing Gothic criticism frequently either dismisses the import of the theological due to a mistaken conception of the Gothic as a sceptical mode, focuses on the Gothic's relation to Catholicism, or views the Gothic as a reflection of a monolithic Protestantism or Anglicanism in opposition to the Catholic. This thesis engages with contemporary theological debate and religious-historical context of the period to explore the ways in which the Gothic engages with diverse Protestant theologies from both Anglican and Dissenting traditions. This thesis suggests that Gothic depictions of the supernatural, engagement with popular aesthetic discourses and representation of various faith traditions is inseparable from contemporary theological discourses surrounding these issues. Furthermore, it suggests that Gothic works not only reflect these discourses but also more fundamentally, that important creative theological work is encoded in the Gothic, especially by those marginalised from contemporary theological debate, such as women.

This thesis explores the existing criticism that focuses on the anti- or pro-Catholic nature of the Gothic. It offers an alternative paradigm for investigating the depiction of the figure of the Catholic based on contemporary theological and theo-political arguments surrounding toleration. The thesis then moves beyond the existing political readings of the aesthetic strategies of the Gothic. Instead, it looks at Gothic aesthetics as inherently theo-aesthetic, and investigates the way in which they engage with the sublime landscape as Divine self-revelation and depictions of the demonic sublime as indivisible from theologies of evil. The final sections investigate three different manifestations of the supernatural in Gothic fiction: Gothic dreams, ghosts and embodied immortalities. Moving beyond the prevalence of psycho-analytic readings of the Gothic supernatural, each chapter focuses on the theological debates surrounding these supernatural phenomena. Each chapter goes on to illustrate the ways in which the portrayal of the supernatural reflects contemporary theological understandings of the interpretation of miracles, providence, the relationship of the body and soul, immortality and eschatology.

Contents

Introduction

The period that saw the rise and decline of the early British Gothic – 1764 – 1833 – was one of significant religious change, in which the theological remained at the forefront of both public and private life. The continuing supremacy of the Anglican Church, its involvement in religious and political affairs, and the influence of Christian belief on almost every aspect of life continued to form the backdrop of the era. The period also saw the rise and spread of Evangelical Christianity and both Enthusiastic and rational Dissenting groups continued to proliferate in an atmosphere of continuous theological debate. There was a dynamic discourse on religious tolerance that came to fruition in the removal of the *Tests and Corporation Acts* (1828) and represented a changing relationship between church and state. The often-tense societal reaction to this growing tolerance, as manifested in the anti-Catholic Gordon Riots of 1780 and the anti-Unitarian Birmingham Riots of 1791, suggests the continued importance of religious questions in the cultural imaginary. The impact of the anti-religious discourse of the French Revolution, and a subsequent suspicion both of theological radicalism and deist/atheist discourse, mediated the spread of Enlightenment rationalism.

Gothic criticism frequently elides the importance and diversity of this theological background. It is a critical commonplace to view the early British Gothic as either a reflection of secularisation or a part of the secularising process. The Gothic is thereby rendered as a constituent part of a wider Enlightenment project in which religious experience is replaced with the 'secular analog' of sublime affect;[1] superstitious models of religion (usually coded as Catholic) are replaced with a broadly Protestant 'providential deism;'[2] and a belief in the supernatural is gradually substituted for medicalised discourses which explain the ghostly, the prophetic and the 'miraculous' in natural terms. Robert Geary's *The Supernatural in Gothic Fiction* (1992) presents just such a 'secularising' account of the Gothic through a focus on the Gothic's balancing act between concepts of providence (depicted as a rationalising, anti-miraculous religious discourse) and a concept of 'numinous

[1] Robert Doran, *The Theory of the Sublime from Longinus to Kant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 12

[2] Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Riffs: Secularizing the Uncanny in the European Imaginary 1780-1820* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2010), p. 3

dread'[3] (which itself conflates Rudolf Otto's numinous with the 'daemonic dread'[4] which is one of its constituent parts). It provides both an example of this secularising view of the Gothic and demonstrates its limitations.

Geary, taking his lead from Horace Walpole, argues that the 'problem' which the Gothic confronts is the attempt to merge the old romance (the marvellous and the supernatural) with the new novel (probability, reason and mimesis). He outlines a progressive relationship between the two, starting with Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764) as an unsuccessful attempt to combine the supernatural with a rationally providential framework. He points to Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron* (1778) as the next step in this balancing attempt: subordinating the supernatural to a rationalist concept of providence. In Radcliffe, he contests, the providential model is largely abandoned and the ritualistic expulsion of the transcendent through the 'explained supernatural' reveals a use of the supernatural primarily based on affect rather than belief. Then in the works of William Godwin and Matthew Gregory Lewis, he argues, 'the providential context dissolves completely', there is a 'repudiation of the traditional framework of belief' and theology is replaced with a desacralised numinous dread.[5] He argues, thereby, that the Gothic mirrors a larger societal change which attempted first to combine 'supernatural' and 'rational' models of Christianity; proceeded to create a dominant rationalist model, increasingly deist in character; eventually denied the preternatural in favour of the natural; and ultimately replaced the theological with the affective and spectacular. Religious paradigms of interpretation were gradually replaced with de-theologised explorations of the fear of death, power and the unknown, which he views as the central components of the 'religious hypothesis'.[6]

Geary's arguments highlight a number of problems with the 'secularising' approach. First, the historical context is largely ignored. His depiction of a rationalist progression fails

[3] Robert Geary, *The Supernatural in Gothic Fiction: Horror, Belief, and Literary Change* (Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), p. 8

[4] Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational,* trans. by John W. Harvey, 6th Impression (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 16

[5] Geary, *Supernatural in Gothic Fiction,* p. 63/60

[6] Isabel Rivers, Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment, Volume II: Shaftesbury to Hume* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 239. Rivers uses the term to refer to the postulation of a Divinity as an explanatory tool.

to engage with the fact that the Evangelical Revival, which started from within the Anglican Church in the 1730s and manifested in the rise of Methodism, continued into the nineteenth century, until Evangelical Christianity became the predominant mode not only in 'the three great Evangelical movements of Congregationalism, Methodism, and the Baptists'[7] but ultimately in the Anglican Church. There was no simple replacement of religion with secular reason. This is not to deny the growth of atheism or deism but rather to insist on the acknowledgement that Christianity, in its many different manifestations, continued to be, in Jane Shaw's words, a 'lived religion'[8] for the majority of the British population. As Michael Watts asserts, 'religion pervaded education, shaped morals, motivated philanthropy, controlled leisure, permeated literature, inspired poetry […and…] decided political loyalties.'[9] We cannot ignore the vitality and influence of theological thought in the period when addressing Gothic texts.

The second issue with Geary's reading is its rhetorical construction of, and reliance on, a monolithic Protestantism. It ignores the proliferation of differential denominational standpoints. In recognising this proliferation we must take care to acknowledge that an exclusive focus on denominational theological divisions ignores the flexibility of personal belief and the way in which denominational affiliation may suggest but cannot determine an author's theological stance. A concentration on denominational theologies may also obscure the parities, points of agreement, reciprocal discussion and connections between different denominations. However, an awareness of the ongoing inter- and intra-necine debates is vital to understanding the multiplicity of positions existent at the time. Diane Long Hoeveler in *Gothic Riffs* (2010) and Robert Miles in 'Popular Romanticism and the Problem of Belief' (2014) both stress the importance of Charles Taylor's concept of the secular as outlined in his *The Secular Age* (2007). Taylor rejects 'the two usual accounts of secularisation, the separation of Church and state and the decline of religion.'[10] Rather, he argues that a secular state is one in which a 'pluralism of outlooks, religious and non- and

[7] Michael Watts, *The Dissenters: Volume II, The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 3
[8] Jane Shaw, *Miracles in Enlightenment England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 9
[9] Watts, *The Dissenters: Volume II*, p. 1
[10] Robert Miles, 'Popular Romanticism and the Problem of Belief', in *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic,* ed. by Dale Townshend and Angela Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 117-34 (p. 121)

anti-religious',[11] appears and belief is experienced as a choice. However, this multiplicity for Taylor, Hoeveler and Miles is still problematically conceived of as part of a sceptical movement away from 'transcendent' to 'immanent' understandings of the world, which may co-exist but ultimately compete with one another. This adoption of a Taylorian model of secularisation highlights the plurality of existing views and suggests a model for engaging with apparently contradictory impulses within Gothic texts. However, by positing the Gothic as a 'cultural production' that repeatedly stages 'the slaying of superstition' in a form of a 'Gothic Riff',[12] it imposes an interpretative framework that ignores the proliferation of differing theological views in favour of a postulated dichotomy between the secular (immanent) and religious beliefs (transcendent). It also minimises the continued primacy and complexity of religious discourse in public and private life in which immanent and transcendent understandings not only compete but become symbiotic forms as religion absorbs new conceptions of the world into its frameworks of interpretation.

The third problem in secularising theories such as Geary's work is a result of the erasure of this theological diversity: mis-readings and oversimplifications of the theological. In Geary, for example, the conflation of providence with a broadly deist approach ignores distinctions between 'providence', 'special providence' and the 'miraculous'; between 'primary' and 'secondary' causes; and between the preternatural, supernatural and natural. It therefore offers no meaningful engagement with the way in which these distinctions are navigated in texts like *The Old English Baron,* in which both preternatural and supernatural readings of its prophetic dreams are possible and in which a framework of special providence, relying principally on what appear to be secondary causes (dreams), is depicted alongside miraculous events (self-opening doors). Geary's conclusions therefore rest on mistaken premises which simplify and distort the theological issues in the text.

The majority of Gothic criticism either undervalues or ignores the theological valence of texts in ways similar to those outlined above. However, in turning my focus to the theological, I am building on the work of a consistent but minor thread in Gothic criticism. Early critics, such as Montague Summers in *The Gothic Quest* (1938), J. M. S. Tompkins in

[11] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: The Belkin Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 437

[12] Miles, 'Popular Romanticism', p.125. Hoeveler, *Gothic Riffs,* pp. 1-6

The Popular Novel in England 1770-1800 (1932) and Devandra Varma in *The Gothic Flame* (1957), frequently assume an engagement with the theological: a reflection of 'widespread beliefs' in the supernatural and a 'steadily intensifying interest in questions of life, death and immortality' and the relation of the 'human and the divine'.[13] However, these accounts, in assuming an underlying theological valence, do not seek to articulate it in any detail. We must move beyond this simple recognition to engage meaningfully with the theological content of Gothic texts.

The most frequently recurring focus of theological enquiry is the Gothic's depiction of the Catholic. The first significant intervention in this debate was that of Mary Muriel Tarr in *Catholicism in Gothic Fiction* (1946). Her thesis is not the assumption of anti-Catholicism that informs much Gothic criticism but rather an enquiry into the depiction of the Catholic that notes an incipient anti-Catholicism frequently inflected by a pro-tolerance discourse and an aestheticized appreciation of the 'Catholic' as it appears in the Protestant imaginary. In later works, such as George Haggerty's *Queer Gothic* (2006), Maria Purves' *The Gothic and Catholicism* (2009) and Diane Long Hoeveler's *The Gothic Ideology* (2014), there is an emphasis on the Gothic's relation to the Catholic as either essentially antagonistic (Hoeveler, Haggerty) or involved in a positive re-evaluation (Purves). While usefully highlighting the importance of the depiction of the Catholic to the Gothic, these studies produce a simplistic Protestant/Catholic binary that undervalues the way in which depictions of the Catholic intervene in wider theological debates about not only toleration but about broader considerations of religious practice and doctrine.

A limited number of works focus more exclusively on a theological examination of the Gothic. Joel Porte's 'In the Hands of an Angry God' (1972) discusses a range of texts by sceptical writers (William Godwin, Mary Shelley, Matthew Gregory Lewis) as a reflection of a 'genuine expression of profound religious malaise',[14] arguing that Gothic terror is a specifically theological terror. This emphasis on an underlying theological dread is echoed in Judith Wilt's *Ghosts of the Gothic* (1980). It is a terror compounded of religious guilt, a conflicted relationship with theologies of judgement, salvation and damnation, a fear of the

[13] Devandra Varma, *The Gothic Flame* (London: Arthur Baker Ltd, 1957), p. 26/16

[14] Joel Porte, 'In the Hands of an Angry God: Religious Terror in Gothic Fiction', in *The Gothic Imagination: Essays in Dark Romanticism,* ed. by G. R. Thompson (Washington State University: Washington State University Press, 1974), 42-64 (p. 43).

demonic and the demonic/fallen self, and the image of an angry God. While both Wilt and Porte usefully map the ways in which Gothic texts reflect an underlying set of theological assumptions with which they may be at odds, there is an obvious limitation to these accounts in their focus on theological terror. While they usefully illuminate the intense theological discomfort of texts like Lewis' *The Monk* (1796), the accounts narrow the focus of enquiry to specific manifestations of the Gothic and limit the field of theological enquiry by imposing 'terror' as the dominant theological discourse.

Victor Sage influentially discussed the Gothic as a specifically Protestant genre in *Horror Fiction in the Protestant Tradition* (1988). He identifies the imagery of the 'dark house;' anti-Catholic rhetoric; an emphasis on an internalised conscience and self-reflection (and a subsequent horror of the externalised conscience of the Catholic confessional); theories of testimony; and a rationalised approach to the miraculous as 'Protestant' aspects of Gothic texts. Although he notes the existence of different denominational and theological positions, Sage does not investigate the possibilities of theological plurality in Gothic texts, focusing instead on a universalising conception of Protestant belief. While his influential work thus offers an entry point to a number of specific theological concerns in the Gothic, it lacks historical specificity.

Most recently, Alison Milbank has sought to map the theological resonances of the Gothic of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in *God and the Gothic* (2018). Her study engages with a number of key elements of the theological in Gothic texts: the depiction of the Catholic; narratives of usurpation related to Protestant re-imaginings of the Reformation; providence; aesthetics of theological melancholy; and 'Calvinist anthropologies' in the demonic double. Milbank's work engages in a close theologically informed engagement with her chosen Gothic texts. However, there is a singular emphasis on an underlying and monolithic Anglican theology at the heart of the Gothic, whose principle focus is a form of self-definition, navigating its own past and its relationship to the Catholic. Milbank's readings, therefore, offer detailed insights into theological currents which run through their depictions of ruined abbeys, exploded ghosts and melancholic contemplation. They ignore, however, the importance of competing theologies in the early Gothic. By imposing a unitary model, there is the risk of distortion and of erasing the complexity of the contemporary theological landscape.

In order to move beyond the limitations of existing theological engagements with the Gothic, then, it is necessary to engage with an historicised study of the relevant theological discourses of the period and the ways in which they are reflected in Gothic texts. These discourses must firstly be placed within the context of the theological climate of the period, for which purpose I use both secondary survey materials and contemporary sermons, pamphlets and treatises to explore Anglican and Dissenting views and history. The root of this study is a close engagement with contemporary discourses across a range of theological subjects: toleration, aesthetics, the supernatural, the ghostly, dreams, immortality, and the relationship of the body and soul. In tracing the theologically inflected debates relevant to the various foci of my investigation, I have concentrated on primary materials that include treatises, books, sermons and, where appropriate, letters and diaries in order to gain insight into the specific theological positioning of particular writers. I have then traced these debates, paradigms of interpretation and representative tropes in the Gothic case-studies I have undertaken. Each chapter engages in a review of Gothic criticism, the historical theological context of the debate and close readings of relevant Gothic texts.

In choosing my primary texts, I have not been confined by genre although the majority of the works studied are novels. However, by including poetry, plays, short stories and chapbooks, I aim to give an overview of Gothic productions, tracing common theological concerns across generic boundaries. In order to avoid a concentration on one specific theological 'type' of text, I have chosen a range of texts across the period from Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764) to Mary Shelley's 'The Mortal Immortal' (1833), from both writers considered pivotal to the development of the genre, such as Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis, and minor writers representing less familiar manifestations of the Gothic. I have deliberately sought to balance male and female writers and 'terror' and 'horror' Gothic texts in order to both map different theological trends and trace similarities. In order to avoid an emphasis on writers emerging from one specific denomination, I have chosen writers who represent a variety of denominational positions, such as T.J. Horsley Curties (High Anglican), James Hogg (Scottish Presbyterian) and Anna Letitia Barbauld (Unitarian/Presbyterian).

The first chapter reviews the question of the Gothic's depiction of the Catholic using Purves' *The Gothic and Catholicism,* Hoeveler's *The Gothic Ideology* and Milbank's *God and the Gothic* to map the existing debate between pro-Catholic and anti-Catholic readings and

a mixed Anglican position of 'critique and appropriation' respectively.[15] Using reference to a variety of Gothic texts, the chapter illustrates how these critical paradigms both illuminate underlying concerns encoded in portrayals of the Catholic and fall short of fully engaging with their complex theological and theo-political underpinnings. My own investigation of the case-studies used will demonstrate the necessity of distinguishing between political and theological paradigms of interaction with the Catholic and of focusing on the Gothic's use of Catholic depictions to reflect contemporary concerns beyond Anglo-Catholic relations. Building on the work of Irene Bostrom and Mark Canuel, I suggest that, in order to move beyond the reductive tendencies of the anti-Catholic/pro-Catholic binary, we must engage with the Gothic through the lens of contemporary toleration debates, not simply as a political issue (as in Bostrom and Canuel) but as a fundamentally theological one.

The second chapter begins a two-part exploration of theo-aesthetics. It investigates the use of the aesthetics of the sublime. Through an overview of contemporary aesthetic discourse, I demonstrate the ways in which the sublime is part of a theo-aesthetic discussion about Divine self-revelation in the natural world. Moving past the emphasis on the influence of Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757), I suggest that Joseph Addison and John Dennis offer theo-aesthetic models which strongly influenced eighteenth-century Gothic writers. Building on Natasha Duquette's claims in *Veiled Intent* (2016) that those marginalized from theological discourse in the period, particularly women, encoded creative theological work in their aesthetic strategies, this chapter explores how this manifests in the Gothic through a detailed case-study of Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794).

The third chapter engages with the theological difficulties posed by the Demonic sublime. Exploring the utilisation of John Milton's Satan in *Paradise Lost* (1674) as a paradigmatic example of the sublime in the British tradition and connected discourses of negative sublimity, this chapter seeks to understand the theo-aesthetic strategies of demonic depiction. By engaging with close readings of Lewis' *The Monk* (1796) and 'The Isle of Devils' (1833) and Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya; or, The Moor* (1806), I suggest that two theo-aesthetic paradigms – perverse sublimity and the sublimity of judgment – offer a means of

[15] Alison Milbank, *God and the Gothic: Religion, Romance, and Reality in the English Literary Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 5

decoding the underlying theological motivations of sublime demonic depiction. The chapter ends by contrasting the English model of the sublime devil and his connection to the special-case Faustian pact with the tradition in the Scottish Presbyterian Gothic of the demonic double as represented in James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824). In doing so, it suggests that the respective traditions utilise different theo-aesthetic strategies to encode differing theological concerns, with the English sublime tradition focusing on Divine/demonic relations and questions of theodicy and free will and the Scottish Presbyterian tradition of demonic doubles emphasising the relation of the human and the demonic and both reflecting and critiquing conceptions of total depravity and double election.

In the secularising models of E. J. Clery in *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction* (1995) and Diane Long Hoeveler's work, the depiction of the supernatural is understood as being disconnected from actual belief and reimagined as spectacle or a purely affective tool. The fourth chapter of this thesis challenges these assumptions through an investigation of the supernatural dreams of the Gothic. This chapter reviews the changing discourse around dreams in the eighteenth century and demonstrates the survival of theological frameworks of interpretation that reflect wider theological discourses concerning the immortality of the soul, the possibility of both Divine and demonic action in the world, and providence. Using examples from Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) and *The Italian* (1796), Lewis' *The Monk*, Dacre's *Zofloya*, James Hogg's 'A Singular Dream' (1811), the anonymously published 'The Astrologer's Prediction, or the Maniac's Dream' (1826) and Mary Shelley's 'The Dream' (1831), I investigate how Gothic texts reflect the changing discourse around dreams, maintaining the possibility of theological valence while revealing the impact of the changing medicalised conception of dreaming.

The fifth chapter continues with an investigation of the Gothic deployment of the supernatural in the form of ghosts. It maps the ghost debates of the eighteenth century and challenges the dominant assumption that depictions of the ghostly were alienated from contemporary theological frameworks of understanding. This chapter first broaches the phenomenon of the 'explained supernatural' and contests the dominant critical conception of a single 'explained supernatural' by mapping three different forms in Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho*, Eliza Parsons *The Castle of Wolfenbach* (1793) and Carl Friedrich Kahlert's *The*

Necromancer; or, The Tale of the Black Forest (1794). Radcliffe's affective strategies emphasise an extra-fictional interpretative hesitation; Parsons frames the seemingly supernatural as a natural mystery to solve; and Kahlert implicates both reader and character in their own superstitious self-deception. In each case, the depictions of the 'explained supernatural' are underpinned by a specific theological position regarding the ghostly rather than a sceptical rejection of the supernatural. The chapter finishes by investigating examples of the real supernatural in Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto,* Reeve's *The Old English Baron* and Lewis' *The Monk* in order to demonstrate how these texts represent different approaches to the supernatural they depict. It notes a frequent correlation between scepticism and the depiction of a spectacular 'real' supernatural in Lewis and Walpole but suggests that this cannot be fully understood without reference to the specific theologies both informing and critiqued in their depictions of the ghostly.

Understood theologically, the ghost is a reflection of a theological concept of human mortal immortality. The final chapter continues this exploration of mortal immortality by looking at embodied immortal figures. Figures such as the Wandering Jew, successful alchemists, immortal wanderers and vampires are not the subject of extra-fictional belief or disbelief like the ghost. However, they are understood within a theological framework based on specific understandings of the nature of the human, immortality, the flesh and the spirit, original sin and total depravity. These theological frameworks are reflected in and frequently critiqued through these figures. This chapter maps the folkloric or biblical antecedents of the Gothic's mortal immortals – Adam, Cain, Faust and the Wandering Jew – and demonstrates the ways in which these prototypes function as theologically rich intertexts through which the Gothic's immortals are read. This chapter uses case studies from William Godwin's *St Leon* (1799), Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) and Mary Shelley's 'The Mortal Immortal' (1831) to show the ways in which mortal immortal figures in the early British Gothic inevitably serve theological or anti-theological (rather than a-theological) ends. The chapter concludes by applying these theological frameworks to the most famous of the period's Gothic figures – the vampire – whose meaning in its specific theo-historical context cannot be separated from the underlying theological valence of the mortal immortal.

Chapter 1: "Christ is not Divided": Theologies of Toleration and the Depiction of the Catholic

Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every soul spirit and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird – Revelation 18:2[1]

Any investigation of the theology of the early British Gothic must engage with 'the prevailing critical view' of the Gothic as 'a means of anti-Catholic expression'.[2] Such anti-Catholic readings are underpinned by an assumption, articulated by Victor Sage, that there is a single dominant theology in the Gothic that is 'predominantly if not exclusively' Protestant.[3] This idea of a monolithic Protestant identity, self-defined in contrast to a feudal and barbaric Catholicism as monstrous other, allows for the Gothic to be read as denominational propaganda. However, there have been attempts to revise, investigate or nuance the supposed anti-Catholicism of the Gothic. The most recent manifestation of the controversy between anti-Catholic and pro-Catholic readings of the Gothic is found in Maria Purves' *The Gothic and Catholicism* (2009) and Hoeveler's rebuttal in *The Gothic Ideology* (2014). As these texts provide an overview of dominant trends in criticism, I will use them to map the debate throughout this chapter, referring to other anti- and pro- Catholic readings only when they diverge from or significantly add to those found in these two pivotal texts.

The work of Jarlath Killeen and Alison Milbank offers an apparent third position in relation to the depiction of the Catholic: the Gothic as a peculiarly Anglican genre that reflects Anglo-Catholic relations. In Killeen's *Gothic Ireland* (2005) this is related to the specifics of Anglo-Irish rapprochement with the Catholic Church at the end of the eighteenth century in readings of Irish-authored Gothic texts. Milbank makes the broader claim in *God and the Gothic* (2018) that the Gothic continually undertakes an Anglican double movement of 'critique and appropriation' of the Catholic that mirrors the extra-fictional relationship of the Anglican and Catholic Churches.[4] As religious historian Michael Watts asserts, the

[1] All biblical references are from *Holy Bible Containing the Old Testament and The New: Newly Translated out of the Original Tongues, and With the Former Translations Diligently Compared and Revised,* (London: Charles Bill, 1703)

[2] Maria Purves, *The Gothic and Catholicism* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p.3

[3] Victor Sage, *Horror Fiction in the Protestant Tradition* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1988), pp. xxi-xxii

[4] Alison Milbank, *God and the Gothic: Religion, Romance, and Reality in the English Literary Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 5

Anglican Church at its initiation 'was neither Protestant nor Catholic, but something in between'.[5] In Milbank's terms, the Anglican Church 'sought consciously a middle way between the extremes of Reformed and Catholic Christianity', retaining some forms of Catholic worship and an Episcopalian structure.[6] The Gothic, Milbank argues, mirrors this relationship, simultaneously offering a critique of Catholicism and the valorisation of elements of Catholicism or Catholic figures.

This understanding of the Gothic as Anglican, however, retains an implicit emphasis on the Gothic as anti-Catholic by rewriting the Protestant/Catholic binary of Hoeveler's account onto a distinction between Anglican and Catholic. The Gothic becomes a form of complex apologetics that justifies the Anglican Church's retention of Catholic elements and emphasises a shared history (and an apostolic succession) at the same time as reinforcing the rejection of Catholicism as an institution and of Catholic doctrine, a rejection foundational to the creation of the Anglican Church. Many of Milbank's arguments therefore echo Hoeveler's and her readings frequently function as a more nuanced but ultimately anti-Catholic rendering of the Gothic's depiction of the Catholic. Where all of these accounts fall into error is in assuming a monolithic Protestantism, or Anglicanism, arrayed against a Catholic other. The period was one of theological diversity both within the Anglican Church and among Dissenting groups, a fact reflected in the Gothic. In evoking a binary model of the Gothic's depiction of the Catholic as either pro- or anti- Catholic, these accounts reduce the fierce debates surrounding religious toleration in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to Anglo-Catholic relations. This erases the far wider and long-running debate surrounding toleration, much of it produced by Dissenters and moderate Anglicans in opposition to the official position of the state and the Anglican Church. Once we begin to understand the Gothic's depiction of the Catholic as part of wider political and theological discourse, we can begin to interrogate the ways in which the Gothic's depiction of Catholic institutions, figures and practices engages in creative theological work beyond the question of Anglo-Catholic and Protestant/Catholic relations.

[5] Michael Watts, *The Dissenters: Volume I, From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 15
[6] Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 5

The aim of this chapter is not to resolve the question of whether or not the Gothic is anti-Catholic or pro-Catholic. Rather, in exploring existing arguments and applying them to a number of case studies, it seeks to assess both their limitations and possibilities. While necessarily limited, I have selected a range of texts from both male and female writers, in the 'terror' and 'horror' traditions, and from both well-known and more marginal texts, in order to provide an overview of trends within the early British Gothic. Work on the depiction of the Catholic, following Sister Mary Muriel Tarr's comprehensive *Catholicism in the Gothic* (1946), frequently navigates the discussion through an exploration of common tropes. In seeking to map the existing debate, therefore, this chapter will provide an overview of the most commonly cited: the monk, the monastery, the Inquisition, conventual communities and the ecclesiastical ruin.[7] Throughout, I will seek to demonstrate the necessity of engaging with the theological subtext of portrayals of the Catholic and the way in which they reflect contemporary concerns beyond Anglo-Catholic relations. The final section of the chapter explores contemporary toleration debates as a more fruitful frame through which to explore the Gothic's depiction of the Catholic. In focusing on toleration as an interpretative lens, I build on the work of Irene Bostrom and Mark Canuel but move past their exclusive emphasis on toleration as a political issue by exploring its connection to theological tolerance.

The Context for Tolerance

He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad – Matthew 12:30

And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us, is for us – Luke 9:50

Pro- and anti-Catholic readings focus particularly on the status of Catholics within Britain during the period of the rise of the Gothic. In re-assessing the supposed anti-

[7] This division between the monastery and the convent is to some extent arbitrary and is used to map broadly positive and broadly negative depictions of cloistral institutions which are often split along gendered lines; the convent is more frequently depicted as a place of actual or possible refuge for the fleeing heroines of the Gothic. The distinction should not, however, be understood as exclusive. The Convent of Santa-María del Nova, for example, in W. H. Ireland's *The Abbess* (1799) depicts a conventual space as a site of horror, exploitation and debauchery.

Catholicism of the Gothic, it is not my intention either to minimise or erase the existence of anti-Catholicism. The Reformation divided a nation on religious lines, which resulted in a lasting struggle for legitimacy, power and acceptance. In its most extreme forms, Reformation rhetoric cast the Pope in the role of Anti-Christ and the Catholic Church as the Whore of Babylon in order to justify the creation of the Anglican Church and the suppression of Catholicism. This rhetoric survived, though in diminished and intermittent forms, into the nineteenth century. Charles Maturin's *Five Sermons on the Errors of the Roman Catholic Church* (1826), for example, include a sermon entitled 'Babylon is fallen',[8] which celebrates the inevitable dissolution of the Catholic Church, vividly imagined as the Whore of Babylon sated with the blood of martyrs and 'full of names of blasphemy' (Revelation 17:3).[9] As Maturin's rhetoric suggests, a common foundation of anti-Catholic critique was the fact that the Catholic Church was seen as a 'persecuting church' that denied the legitimacy of other faith traditions and enforced adherence to its own doctrines. This conception of the Catholic was used by John Locke in his influential *Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689) as justification to deny Catholics the rights of citizens in a work otherwise advocating religious toleration.[10] Both the lower status and perceived threat of Catholics was reified into a penal code, which limited or denied Catholic access to suffrage, parliamentary representation, public worship, entry into university and the army, and the ability to inherit property. An underlying fear of Catholicism as a political entity was kept alive by the memory of such events as the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745 and of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, which was commemorated annually in an official Anglican service.

However, as Purves emphasises, the period also saw significant shifts towards toleration. The rise of the Gothic, as Canuel comments, 'coincided rather conspicuously' with this change in the legal, social and political status of Catholics.[11] Three separate Catholic Relief Acts were passed in 1778, 1791 and 1829, the last of which saw full Catholic

[8] Charles Maturin, *Five Sermons on the Errors of the Roman Catholic Church* (Dublin: William Curry, 1826), p. 122

[9] Ibid., p. 156

[10] John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (Huddersfield: J. Brook, 1796), pp. 55-7 As Leslie Stephen notes, Locke also underlines the common arguments against Catholic toleration that 'they hold the doctrine of keeping no faith with heretics, or acknowledging the supremacy of another ruler.'*

* Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century,* 2nd edn, 2 vols (London: Smith, Elder, & Co, 1881), II, p. 148

[11] Mark Canuel, *Religion, Toleration and British Writing 1790-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 56

emancipation. Although, as Sage notes, there was resistance to these measures, it became increasingly limited. Sage claims that the 'the atmosphere had changed completely with the Gordon Riots of 1780' (a response to the 1778 Act) in terms of a move towards increasingly hostile Anglo-Catholic relations.[12] However, while these riots indubitably demonstrate residual anti-Catholic feeling, they are a single event whose context is an increasing political tolerance for both Catholicism and Dissent and whose value as an index of majority public sentiment well into the nineteenth century is limited at best. The lack of similar widespread large-scale rioting in reaction to other Relief Acts underlines the reality of change.

A further shift in attitudes to Catholicism, as Purves notes, was prompted by the influx of French refugee clergy escaping the Revolution (particularly after 1792), and for whom Anglicans 'discovered a novel sympathy'.[13] Sage maintains that this influx of Catholics was 'viewed with suspicion';[14] however, there was a significant positive response, particularly from the educated classes. Kirsty Carpenter, in her study of French émigrés in London in the 1790s, notes that there were some 'negative reactions to the influx', including 'sporadic outbursts of very hostile behaviour' from the 'lower class of people'.[15] This resistance is also reflected in the 1793 Aliens Act. We must be careful, however, to identify correctly the source of this suspicion. The principal concern regarding those fleeing France was the suspicion that Jacobin agents were infiltrating the ranks of those emigrating.[16] As Carpenter argues, overall the tide of both lay Catholics and Priests escaping the French Revolution 'pav[ed] the way for the demystification of 'popery', and the eventual repeal of the laws preventing Catholic emancipation'.[17]

Purves points to the existence of a 'counter-revolutionary discourse … shaped mostly by Edmund Burke' which 'emphasised the sanctity and supremacy of adhering to the religious traditions of one's forefathers'.[18] For Purves, Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution*

[12] Sage, *Horror Fiction in the Protestant Tradition,* p. 32
[13] Watts, *The Dissenters*, II, p. 5
[14] Sage, *Horror Fiction in the Protestant Tradition,* p. 32
[15] Kirsty Carpenter, ', 'The Novelty of French Emigres in London in the 1790s' in *A History of the French in London: Liberty, Equality, Opportunity,* ed. By Debra Kelly and Martyn Cornick (London: University of London School of Advanced Study, 2013), 69-90, (p. 74/78)
[16] J. R. Dinwiddy, 'The Use of the Crown's Power of Deportation Under the Aliens Act, 1793-1826', *Historical Research,* 41.104 (Nov. 1968), 193-211 (p. 193)
[17] Carpenter, 'The Novelty of French Emigres in London in the 1790s', p. 76
[18] Purves, *The Gothic and Catholicism,* p. 1

in France (1790) represents a conservative Anglican attempt to establish the concept of an organic familial relationship between the Catholic and the Anglican Churches and, for some, a line of apostolic succession. In this tradition, Catholicism is positively re-evaluated to shore up a defence against radical politics and the fanatical atheism of French Revolutionary sentiment. As Clara Tuite notes, 'the cause of the Catholic Church during the French Revolution was identified with the cause of all churches'.[19] The portrayal of Priests in Burke's *Letters* offers a concrete example of the interpenetration of this conservative discourse with specific 'tropes' of positive depiction of the Catholic and with contemporary changes in attitude facilitated by the arrival of French emigres and the 'spiritual zeal' and industry of the French Priests.[20] Burke describes the French clergy as 'persons of noble birth . . . liberal, open and with the hearts of gentlemen', linking the Catholic clergy to a lost world of chivalry that relied on the 'indissoluble union' of 'the nobility and the clergy' necessary to national stability.[21] Rather than a time of increasing suspicion and alienation from the Catholic, Newton suggests that 'the behaviour of the clergy, together with the sight of so many of them about the London streets, did much at the critical time of the Relief Bills to break down prejudices as well as familiarize the public with Catholic services, chapels and ways of life'.[22] For Purves, the Gothic echoes this discourse of a wide, though not universal, public re-evaluation of Catholicism in the sympathetic presentation of some Catholic figures, institutions and practices.

While not unproblematic, Purves' work usefully engages with the fact that 'public opinion became increasingly in favour of emancipation' during the period.[23] Critics such as Hoeveler, who view the Gothic as virulently anti-Catholic, frequently under-emphasise the changing status of Catholicism and the growing movement for toleration. Hoeveler acknowledges the existence of these positive depictions and gestures towards the necessity of a more nuanced view, noting that 'the stark differences in opinion on this issue can be

[19] Clara Tuite, 'Cloister Closets: Enlightenment Pornography, The Confessional State, Homosexual Persecution and *The Monk*', *Romanticism on the Net,* 8 (Nov. 1997) < https://doi.org/10.7202/005766ar> [last accessed 05.10.2019]
[20] Douglas Newton, 'Notes on French Catholics after 1789' in *A History of the French in London: Liberty, Equality, Opportunity,* ed. By Debra Kelly and Martyn Cornick (London: University of London School of Advanced Study, 2013), 91-99 (pp. 91-9)
[21] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London: J. Parson, 1793), p. 104/76
[22] Ibid., p. 93
[23] J. R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Church in England* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1953), p. 331

resolved by recognizing that an "either/or" explanation will not suffice; in fact a "both/and" method is a more accurate way of accounting for the bifurcated ideological agendas present [in Gothic texts]'.[24] Hoeveler's argument is based on Charles Taylor's concept of secularisation not as a linear movement from belief to disbelief but as a 'pluralism of outlooks, religious and non- and anti-religious'.[25] She suggests that the Protestantism of the period is an increasingly de-theologised 'Providential Deism',[26] which exists contentiously alongside nostalgic impulses towards the mystery and majesty of older forms, namely Catholicism.

While Hoeveler's work, like Milbank's, recognises the contradictory impulses often evident within Gothic texts, it rejects the radical plurality at the heart of Taylor's concept of the secular. Hoeveler reimagines the secular as progressive rejection of the theology and theo-politics of 'a reactionary, demonized and feudal Catholicism'. [27] The Catholic is imagined as an 'other' that 'stand[s] in opposition to the modern Protestant individual, who then alternatively combats and flirts with this uncanny double'.[28] This argument reinforces an artificial binary between a monolithic Protestantism and a barbarous Catholicism. Her dedication to this essentially binary frame of interpretation recognises seemingly contradictory impulses in the Gothic but ignores the diverse theological landscape of the period, the range of both political and theological responses to the Catholic Church and the far broader discourse of toleration.

Purves also fails to engage with a wider understanding of toleration debates. She produces a distorted conception of pro-toleration discourse by depicting Tory-leaning Anglican politics as the root of Catholic acceptance and ignoring the role of Anglicans and Tories in anti-toleration politics. Although the discourse suggested by Purves certainly spread in the period, an overemphasis on its ubiquity erases the vitality of a wider discourse of toleration and tolerance, whose arguments did not arise from an attempt to justify the Anglican Church or its current relationship with the state. Pro-toleration and ecumenical

[24] Diane Long Hoeveler, 'Regina Maria Roche's "The Children of the Abbey": Contesting the Catholic Presence in Female Gothic Fiction', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature,* 31.1-2, (Spring/Fall 2012), 137-58 (p. 139)
[25] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: The Belkin Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 437
[26] Hoeveler, 'Contesting the Catholic Presence in Female Gothic Fiction', p. 145
[27] Diane Long Hoeveler, *The Gothic Ideology: Religious Hysteria and Anti-Catholicism in British Popular Fiction, 1780-1880* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2014), p. 3
[28] Ibid., p. 3

views and groups proliferated among Dissenting communities. Two examples demonstrate this 'interdenominational temper'.[29] First, the 1790s saw the rise of ecumenical movements, such as the London Missionary Society, which was composed of Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Calvinist Methodists and Evangelical Anglicans.[30] Likewise, the early-nineteenth century particularly saw the rise of pro-toleration mixed Dissenting societies, such as the Protestant Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty. This support for toleration was not based on a particular understanding of the Catholic Church but on support of particular conceptions of Church/State relationships, freedom of conscience and the right to worship.[31]

There was also no single Anglican position. Liberal Anglicans such as William Paley and Richard Watson supported theological tolerance but had differing positions on political toleration. Watson supported political toleration and Paley rejected total toleration on the grounds of the stability of the state.[32] Both followed arguments reminiscent of earlier Latitudinarians and Freethinkers, such as John Locke and Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, rather than emphasising a conservative re-evaluation of the importance of the Catholic Church to Anglican identity.[33] The various arguments concerning political toleration, Church/State relations and theological tolerance had, since the seventeenth-century, been a discussion predominantly carried out in relation to and between different denominations of Protestant thinkers and cannot be reduced to a question of the political or theo-political expediency of Catholic Emancipation or repression. Gothic depictions of the Catholic can similarly not be extricated from wider considerations of the interrelation of different Christian creeds.

A view of toleration as essentially synonymous with Catholic emancipation not only ignores the history of toleration debate but the widespread state repression of Protestant

[29] David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 66
[30] Michael Watts, *The Dissenters: Volume II, The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 10
[31] Ibid., 421. The Dissenting exceptions to this rule were the Wesleyans and the Calvinist Methodists. As Watts notes, 'more prosperous and better-educated metropolitan congregations…favoured the repeal of legislation which discriminated against Dissenters and Catholics alike' but 'Dissenters outside London' were less open to Catholic emancipation. Ibid., p. 421
[32] Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment, Volume II: Shaftesbury to Hume* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 341
[33] Ibid., p. 345

Dissent. This elision of Anglican persecution of Dissent is manifest in many anti-Catholic accounts of the Gothic. Hoeveler, for example, uses the 1791 Birmingham riots, which were specifically aimed at Unitarians, as an example of anti-Catholic sentiment. In *The Dissenters* (1978, 1995, 2015), Michael Watts details the ways in which 'in the years following the French Revolution religious liberty was at times threatened by Anglicans and Tories who equated religious deviance with political rebellion'. [34] Fears of political radicalism linked to 'rational' Dissenting groups and figures such as Richard Price (Presbyterian) and Joseph Priestley (Unitarian) led to increased suspicion of Dissenters and set back the removal of the Test and Corporation Acts. This was juxtaposed after the Union with Ireland in 1800 with an increased pressure for Catholic Emancipation by 'liberal Tory MPs, who regarded the removal of Roman Catholic grievances as a more pressing issue' than the claims for toleration of Protestant Dissent.[35]

Catholic Emancipation occurred only one year later (1829) than the removal of the Test and Corporation Acts (1828) that affected both Catholics and Dissenters equally. Some of the repressive legal measures enacted after the Reformation were clearly aimed at eliminating Catholics specifically from the civil stage. As Milbank notes, 'Catholics were pointedly excluded from'[36] from the Act of Toleration in 1689 as its conditional clauses necessitated the denial of transubstantiation and made swearing the Oath of Supremacy a requirement of access to its privileges.[37] However, the clauses that modified the Act deliberately excluded not only Catholics but Socinians (anti-Trinitarians who deny the divinity of Christ) and Quakers. Similarly, laws such as the Five-Mile Act and the Conventicle

[34] Watts, *The Dissenters: Volume II,* p. 32. In doing so, contemporary thinkers frequently elided the very real difference between Evangelical Dissenting politics (which emphasised non-resistance and obedience to existing powers in a sort of 'political quietism') and Rational Dissenting politics (which frequently promoted Republican models of state or advocated for significant reform of the current legal and political system).
[35] Ibid., p. 429
[36] Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 62
[37] This fear was reified in the Oath of Supremacy instituted by Henry VIII in 1534 and reinstated, though significantly altered, by Elizabeth I in 1559. It required those seeking public office or a church position to swear allegiance to the monarch, declaring that 'no Foreign Prince, Person, Prelate, State, or Potentate hath or ought to have any Jurisdiction, Power, Superiority, Pre-eminence, or Authority, Ecclesiastical or Spiritual, within this realm'* It is a clear and lasting example of the continued fear of the threat of Catholics' primary allegiance to the Pope. It also targeted Quakers whose religion forbade taking oaths.
* *The Oath of Allegiance,* ([London]: [n. pub], [1715])

Act (repealed in 1812)[38] and the Blasphemy Act (1697)[39] specifically targeted Dissenters. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, both Dissenters and Catholics were targeted at various times for particular persecution. There is a shared history of oppression and of increased toleration that makes it impossible to separate Catholic Emancipation, and the representation of the Catholic, from a wider discourse of toleration more frequently found to be critical of an Anglican confessional state than supporting it.

As Bostrom notes, throughout the period 'the pamphlet warfare was unceasing, and innumerable sermons and arguments on the topic were published'.[40] This vital and often vociferous debate was engaged in a broad consideration of toleration and the viability of a confessional state and we cannot separate Gothic depictions of the Catholic from these contemporary debates. This does not discredit Hoeveler's or Purves' readings; rather, it highlights the way in which their anti- or pro- Catholic lenses inevitably fail to engage with significant ideological and theological work encoded within depictions of the Catholic. The next sections use case studies to map current critical understandings of the Gothic representation of the Catholic. They explore the possibilities and limitations of current frameworks of interpretation, and model a practice of engagement with depictions of the Catholic that prioritises recognition of the diverse theological work with which they are engaged beyond a simple reflection of Anglo-Catholic inter-relation.

Monks

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheeps clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits – Matthew 7:15-16

Monstrous monks run amok through the pages of the Gothic. The frequency with which such figures are portrayed lends itself to an anti-Catholic conception of the Gothic. For Hoeveler, they function as avatars of one of the 'three basic tenets of British anti-

[38] As Watts explains, the Five Mile Act 'forbade nonconformist ministers who would not take certain oaths from coming within five miles of towns or their former churches and from teaching in schools.' The Conventicle Acts 'made it a crime for five or more people to assemble together for religious worship other than by the Book of Common Prayer'. Watts, *The Dissenters: Volume I,* p. 92

[39] The Blasphemy Act is clearly aimed at Deists and atheists but its inclusion of a Trinity clause (that is, it was illegal to deny the doctrine of the Trinity) targeted Socinians specifically. The Doctrine of the Trinity Act 1813 finally removed this clause.

[40] Irene Bostrom, 'The Novel and Catholic Emancipation', *Studies in Romanticism,* 2.3 (Spring 1963), 155-176 (p. 155)

Catholicism': 'political distrust of meddling and hypocritical Catholic clergy'. [41] Embodied in the rapacious, libidinous, ruthless monks gleefully and sadistically striding through the Gothic, she argues, is a fear of the threat of priestcraft 'to the freedoms valued in Britain, and to the British patriarchal family in particular'.[42] Particularly, Hoeveler suggests, there is a paranoid fear that 'through the confessional, priests had access to the inner thoughts and desires of their parishioners, giving the clergy the power to control females in ways that were viewed as dangerous to the control that women should be under from their fathers and husbands'.[43] Hoeveler's anti-Catholic reading makes the individual monk an avatar of the Catholic Church and its insidious threat to Protestant society. Purves' Pro-Catholic reading similarly relies on an understanding of the monkish figure as a metonymic representative of the Catholic Church but offers a widely differing interpretation. According to Purves: 'Roman Catholicism was being rehabilitated and romanticised during the 1790s'[44] and part of this process was the valorisation of Catholic religiosity, which represented 'Christian piety in a world of unruly emotion and unchecked sensibility' [45] such as that found in the Gothic. The monk therefore becomes a possible representative of these values and the salutary influence of Catholic doctrine. While Hoeveler and Purves are largely responding to different characters, their interpretative frameworks clash in relation to Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1796), making it a useful case study of the possibilities and limitations of both approaches.

In *The Italian,* the monk Schedoni's church-sanctioned influence over the Marchesa de Vivaldi's conscience supports her persecution of the heroine Ellena and her adoption of a masculinised role that rejects the authority of her husband's will. In an anti-Catholic reading, Schedoni's quest for power and influence function as an allegory of the Catholic Church's rapacity, while his relationship with the Marchesa reflects political anxiety over the power of the Catholic Church and its claim to allegiance above and beyond the claims of family or nation. George E. Haggerty offers an alternative view of the relationship between the Marchesa and Schedoni as representing a dangerous connection between the patriarchal structures of civil society and Catholicism. There is, he contests, a 'connection between the

[41] Hoeveler, *The Gothic Ideology*, p. 38
[42] Ibid*.,* p. 110
[43] Ibid., pp. 109-10
[44] Purves, *The Gothic and Catholicism,* p. 15
[45] Ibid*.,* p. 188/1

heteronormativity of sexual violence and the patriarchal law of the father upon which Catholicism insists'.[46] The relationship between the Marchesa and Schedoni is certainly represented as symbiotic:

> Each possessed, in a considerable degree the power of assisting the other; Schedoni had subtlety with ambition to urge it; and the Marchesa had inexorable pride and courtly influence; the one hoped to obtain a high benefice for his services, and the other to secure the imaginary dignity of her house.[47]

This interpenetration of civil and religious interests creates a formidable obstacle to the happiness and prosperity of the seemingly bourgeois Ellena and the ideal of companionate rather than dynastic marriage which perpetuates the patriarchal system. While differing in emphasis, in both readings a key source of anxiety is the threat of the Catholic Church as a political entity seeking power in the private or civil sphere.

Purves' reading of Schedoni as an ultimately sympathetic character is connected to a theological re-evaluation of the Catholic doctrine of penance. After planning to kill Ellena, Schedoni momentarily comes to believe that she is his daughter. This is followed by a scene of repentance couched in penitential language: 'In thus consenting to conspire against the innocent, he had in the event been only *punishing* the guilty, and preparing *mortification* for himself.'[48] Penance, Purves argues, is thereby validated as 'an instrument of change and reformation'.[49] Purves' reading, however, ignores the ultimate failure of penitential theology depicted in the novel and the immediate context of these comments. Schedoni's 'repentance' in this scene is not marked by sincere regret. Rather, he is shocked by the damage he might have done to his 'hope of advancement' through his 'daughter's' marriage.[50] Purves's misreading of this scene suggests a problematic lack of engagement with the underlying theology. Indeed, as Milbank asserts, 'neither Purves nor Hoeveler is interested in any creative theological work Gothic writing might be doing'.[51] However, her

[46] George Haggerty, *Queer Gothic,* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), p. 64
[47] Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian; or, The Confessional of the Black Penitents,* 2 vols (Dublin: p. Wogan et al., 1797), I, p. 55
[48] Radcliffe, *The Italian,* II, p. 82
[49] Purves, *The Gothic and Catholicism,* p. 109
[50] Radcliffe, *The Italian*, II, p. 329. She is ultimately revealed to be his niece.
[51] Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 3

attempt to grapple with Schedoni's undeniable complexity as a character suggests the limitations of Hoeveler's one-dimensional anti-Catholic reading.

One reason for the frequently unfruitful nature of the debates between anti-Catholic and pro-Catholic readings of the Gothic is the different registers in which they work. Hoeveler and Haggerty address the Catholic Church as a political institution; Purves argues for a theologised reimagining of Catholic doctrine. An underlying problem is the unqualified use of the concept of anti-Catholicism. Few if any critical accounts have attempted to define anti-Catholicism rather than simply delineate aspects of its expression and foci of its fear. There are numerous options for its definition: a theological rejection of doctrines perceived to be specifically Catholic (theological critique); a rejection of Catholics as unchristian and damned (theological intolerance); a political rejection of the mode of operation of the Catholic Church (political critique); or a rejection of the political claims of Catholics in England to equal status under the law (political toleration). Critical accounts frequently conflate these different aspects, and while they are often connected, contemporary thinkers clearly distinguished between them.

Dissenting figures such as Anna Laetitia Barbauld and Joseph Priestley (both Unitarians), for example, explicitly rejected many Catholic doctrines (theological critique).[52] However, unlike John Locke, whose *Letters Concerning Toleration* became 'the standard account to which dissenters referred',[53] they supported the removal of the Test and Corporation Acts for all, including Catholics (political toleration).[54] Their work illustrates the contemporary distinction between theological and political acceptance of Catholicism. Theological and political critique are also not synonymous with either political or theological intolerance. Maturin's *Five Sermons* usefully illustrates the distinction between theological critique and theological tolerance. He forcefully reminds the congregation that his strictures, a five sermon critique of Catholic doctrine, are 'not against Catholics, but against Catholicism' and that he has confidence in the 'state of acceptance' of many of his Catholic

[52] Priestley dedicated two volumes to the subject in his *An History of the Corruptions of Christianity* (1793).
[53] Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment, Volume I: Whichcote to Wesley* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 166
[54] See Barbauld's *An Address to the Opposers of the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts* and Joseph Priestley's, *A Letter to the Right Honourable William Pitt on the Subjects of Toleration and Church Establishments.*

friends.[55] This distinction between 'Catholic' and 'Catholicism' is the ground therefore of an extension of theological tolerance in the very act of theological and political critique.

Anti-Catholicism as a term and a critical frame in Gothic criticism is fundamentally flawed. It conflates the theological and the political, the part with the whole, and the individual and the institution. Hoeveler's interpretation of Schedoni relates to a political critique of the Catholic Church but fails to prove either political or theological intolerance. Purves' reading attempts to conflate theological valorisation with political and theological tolerance. The seemingly contradictory impulses in depictions of Catholicism can partly be explained by this false conflation of the theological and the political and the individual and the institution. We may read Schedoni as a metonymic figure for Catholicism's perceived bid for material power through spiritual mastery. However, he is also as an individual upon whom the Catholic Church has acted; there is an underlying theological subtext which critiques specific Catholic articles of faith, their effect on individuals and the theological underpinnings of these practices. This critique extends beyond the Catholic Church.

In the framing device of *The Italian,* we follow English tourists through an Italian church, past a murderer claiming sanctuary, and to a confessional. With them we are told to 'Mark the place because some very extraordinary circumstances belong to it'.[56] These 'extraordinary circumstances' pertain to Schedoni's fratricidal confession and the denouement of the novel features the revelation of its contents. The 'externalised conscience'[57] of the confessional and the penitential theology connected to it therefore frame both the novel itself and Schedoni's story, a fact underlined by the novel's subtitle: *The Confessional of the Black Penitents*. Maturin, in his *Five sermons,* attacks the sacrament of penance, which he associates with the confessional and priestly absolution of sin.[58] This

[55] Maturin, *Five Sermons,* p. 28/p. 14
[56] Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian*, II, p. viii
[57] Sage, *Horror Fiction in the Protestant Tradition,* p. 38
[58] Tarr in her comprehensive survey *Catholicism in Gothic Fiction* (1946) notes that the Confessional is attacked in Gothic fiction for two reasons: 'the problem of the seal of confession' and 'the *mistaken* belief that it is possible to purchase absolution.' Though both Maturin's sermons and Radcliffe's depiction of the confessional may be an over-simplification of the Catholic doctrines of penance and confession, they nonetheless represent the concept of confession that existed within the Protestant imaginary. The Gothic often presents us with the Catholic not as it is but as it was thought to be, both theologically and politically, in the Protestant imaginary. (Mary Muriel Tarr, *Catholicism in Gothic Fiction,* (Washington D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1946), p. 38

'monstrous doctrine', he argues, 'notoriously substitutes the phrase "Do Penance!" for the 'Repent Ye!' of Acts 3:19.[59] In other words, the doctrine of penance replaces the internal revolution and rejection of sin understood by 'repentance' with the idea of an external penance or 'price'.

Testifying before the Inquisition, Ansaldo, the priest who took Schedoni's confession, recalls Schedoni's attitude when giving it: his 'heart was bursting with the secret, and required the comfort of *absolution*, even at the *price* of the *severest guilt*' (my emphasis). [60] He seeks absolution through penance. Indeed, he is renowned for his 'frequent penances', which are presumed to be 'the consequences of some hideous crime gnawing upon an awakened conscience'.[61] Though he clearly experiences guilt, there is no repentance; he dies with a 'demoniacal sound of exultation' after murdering his former accomplice.[62] The 'barbarity of penance', we are told, is not only incapable of overcoming his selfish 'pride' but is rooted in it.[63] His penitential practice is, therefore, not only revealed as fruitless but, in accordance with Maturin's claims, a 'deadly delusion' that bars the way to salvation by replacing an awareness of the need for repentance with a system of barter disassociated from any internal revolution. [64]

Schedoni is both oppressor and victim within the Catholic system, winning temporal power but separated by doctrine, rather than simply by his own iniquity, from salvation. The theological critique implicit in the depiction of Schedoni is not confined to Catholicism but suggests a broader exploration and rejection of a works-based theology. Gregory Scholtz notes the eighteenth-century prevalence of an 'Anglican doctrine of conditional salvation', which made 'God's grace contingent to a certain extent on human effort'.[65] As Isabel Rivers explores, the relation between freewill, human effort and grace in salvation was a vexed question throughout the eighteenth century. A High Calvinist approach assumes that man's election is completely disconnected from his own actions. He has no ability to influence his

[59] Maturin, *Five Sermons*, p. 84
[60] Radcliffe, *The Italian,* II, p. 227
[61] Ibid., I, p. 53
[62] Ibid., II, p. 329
[63] Ibid., II, p. 53
[64] Maturin, *Five Sermons,* p. 82
[65] Gregory Scholtz, 'How "Degraded" was Eighteenth-Century Anglicanism," *Eighteenth Century Studies,* 24.1 (Autumn 1990), 93-111 (p. 109)

salvation. Arminians, on the contrary, believe that 'man is free to work out his own salvation in co-operation with grace'[66] and that the 'elect' are not those predestined from before time but rather those whom 'God foresees will accept grace and have faith'.[67] The official position of the Church of England in the seventeenth century was Calvinist but, as Rivers argues, a Baxterian middle-way between Calvinism and Arminianism had become the de facto theology of much of the Anglican Church by the early eighteenth century.

The seventeenth-century Dissenter Richard Baxter differentiated between the law of Works and the conditions of the Gospel and 'though Christ performed the conditions of the Law, and satisfied for our non-performance; yet it is our selves that must perform the conditions of the Gospel'.[68] The 'conditions' of the Gospel were 'obeying the Gospel or beleeving' (in other words, faith) for 'on no other terms do we partake of the Legal Righteousness of Christ'.[69] This middle ground was held in particular suspicion by Evangelicals, and particularly Calvinist Evangelicals, as diminishing both God's power and man's depravity. [70] Such a form of 'conditional faith' was also easily open to theological misinterpretation, both to critique from outside the church and misinterpretation by adherents, especially considering the remaining influence of Latitudinarian emphasis on a moral life above theological controversy. Radcliffe's depiction of Schedoni, and her thorough repudiation of penitential theology, serve as an intervention in a much wider theological discourse regarding faith and works and denotes a suspicion either of the dominant Anglican position itself or of potential misunderstandings thereof.

This study of *The Italian* demonstrates the failure of a monolithic 'anti-Catholicism' as a framework of interpretation. To question whether *The Italian* is anti-Catholic can never result in a coherent answer. Tropes such as a manipulative confessor in relation with a powerful secular figure point towards a political critique of the Catholic Church and its

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[66] Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment*, I, p. 11
[67] Ibid., I, p. 11
[68] Richard Baxter, *Aphorismes of Justification* (Hague: Abrahams Brown, 1655), p. 70
[69] Ibid., p. 72 There is an obvious proximity between Baxter's work and Luther's concentration on justification through faith where Baxter differs from Luther is his emphasis on human responsibility rather than Divine grace in relation to saving faith.
[70] David Bebbington notes that Evangelicalism was marked not by a notable emphasis on '*conversionism,* the belief that lives need to be changed; *activism,* the expression of the gospel in effort; *biblicism,* a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be called *crucicentrism,* a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.' There was therefore a significant emphasis on the saving sacrifice of Christ and justification by faith alone. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, p. 3

relationship to the state and there is a clear theological critique of aspects of Catholic doctrine. This is not, however, a guaranteed index of political or theological intolerance, especially when it is presented alongside positive depictions of religious figures and institutions as we find in *The Italian* and as I will discuss further below. This is equally true when we are confronted with complex Catholic figures who refuse to act simply as metonymic representations of Catholicism but instead function as individuals: both theological subjects and objects of Catholic doctrine. *The Italian* resists any attempt to interpret it as a universal denunciation of Catholicism or to limit its relevance to the question of Anglo-Catholic or Catholic/Protestant relations.

It is worth noting that although Purves' interpretation of *The Italian* is unconvincing and although largely disengaged from the theological work occurring in Gothic texts, Purves highlights the necessity of engaging with mixed and positive depictions of Catholics ecclesiastical figures, such as Schedoni. Hoeveler dismisses her claims by suggesting that these figures are outnumbered, yet they are prevalent enough to deserve critical recognition.[71] Hermits, friars, priests, nuns and abbesses are often allowed positive minor roles in Gothic texts, such as the kindly Priest who comforts and the Abbess who shelters Emily after her father's death in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). They may also be central to the stories they inhabit, as is the case with Father Benedicta, Father Andrea and the Conte della Croisse in Eleanor Sleath's *The Orphan of the Rhine* (1798). Throughout the novel, they alternately comfort, console, advise and rescue the eponymous orphan. However, Purves' claim that the monastic character is 'defined by piety and chastity' and 'humility' and is therefore a model of Catholic chivalric masculinity that 'becomes part of the Gothic hero's code' is not justified even by this text, which is replete with positive Catholic figures. [72]

Sleath's Father Andrea and the Conte della Croisse enter the monastery in relative old age near the end of the novel. Their military exploits, support of the oppressed and practical wisdom are attributes formed in the world and brought into the convent. Father Benedicta, who enters the monastery earlier after repenting his misspent youth and its terrible consequences, suggests a validation of the potentialities of true religiosity to

[71] Hoeveler, *The Gothic Ideology,* pp. 56-7
[72] Purves, *The Gothic and Catholicism*, p. 173/p. 188

provoke spiritual change. The fact, however, that he is singled out for his generosity, self-sacrifice and sincerity within his order indicate that these values are individual rather than a representation of a generalised 'monastic virtue'. The good monks of *The Orphan of the Rhine* are not, in Purves' terms, 'men with the hearts of monks'[73] but rather monks with the hearts of men. However, they serve to reinforce the fact that the Gothic cannot simply be read as broadly antagonistic to Catholicism. Good monks exist alongside their murderous brethren, proving that there are monks who are men and not monsters. In doing so, they disrupt any attempt to interpret an 'ideology' of the Gothic as either narrowly pro- or anti-Catholic.

Monasteries

Now we see through a glass darkly – 1 Corinthians 13:12

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to your again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is thine own eye? – Matthew 7:1-3

Like the monstrous monks of the Gothic, its monasteries are frequently used as evidence of an anti-Catholic agenda. Certainly, from Agnes' live burial in *The Monk* (1796), to the tortures enacted on Monçada in *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), from the charnel houses hidden throughout the monastery at the heart of the anonymously authored *The Libertines* (1798) to the lush den of the luxurious Vittoria in W. H. Ireland's *The Abbess* (1799), Gothic texts abound with cloistral spaces as places of entrapment, torture, libidinous excess and diabolical machinations. Following Haggerty, Hoeveler connects the depiction of cloistral life to a tradition of pornographic French anti-Catholic and anti-clerical propaganda, such as the infamous *Vénus dans le cloître* (1683). Figures such as the Madre Vittoria in *The Abbess,* Ambrosio in *The Monk* and Father Jerome in *The Libertines* all reflect existing tropes of a 'sexually predatory clergy who use their positions in the monasteries to prey on nuns or

[73] Ibid., p. 187

servants or each other'.[74] Ambrosio's sexualised relation to the painting of the Virgin, whose form Rosario/Matilda takes, also illustrates a particular suspicion of Marian worship as sexually corrupted. Angela Wright suggests a wider political valence for the trope of the corrupt monastery in anti-clerical propaganda that proliferated at the time of the French Revolution: 'a method of critiquing the *ancient regime's* abuses of institutional – and particularly clerical – power'.[75] The Gothic's diabolical monasteries then partially represent a dangerous model of nationhood and a threatening interpenetration of state and Catholic clerical interests. This fear is exemplified in the conspiracy of Father Jerome and Alexo's uncle Roderigo in *The Libertines,* where both seek to profit by Alexo's entry into the monastery. The connection between anti-Catholic propaganda and the Gothic is made clear by the preface to *The Libertines.*

In this furiously paced tour of monastic debauchery, Father Jerome uses his position as a confessor and an inquisitor to kidnap, imprison, rape and murder a number of women. The monastery itself has become a place of imprisonment, torture and diabolical plots. The anonymous author uses her preface as a justification of the monstrosities of her tale by arguing that though 'they carry an air of improbability, the Author…is indebted to a fact well-authenticated, and which he first read in old French pamphlets'.[76] She further emphasises another key facet of anti-clerical pornographic propaganda: that it is 'the wrong of the fair sex' that is 'countenanced by the popish religion'[77] as Catholic structures serve to isolate and exploit women. However, a note of caution should be sounded about a single-minded focus on the Catholic nature of these spaces or the figures that inhabit them.

In *The Libertines,* Father Jerome leaves the Catholic Church and studies 'the religious principles of Luther'[78] before beginning a field mission, which 'gained a few illiterate

[74] Hoeveler, *The Gothic Ideology,* p. 198
[75] Angela Wright, *Britain, France and the Gothic 1764 – 1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 127
[76] [Anon.], *The Libertines,* p. ii Although the author self-identifies as male in the preface, there are numerous textual markers that the author is female. Hoeveler identifies the author as Elizabeth Meeke. However, I have not found any evidence to support this hypothesis. Anthony Mandal in his study of Elizabeth Meeke's publishing record does not include the novel and argues that she 'published the entirety of her fiction with the Minerva Press' who were not the publishing company responsible for *The Libertines.* Anthony Mandal, "Mrs Meeke and Minerva: The Mystery of the Marketplace', *Eighteenth-Century Life,* 42.2 (April 2018), 131-51 (p. 132)
[77] [Anon.], *The Libertines,* I, p. iii
[78] Ibid., II, p. 189

followers' and led to his death as a heretic. His conversion is connected to a change in his moral conduct, echoing the more clearly positive conversions of Florella and St Anna. However, the slighting reference to his field-preaching is clearly a thinly veiled allusion to Methodist preaching practices and there is a marked suggestion that his manipulative methods of religious control remain the same. He continues to exert unchecked control when he 'commanded' his 'illiterate followers' to sign a 'recantation of their Catholic beliefs'.[79] This conflation of Catholic and Dissenting Evangelical identities reflects an eighteenth-century suspicion of enthusiastic Dissent, its methods of evangelism and its structures of power and ideological control as we find in Bishop George Lavington's three volume *The Enthusiasm of the Methodists and Papists compared* (1749). As Robert Miles notes the 'Catholic body in the Gothic is often the shadow of enthusiastical Protestantism'.[80]

It is a critical commonplace that the Gothic uses 'historical and geographical distancing' to confront contemporary issues 'safely'.[81] This sense of an encoded commentary on contemporary issues may usefully be applied to Gothic depictions of the Catholic. As we find in *The Libertines,* this may involve a critique of Enthusiastic Dissent. Rarely noted is the way in which Gothic depictions of the Catholic Church function as a reflection 'in a glass darkly' of contemporary concerns about the Anglican Church. The mirrored political position (confessional state churches) and the familial relationship between Catholicism and Anglicanism is exploited within the Gothic to express contemporary anxieties centred on the Anglican Church and frequently its relation to civil power. As Robert Miles notes, the 'Catholic other' is 'not simply other' but also a 'complex foil' which 'cues us into some of the eighteenth-century sources of internal, Protestant, British unease'.[82] The monstrous Catholic institutions of the Gothic may also usefully be read not only as a critique of the Catholic Church as an institution but as a reflection of contemporary concerns about the Church of England.

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[79] Ibid., II, p. 189

[80] Robert Miles, 'Europhobia: The Catholic other in Horace Walpole and Charles Maturin' in *European Gothic: A Spirited Exchange 1760-1960,* ed. by Avril Horner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 84-103 (p. 91)

[81] David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: Vol I: The Gothic Tradition,* 2nd edn (London and New York: Longman, 1996) p. 15/54

[82] Miles, 'Europhobia', p. 85-86. Miles uses psychoanalytic theories of both projection and abjection to argue for this mirroring. As I have shown there is also a long tradition of using Catholic or superstitious imagery to comment on the Anglican Church.

There was a notable increase in Nonconformist church attendance in the eighteenth century, which saw the beginnings of the Evangelical revival, the spread of Methodism and the creation of a new Rational Dissenting group – the Unitarians.[83] While still only representing a minority of the population, these growing Dissenting groups demonstrate both the theological diversity of the period and an underlying dissatisfaction with the Anglican Church. The clergy particularly were a significant focus of both Dissenting and reforming complaint. Dissenter Isaac Watts's *An Humble Attempt Toward the Revival of Practical Religion* (1731), for example, underlined 'the hypocrisy of divines, both Anglican and Dissenting, who did not practise the imitation of Christ'.[84] Wesleyan Methodism's original aim as a movement within the Anglican church was to 'reform the nation, *particularly the church'* (my emphasis).[85] Evangelicalism flourished, as Watts and David Bebbington note, in part because of the perceived failures of the Anglican Church. The 'inflexible parochial structure, inadequate pastoral machinery, and unemotional moralistic theology',[86] combined with the continual issues of 'pluralism, non-residence, nepotism, [and] sinecures',[87] laid the groundwork for the spread of a reactionary Evangelicalism in response to a conception of a professional clergy as hypocritically unable or unwilling to fulfil parochial duties and a church incapable of performing its spiritual function.

Charles Churchill's polemic poem 'The Times' (1764) makes clear, though in a radically exaggerated form, contemporary fears of clerical sexual misconduct, which echo those found in the anti-clerical propaganda of France, and the monstrous clergy of the Gothic:

> …[We] Ourselves have lived to see,
>
> More than one Parson in the Pillory.[88]

[83] The first church was founded by Theophilus Lindsey in 1774.
[84] William Van Reyk, 'Christian Ideals of Manliness in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *The Historical Journal,* 52.4 (Dec. 2009), 1053-1073 (p. 1063)
[85] Rev. Charles Elliott, *The Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review* (New York: T. Mason and G. Lane, 1838), p. xx
[86] Michael Watts, *The Dissenters*, II, p. 110
[87] Moorman, *History of the Church in England,* p. 285
[88] Rictor Norton (Ed.), '*The Times* by Charles Churchill, 1764', *Homosexuality in Eighteenth-Century England: A Sourcebook.* Updated 1 Dec. 1999 <http://rictornorton.co.uk/eighteen/1764chur.htm>

In a poem that focuses repeatedly on homosexual activity, the implication here is clear and is one of many sexualised charges against the clergy that he notes. His reference to specific infamous ecclesiastical figures such as William Dodd[89] highlights the existence of a contemporary discourse that viewed with disapprobation or concern the current state of both the church and the clergy. The Gothic's depiction of lascivious, corrupt, unfit, sceptical and monstrous priests therefore intersects with existing contemporary discourse that was critical of Anglican practitioners.

This practice of using either Catholic figures or Catholic coded terminology to critique Protestantism occurred frequently in eighteenth-century debate, from freethinkers, sceptics, Dissenting critics and internal reformers. Rivers notes the ways in which freethinkers, for example, hid their critique of Christianity in order to avoid prosecution by critiquing 'paganism and superstition'.[90] The term 'priestcraft', although often viewed as Catholic-coded, was used in broader critiques of religion, the Anglican Church or Dissenting groups with the meaning of 'fraud, cheat and imposture' with the aim of making 'the people the victims of superstition and prejudice'.[91] The Gothic's representation of corrupt monastic figures and institutions, associated with sexual corruption and practising priestcraft, should not be seen as a limited critique merely of Catholicism but as a potentially coded reflection on Protestant denominations.

The Libertines also illustrates the way in which these depictions of corrupt monastic institutions may engage in more overtly theological work and in a critique of a non-denominational understanding of 'priestcraft'. This depiction of Monastic depravity is used to investigate and critique theologies of providence. The protagonist Alexo finds the tale of another of Father Jerome's victims, Cleanthe, and rails against providence:

> It may be suffered, to answer *some wise and providential end*. But when we see from day to day these prosperous miscreants of oppression gathering to themselves wealth and power, and fattening upon the superfluous luxuries of the world, whilst the virtuous and friendless part of mankind are the victims of their premeditated

[89] Dodd was infamously hanged for forgery in 1777. At the time of writing, Churchill was most probably referring to his fame as the Macaroni parson. The Macaronis, evocatively described in one satire as 'crowds of beau effeminate', were associated with both loose and 'deviant' sexual moralities. Ferdinand Twigham, *The Macaroni: A Satire* (London: G. Allen, 1773), p. 5

[90] Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment,* II, p. 42

[91] Ibid., I, p. 8

> plans for debauchery and cruelty, *this fact militates against the avowed utility of religion*; and the common benefit supposed to be derived from *the craft of pulpit declamation, is nothing more than a delusion, to protect them from the suspicions of a discerning age*.[92] (My emphasis)

Here, Alexo critiques not only Father Jerome, Cleanthe's principal persecutor, and the Catholic Church itself but questions the existence of a 'wise and providential end'. His bold questioning of the 'avowed utility of religion' and the author's choice carefully to erase all terms specific to the Catholic Church in this speech suggest its wider application: an attack on doctrines of providence and the establishments that use them as a form of social control.[93] Priestcraft in this evocative denunciation is disconnected from its Catholic manifestation and becomes a general indictment of priestly manipulation.

This is not to suggest that Gothic depictions of the Catholic either can or should be completely divided from a critique of Catholic practice. There is, for example, a set of fairly standard theological critiques which directly attack the cloistral theologies of monasticism. Encoded in a negative depiction of monastic life, and frequently mused upon by Gothic protagonists, is a view of monasticism's vow of celibacy as unnatural and vitiating;[94] cloistral separation from a secular life as a cowardly retreat from the world productive of only 'negative virtue';[95] and its legalistic practices as the fount of hypocrisy. These critiques represent discomfort with cloistral theology. They may also, however, reflect a broader theological or moral subtext within the novel, which escapes the confines of an anti-Catholic agenda. The criticism of monastic seclusion, for example, is as much a criticism of seclusionism as it is of monasticism.[96] In Ann Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest*

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[92] Ibid., I, p. 36

[93] It is also worth noting that this rejection of providential discourse is in part lived out by characters within the novel. Contrary to the standard practice of Gothic heroines awaiting providential intervention, one of Father Jerome's victims, Florella, 'instantly drew a dagger from her vest, and plunged it in his bosom.' [Anon.], *The Libertines,* I, p. 180

[94] Perhaps the most famous denunciation is found in W. H. Ireland's *The Abbess* (1799), in which the Abbess Vittoria Bracciano, who later rapes Marcello using drugged wine, declares that 'the life of celibacy was a human ordinance; pure nature shuddered at the dreadful act.'* Marcello cannot help but agree. The monstrous consequences of her rejection of this doctrine, however, serve to reinforce the necessity of controlling female sexuality.

* W. H. Ireland, *The Abbess,* 4 vols, (London: Earle and Hammond), I, p. 163.

[95] Ann Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest,* ed. with notes by Chloe Chard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 73

[96] It is also worth noting, that the doctrines and practises condemned in Gothic texts, such as seclusionism and the legalistic hypocrisy are all relevant to a Protestant self-critique. Those practices, such as the telling of rosary beads, which have no such analogue, are notably rarely portrayed or declaimed against.

(1791), Louis La Motte contemplates the burial place of a monk and soliloquises on his life, remembering him sympathetically but questioning the idea that his 'life of mere negative virtue deserved an eternal reward'.[97] This consideration of the respective values of negative and active virtue is an underlying consideration of the novel. Louis' father La Motte is not an active villain. He responds passively throughout most of the text, whether that involves a temporary sympathetic adoption of Adeline or surrendering her to her villainous uncle. His apparent virtue is 'negative' – it exists in the absence of temptation and is therefore of no value. Louis' reflection on monastic life therefore highlights a pivotal theological drive of the novel: privileging the active religious life of the alternative father figure La Luc over the moral passivity of La Motte.

Convents and Nuns

For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them – Matthew 18:20

Although the cloistral space may be rendered suspect by its association with rejected theologies of seclusionism and celibacy, there are more positive portrayals of cloistral spaces, particularly convents, as places of piety, refuge and protection. For Purves, this positive portrayal is linked to the engagement with the 'cloister theme', as outlined by R. Shackleton, which focuses on a protagonist who has suffered in love and retreats to a monastic setting.[98] Shackleton reads this tradition as a negative reflection on Catholicism and the repression of passions that allows for a sympathetic conception of the immured heroine but is hostile to Catholicism or monasticism itself. Purves argues for a positive romanticised tradition stemming from Alexander Pope's *Eloisa and Abelard* (1717). As Dale Townshend notes, however, this ignores how Eloisa and Abelard and its underlying motif of 'thwarted romantic love and sexual desire', was put to 'voraciously anti-Catholic use' throughout the eighteenth century, focusing on 'the dangers of monasticism, the deprivations of clerical celibacy and the 'glorious' vanquishing of Roman Catholicism'.[99]

[97] Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest,* p. 73
[98] Purves, *The Gothic and Catholicism,* p. 62
[99] Dale Townshend, 'The Aesthetics of Ruin', in *Writing Britain's Ruins,* ed. by Michael Carter, Peter N. Lindfield and Dale Townshend (London: British Library Publishing, 2017), 83-116 (p. 102)

Just such a negative rendering of the Eloisa and Abelard story is found in *The Libertines.* St Anna, Father Jerome's first victim reads her own story through that of Eloisa, even erecting 'an altar, sacred to the loves of Abelard and Eloisa' after Father Jerome's death.[100] This conflation of the monstrous Father Jerome and Abelard challenges a sentimental reading of the story by connecting monastic celibacy with outbursts of murderous concupiscence. The mournful nun, dedicated to love and passing her days in virtuous retirement, is depicted as partially insane and only her removal from the convent and conversion to Protestantism can rescue her. There is no trace of Purves' suggested romanticisation of the 'spiritual experience of the Catholic nun' in which 'grace, nature, [and] virtue' struggle and win against 'passion'.[101] Rather than portraying the 'conventual experience [in] sentimental terms',[102] it represents the effect of romanticising an Eloisa narrative of self-renunciation as a form of self-deception, which obscures the vitiating effect of the cloistral life and the inability of the 'inexorable rigours of a monastic life' to overcome spiritual devastation.[103]

The Libertines' use of the Eloisa and Abelard motif suggests that the Gothic absorption of the Eloisa and Abelard story so central to Purves' reimagining of the cloistral space was not divorced from the existing negative meanings annexed to it.[104] Purves' own example, Catherine Selden's *The English Nun* (1797), offers a cautionary rather than a celebratory re-enactment of the tale whose dominant ideological drive is not pro-Catholic so much as anti-intolerance. The titular nun, Louisa, remains inconsolable after years in the convent and both she and her lover Edward die young, victims of her excessive dedication to oath-keeping and the bigotry of a parent who could not countenance his daughter giving her 'heart to a heretic'.[105] In Purves' reading, Louisa is a representation of the way in which 'devotion to the doctrines of the Church can shape a woman into a superior model of strength formidably able to resist the indignities of weakness and morbid sensibility'.[106] This is undermined, however, by Louisa's feeble fading into death; every other character's

[100] [Anon.], *The Libertines,* p. 198
[101] Purves, *The Gothic and Catholicism,* pp. 65/63-4
[102] Ibid., p. 65
[103] [Anon.], *The Libertines,* II, p. 186
[104] Tarr, *Catholicism in the Gothic,* p. 20
[105] Catherine Seldon, *The English Nun,* 2 vols, (London: William Lane, 1797), I, p. 31
[106] Purves, *The Gothic and Catholicism,* p. 153

resistance to her determination; and the depiction of the convent's abbess as a mendacious and materialistic figure, keen to keep Louisa's money in the church. Rather than a celebration of Catholic piety, the novel offers a condemnation of a religiosity that privileges formal obedience over spiritual authenticity and a thorough condemnation of bigotry. The interdenominational, rather than simply Catholic, target of this condemnation is articulated by Louisa's mother who 'was of the opinion, that amongst the *bigoted*, morose, and severe of *either* religion, such an injunction [a refusal to allow marriage] could not fail of producing misery' (my emphasis).[107] Similarly, she states that her son's 'religion might as well be the Protestant as the Catholic' as long as they live Christian lives. [108]

While Purves' assumption of a sentimental re-evaluation of Catholicism and the 'cloister theme' is unconvincing, we cannot ignore more positive depictions of convent life in the Gothic. Critics have frequently engaged with the convent as a potential space of both protection and comfort away from an exploitative patriarchally structured world.[109] The convent of St Catherine's in Regina Maria Roche's *The Children of the Abbey* (1796)*;* the 'recess' where Elinor and Matilda are raised in Sophia Lee's *The Recess* (1783–85); and La Piéta in *The Italian* all feature religious spaces as places of retreat and protection. As Tarr notes, this is an essentially detheologised account of the convent, which focuses on a movement 'away from' sorrow, guilt or desperation rather than a move 'into' a positively imagined space and religious practice. [110] However, these positively imagined Catholic spaces still pose an interpretative problem in terms of understanding the Gothic's depiction of the Catholic. This is particularly evident in a text like *The Italian*, in which two convents – the Santa María della Piéta and the San Stefano – reflect two different models of cloistral depiction: a seemingly anti-Catholic narrative of cloistral oppression and a positive reimagining of the cloistral space.

Ellena is imprisoned in the San Stefano as a result of criminal collusion between the abbess and the Marchesa de Vivaldi. There is a familiar discourse of entrapment, separation

[107] Selden, *The English Nun,* I, p. 31
[108] Ibid.*,* p. 2
[109] See, for example, Robert Mayhew's 'Gothic Trajectories: Latitudinarian Theology and the Novels of Ann Radcliffe'; Jerrold Hogle's 'Recovering the Walpolean Gothic *The Italian: or, the Confessional of the Black Penitents* (1796-1797)'; Jarlath Killeen's *Gothic Ireland* and Mark Canuel's *Religion, Toleration and British Writing* 1790-1820.
[110] Tarr, *Catholicism in Gothic Fiction,* p. 49

from the natural world, coercion and an oppressive alliance of church and state. La Piéta, however, plays an unambiguously positive role in the novel as a place of refuge for both Ellena and her mother Olivia. Hoeveler offers an essentially anti-Catholic reading of both these institutions, suggesting that they are used 'to portray the threat and continuing lure of Catholicism as a political institution, and the vigilance needed to escape its seductive siren song'.[111] Radcliffe's earlier novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794)*,* certainly, directly engages with the supposed 'duplicity of convents'.[112] After St Aubert's death, Emily is supported by the nuns of the Convent of St Clair. While describing their worship as sublime, admiring their situation and believing in the sincerity of their kindness, she recognises that these factors 'have spread a beautiful illusion over the sanctified retirement of a nun, that almost hid from her view the selfishness of its security'.[113] Given the historical context of the return of English monasticism,[114] depictions of the deceptive nature of the appeal of a cloistral life may function as a tacit rejection of these institutions more realistic than the monstrous monasteries of texts like *The Libertines.* However, it is difficult to extend this argument to less ambiguously positive depictions of conventual life, such as la Piéta. To do so, is to enforce an interpretative framework not produced by the texts themselves.

Mayhew suggests, in a reading that is still essentially anti-Catholic, that the positive depiction of the convent must be understand in light of the depiction of its superior: 'In her lectures to the nuns she seldom touched upon points of faith, but explained and enforced the moral duties…Her religion was neither gloomy, nor bigoted…she conformed to the customs of the Roman church, without supposing a faith in all of them to be necessary to salvation.'[115] Like a Latitudinarian, the abbess emphasises a moral life and downplays religious controversies. Mayhew suggests that in doing so, she is an 'honorary Protestant'[116] and her model of conventual operation is essentially Protestant. Such a reading reinforces an anti-Catholic conception of the text as it implicitly reproduces a hierarchy, in which Protestant identity and religious observance dominate over inferior Catholic forms.

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[111] Hoeveler, *The Gothic Ideology,* p. 10
[112] Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 126
[113] Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho,* 4 vols (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1795), I, p. 237
[114] There had been English convents on the continent but with the outbreak of the French Revolution many returned back to British soil.
[115] Radcliffe, *The Italian,* II, p. 168
[116] Purves, *The Gothic and Catholicism,* p. 5

'Good' figures and 'good' institutions that are technically Catholic are often read as Protestant or proto-Protestant. While there is significant justification for seeing figures, such as the abbess of La Piéta, as espousing or modelling Protestant-coded behaviour and discourse, there is a tendency to assume the uniquely Protestant nature of concepts of, for example, providence, sentimentality and tolerance, which are then used as markers of Protestant identity. These readings also fail to engage with the way in which these quasi-Protestant figures are actively and constructively engaged in Catholic practices. Olivia partakes in mass and communion worship with 'fervency and penitence'.[117] In *Udolpho,* St Aubert is desirous of and comforted by the Catholic service for the dying and Extreme Unction.[118] In *The Abbess* both Maddalena and Marcello engage in fervent worship of the Virgin.[119] In *The Orphan of the Rhine* the main characters are overtly Catholic and engage in Marian worship, prayer to saints and even refuse marriage with Protestants on the grounds of religious difference. Moreover, these Catholic practices, as Tarr notes, are not only neutrally depicted in Gothic literature but are often valorised as productive of sublime emotions.[120] Gothic protagonists find that 'their emotions sweep rationalistic evaluation aside when they are confronted with Catholic practices'.[121] Mystical rituals and sublime worship forms become sources of comfort and transcendence. As Milbank argues, Catholic forms of worship are frequently 'shown as valid, not demonic'.[122]

Both 'good' characters and convents of the Gothic cannot simply be seen as 'Protestantised'. They are frequently both good and Catholic and resist any unifying anti-Catholic framework. La Pieta and its abbess are Catholic and represent not a 'Protestantised' version of Catholicism but a 'tolerant Catholicism' such as that articulated by Maturin in the first of his *Five Sermons.*[123] Nor are they simply part of a project of Anglican re-appropriation

[117] Radcliffe, *The Italian,* I, p. 141
[118] Radcliffe, *Udolpho,* I, p. 210
[119] Much of the plot of *The Abbess* revolves around Marcello's refusal to break an oath sworn 'by the Father Omnipotent, his martyred Son, and *the pure Virgin*'* not to reveal his unwilling assignation with the Madre Vittoria. This emphasis on the Virgin in the worship of both positively and negatively coded characters runs throughout the novel.
* Ireland, *The Abbess,* p. 100
[120] She also makes it clear that many of these ceremonies and rituals are invented. They are a Protestant idea of the Catholic engaged not with Catholic theology but with a broader recognition of value in ritual and a theologically tolerant position which accepts and validates other modes of religious worship.
[121] Tarr, *Catholicism in Gothic Fiction,* p. 43
[122] Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 99
[123] Maturin, *Five Sermons,* pp. 12-14

of the Catholic past to justify a conception of a continuous history of both the nation and English church. The apparently secure salvific condition of so many Catholic figures and admirable functioning of Catholic institutions, especially in texts set in a period roughly contemporaneous to the time of writing, such as *The Italian,* suggests a clear support of a broader theological tolerance rather than a specific position regarding Catholicism.

Sacred Ruins

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem…how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate – Matthew 23:37-8

Even more than the convent, the ecclesiastical ruin in the Gothic poses a problem of interpretation. Ruined abbeys and monasteries anachronistically populate the Gothic's Southern European landscapes – a reflection not of the architectural reality of the lands they represent but of the ruin-pocked post-Reformation landscape of Britain.[124] As Tarr notes, 'most characters in Gothic fiction fall victim to the romantic spell exerted by a ruin'.[125] This aesthetic valorisation of the ruin and the concomitant evocation of 'melancholy pleasure' and 'religious awe' are, Tarr suggests, simply the props of a 'melodramatic sensibility' which celebrates the 'enjoyment of emotion… for its own sake'.[126] However, as her use of the term 'religious awe' suggests, these aesthetic responses cannot so easily be disconnected from the religious significance of these edifices.

Critics, such as Townshend, Milbank and Hoeveler have connected the Gothic's deployment of ecclesiastical ruins with contemporary re-evaluations of the Reformation and the Dissolution of the Monasteries.[127] A polemical example of revisionist accounts of the Dissolution is found in William Cobbett's *A History of the Protestant Reformation* (1827). For Cobbett, the Reformation had been 'brought forth by hypocrisy and perfidy', had 'devastated and plundered the country' and was the 'sure foundation for that pauperism, that disgraceful immorality' of contemporary England. [128] Purves, Milbank and Hoeveler all

[124] Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 16
[125] Tarr, *Catholicism in Gothic Fiction,* p. 95
[126] Ibid., p. 89/111
[127] Further examples of this practice can be found in Anne Janowitz's *England's Ruins: Poetic Purpose and the National Landscape* (1990); Elizabeth Bohls' *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics* (1995); and Michael Carter's 'The Making of British Ruins: Monasteries and Castles, 1536-1650' (2017).
[128] William Cobbett, *A History of the Protestant Reformation* (London: R. & T. Washbourne, [n.d.]), p. 76

place the contemporary re-evaluation of the Dissolution at the centre of their understanding of the Gothic's use of ruins but in radically different ways. For Purves, a tentative re-evaluation of England's relationship with its Catholic past lies at the root of the aesthetically valorised depictions of ruined ecclesiastical buildings. For Milbank, 'the ruined abbey functions in a double way as a potent emblem of that fear [of the Catholic past] but also as a symbol of the victory of progress beyond superstition'.[129] There is, in other words, a specifically Anglican 'double gesture of repudiation combined with regret',[130] which manifests in a melancholic tradition 'whereby Catholicism is prefigured as a loss, but a necessary loss to be turned to meditative account'.[131] Hoeveler, in a diametrically opposed interpretation, suggests that the Gothic offers 'a historically belated argument for the necessary eradication of the monasteries' by bringing ecclesiastical ruins into dialogue with depictions of monastic abuse to allay Protestant 'bad conscience'.[132]

Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* offers a useful case study through which to compare these competing claims. Confronted with the 'Gothic remains of an abbey', where he will later take refuge, La Motte 'felt a sensation of sublimity rising into terror – a suspension of mingled astonishment and awe'.[133] For Hoeveler, this aesthetic valorisation is nothing more than a 'nostalgic bow' to the Catholic past. Upon closer acquaintance the abbey is revealed as the locus of fear and danger. As such, it functions, she argues, as a representation of the threatening 'reality' of the Catholic Church, a fact which serves to justify its own ruinous state. However, such a reading dismisses entirely the abbey's role as a place of refuge and revelation and the fact that civil actors are the source of corruption and threat. It is only once it has been abandoned that the abbey becomes the haunt of robbers and murderers, suggesting a more thorough rejection of its desacralisation than Hoeveler, or Milbank, allows. Moreover, La Motte's reaction is connected to a sympathetic portrayal of Catholic practices such as the 'hymn of devotion' and 'the tear of penitence'.[134] The abbey is clearly linked not only to fear but to a more positive relation with the Catholic

[129] Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 17
[130] Ibid.*,* p. 41
[131] Ibid., p. 56
[132] Hoeveler, *The Gothic Ideology,* p. 198
[133] Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest*, p. 15
[134] Ibid., p. 15

past and a melancholic contemplation of loss and of mortality.[135] However, this sense of loss is juxtaposed with an explicit denunciation of 'the pride of monkish devotion', 'superstition' and an 'austerity [which] anticipated an earthly purgatory'.[136]

The contradictory impulses obvious in La Motte's appraisal of the abbey appear to support Milbank's more balanced view of the combined repulsion and attraction at the heart of Anglican appropriation of the Catholic past. Kathleen Hudson suggests, however, a more negative reading of this attempted 'Anglican' appropriation of a Catholic space. Hudson notes that the servant Peter become a metonymic Anglican representative and 'positively reimagines the space around him and physically attempts to modernise the ruin, though the final results suggest … scepticism regarding long-term sustainability'. In the end, she notes, 'the semi-domesticated Gothic ruin is ultimately untenable . . . and Peter himself eventually flees with the heroine'.[137] This failure successfully to modernise and inhabit the structure suggests the fragility of the Anglican church. Ultimately none of the explanations offered above, based on universalising conceptions of a singular overarching significance attached to the ecclesiastical ruin, serve to map or explain fully the complex theological and theo-political undercurrents wound into the depiction of the abbey.

A similarly complex use of the ecclesiastical ruin is found in Regina Marie Roche's *The Children of the Abbey*, in which the titular abbey shelters the convent of St Catherine, and which demonstrates the importance of specific theo-political contexts on our attempts to decode ecclesiastical ruins. In *Gothic Ireland,* Jarlath Killeen maps the developing episteme of Anglican identity in Ireland, suggesting that by the eighteenth century, the previous sense of an essentially English identity was being eroded by the way in which the English government was constructing Anglicans in Ireland as Irish.[138] Killeen frames the broadly positive depiction of the Convent of St Catherine, therefore, as part of a politically

[135] 'Several of the pillars, which had once supported the roof, remained the proud effigies of sinking greatness, and seemed to nod at every murmur of the blast…La Motte sighed. The comparison between himself and the gradation of decay, which these columns exhibited, was but too obvious and affecting.' Ibid., p. 16
[136] Ibid. p. 15-6
[137] Kathleen Hudson, *Servants and the Gothic, 1764-1831: A Half-Told Tale* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press), p. 75
[138] Killeen, *Gothic Ireland,* p. 76. He uses the example of the English response to the Irish parliament's 1692 demand for 'sole right' (or the right to be subject to and create Irish laws in the Irish parliament). Instead of acceding to the request for 'sole right', the English government extended penal laws. While this reinforced the anti-Catholic sentiment behind the 1692 appeal for 'sole right' (to avoid the 'threat' of toleration measures), as Killeen argues, it also responded to the demand of 'English Protestants in Ireland' as part of a larger Irish body.

necessary 'project of an Irish Anglican rapprochement with Irish Catholicism'.[139] The heroine Amanda who takes shelter from poverty and persecution in the Convent of St Catherine, is not, as Hoeveler suggests, 'in thrall' to a dangerously tempting Catholic past.[140] St Catherine's is represented as a truly positive space not only of refuge but of real devotion.[141] There is a distinctly positive rendering of both the explicitly Catholic figure of the prioress, for whom Amanda felt 'a real reverence', [142] and the monastic life itself.

The extension of theological tolerance implicit in this positive portrayal is connected to theo-political toleration, a fact encoded in the depiction of the convent – a 'long low building' which is 'encompassed by ruins' of a formerly wealthy abbey. [143] This abbey is itself positively represented, provoking 'sacred awe' in Amanda; the location of the convent within these sublime ruins emphasises a familial relation that valorises both. [144] However, the visual tableau also serves to underline a break between present and past. The former, potentially threatening, power of the abbey has been replaced with a humble, benevolent, and positively imagined convent denuded of any active power.[145] It functions therefore as a visual signifier of the theological and political conditions necessary for an Anglican rapprochement with Irish Catholicism.

Hoeveler argues that the abbey and convent must be read with reference to other textual markers, specifically the wake after the death of Amanda's father and her horrified reaction to it, which, she suggests, demonstrate a more overtly anti-Catholic subtext. While there is a clear discomfort at the wake with Catholic practices, the rejection is cultural rather than theological. We are told that Sister Mary, 'from being accustomed to such scenes, felt neither horror nor disgust: She complied, however, with the request of Amanda, and besought them to depart'.[146] The neutral reaction of this consistently positively coded

[139] Killeen, *Gothic Ireland,* p. 131
[140] Ibid., p. 138
[141] *Children of the Abbey* includes one of the few Gothic nuns who have become nuns due to a specific calling. Sister Mary's 'enthusiasm' is frequently noted and the universally positive portrayal of this character suggests the choice of a useful cloistral life is not inherently negative.
[142] Regina Maria Roche, *The Children of the Abbey,* ed. by William D. Brewer (Richmond, Virginia: Valancourt Books, 2016), p. 167
[143] Ibid., p.162
[144] Ibid., p. 161
[145] This distinction between a non-threatening Irish Catholicism, as opposed to a threatening and empowered continental Catholicism, is made clearer in Roche's comparison of Irish convents and their foreign counterparts. Roche, *The Children of the Abbey,* p. 164
[146] Ibid., p. 346

Catholic character suggests that there is no direct narratorial theological condemnation of holding wakes. The ability to 'grow accustomed' over time suggests a cultural difference subject to theological tolerance and neither necessary nor inimical to salvation. Mary's acquiescence in Amanda's desire to stop the wake echoes this extension of tolerance: a willingness to accommodate other modes of religious expression. The incipient ecumenicalism of Amanda herself is suggested also by her participation in worship in at least three different traditions: Irish Catholic, English/Welsh Anglican and Scottish Presbyterian. The 'meaning' of the wake, then, a purportedly anti-Catholic incident, can more clearly be understood against the specific historical background of rapprochement – an uneasy extension of theological tolerance as part of a political extension of toleration.

There is no single solution to the question of the positive aesthetic coding of Gothic ruins and each instance must be assessed individually, looking at the precise theo-political context as well as the other representations of the Catholic in the text. We ought also to acknowledge the aesthetically coded theological subtexts involved. If we return to *Romance of the Forest,* for example, we find an aesthetic valorisation of 'hymn-singing', [147] which suggests an intervention in eighteenth-century debates on their place in worship. [148] As Watts notes, the 'crucial evolution from psalm-singing to hymn-singing' began in Particular Baptist and Congregational churches in the late seventeenth century and the use of hymns in the Anglican Church 'did not meet with universal approval until well into the nineteenth-century'.[149] Each ruined abbey of the Gothic is capable of serving multiple theological, theo-political and aesthetic purposes and to reduce a discussion of their role to the question of the anti-Catholic or pro-Catholic tendencies of the genre is to erase much of this potential complexity.

The Inquisition

I came not to send peace, but a sword – Matthew 10:34

[147] Ibid., p. 15
[148] Watts, *The Dissenters,* I, pp.180-5
[149] Ibid., p. 309

The Inquisition, as another negatively viewed Catholic institution, became a stock feature of the early British Gothic, from the psychologically disorienting account, focalised through the obscured perspective of the inquisitional victim Vivaldi in *The Italian* and the Inquisition as an agent of punishment in *The Monk* to the sexualised accounts of Inquisitional torture in *The Abbess* and the spectacle of the Inquisition as a burial ground for monastic cruelty's innumerable victims in *The Libertines*. There is a similar pattern to these accounts: an arrest; questioning; faux-supernatural trickery to instil fear; the visit of an inquisitional informant; the threat or realisation of torture; and an escape or release.[150] Most accounts place a practically standard list of critiques in the mouths of the Inquisition's victims such as that found in William Godwin's *St Leon* (1799). Declaiming that the Inquisition offers only a 'mockery of a trial',[151] St Leon critiques the anonymity of the accusation; the refusal to state a charge clearly; manipulative and deceptive questioning techniques; the baseness of agents attempting to ensure confession through feigned sympathy; and the barbarity and inefficacy of the mortification of the flesh to impact the beliefs of the victim.[152] According to Hoeveler, these criticisms of the Inquisition offer a condemnation of specifically Catholic 'legal, religious and political injustices',[153] which implicitly contrasted the 'British legal system with this earlier tyrannical, corrupt and ecclesiastical one'.[154]

For Hoeveler, the Gothic's representation of the Inquisition reflects a fear of invasion as a part of a Protestant imaginary in which the 'Inquisition was the most ominous and frighteningly real manifestation of the continued power of the Catholic Church'[155] and the threat of invading Catholic forces was kept alive by French support for the uprisings of the United Scotsmen in 1797 and the United Irishmen in 1798. Such a claim, however, ignores the equivocal status of the Catholic Church as a persecuted organ of the secular state in France; the attempted involvement of the Protestant Dutch in the Scottish rebellion, and

[150] The almost standardised format can be traced back to a number of real accounts of the Inquisition which proliferated in the eighteenth century, such as *The Tryal and Sufferings of Mr. Isaac Martin* (1723) and *The Bloody Tribunal; or, an Antidote Against Popery being a review of the Horrid Cruelties of the Inquisition* (1756).
[151] William Godwin, *St Leon: A Tale of the Sixteenth Century,* ed. by William D. Brewer (Peterborough: Broadview editions, 2006), p. 318
[152] Ibid., pp. 318-334
[153] Hoeveler, *The Gothic Ideology,* p. 196
[154] Ibid., p. 155
[155] Ibid., p. 155. The Inquisition was still active in the period though its power was much diminished. It was outlawed in Spain in 1834

the 'radical republican Presbyterians'[156] at the heart of the uprisings. As Angela Wright notes, a 'dominant topic of public debate in Britain was the possibility of invasion by France' after the 'outbreak of the Seven Years War in May 1756'.[157] However, the advent of the French Revolution, and the subsequent suppression and persecution of the Catholic Church, disrupted the conflation of Catholicism and France previously attached to this fear of invasion. The feared invasion was now conceived of as Jacobin rather than Jacobite and the fruit of radical atheistic politics rather than religious expansion. [158] While the Gothic's deployment of the Inquisition clearly represents a fear of the abuse of clerical power and a confessional state, there is little to suggest that it represents a specific fear of Catholic invasion or a critique limited to the Catholic Church.

We should not, as Hoeveler notes, presume a purely allegorical reading especially bearing in mind the continued existence of the Inquisition until 1834. However, the Gothic recurrence to images of the Inquisition is not explained by a distant and diminishing threat. Indeed, we must acknowledge the fact that the imagery of the Inquisition was appropriated in contemporary discourse to arraign both arbitrary injustice and the oppressive union of church and state. Both Hoeveler and Milbank suggest that the depictions of repressive monastic institutions and a ruthless Inquisition are connected to the place of the Marian persecutions in the Anglican imaginary. Both cite John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* (originally published 1563)[159] as a 'repository for the British Protestant Conscience' in its collection of

[156] Bruce P. Lenman, 'From the Union of 1707 to the Franchise Reform of 1832', in *The New Penguin History of Scotland: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day,* ed. by R. A. Houston and W. W. J. Knox (London: Penguin 2001), 276-355 (p. 325). The situation in Ireland is significantly complicated, of course, by the existence of a Catholic majority. Killeen suggests that 'the antagonism that Anglicans felt towards Dissenters was expressed in terms of the Protestant-Catholic division: it was claimed, for example, that Presbyterians had actually stole their best ideas from Catholics, and were simply Catholics in Protestant drag, waiting for the opportunity to allow their true colours to show through.'* However, to suggest either that there was a predominant fear of Catholic invasion and that Irish writers absolutely conflated Catholic and Dissenting identity erases much of the nuance of portrayals of the Inquisition and different Dissenting communities in works like Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer.*

* Killen, *Gothic Ireland,* p. 86

[157] Wright, *Britain, France and the Gothic 1764-1820*, p. 14

[158] Burke's 'Speech on the Petition of the Unitarians' in 1792 clearly expresses this fear of an alliance between unitarian, deist and atheist beliefs, radical politics and both metaphorical (French ideas) and literal invasion. Burke urges the rejection of their petition for extended rights, arguing that their 'designs against the church are concurrent with a design to subvert the state.' 'On what model do they intend to build?' He asks. His reply is 'It is the French.' Edmund Burke, 'Speech on the Petition of the Unitarians 1792', in *Burke's Speeches,* ed. by J. Burke (Dublin: James Duffy, 1854), 414-424 (p. 418)

[159] The text continued to be revised both by Foxe and later authors. The original title was *The Ecclesiasticall History Contaynyng the Actes and Monumentes of Thynges Passed in Euery Kynges Tyme in this Realme* but was popularly known as the *Book of Martyrs* in the eighteenth century, hence I have retained this title.

deaths and persecutions in the cause of the 'true church'.[160] However, their emphasis on the Marian persecutions elides the more recent histories of Dissenting persecution, including imprisonment, exile and corporal and even capital punishment at the hands of the Anglican state. A comparison of Presbyterian John Howe's response to Bishop Thomas Barlow's support of repressive measures against Dissenters in 1685 and anti-Inquisition speeches in *St Leon* and *The Abbess* highlights the intersection of Gothic portrayals of the Inquisition with Dissenting pro-toleration discourse and critique of the British confessional state.

Howe, in a letter addressed to Barlow, critiques the claim that 'all this Rigour your Lordship shews [proceeds] from Love, and that you are for destroying the Dissenters, only to mend their Understandings'.[161] Barlow's use of 'love' as the motivation for religious oppression closely mirrors the claims of *St Leon'*s Catholic inquisitor. He asserts that 'the breast of an inquisitor was accessible to no sentiment but that of love; a burning love of God; love of the church; love of the prisoner . . . love of the penitent . . .love even of the incorrigible heretic whose body he burned for the good of his soul'.[162] This emphasis on justifying suffering as for the ultimate benefit of the sufferer's souls is echoed in Howe's denunciation of Barlow's recourse to the sentiment that '*afflicto dat Intellectum'* (suffering brings understanding).[163] Howe raises two specific problems with this logic. First, he asks, 'Can you, by undoing Men, change the Judgment of their Consciences?' Secondly, he notes that even if the sufferer should appear to change their beliefs, they do no more than 'greatly offend God, by complying with your Injunctions' hypocritically.[164] These exact arguments are raised by Marcello in *The Abbess* as he undergoes torture in the Inquisition:

> Is the dungeon, the torture, and the flame, to convince the poor, the deluded victim? No; it only serves to harden him in his perverse belief; for, if, through the agonies which the rack inflicts, he perforce confesses and abjures his error, religion obtains

[160] Hoeveler, *The Gothic Ideology,* p. 152. This idea is echoed by Milbank in her claim that Elizabeth I, and specifically her oppression during Mary's reign, became a model of Anglican heroism under persecution. Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 22
[161] John Howe, *Memoirs of the Life of the Late Revd. Mr. John Howe,* collected by Edmund Calamy (London: Sam Chandler, 1724), p. 111
[162] William Godwin, *St Leon,* p. 320
[163] Howe, *Memoirs,* p. 111
[164] Ibid., p. 111

> no victory, reason no convert, and truth no follower. For he still secretly cherishes his false doctrine.[165]

The convergence of these arguments against the Catholic Inquisition in Gothic texts and extra-fictional critiques of Anglican policy suggest the wider valence of these scenes beyond a simple anti-Catholicism. They also more broadly echo the Enlightenment discourse which challenged the use of torture found in such works as the Italian Cesare Beccaria's *An Essay on Crimes and Punishments* (1764). Reprinted in English multiple times in the late eighteenth century, the text decries the idea that 'pain, which is a sensation, [can] have any connexion with a moral sentiment'.[166] For Beccaria, the use of torture is 'the offspring of religion' in its bigoted form, regardless of denomination.[167]

As Gary Kelly notes, *St Leon* is a clear example of the Gothic's use of the Inquisition to criticise the confessional state. St Leon makes explicit that this sort of religious persecution is not limited to Catholic organisations. Even if the Catholic Church falls, he argues that 'men shall learn over again to persecute each other for conscience sake: other anabaptists or levellers shall furnish pretexts for new persecutions; other inquisitors shall arise in the most enlightened tracts of Europe.' [168] He uses his critique of the Inquisition to articulate a broader critique of state/church relations, asking:

> Why had Providence thought proper to generate an alliance between church and state, and to place the powers and authority of human society in the hands of the adherents of the Christian faith?[169]

Godwin's target is the contemporary political climate: the treason trials and suspension of Habeus Corpus of 1794 and the continued existence of the penal codes.[170] Nor was the politically radical Godwin unique in using the Inquisition for similar purposes. The Inquisition functions as a powerful symbol, in the work of writers as diverse as Radcliffe,

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[165] W. H. Ireland, II, p. 223
[166] Cesare Beccaria, *An Essay on Crimes and Punishments* (Glasgow: Robert Urie, 1770), p. 59
[167] Ibid., p. 60
[168] Godwin, *St Leon,* p. 334
[169] Ibid., p. 314
[170] Godwin produces a similar critique more directly in *Caleb Williams* (1794), which paints a horrifying picture of an arbitrary justice system. His comparison of English prisons to the Bastille therein undermines any conception of torture and arbitrary justice as 'foreign' or 'other' to the English system. He lays down a challenge: 'Go, go, ignorant fool! And visit the scenes of our prisons! Witness their unwholesomeness, their filth, the tyranny of their governors, the misery of their inmates! After that show me the man shameless enough to triumph, and say, England has no Bastille!' William Godwin, *Caleb Williams,* 2nd edition, 3 vols (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1796), II, p. 216

Lewis and Godwin, of politically repressive bigotry and its manifestation in the penal codes of the British confessional state.

Although the Inquisition is always portrayed negatively in Gothic fiction, the 'good inquisitor' offers a challenge to a straightforward condemnation of either Catholicism or the confessional state through the medium of the inquisition. Although not ubiquitous (such a figure is notably absent from *St Leon*), it is a common figure. In *The Italian,* for example, Vivaldi is faced with a trio of inquisitors: 'the vicar-general, or grand inquisitor, the advocate of the exchequer, and an ordinary inquisitor'.[171] The inquisitor is impatient and cruel, seeking to trap Vivaldi into confession and demanding his torture. The vicar-general, in contrast, 'listened with attention' and his interest in the truth leads to Vivaldi's freedom. [172] In *The Abbess,* when Marcello is brought before the inquisitorial tribunal, the Grand Inquisitor stops his torture when it is beyond bearing and 'gentleness and pity were blended in his looks'.[173] There is also a related trope of good bishops who rein in abuses of religious power, such as the bishop who frees Monçada from monastic abuse in *Melmoth* and the Archbishop of York in Radcliffe's *Gaston de Blondeville* (1826)*,* who tacitly defies the king and seeks justice for the persecuted Woodreeve.

Mark Canuel suggests that these figures and even the Inquisition itself, in texts like *The Monk,* act as a form of 'secular' control over the excesses of clerical figures. Such a structure mirrors contemporary discourses of toleration, Canuel argues, which stress not secular belief but a secular ordering of belief with 'good inquisitors' and ecclesiastics serving as avatars of secular governance.[174] His reading ignores the theo-political aspects of the toleration debate but also fails fully to explain how these figures, who have advanced through the structures they now dominate, and who are often still implicated in their most pernicious practices, function as a form of secular authority. They replicate the structures and practices of inequity and proliferate systems of oppression. The Grand Inquisitor who stops Marcello's torture has, after all, presided over it. Any attempt to provide a straightforwardly positive reading of these figures is inherently unstable.[175] Instead, the

[171] Radcliffe, *The Italian,* II, p. 185
[172] Ibid., II, p. 186
[173] Ireland, *The Abbess,* IV, p. 29
[174] Canuel, *Religion, Toleration and British Writing,* p. 3
[175] Canuel's model suggests a rejection of Catholic models of control and governance in exchange for Protestant or secular ones.

mixed nature of these figures reflects a more nuanced position of discomfort with all models of over-arching ecclesiastical and legal control, however functional or benevolent they appear to be. We must also view these figures not only as avatars of a specific theo-political system of order but also as individuals. The juxtaposition of 'bad' and 'good' ecclesiastical figures illustrates a differentiation between individual and institution, Catholic and Catholicism, inquisitor and Inquisition that is the basis for a position of theological tolerance as I will discuss further in the final section of this chapter.

This division between individual and institution leads, in the work of some Gothic authors like Radcliffe, to the provision of a positive vision of an Anglican church, as part of a confessional state, that is capable of surviving meaningfully as a religious institution despite the potential for abuse in the system. In *Gaston de Blondeville* (1826), two clerical figures are opposed to each other: the Archbishop of York and the Prior of St Marys. As Angela Wright has explored, *Gaston* may be read as a reflection on ineffective or incompetent monarchical rule.[176] It is also a reflection on the role of the church in a confessional state headed by such a figure. In *Gaston,* Henry III's weak vacillation leaves him open to the influence of perfidious counsellors. The Prior of St Marys is a monstrous ecclesiastical figure – cruel, ruthless, greedy, hypocritical and deceitful – whose relationship with the king reflects a negative version of the church/state relationship that is predicated on the moral inadequacy of both. The king, in such a configuration, is manipulated by interested counsel, sophistic arguments and a deployment of superstitious beliefs, in other words, by priestcraft. However, the Prior's influence is juxtaposed with that of the Archbishop of York, 'a powerful and intrepid prelate'[177] who retains spiritual authority in the text and seeks truth and subsequently justice in the trial of Woodreeve.

Radcliffe does not allow an easy division of the two characters between 'monkish' Catholicism and 'Episcopal' Anglicanism. The constantly recurring symbol of the Archbishop's spiritual authority is his use of the sign of the cross, a particularly Catholic gesture, against the novel's ghost. Similarly, the Friar's identity is expressly not Catholic. He is 'no true son of the church':[178] an evil-doer who is neither, figuratively, a member of the

[176] Angela Wright, *Britain and France and the Gothic 1764 - 1820,* p. 116
[177] Ann Radcliffe, 'Gaston de Blondeville', in *The Posthumous Works of Anne Radcliffe with A Memoir of the Authoress,* 4 vols (London: Henry Colburn, 1833), II, p. 146
[178] Ibid., III, p. 40

catholic and apostolic church nor, literally, a Catholic Friar; he is a robber in disguise. The contrast between the Friar and the Archbishop is not a contrast of denominations but of individuals within a single religious system. *Gaston* reflects both the danger and possibilities of a close relationship of church and state based on the spiritual and moral health of both. The friar is an intruder in the church, a secular agent dressed in borrowed robes of piety and a threat to both the civil and religious establishment through his despotic rule at St Mary's and his sycophantic manipulation of the king. He represents a horrifying vision of the results of a corrupted church in symbiotic relationship with civil power. The Archbishop, however, offers the reader a contrary vision of this relationship along Lockean lines.

For Locke, the civil and religious are interdependent but separate components of a functional state and each should attend to the 'just bounds that lie between them'.[179] The church is responsible for the spiritual and the state for the civil good of a nation's people and they are pillars that jointly hold up the nation. The figure of the Archbishop is so described as to mirror Burkean arguments on the organic development of the church implicit in this model:

> the Archbishop, with his firm, composed, and solemn countenance and lofty figure, made all other dignity appear as nothing. He was like some oak of our forest, whose grey top has braved the storms of centuries, and whose mighty branches still afford shelter to the storm-beset traveller, and to the plants and flowers at his feet.[180]

He is the embodiment of a concept of the church as an ancient and revered institution, rooted in a long tradition of co-existence and interaction with civil power. The Archbishop's actions represent the possibilities of such a position of privilege and responsibility. His defiance of the king reinforces the conception of independent spheres. His advice represents the conscience of civil power. His indefatigable search for evidence and justice reinforces a positive vision of active, engaged and spiritually authoritative clergy. In these opposing figures of the Friar and the Archbishop, Radcliffe offers two different models of a contemporary Anglicanism and its alliance with the state, which both recognises the human weakness which can destroy the system and the value of the relationship itself.

[179] Locke, *Concerning Toleration,* p. 10
[180] Radcliffe, 'Gaston de Blondeville', II, p. 13

A Question of Tolerance

In my father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you – John 14:2

Every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? – 1 Corinthians 1:12-13

Repeatedly, the case-studies above have led back to questions of tolerance and toleration. There are clear indications of a pro-toleration inclination in the Gothic in the condemnation of repressive religious organs and the positive depictions of Catholic figures. There is also often an overtly stated rejection of bigotry, which indicates the importance of a pro-toleration discourse to the theological and theo-political projects of Gothic novels. The following lengthy speech in Charles Lucas' *The Castle of Saint Donats; or, The History of Jack Smith* (1798) is one such example. The Duke, who is the hero's long-lost father explains his decision to live in England:

> Though I was brought up in the Roman Catholic faith, since I came to the years of mature judgment I have made profession of none other but the Christian. I abhor all separating names of sectaries and distinction; I am neither of Paul, or Apollos or of Cephas, but Christ. Luther or Calvin, Wesley or Priestley, Papist, Protestant, or Dissenter are nothing to me!'[181]

Paraphrasing 1 Corinthians 1:13, the Duke espouses a radical theological tolerance, which he uses to support his own claim to political toleration as a refugee. These pro-toleration sentiments are repeated in many other Gothic novels, although often in more muted forms, as we have seen in *The Italian* and *The English Nun*. It also appears in more sensational texts. In *The Abbess,* for example, Marcello compassionates the plea of an executed heretic, which is written on the wall of his cell: 'We differed in our professions of faith from our persecutors, but we, nevertheless, thought ourselves equally entitled with them to the Almighty's favour'.[182] This pro-toleration discourse, rooted in a concept of reciprocal theological tolerance, reoccurs across vastly different forms of the genre.[183]

[181] Charles Lucas, *The Castle of Saint Donats; or, The History of Jack Smith* (Minerva Press, 1798), III, p. 148
[182] Ireland, *The Abbess,* II, p. 10
[183] *The Abbess* is frequently depicted as virulently anti-Catholic and is an example of the horror Gothic; Purves argues that *The English Nun* is pro-Catholic and is a sentimental tale of thwarted love; and *The Italian* has the contradictory tendencies expected from a Radcliffean riposte to Matthew Lewis' horror Gothic.

Bostrom and Canuel both foreground toleration as a framework for investigating the depiction of the Catholic although problematically ignore the issue of theological tolerance that underpins these pro-toleration ideologies. For Canuel, toleration is a question of a secular interest in how 'distinct beliefs could be coordinated or organised under the auspices of more capacious and elaborate structures of government'.[184] Here he universalises a broadly de-theologised cynical perspective, such as that found in Shaftesbury, who asserts the utility of a state religion to arrive at 'Civil Unity by help of the Spiritual': the unity of a comprehensive church.[185] Canuel conflates two distinct theological models of the interrelation of different Christian groups: comprehension and toleration. Comprehension refers to the absorption of different theological views and practices into the same church: the national church in the English context. Toleration, on the other hand, 'would allow freedom of worship' to nonconformists. [186] Toleration, as opposed to comprehension, asserts the radical right to freedom of conscience disassociated from any state control, manifesting in a pluralist state. Canuel's model conflates toleration with a model of political comprehension whose aim is to create a single unified political state. He ignores the different theologies underlying the two models of interrelation between Christian groups and between state and church.

While ignoring the theological aspect of toleration debates, Canuel usefully notes the way in which Gothic texts do not portray 'monastic institutions as fascinating sources of danger' only in an attempt to 'suppress Catholicism as a set of alien beliefs'.[187] Rather, as he suggests, the repressive measures of the Inquisition and oppressive monastic spaces of the Gothic represent a suspicion towards and rejection of a persecuting 'confessional state'[188] or 'government-by-belief'[189] and the bigotry in which they rooted. The pervasive appearance of this coded critique of the Anglican confessional state in the Gothic is highlighted by an exception to this rule: the 'Royalist Gothic' of T. J. Horsley Curties.[190]

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[184] Canuel, *Religion, Toleration and British Writing,* p. 4
[185] Lord Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks Vol. III Miscellaneous Reflections on the Preceding Treatises, and Other Critical Subjects* (London: John Darby, 1727), p. 90
[186] Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment,* I, p. 33
[187] Canuel, *Religion, Toleration and British Writing,* p. 7
[188] Ibid., p. 7
[189] Ibid., p. 26
[190] Dale Townshend, 'T. J. Horsley Curties and Royalist Gothic: The Case of the Monk of Udolpho (1807)', *Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies*, 4 (June 2008), 3-14 (p. 12)

Whereas in *St Leon, The Italian* and *The Abbess* it is the collusion of church and state that comes under contemptuous review, in Curties' *Ethelwina; or, The House of Fitz-Auburne* (1799), it is the Church's circumscription of state power. Curties' depiction of a Catholic sanctuary space under the villainous Leopold's Welsh castle is used as an emblem of the antagonism of the Catholic Church and the English state: 'Not even the power of Majesty dared, without the consent of the Church, to drag forth the guilty offender.'[191] In *Ethelwina*, the villain Leopold uses the services of a corrupt priest but all legitimate wielders of power are depicted as problematically subordinated to both the will and actions of the Catholic Church, including, as this example shows, the king. Curties' Royalist Anglican version of the Gothic throws into relief the more critical agenda of most Gothic fiction.

Bostrom's contribution to the use of 'toleration' as an interpretative lens is her emphasis on the differentiation of the individual and the institution as key to pro-toleration 'propaganda'. She dismisses the Gothic as an anti-toleration mode that 'reinforces old prejudices against Catholicism'; however, her own interpretative paradigm suggests the opposite. Pro-toleration texts, she argues, 'balance their characters quite obviously' by depicting either good figures on 'all sides' or both good and bad figures within the same faith tradition.[192] The pro-toleration lens resolves the apparent interpretative difficulties of 'good' Catholic characters that rests on a differentiation between individual and institution. Goodness is not defined by denominational allegiance, nor is it, as in Bostrom's reading, simply a reflection of a right to civil status; it is an index of one's spiritual condition. The abbess of La Piéta, Emily in *Udolpho,* Julie in *The Orphan of the Rhine* and Marcello in *The Abbess* are not simply 'good' in the sense of being adequate citizens. Their goodness is theologically understood as membership of the catholic and apostolic church. The Gothic's heroes and heroines are not damned but rather theological tolerance is implicitly extended to them.

By removing all theological considerations from their discussion, Bostrom and Canuel risk creating a distorted mono-dimensional concept of toleration that not only conflates ideologies of comprehension and toleration but also three distinct forms of toleration: theological tolerance, theo-political toleration and political toleration. By theological

[191] T. J. Horsley Curties, *Ethelwina; or, The House of Fitz-Auburne,* 3 vols (London: Minerva Press, 1799), II, p. 42
[192] Bostrom, 'The Novel and Catholic Emancipation', p. 161

tolerance, I do not imply a lack of theological critique but rather an acceptance of other Christian creeds as members of the fellowship of believers. Its most pronounced form is arguably shared religious practice or ecumenicalism. Amanda's participation in forms of worship across a range of denominations in *The Children of the Abbey,* for example, represents a form of ecumenical tolerance. Theological tolerance is the opposite of 'separatist' theologies, which repudiate and condemn other forms of Christianity as unchristian.

By theo-political toleration, I refer to a theologically framed argument for the extension or repression of toleration, which is often linked to theological tolerance as a pre-condition of toleration. In *A Letter Concerning Toleratio*n, Locke frames his subsequent debate on the separate but connected spheres of the state and church, the extension of political enfranchisement and the rejection of political persecution through a theological conception of tolerance as a natural extension of the innate nature of Christianity: 'I esteem that toleration, or liberty to think and act for themselves in matters of religion, to be the chief characteristical mark of the true church.[193] He frames his argument throughout in biblical terms. For example, an appeal to Luke 22:25 – 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, said our Saviour to his disciples, but ye shall not be so' – is used to repudiate intolerance in the form of civil control over the individual conscience. This claim that 'religion is a matter of personal faith rather than public ceremony' was, as Watts notes, a key separatist contribution to the debate around comprehension/toleration in the 1640s and became a prominent feature of toleration discourse.[194] As we see in both Locke's *Letters* and Burke's 'Speech on the Petition of the Unitarians' (1792), there is a clear correlation between the extension of political toleration and that of theological tolerance, visible in the demarcation of this toleration's limits. Burke specifically rejects Unitarians and Locke rejects Catholics and atheists from the rights of toleration as they exist outside the true church.[195] The 1689 Act of Toleration made this exclusion into law by barring Quakers,

[193] Locke, *Concerning Toleration,* p. 7
[194] Watts, *The Dissenters,* I, p. 75
[195] It is worth noting here, as Carol Margaret Davison points out that these debates of toleration were largely limited to Christian toleration. Jewish Emancipation, for example, was roundly rejected by pro-Catholic Emancipation thinkers like William Cobbett. Carol Margaret Davison, *Anti-Semitism and British Gothic Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 6

Socinians and Catholics from the rights extended by the act. Exclusion from the fellowship of believers was tied to exclusion from civil rights.

Political toleration differs from theo-political toleration in that the argument for the extension of political rights is based wholly on civil rather than theological foundations. Priestley and Barbauld both engage in a specifically de-theologised discourse of toleration in part, perhaps, because of the acknowledged Unitarian desire for an end both to the current close relation of church and state and of the Anglican Church itself. In *An Address to the Opposers of the Repeal of the Test and Corporations Acts*, Barbauld declares that 'we wish to bury every name of distinction in the common appellation of Citizen'.[196] She subordinates all theological claims to tolerance to a political demand for toleration based on the rights not of Christians but of citizens.

The Gothic is not primarily, as Canuel suggests, engaged in a call for a simply political toleration but for a radically theo-political one. This emphasis on a combined theological tolerance and theo-political toleration is most evident in positive portrayals of Catholic figures and in texts that emphasise ecumenical practices (*Children of the Abbey*), adhere to Bostrom's concept of 'balance' in their mixed characterisation of Catholic figures, and present working models of inclusive societies (*The Italian*). In the case of La Piéta, Radcliffe not only advocates for religious tolerance but provides an alternative, 'comprehensive' model of a positively imagined state church. In her emphasis on that which is 'absolutely necessary to the profession of Christianity' and a tolerant attitude to 'additional' practices, beliefs and rituals,[197] the abbess of La Piéta represents a particular mode of theologically and politically tolerant Anglicanism[198]. The admirable structure of her 'confessional community' suggests an appropriate model of governance for a comprehensive state church: a position of theological tolerance and theo-political inclusion that maintains traditional forms but allows for differences of practice and belief.

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[196] Anna Letitia Barbauld, *An Address to the Opposers of the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts,* 3rd edn (London: J. Johnson, 1790)*,* p. 16

[197] Locke, *Concerning Toleration,* p. 17

[198] Earlier, I have noted that we should not view the abbess as a 'Protestantised' Catholic. This reading of the abbess and the convent as an alternative model of a tolerant Anglicanism is an allegorical reading which exists alongside an understanding of the abbess herself as Catholic. The theological tolerance inherent in this emphasis on her Catholic faith is the foundation of the theo-politically tolerant model of Church reflected in the depiction of the convent. We must read her simultaneously as Catholic and as presenting a model of Church organisation relevant to contemporary Anglicanism.

In more overtly negative depictions of Catholic institutions and practices, this underlying discourse of toleration/tolerance can be harder to discern. The Gothic, as Canuel suggests, frequently performs a complicated double movement in its renderings of the Catholic Church. In depictions of the Inquisition and repressive monasteries, Gothic novels paint a grotesque vision of a Catholic past that appears at first to suggest a rejection of the Catholic entirely. However, as Canuel argues, the Gothic novel 'expose[d] what it deemed to be a terrifying logic of confessional government and then assume[d] – precisely as a remedy to the anxieties about Catholicism it generated – a more tolerant relation to religious belief'.[199] This 'more tolerant relation' in turns reflects back to include the very Catholicism whose repressions have proved the need for toleration in the first place.

Matthew Lewis' Gothic drama *Venoni* (1809) exemplifies this double movement. Both Venoni and the benevolent Father Michael, who has helped Venoni and his bride Josepha escape from the clutches of the evil Coelestino, speak in favour of theological tolerance. Hoeveler dismisses these speeches in the light of the atrocities occurring throughout both acts of the play as a 'disingenuous addition' to the source material: Père Laurent's *Les Victimes cloîtrées* (1791).[200] They function, she argues, as 'a broad wink to his audience, a smirk that said something like: let's all play along with this suddenly fashionable toleration business'.[201] However, her assessment fails to incorporate a recognition of this double movement of toleration discourse. The play closes on Venoni's shouted command: 'BE TOLERANT!' The seemingly swift change in tone, from breathless escape from Catholic persecution to theological harangue, does not invalidate the resonance of this cry. It reinforces it.

The Catholic Church has functioned throughout as a persecuting church, forcing not only conformity by tricked professions and literal imprisonments, but acting to accrue civil power through the absorption of Venoni and Josepha's civil estates. At the end of the final scene, having facilitated Venoni's escape, Father Michael announces that he plans to retire 'to some more virtuous fraternity' and pleads for tolerance:

[199] Canuel, *Religion, Toleration and British Writing,* p. 56
[200] Hoeveler, *The Gothic Ideology,* p. 107
[201] Ibid.*,* p. 108

> Forbear, my Lord, nor brand a whole profession with disgrace, because some few of its professors have been faulty. 'Tis not the *habit* but the *heart,* 'tis not the name he bears but the principles he has imbibed, which make man the blessing or reproach of human nature.[202]

The groundwork here is laid for a theologically tolerant reabsorption of the Catholic into the ecumenically understood universal church. As Bostrom's work suggests this possibility of theo-political toleration and theological tolerance rests on a recognition of the difference between individual and institution. The juxtaposition of Michael and Coelestino throughout the play plants the seeds of a pro-toleration discourse by differentiating between devotee and creed. Venoni's interjection only confirms the emphasis on theological tolerance: 'scorn to bow beneath the force of vulgar prejudice, and fold to our hearts as brethren in one large embrace men of all ranks, all faiths, and all professions'.[203] This message of tolerance is conversely consistent with the depiction of a persecuting Catholicism.

One final case study shows the ways in which the prism of toleration allows us to see correlations between the depiction of the Catholic and of other Christian groups as part of a pro-toleration agenda. Killeen refers to Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* as an 'anti-Catholic manual' in which 'the Catholic Church is depicted as a cornucopia of perverts, control freaks, Satanists, and power-hungry sadists'.[204] This reading of Maturin's anti-Catholic intent is often connected to his *Five Sermons on the Errors of the Roman Catholic Church*. I am not the first, however, to suggest that Maturin's text has a pro-toleration agenda.[205] Milbank suggests that there is an 'incipient ecumenism' in Maturin[206] and Bostrom notes the way in which the novel balances negative portrayals of Monçada's monastic experience with a positive portrayal of the friendly priest in 'Guzman's Story'.[207] Although the text is clearly still weighted towards a suspicion of Catholic institutions, the

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[202] Matthew Lewis, *Venoni: or, The Novice of St. Mark's* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1809), p. 102

[203] Ibid., p. 102

[204] Killeen, 'Irish Gothic', p. 16

[205] Robert Miles does not concentrate on the issue of toleration but does argue that 'the energy that propels it is not anti-Catholicism *per se'* rather, he suggests, it is 'Irish nationalism.'* Such a reading ignores the wider discourse of toleration and overemphasises Maturin's early works – *The Wild Irish Boy* (1808) and *The Milesian Chief* (1812) – at the expense of his later output. However, Miles reading is another instance of a critical suspicion of a monolithic anti-Catholic reading.

* Miles, 'Europhobia', p. 100

[206] Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 190

[207] Bostrom, 'The Novel and Catholic Emancipation', p. 162

fact that Monçada retains a Catholic identity and that Immalee partially adopts one further strengthen the argument for theological tolerance.[208] In an overview of Maturin's work, there is a clear recurrence to concepts of toleration especially in *The Albigenses* (1824). It depicts the mutual respect of the Catholic Monk of Montcalm and the Albigensian minister Pierre and closes with a plea for tolerance: 'May those of different faiths, like them, imitate their tolerance and embrace their example.'[209] Maturin's *Five Sermons* are key to understanding his position in relation to tolerance/toleration throughout his work and particularly in his depiction of different faith traditions in *Melmoth.*

Maturin's *Five Sermons* offer a theological critique of Catholic belief but an incipient extension of theological tolerance, which, somewhat disingenuously avoids an avocation of political toleration. His sermons are replete with markers of theological tolerance. A clear distinction is forcefully made between individual and institution as he inveighs 'not against Catholics, but against Catholicism – not against individuals, but against abstract opinions'.[210] He portrays himself as an anti-controversialist seeking to avoid doctrinal controversies.[211] 'The true church', he argues, 'is an aggregate of all who worship God in spirit and in truth, *under whatever denomination . . .* Calvinists and Arminians, Churchmen and Dissenters, *all*'.[212] His objection to the Catholic Church and his reason for entering into controversy with it are the supposedly pernicious nature of some of its practices but more importantly its exclusionary claims to be the 'true Church' and thus its status as a persecuting church. [213]

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[208] Milbank refers to Monçada's 'proto-Protestant' faith* but his adherence to the Catholic faith is underlined at his introduction: 'the first act of his recovered reason was to request that a Catholic priest might be sent for.'**

* Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 198

** Maturin, *Melmoth the Wanderer* (London: Penguin English Library, 2012), p. 79

[209] Charles Maturin, *The Albigenses,* 4 vols (London: Hurst, Robinson, And Co., 1824), IV, p. 277

[210] Maturin, *Five Sermons*, p. 28

[211] The extent to which this is a true self-representation is questionable. His theological position, particularly in relation to Calvinism, changed over time. Miles attempt to label Maturin as an unequivocal High Calvinist is unconvincing in the light of Maturin's own sceptical attitude towards the five points of Calvinism in both his sermons and novels, including *Melmoth*. His letters to Walter Scott, however, show him to have been entangled in theological controversy within the Church as a 'High Calvinist'* and Walter Scott advised him that a proposed sermon publication was potentially controversial and engaged in 'speculative' points of doctrine.**

*Maturin to Scott January 1813, p. 10

** Scott to Maturin 21 November 1813, p. 22

All letters found in *The Correspondence of Sir Walter Scott and Charles Robert Maturin,* ed. by Fannie E. Ratchford and William H. McCarthy (Austin, Texas: The University of Texas Press, 1937)

[212] Maturin, *Five Sermons,* p. 32

[213] Ibid., p. 29

The relevance of Maturin's sermons and their avocation of a form of theological tolerance to a reading of *Melmoth the Wanderer* quickly becomes clear. *Melmoth* presents us with a series of inset tales each representing figures with different religious backgrounds. There is the Anglican Stanton; the Catholic Monçada; the German Protestant Walbergs; Elinor who comes from a Puritan/non-conforming family;[214] and Immalee/Isidora who begins the tale as a quasi-pagan figure and ends it as a quasi-Catholic, whose simple faith arguably represents an idealised 'child-like' Christianity (Matthew 19:14). Not all of these faith systems are universally positively represented. Maturin, for example, dwells on the empty austerity of his fictional Puritanism; we are told that the virtuous Elinor's aunt's 'life was mere mechanism', a habitual and meaningless repetition of outward forms.[215] As in Maturin's sermons, this rejection of specific practices is tempered by a valorisation of individuals within each faith tradition and the recognition of their equal spiritual status.

In 'The Lover's Tale', for example, it is the two lovers, Elinor and John, who are both from Dissenting backgrounds, who serve as models of Christianity. The faith of Elinor's Anglican family is depicted as a matter of little reflection; her cousin Margaret is 'strictly attached to the Church of England, as her forefathers had been from its first establishment.[216] Her faith is a matter of inheritance, her beliefs received by rote. While depicted as Christian, she is unfavourably compared with the non-conformist Elinor and her thoughtful tolerant faith: 'Balancing the opposite extremes she was destined to witness, she came to the right conclusion, - that there must be good on both sides…nor could she conceive that these clear and mighty spirits would be for ever opposed to each other in their future destinations.'[217] This distinction between individual and institution is universally maintained in *Melmoth*. Maturin's portrayal of monstrous Catholic institutions conforms to the double movement of pro-toleration fiction – the rejection of the political structuring and operation of the Church and the extension of theological tolerance of its adherents.

[214] The terms are used interchangeably by Maturin in relation to Elinor.
[215] Maturin, *Melmoth,* p. 596
[216] Ibid., p. 571-2
[217] Ibid., p. 572

The central device of the novel cannot be understood outside of a framework of theological tolerance. In the introduction to *Melmoth,* Maturin notes the context that inspired his story – a passage from one of his sermons:

> At this moment is there one of us present, however we may have departed for 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?[218]

This bargain is literalised in Melmoth's peripatetic attempt to find someone to sell their soul for his salvation. Melmoth draws his victims into despair and offers them damnation. Not one of them from any faith tradition accepts. The fact that they will not sacrifice their salvation suggests that they already had a salvation to sacrifice.

As I have argued throughout this chapter, the representation of Catholic and of other Protestant Dissenting traditions is more complex than a single framework of interpretation can suggest. Although the frame of tolerance/toleration allows us to move beyond a simple anti-Catholic/pro-Catholic binary, we must continue to engage with these depictions of alternate religious traditions from a range of angles. *Melmoth the Wanderer* offers a rich field for an investigation of the complex web of varying political and theological arguments and contemporary concerns, from its critique on the five points of Calvinism as they pour from the mouth of a lunatic and a commentary on sacrificial theology made literal in Walberg's young son giving his life blood in a fruitless attempt to save his family to the depiction of a persecuting Catholicism and the representation of a ritualistic inherited Anglicanism. The Gothic's depiction of the Catholic cannot be divorced from wider theological, theo-political and political concerns beyond a political reassessment of Britain's engagement with the Catholic other. In the next chapter, I will move beyond a consideration of the Gothic's theo-political subtexts. In it, I will begin to explore the ways in which the Gothic's deployment of aesthetic strategies cannot be separated from the theological and theo-aesthetic concerns that underpin them.

[218] Ibid., pix

Chapter 2: "Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling:" Gothic Theologies of the Sublime

Be wise now therefore, O ye kings, be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoyce with trembling – Psalm 2:10-11

Any discussion of Gothic aesthetics inevitably turns to the sublime. In its Burkean iteration, sublimity's link to the Gothic is clear. Thematically, both share an interest in 'indulgence in the pleasures of terror'.[1] The connection between the Gothic and the sublime is, as David Morris notes, emphasised by the fact that 'illustrations of the sublime have provided something like a readers' guide to the Gothic novel'.[2] If we take, for example, John Dennis' 1704 list of catalysts of 'enthusiastick' (sublime) terror - 'gods, daemons, hell, spirits and souls of men, miracles, prodigies, enchantments, witchcraft, thunder, tempests, raging seas, inundations, torrents, earthquakes, volcanoes, monsters, serpents, lions, tigers, fire, war, pestilence, famine etc'[3] - the parity between these markers of the sublime and the standard (if not essential) accoutrements of the Gothic novel are clear. There is, at a fundamental level, a shared concentration on extreme emotions. This is not to suggest, however, as Samuel Monk does, that 'the gothic novel exists almost purely for the sake of evoking pleasant terror'.[4] This shared emphasis on extreme emotion is not an index of the teleology of either sublime or its deployment in the Gothic.

Beyond the Burkean Sublime

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth. – Psalm 121:1-2

Criticism of the Gothic frequently concentrates almost exclusively on the Burkean 'terror sublime' as the Gothic's dominant aesthetic.[5] While this ignores the Gothic's

[1] E. J. Clery, 'The Pleasure of Terror: Paradox in Edmund Burke's Theory of the Sublime', in *Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century,* ed. by R. Porter and Marie Mulvey-Roberts (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1996), 164-239 (p. 165)

[2]David B. Morris, 'Gothic Sublimity', *New Literary History,* 16.2 (1985), 299-319 (p. 300)

[3] John Dennis, 'The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry' in *The Select Works of Mr. John Dennis,* 2 vols (London: John Darby, 1721), I, p. 460

[4] Samuel Monk, *The Sublime,* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960), p. 90

[5] In the work of critics such as David Punter, Benjamin Brabon and Elizabeth Bohls there is also a postulated dichotomy between the picturesque and the sublime but there remains an assumptive definition of the sublime as Burkean.

significant engagement with other aesthetic modes, such as the beautiful and the picturesque, it also relies on an inaccurate monolithic conception of the sublime. As Martin Shee despairingly wrote in 1809, 'of all the qualities of Art, the sublime is that which appears to be the most vague, irregular and undefined; scarcely two writers are agreed as to its properties or powers'.[6] It is necessary to confront this multiplicity of definitions in order to understand the contemporary influences on Burke and the alternative discourses of the sublime with which Gothic authors engage. The following brief examples from Ann Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) demonstrate varied uses of the term 'sublime', challenging an exclusively Burkean reading of 'Gothic sublimity'.

First, in educating the heroine Emily, her father St Aubert discourses on the 'sublime pleasure' of 'thought and contemplation' in 'the taste they create for the beautiful and the grand'.[7] Here, there is an almost Godwinian emphasis on the sublime nature of thought and reason;[8] a clear echo of Joseph Addison's notion of the 'pleasures of the imagination' - the 'beautiful', the 'grand' and the 'uncommon' - as central to 'sublimity';[9] and a reflection of early nineteenth century Dissenting aesthetic theorist Mary Schimmelpenninck's 'contemplative sublime' (or sublime of virtuous contemplation).[10] The sublime here is disconnected from fear and figured as a product of reasoned engagement with the natural world.

Second, Radcliffe offers an example of the natural world itself as a source of the sublime. During the travels of Emily and St Aubert, '*the serenity and clearness of the air* in these high regions' are said to be 'particularly delightful to the travellers; it seemed to inspire them with a finer spirit, and diffused an indescribable *complacency* over their minds. They had no words to express the *sublime emotions* they felt.'[11] (My emphasis) This second example emphasises 'complacency' and tranquillity, echoing Presbyterian Divine Andrew Kippis' emphasis on 'sublime serenity''[12] or Dennis' and John Baillie's description of the

[6] Martin Shee, *Elements of Art: A Poem in Six Cantos* (London: William Miller, 1809), p. 193
[7] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho,* 4 vols (London, G. G. and J. Robinson, 1795), I, pp. 17-18
[8] See William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* and also Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men.*
[9] Addison, 'Spectator no. 413 (Tuesday June 24, 1712), *The Works of Joseph Addison Complete*, 3 vols (New York: Harper Brothers, 1837), II, pp. 140-2
[10] Mary Anne Schimmelpenninck, *Theory of the Classification of Beauty and Deformity* (London: John and Arthur Arch, 1814)
[11] Radcliffe, *Udolpho,* I, p. 118
[12] Andrew Kippis, *Sermons on Practical Subjects* (London: G. G. J. Robinson, 1791), p. 248

sublime of 'joy'.[13] Again, the sublime is disconnected from any fearful engagement with the landscape, instead it is a comforting and transcending form.

Third, we are told that at St Aubert's death, Emily hears 'those affecting and sublime words: "His body is buried in peace, and his soul returns to Him that gave it"'.[14] Although this example appears to echo a Burkean emphasis on the terrors of death, it focuses not on the fear of death but on the 'feeling' of spiritual security and Divine comfort arising from devotion and the recognition of Divine providence: a notion reflected in Anna Barbauld's discussion of aestheticised devotion.[15] Though these examples explicitly use the term 'sublime' to define the experiences described therein, there is no connection to Burke's definitive assertion that 'whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime'.*[16]

This aim of this chapter is to investigate Gothic writers' use of the sublime, for which I will posit a theological valence in both aesthetic discourse and its varied deployment in early Gothic novels. Previous Gothic criticism has largely been dominated by three currents of thought in reference to the aesthetic strategies of early Gothic novels: psychoanalytical readings, feminist criticism and New Historical accounts.[17] Psychoanalytically orientated accounts, such as those of David Morris in 'Gothic Sublimity', engage in a largely de-historicised and often universalising account of the sublime, based on a modern conception of sublimity (influenced largely by Lacanian or Kantian discourse). The emphasis of this chapter will be to provide an historicised account of the contemporary debate surrounding the conception of the sublime.

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[13] Dennis, *Grounds of Criticism,* p. 423. John Baillie, *An Essay on the Sublime* (London: R. Dodesly, 1747), p. 32
[14] Radcliffe, *Udolpho,* I, p. 234
[15] See Anna Laetitia Barbauld, 'Thoughts on the Devotional Taste, and on Sects and Establishments' in *The Works of Anna Laetitia Barbauld. With a Memoir by Lucy Aiken,* 2 vols, (London: Longman and Co, 1825), I, pp. 232-259
[16] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* edited with notes by Paul Guyer*,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 33
[17] For examples of some of these approaches to Gothic aesthetic strategies (including use of the picturesque) see Tom Furniss, *Edmund Burke's Aesthetic Ideology: Language, Gender, and Political Economy in Revolution* and E. J. Clery's 'The Pleasure of Terror: Paradox in Edmund Burke's Theory of the Sublime' in *Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century* (historicised predominantly political approaches)*;* Elizabeth Bohls, *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics, 1716-1818;* Kate Ferguson Ellis' *The Contested Castle: Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology;* Donna Heiland's *Gothic and Gender: An Introduction;* and Diane Long Hoeveler's *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalisation of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës* (feminist readings)*;* David Punter's 'The Picturesque and the Sublime: two worldscapes' in *The Politics of the Picturesque* and David Morris' article 'Gothic Sublimity' (psychoanalytic approaches).

Feminist and New Historicist readings offer historically informed accounts, focusing on the potential ideological content of the sublime and its manipulation by Gothic writers. These discussions of the sublime are usually predicated on a presumption of a progressive/reactionary binary as we find, for example, in Terry Eagleton's *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*. According to Eagleton, an author may use aesthetic strategies 'to explore the realm of affective life which authority seeks to colonize and turn it against the insolence of power itself… A new kind of human subject – sensitive, passionate, individualist – poses an ideological challenge to the ruling order'.[18] This 'new' concept of aesthetic value, namely the value of the uncontrollable sublime, produces a new subject who is both the proponent and repository of these values. Eagleton's account echoes Abigail Williams' political reading of the sublime as an aesthetic deeply engaged with Whig discourses of political liberty in the work of early eighteenth-century critics such as Joseph Addison, John Dennis and Richard Blackmore.[19] These accounts, however, by tying sublime discourse to a dialogic political model, erase the wider debate surrounding the sublime, not predicated simply upon questions of political liberty but on a complex interlocking discourse incorporating contemporary theology, proto-psychology, moral ideologies and scientific debate which escaped the Whig/Tory binary particularly in the later eighteenth century.

Eagleton also outlines a conservative use of the sublime in which 'power utilizes feelings for its own ends'.[20] The sublime may, in effect, perform a 'romanticising' function, sanctifying or elevating that which falls under its classification.[21] Burke's use of sublime rhetoric in his description of Marie Antoinette's arrest in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) provides an example of a conservative function, aesthetically valorising existing power structures. Feminist readings focus on the conservative function of both the sublime and picturesque as tied to a specifically male and often colonising gaze, which seeks to both control the natural world and the female while simultaneously othering it.[22] This may, however, be overturned, allowing the sublime to fulfil a progressive function by, for

[18] Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1990), p. 27
[19] Abigail Williams, *Poetry and the Creation of a Whig Literary Culture 1681-1714* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). Kindle Edition, 265/4343
[20] Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, 27
[21] Radcliffe's *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789) offers a useful example of both possibilities: Athlin, home of the good Lord, is romantically sublimed, Dunbayne, home of the evil Lord, is sublimely terrifying.
[22] Elizabeth Bohls, *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics: 1716-1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 210

example, co-opting to the female the male gaze implicit in these aesthetic discourses in, for example, the depiction of Emily's appreciation for the sublime and co-option of sublimity in her own poetic creation.[23] While useful, these ideological readings of the sublime have two key deficiencies. The first of these is the assumption of a progressive/regressive paradigm, the second is the under-evaluation of the role of religious discourse in contemporary debates about and uses of the sublime.

My account rejects the assumption that religion's 'role' in the sublime is to serve particular political or gendered ideologies. Rather, it responds to the theological and the religious as an independent, though interconnected, discourse. Such a focus on the religious underpinnings of the sublime inevitably leads away from a progressive/regressive interpretation of aesthetic strategies. The theological 'controversies' with which the sublime engages are perpetually regenerating and recurring without a final resolution. While scientific and philosophical 'advances' may be inflected in these debates, questions engaged with by the sublime (the existence of God, (pre-)determinism, original sin and universal corruption, free will, providence and 'effective' devotional practices) have no definitive 'final' answer.

Natasha Duquette's study *Veiled Intent* (2016) suggests a further importance to a theologised approach to the Gothic's use of the sublime. As Duquette argues, women during the period were largely excluded from theological debate and, as a result, turned to 'veiling their incarnational biblical hermeneutics in a multiplicity of forms that were increasingly seen as acceptably feminine: lyric verse, elegies, devotional literature, aesthetic theory, and educational manuals for children'.[24] While she does not address the Gothic novel, her claims are nonetheless suggestive of the possibilities of Gothic literature as a medium of theological expression for those frequently marginalized from theological debate.

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[23] E. J. Clery, *Women's Gothic: From Clara Reeve to Mary Shelley,* 2nd edn (Tavistock: Northcote House Publishers, 2004), 63-7

[24] Natasha Duquette, *Veiled Intent: Dissenting Women's Aesthetic Approach to Biblical Hermeneutics* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2016), p. 1. Women were largely excluded from positions of 'spiritual authority'. This rejection of women's right to preach or teach was perceived as a biblical injunction based on passages like 1 Timothy 2:12: 'But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.' The only contemporary exceptions were found in limited ways in Dissenting groups. Although Wesley had originally allowed women to preach, by the end of the eighteenth century only the Primitive Methodists sanctioned women preachers. Quakers were also more tolerant of women's intervention and participation in the theological and spiritual lives of their communities.

The limited amount of work that exists on the theological underpinnings of Gothic sublimity concentrates almost exclusively on a singular conception of natural theology and proof of the existence of God. [25] To move beyond this emphasis, it is necessary to review the religious components of the aesthetic discourse of the sublime within the eighteenth-century British tradition. While acknowledging the importance of Burke to the Gothic, I will demonstrate that a wider approach must be taken in order to understand the influences underlying Burke's theory, and the competing discourses with which Gothic fictions may interact. Botting has claimed that the sublime 'was *akin* to the sense of wonderment and awe accompanying religious experience'[26] (my emphasis) and Robert Doran's suggests that it was 'a secular analog of religious transcendence'.[27] I will demonstrate, on the contrary, that the sublime, in much eighteenth-century discourse, represents not a replacement of the Divine but a lived experience of it.

The second section of this chapter will investigate the theological coding of aesthetics in Gothic fictions themselves. In order to offer a detailed engagement with the theological possibilities of aesthetic strategies, I will focus on an in-depth case-study of one text - Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). In doing so, I do not aim to create a universalising insistence on a single 'theo-aesthetics of the Gothic'. To do so is to commit the error of homogenizing the theo-aesthetic beliefs and practices of a diverse group of writers from a range of religious backgrounds. Instead, the case study will illuminate possibilities inherent within the aesthetic strategies of the Gothic. Radcliffe has been chosen as the primary case study because, as Elizabeth Bohls notes, she, of all eighteenth-century

[25] See Anne Chandler's 'Ann Radcliffe and Natural Theology' and Robert Mayhew's 'Gothic Trajectories: Latitudinarian Theology and the Novels of Ann Radcliffe.' An exception to this conception of the relationship between the sublime and natural theology is found in Jarlath Killeen's *Gothic Ireland* (2005), which postulates that Burke's *Enquiry* functions as a corrective to 'Deistic' Natural Theology. While his work points usefully to the Burkean model's rejection of a purely rationalist conception of Natural Religion, it relies on an inaccurate conflation of Natural Religion and natural theology and an over-generalisation regarding the theological premises of natural theology (namely, the universal primacy of the 'watchmaker God' model) and its exclusive connection with Anglican thought. As Milbank notes, for example, Newton's *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (1687) 'emphasises the need for constant Divine intervention.'* It also problematically ignores Burke's assimilation of the work of previous Anglican authors in his model. It does not, therefore, offer a significant counter-argument to the conception of the positive connection between the sublime and natural theology.

* Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 69

[26] Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 39

[27] Robert Doran, *The Theory of the Sublime from Longinus to Kant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 12

Gothic writers, was particularly 'immersed in aesthetic theory and extraordinarily sensitive to its ideological dimension'[28] both in her fiction, her travel journals and in her posthumously published essay 'On the Supernatural in Poetry' (1826). As such, her novels offer a particularly rich source for aesthetic inquiry. The aim of the chapter throughout is to give a fuller picture of the possible interactions between the sublime and the theological in the Gothic novel, articulating the ways in which they challenge many of our critical assumptions about both the Gothic novel and the sublime.

A Theological History of the Sublime

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse - Romans 1:20

One danger inherent in any discussion of the sublime is a lack of clarity about what should be included as sublime. This is complicated by the fact that both contemporary critics and Gothic writers did not explicitly identify their engagement with sublime discourse as 'sublime'. Without a clarity of terms, for modern critics the identification of the sublime in eighteenth-century texts becomes devoid of meaning and we easily fall into the error of superimposing a modern conception of the 'sublime' onto the texts that we read. Consequently, I have used the following four-fold method to identify 'the sublime'. First, I refer to the author's self-identification of the scene or discourse as 'sublime'. As the earlier examples from Radcliffe illustrate, concentrating on the use of the term 'sublime' highlights areas where the writer's own conceptions of the sublime may differ from our own assumptions. The second method is to identify arguments and linguistic markers that overlap with common features of the (self-identified) sublime discourse. Thus, for example, I include Dennis' discussion of 'enthusiastick passions' or Joseph Addison's 'pleasures of the imagination' as they share sources (Longinus), key concepts (emotional transport, elevation) and similar linguistic referents ('greatness of soul', 'transport' et cetera) with discourses

[28] Elizabeth Bohls, *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics, 1716-1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 89

explicitly addressing the sublime. The third method is based on contemporary perceptions of the text as sublime or concerning the sublime. Milton's description of Satan is a paradigmatic example of a text externally identified as sublime in the work of Burke among many others. Fourthly, I have identified passages that display 'features' commonly agreed upon as 'sublime'. For instance, storm-cast seas and towering Apennine heights both represent examples of the 'scenery' almost universally associated with the sublime. This is not to suggest, along with Samuel Monk, that 'the mind…responds automatically and consistently to certain classes of objects; [and that] to introduce these objects into a poem or a painting and you have the sublime'.[29] This is a separate debate within the theory of the sublime. The use of these markers is rather an identification of the author's attempt to employ the sublime through using common tropes.

A certain degree of confusion or lack of clarity also results from a lack of systematised differentiation between forms and varieties of the sublime. Following Monk's classification, the sublime is usually split into two forms: the rhetorical and the natural. As Morris notes, however, there is an inherent danger in making this separation – the possibility of dichotomising the purposes, practices and underlying emphases of each. [30] However, it is necessary to articulate a broad distinction in order to recognise how these different forms of sublimity are deployed in the Gothic. The rhetorical may be divided into the oratorical and the more relevant literary sublime. The 'literary' sublime is connected to what Addison refers to as the 'secondary pleasures' – a term that he applies to arts that affect the imagination not through the object itself but through its representation. In other words, the literary sublime is a mimetic, or partially mimetic, representation of the 'extra-fictional' (or 'natural') sublime in fiction, poetry et cetera where form mirrors sublime 'content'. The 'natural sublime' is connected to Addison's 'primary pleasures' – that is the pleasures (or effects) arising from interaction with the sublime 'object' itself.[31] The differentiation between these forms allows for a differentiation between how sublime landscapes, for example, function in the text and act upon characters and how these descriptions affect or impact the reader.

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[29] Monk, *The Sublime,* p. 115

[30] David Morris, *The Religious Sublime: Christian Poetry and Critical Tradition in eighteenth Century England* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1972), p. 7

[31] Joseph Addison, 'Spectator 411, September 20th 1712', *The Works of Joseph Addison Complete,* II, pp. 137-8

It is also necessary to clarify the 'types' of sublime 'object' or source. Associationist theorists (such as David Hartley, Archibald Alison and Sir Thomas Dick Lauder) and proto-phenomenological philosophers (such as Immanuel Kant) approaches to the sublime deny that there are 'intrinsic or inherent qualities of sublimity or beauty actually existing in the objects of material creation'. [32] However, this does not preclude the idea that certain subjects, scenes, landscapes or events will *usually* produce sublime 'experiences'. I will, therefore, refer to the sublime 'object' but with no intention of directly engaging with this debate. The chief distinction made in eighteenth-century aesthetic discourse is between the 'moral' and the 'natural' sublime. The first applies to qualities or virtues manifested in action by human subjects. The second refers to the natural world. In order to differentiate between the divergent discourses involved with these different 'objects', I will indicate these distinctions where relevant in both this and the next chapter.

The discourse of the 'sublime' as aesthetic category has its origin in Longinus' treatise on the rhetorical sublime, *Peri Hypsous*, in which the sublime is defined as a 'paradoxical experience of being at once *overwhelmed* and *exalted'.*[33] Longinus' definition is worth quoting at length as a point of reference, and serves to clarify the sublime's origins in a discourse not predicated on terror:

> [The sublime] is *grand* and *lofty*, which the more we consider, the *greater ideas* we conceive of it; whose *force we cannot possibly withstand*; which *immediately sinks deep*, and makes such Impressions on the Mind as cannot be easily worn out or effaced…the Mind is naturally *elevated* by the true Sublime, and so sensibly affected with its lively strokes, that it swells in *Transport* and an inward *Pride*, as if what was only heard had been the Product of its own Intention…[34] (My emphasis)

The defining features of his conception of the sublime are its connection to elevation and greatness (in both producer and 'witness') and its instantaneous and irresistible effect. Its impression is permanent and leads to further contemplation and an elevated self-conception. In Longinus's theorisation, the sublime overwhelms, transports and elevates the subject who perceives and experiences it.

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[32] Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, 'On the Origin of Taste' in *Sir Uvedale Price on the Picturesque with an Essay on the Origin of Taste and Much Original Matter,* edited by Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, Bart. (Edinburgh: Caldwell, Lloyd, and Co., 1842), 1-59 (p. 56)

[33] Doran, F*rom Longinus to Kant,* p. 4

[34] Longinus, *On the Sublime* translated by William Smith, (Dublin: S. Powell, 1740), p. 11

In Britain, discussion of the Longinian sublime did not gain traction until after Nicolas Boileau's influential French translation of 1674, which influenced both Dennis and Addison; it was not until after William Smith's English translation of the tract in 1737, however, that it became particularly well known. As Marjorie Nicolson has noted, however, while discussion of the rhetorical sublime only blossomed under the influence of Longinus, 'the natural Sublime was flowering in England well before the turn of the century'.[35] An interest in grand scenery and its ability to elevate and inspire anticipates the later discussion of the natural sublime. It is a discourse inextricably bound up with Christian theology and rooted in biblical patterns of contemplative devotion. Romans 1:20 tells us that 'the invisible things of him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made'. The scriptures offer countless examples exploring this idea of Divine self-revelation in the natural world: from the terror implicit in the claim that 'the earth trembled and quaked, and the foundation of the mountains shook; they trembled because he was angry' (Psalms 18:7) to the assertion that 'the heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands' (Psalm 19:1). The tradition continued with the church fathers. Augustine personalises the passage from Romans quoted above, focusing on the emotional 'impact' of this Divine self-revelation in the natural world: 'Both Heaven and Earth, and all Things that are in them, behold, on every Side cry out unto me, that I should love thee.'[36] Independently of doctrinal disputes, this idea remains a constant of Christian theology during and after the Reformation. Luther tells us that 'God has wrapt himself in the veil of his works' and reveals himself in the natural world as well as in special revelation.[37] For Calvin, the world was infused with and sustained by the Word of God and thus 'the rightest way and fittest order to seek God… is to behold him in his works, by which he maketh himself nere and familiar, and doth in a maner communicate himself unto us'.[38] These accounts represent a devotional practice focused on emotional as well as rational 'access' to Divine truth through the natural world. This devotional practise was not extinguished by the scientific advancements of the seventeenth

[35] Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite,* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), p. 31
[36] Augustine, *St. Augustine's Confessions; Or, Praises of God in Ten Books,* (Drury Lane: T. Meighan, 1739), p. 319
[37] Martin Luther, *Luther's Commentary on Genesis,* trans. by John Nicholas Lenker and Henry Cole, 2 vols (e-artnow, 2018), I, p. 43
[38] John Calvin, *The Institution of Christian Religion,* trans. by Thomas Norton (London: Thomas Vautrollier, 1578), p. 10

and eighteenth centuries but rather entered into a symbiotic relationship with them.[39] The physico-theologists used the results of their investigations into the natural world rationally to argue for God's existence but this did not eclipse the question of not only rational but emotional access to the Divine through contemplation of the natural world.[40]

In terms of the natural world's ability to reflect the divine, it is necessary to distinguish between two divergent streams of thought, which are often conflated in criticism of the sublime's deployment. Accounts of the sublime as a 'secular analog' of religion[41] fail to make a necessary distinction between Natural Religion and natural theology. While these terms were frequently used interchangeably in the period, they offer a means a differentiating between two distinct strands of thought. Latitudinarian thinkers, such as John Wilkins and John Tillotson, sought with a tolerant spirit to avoid the controversies of the Civil War and Interregnum and to 'rehabilitat[e] the role of human reason in religion'.[42] In doing so, they emphasised the importance of a natural theology of fundamentals, attainable through consideration of the natural world and the use of reason.[43] Their natural theology was not an alternative to revealed religion. They were 'interested in showing the essential congruity between natural and revealed religion and interpreting the latter in the light of the former'.[44] This conception of a natural theology supplementing, precipitating or clarifying revealed religion is continued into the eighteenth century in the work of orthodox defenders of the Anglican faith, such as Daniel Waterland, non-conformists such as Isaac Watts, whose 'affectionate religion' emphasised the affective aspects of this natural 'theology', and liberal Anglicans, such as William Paley. For Waterland, natural theology 'is bound up in Revealed, is

[39] Neil Gillespie, Natural History, Natural Theology, and Social Order: John Ray and the "Newtonian Ideology"' in *Journal of the History of Biology,* 20.1 (Spring 1987), pp. 1-49

[40] Marjorie Nicolson and Neil Gillespie offer excellent and comprehensive histories of the development of discourses of natural theology and science in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

[41] Doran, *Longinus to Kant,* p. 4

[42] John Spurr, 'Latitudinarianism' and the Restoration Church', *The Historical Journal,* 31.1 (March 1988), 61-82, (p. 71)

[43] Different thinkers presented different conceptions what was included in this 'natural theology.' For Wilkins, for example, it includes 'belief in the Divine nature', knowledge of his 'perfections', 'suitable affections' towards the deity and 'the duties of religion.'* For Glanvil, it comprehends 'the being of God', 'providence' and 'moral good and evil.'**

*Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment: Vol 1: Whichcote to Wesley* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 66

** Ibid., p. 68

[44] Ibid., p. 67

supported, cherished and kept alive by it.'[45] In contrast the Natural Religion of deists, sceptics, pantheists and freethinkers, such as Shaftesbury, offered an alternative to revealed religion. As Isabel Rivers notes, for Shaftesbury 'deity, universal or sovereign or supreme mind, the whole, supreme nature' are largely synonymous terms, almost entirely distinct from Christian doctrines about the deity. Belief in this organising principle arises from a study of the natural world and the use of human reason alone. Discourses of the sublime predominantly intersect with natural theologies, rather than Natural Religion, as I will show.

The first two influential engagements with Longinian theory, those of Dennis and Addison, both reflect this pre-existing association of the natural world and the Divine as part of a natural theology rather than a Natural Religion. For Dennis, God is the highest sublime, 'nothing but God and what relates to God, is worthy to move the Soul of a great and a wise Man'. [46] For him, the natural sublime or the 'wonders of the universe…shew the Attributes of the Creator'.[47] Dennis was the first aesthetician to use the phrase 'delightful Horror', and his use of the term in describing an Alpine crossing is indissolubly tied to concurrent theological reflections on Creation and Universal Destruction. [48] The phrase, later so vital to Burke's definition of sublimity, is steeped in theological subtext. [49] Similarly, for Addison, those 'pleasures of the imagination' which offer a (sublime) 'pleasing astonishment…delightful stillness and amazement in the soul'[50] are intrinsically linked to contemplation of a world that reveals the Divine. Addison writes that 'His being passes through, actuates, and supports the whole frame of nature. His creation, and every part of it, is full of him.'[51] Thus, it is 'impossible for [him] to survey this world of fluid matter, without thinking on the hand that first poured it out'.[52] For both writers, sublime 'experiences' of the natural world are connected to the self-revelation of the deity.

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[45] Daniel Waterland, *Scripture Revealed,* Part I, 2nd edn (London: W. Innys, 1731), p. 2
[46] Dennis, *Grounds of Criticism,* p. 443
[47] Ibid., p. 443
[48] John Dennis, *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose,* (London: James Knapton, 1693), p. 133. It is linked to Thomas Burnet's theory of the Flood.
[49] Delightful horror is 'the most genuine effect and the truest test of the sublime.' Burke, *Enquiry,* p. 75
[50] Joseph Addison, 'Spectator 412, Monday June 23rd 1712,' in *The Works of Joseph Addison,* 3 vols, II, p. 139
[51] Joseph Addison, *The Evidence of the Christian Religion with Additional Discourses,* (Edinburgh: Gavin Alston, 1772), p. 87
[52] Joseph Addison, 'Spectator no. 489, Saturday 20th September', in *The Works of Joseph Addison,* 3 vols, II, p. 394

Both Addison and Dennis move beyond a discussion of the natural sublime. Dennis maps the sublime onto Hermogenes' list of four sources of poetic inspiration: thoughts of God, thoughts of his Divine works, characteristics of the Deity discoverable in men (fortitude, temperance et cetera) and great 'human' things (wealth).[53] Dennis rejects the last item as a source of the true sublime. Each of his accepted sources has its root in the deity. Dennis links the moral sublime to 'Christian' virtues and man's twofold reflection of the Divine: through his initial 'likeness' to God[54] and through the perfecting process of the inworking Holy Spirit.[55] For Dennis, nothing 'which is against Religion, or which runs counter to moral Virtue' can be truly sublime.[56] Such a view presumes an inbuilt 'Divine sense' of the virtuous. Dennis asserts that 'God himself, who made the Soul, and best understand its Nature, converts it by its Passions'.[57]

A similar concept of an inbuilt 'sense' (or 'taste') is found in Addison, who argues that 'the supreme author of our being has so formed the soul of man, that nothing but himself can be its last, adequate and proper happiness'. [58] Thus, the 'pleasure' of Addison's three aesthetic categories are all implanted for Divine purposes: to inspire us with a love of that which reflects God's nature (the grand), to spur our seeking curiosity about the Divine (the uncommon) and to make the whole earth 'gay and delightful' for our inhabitation (the beautiful).[59] For both writers, there is an ineradicable link between the Divine and the sublime, a connection and mutual imbrication that does not work at the level of reason but of emotion. As Isabel Rivers notes, the discussion of the origin and nature of an internal moral sense was part of a complex debate and their representation of this sense is aligned with Lord Kames', David Hutcheson's and Adam Smith's emphasis on a 'human nature'

[53] Dennis, *Grounds of Criticism,* p. 427
[54] 'So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them.' (Genesis 1:27)
[55] 'But we all with open face behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' (2 Corinthians 3:18)
[56] Dennis, *Grounds of Criticism*, p. 420
[57] 'ibid.*,* p. 421. The term sublime not found in the original Hermogenes. His discourse has been co-opted by Dennis.
[58] Addison, 'Spectator 413' p. 140
[59] Ibid., pp. 138-40

which is 'divinely constituted'[60] and a moral sense which is effectively a 'Divine implantation'.[61]

Monk influentially postulated that eighteenth-century sublime aesthetics later turned away from the overtly religious emphasis of Addison and Dennis. Doran echoes this in claiming that the 'sublime' was the discourse of a secularizing age, and that it became 'the secular analog of transcendence'.[62] Such a position argues for a move away from the supposition an 'inner' (divinely gifted) sense towards more empirical enquiries, associationist accounts and an increasing emphasis on secular 'sources' of the sublime. Burke's *Enquiry* is seen by critics like Paul Guyer and Rodolphe Gasché to represent a turning point in this movement. According to Gasché, 'Burke was the first to propose an uncompromising empiricist – that is, sensualistic – account of aesthetic experience, and to have radically uncoupled this experience from extrinsic considerations (particularly, moral and religious)'.[63] As Morris and Duquette note, however, there continues to be an underlying theological inflection to later accounts of the sublime. The unifying discourse of the sublime is, as Doran states, 'transcendence': a concept that 'has its origins in religious beliefs and practice'.[64] At the linguistic level, the parity between religious language and the discourse of the sublime is clear: "awe', 'astonishment', 'wonder', 'ecstasy', 'amazement' [are all] terms that apply equally well to both secular-aesthetic and religious contexts'.[65] This does not, as Doran suggests, signify that the sublime 'replaces' religion, but rather that it complements religious discourse, representing a possible form of religious experience. Furthermore, there remains significant overlap between discourses of natural theology and the natural sublime and an inevitable influence of Christian thought on definitions of the 'virtues' of the moral sublime.

Throughout the eighteenth century, theorisations of the sublime engaged both explicitly and implicitly with the religious discourses found in Addison and Dennis. Many

[60] Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment,* II, p. 258
[61] Ibid., II, p. 239
[62] Doran, *Longinus to Kant,* p. 4
[63] Rodolphe Gasché, '…And the Beautiful? Revisiting Edmund Burke's "Double Aesthetics"' in *The Sublime from Antiquity to Present* edited by Timothy Costelloe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 24-36 (p. 24)
[64] Doran, *From Longinus to Kant,* p. 1
[65] Ibid., p. 12

critics engaged in partial natural theologies 'from beauty' and 'from design' connected to the sublime while others simply noted the natural world's ability to reflect the Divine. [66] In associationist theories, and in the work of those who rejected the concept of the 'inherent sublimity' of objects, there remains an emphasis on the religious 'associations' of the object as central to the experience of the sublime. David Hartley argues that theopathy is one of six varieties of 'association' upon which pleasure or pain depend: 'Those persons who have already formed high ideas of the power, knowledge, and goodness, of the author of nature, with suitable affections, generally feel the exalted pleasures of devotion upon every view and contemplation of his works.'[67] Hartley's theory depends on fore-knowledge of the Divine but other writers recur to the idea of a divinely implanted sense. As Sir Thomas Dick Lauder phrased it as late as 1846, the natural sublime is 'destined to produce' such sensations and lead us towards the deity.[68]

In keeping with theologies, such as that of Latitudinarian John Wilkins, which emphasised the fact that not only God's existence but his nature were reflected in the natural world, theorists such as Baillie argued that associations affecting us emotionally are connected to Divine attributes because 'in the almighty the sublime is completed'.[69] Whether it is vastness, infinity, eternity, power, obscurity or moral excellence – all are attributes of the deity.[70] As Isaac Browne expresses it, all the 'branches' of the true sublime are 'nourish'd by one common Root'.[71] Whether we take this to mean (as did Browne) that God is the source of all sublime attributes or simply their model, the connection is clear and God figures almost ubiquitously as the 'highest sublime'. There is a similar emphasis on sacred writing as the 'most sublime'. Longinus himself used the 'fiat lux' ('Let there be light) of Genesis 1:3 as an example, and it continued to be appealed to in the British tradition. This is not to suggest that all writers on the sublime accepted these connections between the

[66] See Tamsworth Reresby *A Miscellany of Ingenious Thoughts and Reflections* (1721), Henry Needler's *The Works* (1724), Thomas Stackhouse *Reflections on the Nature and Property of Languages* (1731), Isaac Hawkins Browne's *On Design and Beauty* (1734), Mark Akenside's *The Pleasures of the Imagination* (1744), Barbauld's *On the Devotional Taste of Sects* (1775), James Beattie's *Dissertations Moral and Critical* (1783) and Schimmelpenninck's *Theory on the Classification of Beauty and Deformity* (1814).

[67] David Hartley, *Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and His Expectations: In Two Parts,* 2 vols, (London: S. Richardson, 1749), I, p. 420

[68] Lauder, 'On the Origin of Taste,' p. 49

[69] John Baillie, *An Essay on the Sublime* (London: R. Dodesly, 1747), p. 21

[70] This list is drawn from Burke's *Enquiry* but echoes the 'qualities' associated with the sublime in the majority of theorists.

[71] Isaac Hawkins Brown, *On Design and Beauty: An Epistle* (London: J. Roberts, 1734), p. 2

sublime and the Divine, but rather that there is an inevitable underlying dialogue between the two. It is also important to note that there was more than one way to 'interpret' the sublime theologically. The natural sublime, for example, may be seen as reflecting God as creator, designer or sustainer and/or as revealing his character and/or as instrumental in deepening an affective relationship with the divinity. When attempting to 'decode' the theo-aesthetic 'beliefs' and strategies of any particular writer we must be aware of the *possibilities* before engaging with an author's particular use of the sublime.

We have not yet broached Burke's influential account or the 'terror sublime'. The relevance of Burke's 'terror sublime' to the Gothic makes an investigation of the theological underpinning of the *Enquiry* a matter of particular interest. Burke's work focuses on a 'sensual' discussion of the sublime, basing his theories on concepts of sense impression, associationism and a partially empirical method. His approach is not, however, as resolutely materialist as Gasché takes it to be. Echoing the natural theology of earlier writers, he acknowledges the physico-theological concept that 'the parts of the body may be considered as an hymn to the Creator' and uses it to justify his *Enquiry*.[72] The mind, too, he argues, may admit us 'into the counsels of the Almighty by a consideration of his Works'.[73]

Echoing Dennis and Addison's claims of a 'religious sense', Burke maintains that the 'root explanation' of the experience of the sublime is that.

> whenever the wisdom of our Creator intended that we should be affected with any thing, he did not confide the execution of his design to the languid and precarious operation of our reason; but he endued it with powers and properties that prevent the understanding, and even the will, which seizing upon the senses and imagination, captivate the soul before the understanding is ready either to join with them or to oppose them.[74]

Burke's conception of God's role in our ability to experience the sublime gives an urgency to aesthetic 'taste': it is a matter of salvation rather than simply social positioning. Burke also, like many other sublime theorists, uses those terms (transport, awe, amazement) which

[72] Burke, *Enquiry,* p. 46
[73] Ibid., p. 46
[74] Ibid*.,* p. 86

have a dual religious/aesthetic valence; examples are taken from scripture and his categories of the sublime echo the characteristics of the Christian God (obscurity, vastness, power, infinity, magnificence). There are also clear links between Burke's *Enquiry* and the theologically rich work of Dennis and Addison, not least the use of 'delightful horror' and the emphasis on terror as productive of sublimity.

Burke's theorisation of terror as the root of the sublime is theologically informed. For Burke, the passion caused by the sublime is 'Astonishment:' a 'state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror'.[75] In this way, 'terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently the ruling principle of the sublime'.[76] What is often overlooked in studies of Burke is his contention that 'admiration, reverence and respect' are the 'inferior' effects of the sublime after astonishment/terror.[77] This links his conception of terror not, in Radcliffean terms, with disgusting 'horror' (which 'contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates') but with elevating 'terror' (which 'expands the soul and 'awakens the faculties to a high degree of life'.)[78]

Burke's sublime terror has a three-fold 'process'. First, the soul's 'motions are suspended'. Second, 'the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other'. Third, the subject is led to contemplation. Although Burke avers that, during the initial emotional reaction, the subject cannot 'reason on that object which employs it', he goes on to state that the emotion 'anticipates our reasonings', it does not destroy them.[79] Burke maps the idea of God (and, by association, all that points to God) to this threefold structure of terror. In the second edition of *Enquiry,* Burke replied to Oliver Goldsmith's criticism 'it is certain we can have the most sublime ideas of the Deity, without imagining him a God of terror…our astonishment often proceeds from an increased love, as from an increased fear'[80] with a section on power. He contends that,

> some reflection, some comparing is necessary to satisfy us of his wisdom, his justice, and his goodness; to be struck with his power, it is only necessary that we should

[75] Ibid., p. 47
[76] Ibid., p. 48
[77] Ibid., p. 47
[78] Ann Radcliffe, 'On the Supernatural in Poetry' in *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal,* 1826, Part 1 (London: Henry Colburn, 1826), 145-52 (p. 149)
[79] Burke, *Enquiry,* p. 47
[80] Oliver Goldsmith quoted in 'Notes', in Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful,* ed. by Paul Guyer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 141-154 (p. 146)

> open our eyes. But whilst we contemplate so vast an object, under the arm, as it were, of almighty power, and invested upon every side with omnipresence, we shrink into the minuteness of our own nature, and are, in a manner annihilated before him…[nothing] can wholly remove the terror that naturally arises from a force which nothing can withstand.[81]

For Burke, God is indivisible from terror and our 'sense' interactions with him (or the world that reveals him) will always follow the three-fold progression.

First, one is 'struck' and 'annihilated', one's whole self is filled with one idea (namely the power of God), and only once the initial reaction has faded do we reflect on the 'complex idea of [God's] power, wisdom, justice, goodness'.[82] This emphasis on contemplation, however, should not be ignored. It echoes a similar interconnection of initial sensory impressions and resulting contemplation found in Dennis, Addison and Radcliffe herself and is pivotal to the theological concept of the sublime. For Dennis, 'enthusiastic passion' or sublime emotion 'is a passion which is moved by the ideas in contemplation, or the meditation of things that belong not common life'.[83] For Addison, it is the 'contemplation of our own worthlessness, and of his transcendent excellency and perfection' which leads to the sublime.[84] This emphasis on contemplation is underlined repeatedly by the actions of Radcliffe's heroines who often 'muse' on the sublime scene. An experience of the sublime is one of passion (affect) and of reason – both leading inexorably to the Divinity.

For Burke, the natural world bears witness to a God who has 'implanted' in mankind an attraction to all that points towards his own being and nature. 'Terror' is the primary effect of the sublime – the encounter with vastness, magnificence, obscurity, power et cetera. This terror is effectively the inevitable terror that we feel before the Divine. Burke is, as Doran notes, describing an aesthetic of transcendence, but it is one that is not a 'secular analog of religious transcendence'[85] so much as a religious experience itself. The following literary example demonstrates the theological implications of Burke's 'terror

[81] Burke, *Enquiry,* p. 56
[82] Ibid., pp. 55-56
[83] Dennis, *Grounds of Criticism,* p. 423
[84] Joseph Addison, 'Spectator 531 (Saturday November 8th, 1712)' in *The Works of Joseph Addison Complete*, 3 vols (New York: Harper Brothers, 1837), II, p. 303
[85] Doran, *From Longinus to Kant,* p. 12

sublime'. Mary Shelley's 'The Dream' (1831) explicitly (and ironically) engages with the theological aspect of the Burkean sublime. The story is set in the internecine chaos of the reign of Henry IV of France and tells of Constance, a young woman torn between love and perceived duty. In order to abdicate responsibility for her decision, she decides to undergo the trial of 'St. Catherine's bed' – tradition says that if she sleeps on this ravine-edge ledge for a night, she will see a vision from God. She 'commit[s] her conduct to the inspirations of religion'[86] and deliberately engages in a penetrative movement into an increasingly sublime situation; during a storm, she enters a small chapel surrounded by 'the roar of water' and illumined by a single lamp. She pursues her way through a 'narrow torturous passage' to a 'narrow ledge of earth and a moss-grown stone bordering on the very verge of the precipice'.[87] It is only here, in this encounter with the perilous and terrifying which initially overpowers her senses, that she is taken beyond herself, her own concerns and her own hopes. It is here that she meets the Divine in a series of prophetic dreams in which 'the veil fell from my eyes; a darkness was dispelled from before [her and she thought she] knew for the first time what life and what death was'.[88] Terror leads to transcendence of the self, to revelation and ultimately to an encounter with the Divine inaccessible through more mundane means.

Reading the Theology of Gothic Aesthetics

My Brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire wanting nothing - James 1: 2-4

I will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them a gold is tried - Zechariah 13:9

And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose - Romans 8:28

[86] Mary Shelley, 'The Dream' in *Mathilda and Other Stories,* (Ware: Wordsworth, 2013), 213-225 (p. 221)
[87] Ibid., pp. 222-23
[88] Ibid., p. 225

For Dennis, the goal of the literary sublime is primarily didactic. Its purpose is to give pleasure but also 'to instruct and reform the World' and its 'great Design…is to restore the Decay that happen'd to human Nature by the Fall, by restoring Order'.[89] Monk has argued that while graveyard poetry and terror poetry engaged with the 'terrible aspects of nature … to show the greatness of the Creator, and the inscrutability of his ways', in the Gothic novel 'moralistic purpose was soon lost…the gothic novel exists almost purely for the sake of evoking pleasant terror'.[90] However, the didactic purposes of the sublime and the literary more generally are far from being erased in the early Gothic novel. From Reeve's didactically toned preface to *The Old English Baron* (1778)[91] to Anna Letitia Barbauld's comments on the spiritually transformative potential of literature[92] to the plainly stated 'morals' of Radcliffe's novels: both the Gothic and its aesthetic strategies remain firmly tied to a moral and a theological agenda.

In order to provide a focused exploration of the potential interactions of the theological and the aesthetic in the Gothic, I turn now to a reading of Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Radcliffe's work offers a complex and multi-valent engagement with theo-aesthetic strategies. Their use is not 'exterior' to the heart of the novel; they are not mere effects nor are they simply scenic detours. They offer a map to Radcliffe's work and its ideological foundations and a point of entry into a number of theological and moral debates with which Radcliffe deliberately engages.

The aesthetic strategies of *Udolpho* have received a great deal of critical attention. The predominant view, as Bohls' explores, is that Radcliffe 'split[s] the narrative into sections under the aegis of incompatible aesthetic categories. The picturesque and the Burkean sublime preside over contrasting realities.[93] Such a reading, however, fundamentally misunderstands Radcliffe's aesthetic strategy, as well as erroneously dichotomising the picturesque and the sublime. Such a separation is a modern imposition

[89] Dennis, *Grounds of Criticism,* pp. 417-8
[90] Monk, *The Sublime,* p. 90
[91] 'The business of Romance is, first, to excite the attention; and secondly, to direct it to some useful, or at least innocent end.' Clara Reeve, *The Old English Baron,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 3
[92] 'To the writer of fiction alone, every ear is open, and every tongue lavish of applause; curiosity sparkles in every eye, and every bosom throbbing with concern.' Anna Barbauld, 'On Romances: An Imitation' in *The Works of Anna Laetitia Barbauld. With a Memoir by Lucy Aiken,* 2 vols (London: Longman and Co, 1825), I, p. 171
[93] Bohls, *Women Travel Writers,* p. 210

on the theories of the picturesque and the sublime that were contemporary to Radcliffe. None of the foundational 'thinkers' of the picturesque (William Gilpin, Uvedale Price or Richard Knight), despite working towards an articulation of the specific nature of the picturesque, make such a binary distinction. Price suggests that 'the picturesque…appears to hold a station between beauty and sublimity' but that it can mix with both.[94] Gilpin and Knight offer a concept of the picturesque concerned with framing[95] (in Gilpin, through the medium of the picture and in Knight, through an emphasis on order and limits) within which the sublime and the beautiful may comfortably be placed.

Theologically, both aesthetics – the sublime and the picturesque – are connected to a conception of God's self-revelation in nature. I have already explored the connection between sublimity and Divinity. Robert Mayhew makes a similar argument for the picturesque, stating that there is a strong connection between Gilpin's ministerial and aesthetic work. Gilpin asserts that 'we might begin in moral stile; and consider the objects of nature in a higher light, than merely as amusement. We might observe, that a search after beauty should naturally lead the mind to the great origin of beauty', although he acknowledges that not every viewer is capable of this.[96] For Gilpin, God is the author of 'the book of nature' which man may read to find him and his theory of the picturesque is, according to Mayhew, 'a set of procedures designed to visualize God's plan to a fallen humankind, a project in accord with his didactic and religious ambitions, which aimed at salvation'.[97]

This understanding of the shared 'roots' of the sublime and the picturesque and rejection of a dichotomising discourse is echoed in Radcliffe. Contrary to the common critical assessment of *Udolpho,* there is not a clearly defined move from a stable picturesque (La Vallée) to the sublime (Udolpho) to the picturesque (La Vallée) or, as Maggie Kilgour phrases it a journey from 'here to here'.[98] There is a constant movement between

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[94] Sir Uvedale Price, *An essay on the picturesque, as compared to the sublime and the beautiful* (London: J. Robson, 1794), p. 76/154

[95] I am indebted to David Punter's article 'The Picturesque and the Sublime: two worldscapes' for the importance of the concept of framing though I reject the dichotomy which he uses this concept of framing to project upon the sublime and the picturesque.

[96] William Gilpin, 'On Picturesque Travel' in *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty; On Picturesque Travel; And on Sketching Landscape with a Poem, on Landscape Painting,* 3rd edn (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1808), pp. 46-7

[97] Robert Mayhew, 'William Gilpin and the Latitudinarian Picturesque' in *Eighteenth-Century Studies,* vol. 3, No. 3, Spring 2000, 349-66 (p. 362)

[98] Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 113

aesthetically different landscapes throughout the novel. Emily's sublime 'experience' in Udolpho is interrupted by a period in a 'beautiful' embowered cottage. La Vallée's pastoral simplicity is surrounded by 'wild woods' and towering mountains. [99] We also consistently find 'mixed scenes', such as Emily's first view into Italy which clearly uses a 'picturesque' framing technique but with a 'sublime' foreground.[100] In *Udolpho* aesthetic dichotomies are routinely disintegrated. We cannot therefore postulate a 'purpose-less' movement from prelapsarian picturesque to sublime to picturesque in the narrative. *Udolpho* instead offers a complexly constructed theological/aesthetic bildungsroman in which Emily's spiritual journey is reflected in the mixed aesthetic strategies of the novel.

In order to understand Radcliffe's aesthetic strategies, we must move away from an exclusively Burkean conception of the sublime, an essentially dichotomising rather than harmonising discourse. Burke's sublime is predicated on a binary difference between the sublime and the beautiful, masculine and feminine, admiration and love and between sublime virtues (fortitude, wisdom and justice) and beautiful virtues (amiability, easiness of temper, compassion, kindness, liberality).[101] As Duquette notes, these dichotomies are mutually self-supporting and 'the wide gulf between powerful masculine sublimity and frail feminine beauty leads to extreme divisions between the Old Testament and the New Testament, law and grace, justice and love, death and generation'.[102] The God of Burke's account is the terrifying wrathful God of the Old Testament. According to Burke, 'in the scripture, wherever God is represented as appearing or speaking, every thing terrible in nature is called up to heighten the awe and solemnity of the Divine presence'.[103] His focus on terror has, however, skewed his conception of the Christian God and resulted in insupportable claims about the scriptures. 1 Kings 19:11 – 13 tells us:

> And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a *still small*

[99] Radcliffe, *Mysteries,* I, p. 16
[100] Ibid., II, p. 12-3
[101] Burke, *Enquiry,* p. 91/ 89
[102] Duquette, *Veiled Intent,* p. 20
[103] Burke, *Enquiry,* p. 57

> *voice*. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave: and behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What dost thou here Elijah?' (My emphasis)

Contrary to Burke's position, these verses suggest that we might expect God to speak in the thunder, but he frequently manifests himself in the 'still small voice'. This is not to suggest that God is not conceived of as communicating with the accoutrements that Burke prescribes for him, but rather that the Deity is not one dimensional, involved in a constant show of overwhelming power. Sublimity, that which elevates and leads to the Divine, may appear as clearly in a whisper, for the Divine nature is multiplicitous. Burke's sublime overlooks the 'fear not' of the visiting angels, the still small voice and the incarnate deity: the God who 'is love' (1 John 4:8).

Radcliffe's work does not confine itself to Burke's description of the sublime predicated entirely on terror. Her characters are as likely to evoke the sublime in listening to sacred music, reading, receiving religious consolation or enjoying the twilight.[104] Her aesthetics thus represent a refutation of Burke's implicit theology.[105] Alison Milbank notes this rejection of a 'reductive ascription of the sublime to self-preservation or to power'.[106] She suggests that Radcliffe's primary aesthetic model is one of Shaftesburian progression from 'forms' (created objects) to 'forms that form forms' (created creators and human endeavour) to 'the form that forms that form forms' (the ultimate cause) not predicated necessarily on terror but connected to a taste which both informs our appreciation of forms and leads to a recognition of the form that forms.[107] Her appropriation of Shaftesbury as an orthodoxly Anglican theorist in relation to this moral taste is, however, problematic as it erases his freethinking emphasis on Natural Religion rather than natural theology. For Radcliffe 'there is no separation between natural and revealed theology[108]' but the Shaftesburian model of taste does not facilitate such a reading. Rather, in order to enter

[104] Radcliffe, *Udolpho,* I, p. 118/114/11

[105] This is not to suggest that the problems we have identified were Burke's intent. He clearly argues that a religion that is based only on fear is a pagan one (p. 59). However, his dichotomies problematise the integration of God's multiplicity dividing the God of love from the God of wrath, the all-powerful father from the suffering son, the condemning deity from the Messiah. His declaration that 'love approaches much nearer to contempt than is commonly imagined' (p. 57) is an unyielding barrier to their integration. Burke, *Enquiry,* pp. 57-9

[106] Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 93

[107] Ibid.*,* p. 88

[108] Ibid., p. 98

into the intricacies of Radcliffe's theo-aesthetics we must return to the more overtly theological work of Dennis and Addison and their 'harmonious' concept of sublimity.

For both Addison and Dennis, the sublime is not limited to a sensation of 'delightful horror'. For Dennis, there are six 'enthusiastick passions': 'admiration, terror, horror, joy, sadness, desire'.[109] For Addison, the three pleasures of the imagination - 'the grand, the uncommon and the beautiful' - are often combined to heighten their effect. They are not dichotomised but rather serve as multiple sources of pleasure gifted by the Divine. Addison's reference to Psalm 107 is indicative of the 'integrated' theo-aesthetic conception of the divinity. In Addison's paraphrase: 'The sea that roared at Thy command, /At Thy command was still.' Addison questions 'what can be nobler than the idea it gives us of the Supreme Being thus raising a tumult among the elements, and recovering them out of their confusion; thus troubling and becalming nature'.[110] God's sublimity lies not only in the energetic, destructive, terrifying power to raise a storm but also in the ability and the will to calm it.

In both Addison and Dennis' accounts, the sublime is part of an emotional (not deistically rational) system of contemplative devotion that leads us into closer knowledge of and relationship with God: a God of wrath, of love, of destruction, of protection, of 'rejoicing' and of 'trembling'.[111] This 'harmonious multiplicity' is found in Radcliffe: in the sublime of admiration that Emily experiences looking out over a tranquil Venice sunset;[112] St Aubert's contemplative sublime[113] and, of course, the terror of Emily's Alpine journey or Blanche's Pyrenees' crossing.[114] The sublime in Radcliffe is as likely to comfort as it is to terrify, and 'sublime devotion', 'sublime complacency' and 'sublime pleasure' are all as prevalent as sublime terror. The novel rests upon a harmonious conception of the 'sublime'

[109] Dennis, *Grounds of Criticism,* p. 423
[110] Addison, 'Spectator 489', p. 245
[111] Burke quotes psalm 2:11 'rejoice with trembling' to concentrate on the 'fear' inherent in any interaction with the deity. Burke, *Enquiry, p. 56*
[112] 'How deep, how beautiful was the tranquility of the scene. All nature seemed to repose; the finest emotions of the soul were alone awake. Emily's eyes filled with tears of admiration and sublime devotion.' Radcliffe, *Udolpho,* III, p. 36
[113] 'The sublime emotions of pure devotion gradually elevated his views above the world, and finally brought comfort to his heart.' Radcliffe, *Udolpho,* I, p. 53
[114] Milbank suggests that there is a primary mode of 'melancholic' reflection as a form of the sublime, however. Sublime melancholic reflection forms one point of access to the Divine in Radcliffe's works but an overemphasis on this melancholy erases the radically multiplicitous concept of the Divine advocated for by both Denis and Radcliffe. Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 103

which runs throughout. There is, however, a clear sense of progression as both Emily and the reader learn to distinguish this Divine multiplicity.

To comprehend this progression, we must turn to Dennis who subscribed to the view that man has three faculties: the senses, the passions and reason.[115] In Eden, man's 'primitive state' was one of complete harmony between these 'vital faculties'. As a result, man 'was always in lofty ravishing Transports. For Love, Admiration, Joy and Desire…were all that he knew'.[116] Man 'walked with God, and was … united to him'.[117] With man's fall, 'the Harmony of his Intellectual and Animal powers was miserably broke'.[118] Dennis accepts that reason and the passions are 'at war', but stresses that the answer is not the dominion of either the reason or the passions but the re-harmonising of the faculties. In doing so, Dennis moves away from a Latitudinarian emphasis on the supremacy of reason. The 'sublime', he writes, may 'create Passion in such a manner, as to turn and incline the Soul to its Primitive Object' and in doing so creates a situation where 'Reason and Passion are of the same side' and which 'this Peace between the Faculties causes the Soul to rejoice'.[119] Ultimate harmony, however, only comes after entry into Paradise when man's faculties are once again fully harmonised along with his perception of the deity: an awareness of his essential multiplicitous unity. This is why, for Dennis, a 'variety' of 'passions'[120] are vital to the literary sublime. Otherwise, the various aspects of the divinity, as in Burke, become fractured and separated and we become increasingly alienated. If we turn to *Udolpho* we can trace this movement from disharmony to harmony in Emily's journey.

According to Dennis, our experiences of the sublime return us to a prelapsarian state but only insofar as they bring us towards a 'future' state: a renewed yet new relationship with the deity. It is at once renewed and wholly new: a return to a prelapsarian state but one which involves a subject fundamentally changed by experience. Emily's 'withdrawal' to a prelapsarian 'La Vallée' is, in fact, a move forward into a qualitatively different location. Bohls notes that when Emily returns, it is to a site where 'her "favourite haunts" are unsettled by linguistic hints of death and the supernatural' as 'the narrative stubbornly

[115] This is a fairly standard account of man's capacities although the will is also often marked as a fourth component of human nature.
[116] John Dennis, *The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry,* (London: W. Mears, 1721), p. 147
[117] Ibid., p. 146
[118] Ibid., p. 150
[119] Dennis, *Grounds of Criticism,* p. 457
[120] Ibid., p. 473

refuses to leave Castle Udolpho and its terrors entirely behind'.[121] However, Bohls reads the transformation, as it were, 'in reverse'. She does not acknowledge the pre-existing disharmony of La Vallée centred around Emily's relationship to it.

The terror sublime always existed at La Vallée. In the first chapter, we are told that Emily 'loved more the wild wood walks, that skirted the mountain and … the mountain's stupendous recesses, where the silence and grandeur of solitude impressed a SACRED AWE upon her heart'.[122] This 'terror sublime' is not, as Bohls suggests, an inherently negative aesthetic. The problematic element, which hints at the underlying spiritual disharmony within Emily herself, is her concentration on the sensations and locations of the terror sublime. When she returns to La Vallée at the end of the novel, there is no mention of 'wildness' or 'mountain recesses' but rather of 'favourite haunts', memories, happiness and peace.[123] There is a newly depicted harmony within the landscape, though it has not physically changed, and in Emily's reaction to it that reflects Emily's own state: her final harmonisation of reason, the passions, and the senses. Emily has passed through trials to bring her passions into harmony with her reason and Valancourt has undergone a trial of the sense. In both, reason, sense and passion have been harmonised and the landscape, and their view of it, presents us with a unified reflection of the Deity. This newly recognised and achieved harmony provides the necessary conditions for the active faith of Emily and Valancourt's married life, their 'exercise of benevolence'[124] and La Vallée's newly reacquired designation as 'the retreat of goodness, wisdom and domestic blessedness'.[125]

To reach this point, however, Emily has had to be 'refined like silver' (Zechariah 3:19). She has had to learn that 'happiness arises in a state of peace, not of tumult' and to control the 'ill-governed sensibility' that draws her towards disharmony in her preference for the terror sublime.[126] Radcliffe is intent on 'rewriting what Burke…would have defined as a sublime experience'[127] but not, as Donna Heiland suggests, in order to reject the sublime as an aesthetic which inherently encodes patriarchal oppression. Radcliffe offers a different conception of sublimity and Emily must learn to experience sublimity and find the Divine in

[121] Bohls, *Women Travel Writers,* p. 228
[122] Radcliffe, *Udolpho,* I, p. 5
[123] Ibid., IV, p. 424
[124] Ibid., IV, p. 427
[125] Ibid., IV, p. 427
[126] Ibid., II, p. 212
[127] Donna Heiland, *Gothic and Gender: Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p. 60

both 'the ordinary and the extraordinary of the natural world' for God is 'wonderful in all his works'.[128] Emily must find the many faces of God in the 'beautiful', the 'picturesque' and the sublimes of terror, admiration, joy, and peace. She must encounter in the face of nature not only the 'Great Creator'[129] but also the 'benevolent God' who designed 'innocent pleasures' to be 'the sun-shine of our lives',[130]a 'present God'[131] and the 'Being, who has *protected* and *comforted* us in every danger'.[132] All of these last conceptions of the Deity are articulated by St. Aubert before his death; his 'knowledge' of them is personal and emotional, and it will be the work of the novel for his daughter Emily to know the same God.

If Emily begins by preferring the 'terror sublime' of her wild woods, by the time she enters the 'embowered retreat' in the midst of her Udolpho adventure, she admires beauty, practices picturesque principles of drawing and encounters the God of comfort in the landscape whose 'beauty gradually soothed her mind'. [133] Although, as Milbank notes, Emily must also learn to reject the contrary inclination towards the deceptive security of this beautiful location and its coded occlusion of the God of wrath and the post-lapsarian world.[134] Later, from the window of Udolpho, whose situation had initially 'suggested even more terrors, than her reason could justify',[135] she is able to appreciate a mixed view, including elements of 'exquisite beauty', the pastoral, the picturesque, and the 'terror sublime' and thereby find 'sufficient resolution' to tear her mind away from the indulgence in terror. [136] It is all, for Emily, the 'sublime of nature' and contemplation of it allows her mind to 'recover its strength' through prayer.[137] This section does not present us with the end of Emily's journey (she will 'fall' again into her habits of terror) nor should we conceive of her relation to the theo-aesthetic as a linear development. Rather, it is a continual 'process' that devalues no version of the sublime in itself but works towards a greater harmony and balance and a deeper and growing knowledge (both rational and emotional) of the Divine through His aesthetic self-revelation.

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[128] Tamsworth Reresby, *A Miscellany of Ingenious Thoughts and Reflections, in Verse and Prose,* (London: H. Meere, 1721), p. 27
[129] Radcliffe, *Mysteries,* I, p. 96
[130] Ibid., I, p. 54
[131] Ibid., I, p. 74
[132] Ibid., I, p. 202
[133] Ibid., III, p. 206
[134] Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 91
[135] Radcliffe, *Udolpho*, II, p. 173
[136] Ibid., III, p. 206
[137] Ibid., II, p. 212

The greatest 'refining trial' that Emily faces is that of confronting terror and learning to differentiate the 'false' (profane) from the 'true' (divine) sublime. Emily's initial position is one of excessive emotional receptivity and a preference for the extreme emotional experiences of a Burkean sublime. This makes her susceptible to superstition, to experiencing 'more terrors, than her reason could justify',[138] and to being led into a Burkean theological error: a conception of a God of wrath but not of comfort, of justice but not of providence, terrifyingly powerful not powerfully loving, a God of despair. For Burke, '*whatever* is in any sort terrible…is a source of the *sublime'*[139] (My emphasis). In keeping with a significant female (Dissenting) tradition, Radcliffe rejects this acceptance of *any* terror as sublime in her differentiation between 'horror' and 'terror' as Barbauld had distinguished before between 'natural horror' and 'supernatural horror', and as Schimmelpenninck later will differentiate between the 'terrible sublime' and the 'deformed horrible'. Although their terms and conceptions differ slightly, all these writers suggest the existence of qualitatively different horrors/terrors where one is considered as more valuable. One 'expands the soul and 'awakens the faculties to a high degree of life'; the other 'contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates'. [140] One leads inevitably to God. The other, like Emily's first sight of Udolpho, takes the witness to a place of terror 'beyond reason', destroying Dennisian harmony.

Schimmelpenninck's comparative theories of the 'terrible sublime' and its 'deformity' the 'horrible' is particularly useful in mapping Radcliffe's 'true' and 'false' sublimes. The terms of the 'horrible' are 'violence', 'haughty overbearing fury', 'tyrannic gloom', and 'uncontrolled passion' in the object and 'a distorted imagination', 'passions self-devouring', 'energy without constancy' as its associated 'moral and mental qualities'.[141] The parallels with Emily and her situation are clear. Both Udolpho and its master present a 'proud sublimity' which is a 'perversion of the natural sublime which ought to bespeak the inscrutable power of the supreme maker [but] on the contrary mounts a profane challenge'.[142] Emily must learn to discern the true sublime, reject its deformed twin, quash

[138] Ibid., II, p. 173
[139] Burke, *Enquiry,* p. 33
[140] Radcliffe, 'On the Supernatural in Poetry', p. 149
[141] Schimmelpenninck, *Classification of Beauty and Deformity*, first chart.
[142] Robert Miles, *Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p.94. His comment refers to the Abbey in *A Sicilian Romance,* however, it is usefully applicable to the majority of Radcliffe's terrifically sublime edifices.

her own tendency towards a deforming relish for terror itself and, in the process, escape superstition and a false conception of the Divine. She must learn to rejoice as she trembles.

Theo-aesthetic Coding of Theological Debate

Cursed is the ground for thy sake – Genesis 3:17

Radcliffe uses the aesthetics of her novels to address a number of theological questions beyond the overarching emphases explored above. The first of these is connected to gender and the moral sublime. The gendered nature of Burke's discourse is widely recognised: men are 'sublime', women are 'beautiful'. Fortitude, justice and wisdom are sublime and masculine (a father's virtues) and compassion, kindness and liberality are beautiful and feminine (a mother's weaknesses).[143] The moral sublime engenders admiration but moral beauty only produces love, which, he notes, approaches much nearer to contempt than is commonly imagined'.[144] As Duquette asserts, the boundary that divides men from women equally divides the just, wise, powerful, terrifying 'Father' God from the kind and compassionate 'Son'. Just as Burke ignores the mixing of sublime and beautiful virtues in the Divine, he ignores it in women. Radcliffe continues her attack on Burkean dichotomies by entering into this gendered virtue debate.

Both 'beautiful' and 'sublime' virtues are to be found in both sexes in *Udolpho*. Valancourt displays 'compassion and liberality' to the shepherd family and Bonnac. Emily shows 'wisdom', 'justice' and 'fortitude' specifically in her rejection of Valancourt. In *The Veiled Picture,* the anonymous bluebook version of *Udolpho* that was published in 1802, this rejection is rewritten as a 'test' so that Emily can 'judge by his reformed conduct, if he sincerely loved her'.[145] *The Veiled Picture* removes much of Radcliffe's emphasis on the aesthetics of sublimity and with it the idea of theo-aesthetically inflected bildungsroman; the underwriting of this episode is a natural conclusion. What we find in *Udolpho,* made clearer by the contrast, is Emily's decision as a point of fruition on her journey: a final choice

[143] Burke, *Enquiry,* p. 89
[144] Ibid., p. 55
[145] [Anon.], *The Veiled Picture, or The Mysteries of Gorgono,* ed. by Jack Voller (Chicago: Valancourt Books, 2006), p. 73

to be not the beautiful object but the sublime subject. Emily's journey is profoundly theologically liberating. Emily has become the 'man' of faith described by Addison, one who

> has his light and support within him, that are able to cheer his mind, and bear him up in the midst of all those horrors which encompass him. He knows that his helper is at hand, and is always nearer to him than any thing else can be, which is capable of annoying or terrifying him. In the midst of calumny or contempt, he attends to that Being who whispers better things within his soul, and whom he looks upon as his defender, his glory, and the lifter of his head.[146]

Emily becomes a model of a 'degendered' Christian subject: morally sublime and claiming to herself the 'spark' of divinity often reserved for men in theological and aesthetic discourses of the period. Constructing Emily as a 'degendered' Christian subject implicitly reflects an integrated conception of the Divinity in all his multiplicity and, at least in the moral sphere, fulfils the biblical promise that 'in Christ there is no male and female'. (Paraphrase of Galatians 3:28).

The other significant question connected to Radcliffe's aesthetic strategies, and specifically her use of sublime imagery, is their relation to theological conceptions of providence and justice. We must begin our investigation with an exploration of Radcliffe's natural theology and our path will be, like Emily's, somewhat circuitous. There are various particularities to note about the natural theology of Radcliffe's Gothic aesthetics. Mayhew argues that Radcliffe mirrors what he identifies as a Latitudinarian approach to 'natural religion', a position that 'suggested that justifiable belief in God could be founded on reason alone' and that in her faith and writing she aimed for a 'via media' free from the extremes both of superstition and enthusiasm.[147] In doing so, he ignores the 'three-part harmony' to Radcliffe's theology, in which the triumph of reason is as destructive as the triumph of sense.

Radcliffe avoids a third extreme – excessive rationalism. Radcliffe's natural theology is intensely emotional. It is a sense of divinity, protection, wonder, magnificence and sacred awe manifested and experienced in tears, sighs and devotional contemplation. Radcliffe's

[146] Addison, *Evidence of the Cristian Religion,* p. 93
[147] Robert Mayhew, 'Gothic Trajectories: Latitudinarian Theology and the Novels of Ann Radcliffe', *Eighteenth Century Fiction,* 15.3-4 (April-July 2003), 583-613 (p. 590)

position echoes Barbauld's emphasis on an 'affectionate' religion. In *On the Taste of Sects,* Barbauld argues that 'religion' may be 'lived' as a system of truth, a habit or a taste.[148] She argues for the importance of the overlooked 'taste' which is 'an affair of sentiment and feeling, and in this sense it is properly called devotion.[149] Its seat is in the imagination and the passions, and it has its source in that relish for the sublime, the vast, and the beautiful'.[150] As the following quotation illustrates, Radcliffe's natural theology conforms to Barbauld's idea of religion as 'taste':

> From the consideration of His works, her mind arose to the adoration of the Deity, in His goodness and power; wherever she turned her view, whether on the sleeping earth, or to the vast regions of space, glowing with worlds beyond the reach of human thought, the sublimity of God, and the majesty of His presence appeared. Her eyes were filled with tears of awful love and admiration; and she felt that pure devotion, superior to all the distinctions of human system, which lifts the soul above this world, and seems to expand it into a nobler nature. [151]

The natural world's revelation of the Divine here (explicitly his goodness and power and implicitly his design) is inextricably connected to emotional devotion rather than simple reason.

Where Radcliffe differs from Barbauld is in the form of natural theology that she depicts. Neil Gillespie has given a detailed analysis of two concurrent trends in natural theology – the cosmological and the physico-theological. The first, following Newton, looks to the stars as its evidence of God 'from design'; that is, from the 'evident' order and design of the 'heavens' we are led to acknowledge God as creator, designer and sustainer. The second is that of physico-theology, an argument 'to design': the composition of the earthly phenomena like animal bodies leads us to an acknowledgement of God's purpose/design in the world.[152] Barbauld rejects the cosmological argument not as untrue but as inconsistent

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[148] See Rictor Norton's *Mistress of Udolpho* for a comprehensive discussion of Radcliffe's Dissenting influences. Barbauld's categories here are not mutually exclusive.

[149] As Milbank notes, Barbauld received criticism for this emphasis on taste from rationalists like Priestley, pointing again towards the possibility of a female tradition of affectionate religion, partially inherited from Isaac Watts and Phillip Doddridge.

[150] Barbauld, 'On the Taste of Sects', p. 232

[151] Radcliffe, *Mysteries,* I, p. 127

[152] Neil Gillespie, 'Natural History, Natural Theology, and Social Order: John Ray and the "Newtonian Ideology"' in *Journal of the History of Biology,* 20.1 (Spring 1987), pp. 1-49. All the terms above are taken from Gillespie's argument (including 'from design' and 'to design')

with devotion because 'our imagination cannot keep pace with our reason' in investigating the heavens.[153] Radcliffe, however, as the above passage demonstrates, suggests cosmological arguments are consistent with devotional practice. In doing so, although it is not clearly stated, the above passage points beyond an idea of God as 'powerful' and as a 'good' creator. He is a designer and a sustainer of the heaven where the 'majesty of his presence' appears. Such a conception of the Divine is a perquisite of a belief in providence.

Radcliffe enters into another significant debate within the discourses of natural theology, what Nicolson refers to as 'the Lord's controversy'.[154] This controversy is often associated with Thomas Burnet's *A Sacred History of the Earth* (1684), as both Chandler and Mayhew note, but the stir caused by Burnet's work was one incident in a long debate.[155] The debate, as Nicolson describes it, was fundamentally a question of whether 'Adam and Eve found themselves in a world topographically much like our own' or whether, due to man's Fall, there are 'blemishes on nature' which are ultimately attributable to 'human depravity'.[156] There are multiple facets to the controversy: different readings of key verses, particularly Genesis 3:18;[157] different suggestions for the point of destruction (at the Fall, during Enosh's generation, as a result of Cain's sin when the earth drank Abel's blood, or as a result of the Deluge); an Augustinian assertion of the 'essential' goodness of the earth[158] or a Lutheran assertion of its essential corruption.[159] The debate has implications for the function and efficacy of natural theology; while a fallen or corrupted world illustrates God's power, its ability to 'reflect' the Divine is compromised.

Radcliffe's interaction with this debate is mediated through her references to Burnet's theory that the world was 'ruined' by the deluge. For Burnet, 'we have still the broken Materials of that first World, and walk upon its ruines'.[160] Burnet's theory of the

[153] Barbauld, 'On the Taste of Sects,' p. 232
[154] Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom, Mountain Glory,* p. 73
[155] Nicolson has exhaustively detailed this debate in *Mountain Gloom, Mountain Glory.*
[156] Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom, Mountain Glory,* p. 82
[157] Specifically, whether the ground or land was cursed and whether it was cursed 'for thy sake' or 'in thy work'. This is broadly speaking the difference between a concept of the extension of the corruption of the fall to the whole earth or a specific curse as to man's relationship to the land arising from the fall.
[158] Augustine, *St. Augustine's Confessions; Or, Praises of God in Ten Books,* (Drury Lane: T. Meighan, 1739), p. 112. Augustine laid out the doctrine of Original Sin but differentiated between the universal corruption attached to man and the 'essential goodness' of the earth.
[159] Luther, *Commentary on Genesis,* p. 96
[160] Thomas Burnet, *The Sacred Theory of the Earth,* (Kindle Edition, 1691 text), 17/9866

earth's first destruction is connected inextricably in his work to the concept of a coming second 'general dissolution' of nature: the Conflagration of the End Times.[161] Chandler notes three places in which Radcliffe appears to assert Burnet's claims.[162] In *Romance of the Forest* (1791) Adeline imagines herself to be 'walking over the ruins of the world'[163] and in *Udolpho* Emily refers to the theory in the depiction of the 'broken' mountains through which she passes. A more overt reference is made by Blanche's father when travelling to visit Emily, referring to the 'grotesque form of the mountains, and the various phenomena, that seem to stamp upon the world the history of the deluge'.[164] Chandler uses the example of La Luc's reply to Adeline in *Romance of the Forest* to suggest that Radcliffe disagreed with Burnet's position. According to Chandler, La Luc 'neatly overturned' Adeline's argument in declaring that the landscape 'lift[s] the soul to the Great Author' as we contemplate 'the sublimity of his nature in the grandeur of his work'.[165] However, we should not read this as a refutation. The 'sublimity of his work' may as easily relate to his power and destructive 'justice' as to his creative benevolence. La Luc's reply is not inconsistent with Adeline's views. What we do see here, however, is a move towards the harmonious 'via media' that is so important to Radcliffe's theology.

The world, or parts of it, may reveal evidence of man's fallen nature but this does not necessarily represent its essential corruption so much as its partial destruction. It can still lead us to the Divine. Radcliffe's references to and 'refutations' of Burnet's theory are both oblique. Her appeal to Hannibal's crossing and the associated images of the mountain landscape 'fighting' an invading enemy reflect John Ray's influential *Wisdom of God* (1691). Ray argues that mountains aren't evidence that the earth is a 'heap of rubbish and ruins'[166] but part of God's providential plan and serve multiple purposes including 'serving for Boundaries and Defences to the Territories of Kingdoms and Commonwealth'.[167] In deploying both discourses simultaneously, Radcliffe strikes a balanced note between two

[161] Ibid., 554/9866
[162] I am indebted to Chandler for the following illustrations. Anne Chandler, 'Ann Radcliffe and Natural Theology' in *Studies in the Novel,* 38.2 (summer 2006), 133-153 (pp. 142-3)
[163] Ann Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest,* ed. with introduction and notes by Chloe Chard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 265
[164] Radliffe, *Udolpho,* IV, p. 239
[165] Radcliffe, *Romance,* p. 265
[166] John Ray, *The Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of the Creation,* (Glasgow: Robert Urie and Company, 1744), p. 181
[167] Ibid., p. 185

positions: the earth is neither a useless ruin nor a direct reflection of the Divine. Rather, the natural world is a point of devotional access to the Divine.

Emily and Adeline finally retreat to Rousseau-ian pastoral idylls where they enjoy a harmonious state and relationship to the landscape and the Divine, but Radcliffe remains suspicious of a Rousseau-like declaration of the natural world's 'innocence'. For her, such an unquestioning position leads to the dangers of the libertine 'aesthetics' of a Marquis de Montalt, who advocates following 'nature uncontaminated by false refinement' to justify rape and murder.[168] His arguments echo, as Chloe Chard notes, libertine use of 'similar appeals to the customs of other societies…to justify their own conduct, and to question the moral values or rules of decorum'.[169] They also suggestively mirror the theological critique of a concept of universal innocence articulated by John Wesley. He used the Native Americans (who appear in Montalt's sophistry as an 'uninformed American')[170] and reports of their supposedly 'cruel and idle way of life' as evidence that 'natural man is evil, and man in his natural unaided state is incapable of knowing God'.[171] In regards to the Lord's controversy, Radcliffe's position is most aligned with that of Calvin, who declares that

> the earth, so soon as it was accursed, was brought her natural beautie into miserable filthinesse and deformitie, and to a lamentable state: and that afterwards it was spoyled in many places through the floude: yet notwithstanding I say that it is the same earth whiche was created at the beginninge.[172]

There is in Burnet's theory, and the Calvinist argument that Radcliffe appears to echo, an emphasis on a final judgment on fallen man and Divine providence as predetermined history. The question remains as to the extent to which Radcliffe's theo-aesthetic strategies encode a similar theological position in regards to providence and judgment.

Andrew Chignell and Matthew Halteman's distinction between three forms of the theistic sublime offer a useful entry point to the discussion. The theistic sublime 'stands for

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[168] Radcliffe, *Romance of the Forest,* p. 222
[169] Chloe Chard, 'Notes', Ann Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest,* ed. with notes by Chloe Chard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 382
[170] Radcliffe, *Romance of the Forest,* p. 222
[171] Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment,* I, p. 228
[172] John Calvin, *A Commentarie of John Calvine upon the first booke of Moses called Genesis'* (London: John Harrison and George Bishop, 1578), P. 64

episodes whose epiphanic content includes some affirmative theistic doctrine'.[173] Their three forms of the theistic sublime are the *conversional,* the *corroborative* and the *transformative.* The *corroborative,* which 'involves the strengthening of pre-existing theistic belief and/or affection',[174] is the most common form within the Gothic. The repetitive nature of Emily's 'wild wood-walks…where the silence and grandeur impressed a scared awe upon her heart, and lifted her thoughts to the GOD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH'[175] show the sublime to be 'corroborative'. They represent a repetitive emotional reaffirmation of a pre-existing belief. The 'transformative' theistic sublime is similarly based on pre-existing beliefs 'but the experience has a transformative rather than merely corroborative effect'. The subject may '*realize* something and thus … *change* her conception of the Divine, of the self, of the relation between the two and so on'.[176] In *Udolpho,* Blanche experiences this sublime. She is 'introduced' to the natural sublime after spending her formative years in a convent, and instantly muses, 'How can the poor nuns and friars feel the full fervour of devotion, if they never see the sun rise, or set? Never, till this evening, did I know what true devotion is; for, never before did I see the sun sink below the vast earth!'[177] Blanche's pre-existing faith is transformed as she celebrates a new form of devotional practice with renewed fervency.

What we do not find in Radcliffe is the 'conversional sublime', in which 'someone who is not at all religious, and not even consciously disposed toward religion, [adopts] a robust theistic belief'.[178] It is largely absent from Gothic literature though an assumption of its presence is found in both modern criticism and contemporary parody. In the Marquis de Sade's *Justine* (1791), for example, 'Therese' dies during a sublime storm: a 'blazing thunderbolt reaches her where she stands in the middle of the room…transfixes her'.[179] De Sade is careful explicitly to draw the parallels between this scene and the sublime as we find in a comparison between de Sade's text and Boileau's French translation of Longinus' *Peri Hypsous.* In the Boileau translation the effect of sublime is described as 'renverse tout

[173] Andrew Chignall and Matthew C. Halteman, 'Religion and the Sublime' in *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present* edited by Tim. M. Costelloe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 183-202 (p. 191)
[174] Ibid., p. 191
[175] Radcliffe, *Udolpho,* I, p. 16
[176] Chignall and Halteman, 'Religion and the Sublime', p. 192
[177] Radcliffe, *Udolpho,* III, p. 358
[178] Chignall and Halteman, 'Religion and the Sublime,' p. 188
[179] Marquis de Sade, 'Justine or Good Conduct Well Chastised' translated by Richard Seaver and Austryn Wainhouse in *Marquis de Sade: Three Complete Novels and Other Writings,* (Guernsey: Arrow books, 1965), p. 781

comme un foudre',[180] a description suggestively echoed by de Sade's phrasing of Therese's death : 'à l'instant un éclat de foudre la renverse au milieu du salon.[181] The sight of this example of destructive sublimity has a transforming effect on 'Therese's' sister Juliette who reads the event as a form of Divine revelation. She rejects her lover and plans a move to the convent, saying: 'That appalling stroke was necessary to my conversion in this life, it was needed for the happiness I dare hope for in another.'[182] A conversional experience of witnessing the 'sublime' has occurred and a sinner has been 'saved'. Of course, de Sade's tone is ironic. What is most interesting for our study is the fact that this Sadean assumption of Gothic sublimity as conversional is a misreading that we are often liable to repeat. The consistently corroborative (and occasionally transformative) nature of Radcliffe's sublime is highlighted by this contrast with de Sade. In Radcliffe, no villain, no fallen woman, no insensate servant is 'converted' by the sublime.

A 'taste' for the sublime is often connected in criticism to a 'secular' concept of sensibility[183] where it becomes a 'potent marker of [the characters'] cultivation, sensibility, and innate goodness'.[184] However, as I have already highlighted, the question of receptivity to the sublime is not just a marker of 'sensibility' but a potential marker of salvation. Radcliffe's villains remain 'insensible' to natural sublime landscapes; they lack the 'taste' or indwelling sense through which God draws man to himself. The 'dangerously deterministic' tendencies of moral sense and taste theories were a pivotal source of the contemporary critiques aimed at them.[185] This inherent inclination towards a narrative pre-determination is found in Radcliffe's work. Her 'damned' characters are coded as such by their inability to appreciate the natural world and find the Divine within it; they are universally depicted as incapable of salvation. There is no conversional sublime in Radcliffe as there is no spiritual conversion – there are severe trials (Valancourt), transformations (Blanche), confirmations

[180] Boileau, Nicolas, *Traité du Sublime ou du merveilleux dans le discours,* traduit du texte grec *Peri hypsous* de Longin, (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 1995) < http://www.earthworks.org/sublime/Longinus/index.html> [last accessed 23.08.2017]
[181] Marquis de Sade, *Justine ou Les Malheurs de la vertu*, (feedbooks, 1791)], p. 278 <http://static1.lecteurs.com/files/ebooks/feedbooks/3630.pdf> [last accessed 23.08.2017]
[182] De Sade, 'Justine', p. 742
[183] The concept of 'sensibility' as a completely secular discourse is, in itself, highly problematic.
[184] Jack Vogler, 'Notes' in *The Veiled Picture, or The Mysteries of Gorgono* edited by Jack Voller, (Chicago: Valancourt Books, 2006), p. 20
[185] Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment, Volume II: Shaftesbury to Hume* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 164

(Emily) and corroborations (St Aubert) but no conversional sublime and no conversional salvation.[186] A taste for the sublime and a sensitivity towards the Divine self-revelation occurring in nature becomes in Radcliffe a gift bestowed by God to strengthen and confirm those who already have access to the deity, not to save or convince those who do not and, ultimately, cannot have access to God.

This emphasis on an inescapable providence and Divine justice is further reinforced by the 'morals' which close Radcliffe's novels. In *Udolpho*: 'Though the vicious can sometimes pour affliction upon 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.'[187] There is a dual concept of providence here: 'all things work together for good, to them that love God' (Romans 8:28) but equally 'the wicked shall not be unpunished'. (Proverbs 11:21). Both aspects are reflected in Radcliffe's aesthetics as much as in her plot: the concept of a designed and sustained world with a present God is also the world that bears the marks of his earlier wrath. In Radcliffe, there is an underlying discourse of predeterminism on both a personal and global scale.

Thus far, we have discussed the natural sublime experienced within the novel but have not expanded our enquiries to the literary sublime. Within the novel, there is no conversional sublime. Critics such as Doran and Miles, suggest that the (Gothic) sublime has a role to play in 'replacing' religious experience and offering a 'secularised' alternative to emotional experience: a potentially 'conversional' function in a secular world which denies transcendence. Emma Mason notes that a creative counterpart to Evangelical and Affectionate Dissent's emphasis on feeling was the use of the poetic sublime in eighteenth-century religious poetry to 'move the reasoning reader into the emotional experience of faith'.[188] However, Radcliffe's literary sublime serves a reaffirming rather than conversional function. She ends *Udolpho* by writing, 'if the weak hand, that has recorded this tale, has, by its scenes, beguiled the mourner of one hour of sorrow, or, by its moral, taught him to

[186] Milbank suggests that the heroine's 'active struggle' in the midst of her trials represents a 'romance form of active exertion [which] asserts a particularly Anglican mediation between salvation by God's grace---and human cooperation with that gift'. However, this conflates two completely different strands of theology. The necessity to engage in a struggle with 'the world' only made possible by God's grace is not inconsistent with a Calvinist theology of human inability to affect their salvific status. Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 36
[187] Radcliffe, *Udolpho,* IV, p. 428
[188] Emma Mason, 'Poetry and Religion', in *A Companion to Eighteenth Century Poetry,* ed. by Christine Gerrard (Chichester: Wiley and Sons, 2014), 53-69 (p. 53)

sustain it – the effort, however humble, has not been vain, nor is the writer unrewarded'.[189] The novel is portrayed as having a didactic function, primarily a moral one. The novel and the sublime within it therefore function as a *reaffirmation* of the doctrines of providence and justice – and, as such, as a form of the 'corroborative' or possibly 'transformative' 'sublime'. Radcliffe offers not a conversional document or doctrine but a model of contemplative devotion, a way to read the world, a way to imagine the human, a way to 'feel' the Divine and a warning against a disharmony which risks not only our minds but our salvation. Its emotive effects, where present, take us on a facsimile of Emily's journey.

This chapter has presented the theological possibilities of the sublime. The eighteenth- and nineteenth-century aesthetics of the sublime itself is in a constant state of dialogue with concurrent trends in natural theology, doctrinal debate and contemplative devotion. The use of the sublime in the Gothic is therefore inevitably bound up with an underlying theological discourse whether deliberately evoked or merely reflected. Radcliffe offers an example of an author intellectually and devotionally engaged with the theological subtexts of her aesthetic strategies which become, in her hands, an integral part of the plot and a form of 'veiled hermeneutics'. As we have seen in her work, the sublime may be used to engage in controversies of natural theology, questions of Divine providence, the complex doctrines of predeterminism, discussions of the character of the deity, morality and constructions of the Christian subject. The work of other Gothic writers engages at different levels and in different ways with the theological subtexts of the sublime but each text must be analysed with the possibilities of theo-aesthetics in mind. In the next chapter, I will explore a seemingly contrary theological valence for the sublime: its association with the demonic.

[189] Radcliffe, *Mysteries,* IV, p. 428

Chapter 3: "For Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light": The Aesthetics of Demonic Depiction

'And there was war in heaven … And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him' – Revelation 12: 7-9

The sublime is undeniably a demonic aesthetic. While this claim appears to contradict the last chapter's argument on the inter-relation of the Divine and the sublime, there is an undeniable connection between the sublime and demonic representation. In a tradition dating back to John Dennis, Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) - and specifically its depiction of Satan - was used as a paradigmatic example of the sublime in theoretical discourse; Edmund Burke went so far as to declare that 'we do not meet anywhere a more sublime description' than that of Milton's Satan. [1] The English Gothic likewise regularly accords demonic figures a substantial degree of both physical and moral sublimity. There is also a clear sense of associative sublimity, that is, a connection between sublime landscapes and demonic appearances, from the mountaintop harangues of Matthew Lewis' and Charlotte Dacre's devils - in *The Monk* (1795) and *Zofloya* (1806) respectively - to the cavernous underground world of William Beckford's Eblis in *Vathek* (1786). The contradictory and problematic implications of this seemingly inextricable connection between both the Divine and the demonic with the sublime have been largely ignored by literary critics.

There are three main trends in the critical discourse relating to this question. The first of these is to mark the use of demonic exemplifications of the sublime in eighteenth-century theoretical discourse without engaging with the implications of these associations as we find in Samuel Monk's *The Sublime*.[2] The second approach ignores the problematic nature of these associations by erasing the relationship between the Divine and the

[1] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful,* ed. with notes by Paul Guyer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 51
[2] Samuel Monk, *The Sublime* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960)

sublime. Such theories, like that of Robert Geary, [3] frequently refer to a largely secularized version of Rudolf Otto's concept of the 'numinous' (Otto's concept of the experience of the beyond human). By focusing exclusively on the 'terror' sublime, Geary ignores the existence of other variations of the sublime and the concept of the sublime as God's full self-revelation. Such interpretations take the 'awefullness' and majesty of 'daemonic dread' from Otto's theory but ignore the 'fascinans' of the numinous: the 'attractive' aspect, which, once rationalised or schematised, becomes attached to concepts of mercy, pity and love. [4] These accounts allow the demonic to be unproblematically allied with the sublime as an aesthetic of the 'numinous' but it is a concept of the numinous which has been deformed and diminished, separated unjustifiably from the concept of the divine.

Such an unquestioning acceptance of the sublime/demonic connection is rooted in an exclusive emphasis on the terror sublime in which every object is simply either 'sublime' or 'not sublime'. The existence of different forms of sublimity and the possibility of 'complete' and 'incomplete' sublimity are ignored. When left unchallenged, this monolithic conception of the sublime leads to the third approach: a negatively coded discussion of the sublime such as that found in feminist and Marxist criticism. The 'taint' placed on the monolithically defined sublime by its association with the demonic extends to its relationship with the Divine, producing a conception of the Divine that is potentially negative, subversive or atheistic. As the previous chapter makes clear, however, an overwhelming emphasis on the terror sublime represents a theological distortion whether it proceeds from the author or the critic. To place such definitional restrictions on the sublime distorts our perspective before we even enter into dialogue with the texts themselves.

It is my argument in this chapter that the connection of the sublime and the demonic does not serve to contradict the link between sublimity and divinity nor does it necessarily depend upon an apparent alliance of the sublime with a negative conception of the Divine or an atheistic denial of His existence. The demonic sublime and the Divine sublime are related but not identical, neither diametrically opposed nor synonymous. This chapter will

[3] Robert Geary, *The Supernatural in Gothic Fiction: Horror, Belief, and Literary Change* (Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992). A similar approach is found in Devandra Varma's *The Gothic Flame* and applied to in David Morris' 'Gothic Sublimity'

[4] Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational,* trans. by John W. Harvey, 6th Impression (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 16

first investigate the theoretical justification for the sublimity of Milton's Satan. Working from a base assumption of the multiplicity of the sublime, I will then engage with two case studies: Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* (1796) and Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*; or, The Moor (1806). Through these case studies, I will elaborate a concept of the 'perverse sublime' and of 'the sublimity of judgment', suggesting that the tensions between these two forms of sublimity offer the key to interpreting the demonic sublime of these Gothic works.

Having posited the inextricable link between the demonic and the sublime in the English Gothic, I will turn to the Scottish Presbyterian Gothic tradition, which, as I argue, manifests radically different aesthetic strategies of demonic representation. The last section of this chapter will investigate the way in which the differing theo-aesthetics of the Scottish Presbyterian and English traditions represent divergent theological purposes in their depiction of the demonic. I will use James Hogg's *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) as a case study and demonstrate that while the sublimity of the English Gothic's devil places a theological focus on the relationship between Divine and demonic, the Scottish devil's lack of sublimity indicates a preoccupation with the relationship between the demonic and the human.

Theorising the Demonic Sublime

'Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth: and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, til iniquity was found in thee' – Ezekiel 28: 14-15

John Dennis was the first to discuss the 'sublimity' of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, arguing that Milton's description of Satan 'by its greatness will move and exalt' the reader.[5] This identification of *Paradise Lost,* and its depiction of the devil as sublime, is a view echoed and enlarged upon throughout the eighteenth century by critics as diverse as Joseph Addison, Edmund Burke, James Beattie, Uvedale Price, William Godwin, Immanuel Kant and Ann

[5] John Dennis, *The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry* (London: W. Mears, 1721), p. 37. Although the term 'sublimity' is not directly applied here, the rhetoric of 'exaltation' and affect identifies the sublime dynamic as does the context: a reference to Longinus' treatise.

Radcliffe.[6] The most complete theoretical investigation of the question of the sublimity of Milton's devil is found in Burke's A *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, both through direct commentary on specific passages and through a clear overlap between Burke's choice of sublime Miltonic passages and his own definition of the sublime.

For Burke, 'we do not any where meet a more sublime description than this justly celebrated one of Milton, wherein he gives the portrait of Satan with a dignity so suitable to the subject'.[7] This suggestion of 'dignity' attests to the positive, and contextually sublime, light in which the attributes of the demonic depicted in Burke's illustrative quotation from *Paradise Lost* 1:589-99 are conceived:

> *He above the rest*
> *In shape and gesture proudly eminent*
> *Stood like a tower; his form had yet not lost*
> *All her original brightness, nor appear'd*
> *Less than archangel ruin'd, and th' excess*
> *Of glory obscure'd: as when the Sun new ris'n*
> *Locks through the horizontal misty air*
> *Short of his beams: or from behind the moon*
> *In dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds*
> *On half the nations; and with fear of change*
> *Perplexes monarchs.*[8]

Burke goes on to enumerate the 'causes' of sublimity in this demonic portrayal: the representational strategies employed by Milton; the 'proper' setting of the Satanic; and, most disruptively (in terms of a conception of the sublime as a Divine aesthetic), the properties displayed by Satan himself.

Burke first discusses the necessary sublimity of the representational strategies involved in demonic depiction. His analysis of the passage appears in a chapter on obscurity

[6] See Joseph Addison *Spectator* articles on Milton (every six spectator articles from 267-339) and the 'Pleasures of the Imagination' (specifically 417-418) (1712); Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757)*;* James Beattie's *Dissertations Moral and Critical* (1783); William Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1798); Immanuel Kant's *Observations on the Feeling of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1764 – German original, 1799 – first complete translation into English); and Ann Radcliffe's *On the Supernatural in Poetry* (1826).
[7] Burke, *Enquiry,* p. 51
[8] John Milton, *Paradise Lost. A Poem in Twelve Books,* 2nd Edition, (London: S. Simmons, 1674), p. 29

and his connection of the demonic and the obscure echoes a broader eighteenth-century discourse on the nature of the demonic as 'beyond human' and thus 'obscurely' beyond both conception and speech. For Dennis, demons are 'beings' that 'have an immediate Relation to the Wonder of Another World'.[9] Burke engages with the issue of representational strategies in Book V of the *Philosophical Enquiry* where he addresses the powers of language to express concepts for which there is no direct visual analogue and that 'have never been at all presented to the senses of any men but by words [such] as God, angels, devils, heaven and hell'.[10] Burke argues that new combinations of language allow us to approach the sublime more effectively than any mimetic art. In his commentary on the Miltonic passage above, he explains that 'the mind is hurried out of itself, by a croud of great and confused images; which affect because they are crouded and confused'.[11] This rush of images mimics an encounter with the sublime: the paradoxical experience of being at once *overwhelmed* and *exalted'.*[12] The images ('a tower, an archangel, the sun rising through mists, an eclipse, the ruin of monarchs, the revolutions of kingdoms'[13]) are, in themselves both 'noble' and obscure: simultaneously a fit match for the demonically other and a cause of the apparent sublimity of the depiction. These images, combined in a rush imitating the sublime experience itself, lend their own less equivocal, worldly rather than demonic, sublimity to the devil. The representational exigencies of describing the indescribable (the superhumanly obscure) have, in part, created the sublimity of the demonic description – an inescapable form of associative sublimity.

There is a similar trace of the associative sublime in the depiction of the 'setting' of the demonic. In the passage from Milton quoted above, Satan's elevation 'above the rest' places him in a literally sublime position. Sublimity is both historically (*Peri Hypsous* translates more literally as 'On Elevation') and by definition (Samuel Johnson's primary definition of sublimity is 'high in place'[14]) connected to height, a quality highlighted by Burke and the

[9] John Dennis, *The Grounds of Criticism,* Poetry', in *The Select Works of Mr. John Dennis,* 2 vols (London: John Darby, 1721), I, p438
[10] Ibid., p. 138
[11] Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry,* p. 5`
[12] Doran, F*rom Longinus to Kant,* p. 4
[13] Ibid., p. 51
[14] Samuel Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language,* 3rd edition, (London: Printed for J. F and C. Rivington, 1785)

majority of contemporary theorists. In Part V of the *Philosophical Enquiry*, Burke discusses the sublimity of hell whose landscape bears many of Burke's hallmarks of the sublime: darkness, obscurity, height, uniformity and magnificence, as seen in his chosen example from *Paradise Lost* Book II, lines 618-622:

> O'er many a dark and dreary vale
> They pass'd, and many a region dolorous
> O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp;
> Rock, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens and shades of death,
> a universe of death.[15]

This 'terror sublimity' of setting reflects back on the Satanic figure whose 'proper' place it is and whose own power and desires have, to some extent, shaped its landscape.

For theorists who have a less monolithic conception of the sublime, the emphasis on hell as paradigmatically sublime is diminished. Addison draws a comparison between the acknowledged sublimity of hell and that of heaven, noting that: 'Most readers … are more charmed with Milton's description of paradise, than of hell'.[16] For Addison, the peculiar sublimity of heaven rouses deeper and more varied emotions ('hope, joy, admiration, love')[17] from that of hell and thus accesses other variants of the sublime. What this implies is that the sublimity of the demonic setting is 'incomplete' or 'deformed'. It reflects only the 'terror sublime', disconnected from a broader conception of the multiplicity of the sublime. This 'partiality' or 'deformity' inevitably extends to the devil whose very self is echoed in the landscape around him. I will return to this concept of the 'deformity' of the demonic sublime in the next section.

The third source of sublimity that Burke highlights in *Paradise Lost* Book 1 Lines 589-99 is that of Satan's own personal sublimity. It is this assertion which most explicitly creates a conflict with the idea of the sublime as a Divine aesthetic of self-revelation due to the oppositional nature of Satan and God's relationship – both literally and qualitatively. Burke's dissection of the passage highlights 'eternity and infinity' as personal attributes of Satan and

[15] Quoted in Burke, *Enquiry*, p. 138.
[16] Joseph Addison, 'Spectator 418 (Monday June 30th ,1712)', *in The Works of Joseph Addison Complete*, 3 vols (New York: Harper Brothers, 1837), p. 148
[17] Ibid., p. 148

argues that they are 'among the most affective [ideas] we have', in part due to their 'obscurity' for 'there is nothing of which we really understand so little'.[18] There is also a personal physical sublimity to this Miltonic devil: 'in shape and gesture proudly eminent/like a tower' whose remains of 'original brightness' shine forth and in whom there are still traces of the archangel. Such a description echoes Burkean categories of the sublime as vast, magnificent, found in extreme light and inherently 'close' to divinity (the devil's archangelic nature).

The devil also demonstrates 'moral' sublimity in his 'gesture eminently proud' with its hints of fearlessness, defiance and daring. In Burke's differentiation of beautiful and sublime virtues, sublime virtue is connected to fortitude[19], disdain for power, contempt for death and honour[20], dignity and self-denial.[21] Each of which is, arguably, applicable to Milton's Satan at different points in *Paradise Lost* as we see argued, for example, by William Godwin. Godwin claims that 'the devil [is] a being of considerable virtue' who 'bore his torments with fortitude, because he disdained to be subdued by despotic power'.[22] As Peter Schock notes this conception of Satanic virtue became increasingly 'partisan' in eighteenth-century debate and part of a Romantic reappropriation of a desacralised Satanic figure as ideological figurehead: one whose virtues may be revalued or reemphasised according to the ethical, political and social projects of the writer.[23] Such partisan investigations or utilisations of the Satanic figure, however, are simply a manipulation of the pre-existing moral and personal sublimity of the demonic already so richly explored throughout the sublime tradition.

This direct 'personal' correlation between the demonic and the sublime implies that the sublime as an aesthetic must either be simultaneously corrupt (demonic) and incorrupt (divine) or that there is a demonic taint on the sublime even when applied overtly to Divine objects. The imputed moral sublimity of Milton's Satan forms a clear starting point from

[18] Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry,* p. 51
[19] Burke, *Enquiry,* p. 89
[20] John Baillie, *An Essay on the Sublime,* (London: R. Dodesly, 1747), p.93
[21] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments,* 4th edition, (London: W. Strahan, 1774), p. 371
[22] William Godwin, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice,* ed. by Mark Philp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 143
[23] Peter Schock, 'The Marriage of Heaven and Hell: Blake's Myth of Satan and its Cultural Matrix,' *English Literary History,* 60:2, (Summer 1993), 441-70

which to address this challenge through an investigation of the debate surrounding the concept of the 'negative sublime', which was essentially the question of whether a figure can commit amoral/immoral acts or enact harm and still be considered sublime. A number of critics, including the Earl of Shaftesbury[24], John Dennis[25], Henry Needler[26], Joseph Priestley,[27] and Ann Radcliffe[28], have replied to this question with an unstinting negative, viewing the sublime and the virtuous to be essentially inextricable. The debate over negative sublimity did not, however, cease with a denial of its existence and a range of arguments were put forward throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in relation to the 'negative sublime'.

The debate around 'negative sublimity' focused, largely, on the issue of the 'source' of moral sublimity. John Baillie argued that the sublimity of an action is defined by its object, not by the act itself or the perpetrator of the acts. Thus, a destroyer of worlds will be sublime precisely because he is a destroyer of *worlds*.[29] The devil may be sublime then precisely because it is *God*, the most sublime of beings, whom he defies. Lord Kames and Hugh Blair maintained the opposite view, arguing that the sublime depends on the character of the perpetrator.[30] Whatever their deeds, an Alexander, a Caesar or even a Satan, may retain their sublimity due to their 'grandeur of soul' and the scope of their fearlessness or ambition: 'The splendour and enthusiasm of the hero transfused into the readers, elevate their minds far above the rules of justice'.[31] Another response to the debate was completely to disassociate the sublime from the moral. James Beattie, for example, argues that neither 'great' and 'good' nor 'admire' and 'approve' are synonymous

[24] Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, with a Collection of Letters,* (Basel: J. J. Tourneisen, 1790). For Shaftesbury, aesthetic 'taste' is inextricable from a moral sense.

[25] Nothing which is 'against Religion, or which runs counter to moral Virtue' may be truly sublime. Dennis, 'The Grounds of Criticism', p. 420

[26] For Needler, the sublime is simply a more superlative form of the 'beautiful and excellent' which he describes as 'perfections.' Henry Needler, 'On the Excellency of Divine Contemplation,' in *The Works of Henry Needler* (London: J. Watts, 1724), p. 80

[27] Authors of the 'sublime' are those who take the 'grandest and noblest' view of the world. The sublime, therefore, becomes an engine of the 'noble' and the 'good' capable of 'elevating our souls' morally and spiritually. Joseph Priestley, 'Lecture XX: Of the Sublime', in *A Course of Lectures on Oratory and Criticism* (London: J. Johnson, 1777), p. 162

[28] Radcliffe argues that 'a love of moral beauty' is essential to the production of the literary sublime, making morality and sublimity non-divisible. Ann Radcliffe, 'On the Supernatural in Poetry', in *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal,* 1826 (London: Henry Colburn, 1826), 145-152 (p. 151)

[29] Baillie, *Essay on Sublimity,* pp. 90-95

[30] Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric or Belles Lettres*, 2 vols, (London: W. Strahan, 1783), I, p. 215

[31] Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism,*2 vols, (Basil: J. J. Tourneisen, 1795), I, p. 248

terms and only the first of each pairing necessarily apply to the sublime.[32] The sublime is, therefore, essentially amoral, allowing for the sublimity of the devil as the morality of his actions and character are unrelated to his sublimity. What none of these arguments succeed in addressing, however, is the reality of a sublime, which is not only incidentally associated with the 'non-moral' but tied explicitly to the demonic: a force often theologically understood to be analogous to ultimate evil and diametrically opposed to the divine.

A number of critics have responded to the challenge of demonic moral sublimity by 'de-theologising' the demonic. Adriana Craciun suggests that 'the myth of Satan was desacralised',[33] a claim based on Schock's assertion that 'belief in the existence of the devil had practically disappeared' by the late eighteenth century.[34] Such universalising claims, while a useful shorthand for changing conceptions of the literal reality of the devil and hell in the eighteenth century, present an overly reductive conception of the state of religious belief in the period and the existence of competing discourses surrounding the reality of the demonic.[35] Schock's work relies on an unwarranted emphasis on the influence and dissemination of works of atheistic and Dissenting scepticism, such as Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason* and Joseph Priestley's *Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever.*[36] Similarly, Schock argues that the devil remained a key figure in both political and ideological debates of the period particularly on the French Revolution, where the devil was allied to either revolutionary forces or the Catholic monarchy as per the prejudices of the writer. Schock views this as part of the desacrilisation of the devil and his repurposing for ideological ends.

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[32] 'We sometimes admire what we cannot approve…that which is great is not always good.' James Beattie, 'Illustrations on Sublimity' in *Dissertations Moral and Critical,* 2 vols, (Dublin: Mess. Exshaw, Walker, Beatty, White, Byrne, Cash and Mackenzie, 1783), II, p. 369

[33] Adriana Craciun, 'Romantic Satanism and the Rise of the Nineteenth-Century Women's Poetry,' *New Literary History,* 34.4 (2003), 699-721 (p. 701)

[34] Schock, 'Blake's Myth of Satan,' p. 441

[35] In making such sweeping assertions Craciun and Schock deviate significantly from their sources on the historical dimensions of the debate. Schock references Jeffrey Russel's *Mephistopheles: The Devil in the Modern World* which, rather than arguing for the disappearance of the demonic entirely, points to a growing move away from traditional belief (including the belief in Satanic pacts between the devil and witches), which have either been 'abandoned…or modified out of recognition'.* He argues, however, for the existence of many differing conceptions of the demonic offered by Methodism, Pietism and Fideism in opposition to atheist, deist or even Latitudinarian dismissal of the demonic. Each of these discussions and positions is, he argues, intrinsically theologically oriented.

* Jeffrey Russell, *Mephistopheles: The Devil in the Modern World* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 128

[36] Schock uses Priestley as a Christian example of a rejection of literal readings of Satan. Priestley, a Unitarian, views 'the devil' as 'an allegorical, not a real persona.' (p. 71) Appearances of the devil are, according to Priestley, either 'a vision, or a figurative account.' (p. 71) Joseph, *Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever Part III containing an Answer to Mr Paine's Age of Reason,* 2nd edn (Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1795).

It would be more accurate to suggest that this represents a sacrilisation of the political and ideological spheres: the affairs of men being read through a theological lens.

Both Craciun and Schock dismiss the continuing importance of the demonic in religious discourse of the period and in theologies of creation, the fall, salvation and evil in both Anglican and Dissenting, particularly Evangelical, movements.[37] Services in *The Book of Common Prayer* abound with references to the 'devil', including the baptismal exhortation to 'renounce the devil and all his works'[38] and the confessional plea for protection from 'the crafts and assaults of the devil'.[39] While the sheer quantity of sermons addressing the demonic had, as Schock argues, declined by the end of the eighteenth century, they had certainly not disappeared. Religious historians David Bebbington and Michael Watts argue that a literal belief in the devil and hell were central to the Evangelical movements both within and without the established church.[40] Michael Watts stresses, however, that we must not overemphasise an exclusive connection between Evangelical Dissent and demonic discourse as during the eighteenth century, 'only eccentrics…denied eternal punishment' and the existence of the demonic.[41]

Clearly, we cannot solve the challenge of the demonic sublime by arguing for the demonic's complete disconnection from the theological. The use of the devil within even a faintly Christian framework (as a figure in opposition to a monotheistic divinity linked to the 'good') is irreducibly connected, at the very least, to questions of theodicy. In Byron's *Cain* (1821), for example, Satan berates the 'omnipotent tyrant' whose 'evil is not good',[42] answering the question of theodicy with a refutation of the intrinsic goodness of the Divine. It is also worth noting that criticism of demonic representation in the period, such as that of Schock and Craciun, concentrates on the reimagined Satan of the Romantic imagination. In

[37] It would likewise be an oversimplification to suggest that Rational Dissenters held unanimous views on issues such as demonic reality and original sin. Priestley himself makes reference to Satanic prophecies in revelation and refers casually to concepts of demonic temptation. Joseph Priestley, 'On Habitual Devotion,' in *Sermons by Richard Price and Joseph Priestley* (London, 1791), p. 150

[38] *The Book of Common Prayer* (London: Sampson Low, 1793), P. 185

[39] Ibid., p. 41

[40] David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 5 and Michael Watts, *The Dissenters: Volume I, From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p414. See, for example, Methodist Moravian John Cennick's exhaustive sermon series on *The Fall and Redemption,* (in its fifth edition by 1788).

[41] Watts, *The Dissenters,* I, p415

[42] Byron, Lord George, 'Cain', in *The Works of Lord Byron: Complete in One Volume* (London: John Murray, 1841), p. 321

the Gothic, however, the devil is not represented as 'a defamiliarised version of the mythology surrounding Satan'.[43] Instead, we find a devil explicitly linked to evil, temptation and destruction - the enemy of both God and man. The sublimity of such a figure remains unexamined. To understand the function and repercussions of the demonic sublime, we must move away from secular responses, both in contemporary thought on the negative sublime and modern criticism, and address the underlying theological valence of this Satanic figure and the theo-aesthetics of its representation.

The Perverse Sublime

'For Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light' – 2 Corinthians 11:14

'Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain' – Proverbs 31:30

One answer to the conundrum of Gothic Satanic sublimity is to be found in the concept of the 'perverse sublime'. The concept of 'perverse' sublimity arises in Robert Lowth's *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (1753/87). He holds that if a poet utilising sublime rhetoric 'deviate on any occasion from [the] great aim' of gesturing and leading towards the virtuous and the divine, 'he is guilty of a most scandalous abuse and *perversion* of his art'. [44] In other words, the 'tools' of sublimity may be 'perverted' through improper usage or manipulation.[45] Moving beyond Lowth's work, it becomes clear that this perversion is not limited to 'rhetoric' but applies to both artistic representation of the demonic and demonic self-representation. A clear example of critical engagement with this concept is found in Blackwood's response to Byron's *Cain,* which inveighs against a Satan who is 'half-human devil, with … enough of heaven to throw a shade of sublimity on his very malignity'.[46] There are two significant concepts to be drawn from this commentary: firstly, that the sublime may be used as a 'shade' (or 'mask') over an under-lying absence or

[43] Ibid., p. 441
[44] Robert Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews, t*rans. by G. Gregory, 2 vols (London: J. Johnson, 1787), I, p. 369
[45] This was a complaint frequently aimed at Enthusiastic Dissenting preachers like George Whitfield, who started the Calvinist Methodist movement in England, and was known for his impassioned sermons.
[46] Blackwood, 'Commentary' on 'Cain', in *The Works of Lord Byron* (*London*: John Murray, 1841), p. 320. No first name is provided with the review.

reversal of sublimity and, secondly, that the apparent sublimity of the demonic borrows all its characteristics from the Divine and thus appears sublime only insofar as it shares common traits with the deity.

This idea of the 'overlap' between Divine and demonic has a long history. Thomas Aquinas, for example, states that 'in the demons there is their nature which is from God, and also the deformity of sin which is not from him'.[47] In other words, the demonic, up until the point of internal corruption, shares characteristics with the divine. A literary manifestation of this is found in Milton's depiction of Satan: the personal sublimity of the devil stems from characteristics 'borrowed' or 'perverted' from the devil's original angelic (Divine) sublimity. His 'original brightness', that of an 'archangel ruin'd' with 'glory obscured'[48] and the ideas of power, vastness, infinity, eternity and obscurity encoded into the depiction are all remains of his original, later perverted, Divine heritage. Likewise, the 'moral sublimity' accorded to the devil is a distorted form of Divine virtue. A fortitude which has become egoistic defiance; a seeming valour hiding later-revealed cowardice; a pursuit of justice which damns mankind through impotent jealousy of the divine.

This concept of 'perverse' representation extends to a theological concept of the devil's 'perverse' self-representation. 2 Corinthians 11:14 demands vigilance for 'Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light'. The imagery of an 'angel of light' points towards both sublimity and beauty and warns us that the devil may dress himself in either to deceive. Where an author expressly unveils the deceptive nature of the devil's self-representation, they unveil the 'perverse sublime' as we find, for example, in *Paradise Lost.* The seeming sublimity of Satan in Book I is undermined by later revelations about his cowardice before the archangels, his hypocrisy, his pettiness, his weakness and his own physical submission to a form antithetical to the sublime, that of the worm. To ignore this progressive relation of the deceptive nature of the devil's seeming sublimity in *Paradise Lost* is to 'filter out practically every reminder of the depraved nature, absurdity, and final degradation of Satan'.[49] In texts where the 'perversity' of the devil's self-representation is never uncovered, an underlying theological ambiguity, scepticism or atheism is revealed.

[47] Thomas Aquinas, 'Question 3,' in *Summa Theologica of St Thomas Aquinas*, trans. by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 2nd edn, 19 vols (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1920), I, p. 83
[48] Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book 1: 593-4, p. 29
[49] Schock, 'Blake's Myth of Satan,' p. 452

This is frequently, as in Byron's *Cain,* related to an interrogation of and discomfort with a specific theological model of the Divine: a form of what Shaftesbury terms 'daemonism' or the belief that there is a God but he is not 'absolutely and necessarily good, nor confin'd to what is best, but capable of acting according to mere Will or Fancy'.[50] As Isabel Rivers notes, this is often connected to a rejection of Calvinist theology whose double predestination turns God into an 'arbitrary punisher' and immortal tyrant [51] but may also reflect a more general 'doubting impulse'.[52] We find such theological 'perversity' in *Cain* as contemporary criticism makes clear. Heber, for example, decries the fact that Byron's Satan remains both beautiful and sublime 'endued with all … beauty, wisdom, and … unconquerable daring'[53] as this means that 'his arguments and insinuations are allowed to pass uncontradicted'.[54] The author's allegiance to the devil's views is encoded in the aesthetic choices of his demonic depiction.

In both *The Monk* and *Zofloya,* the devil is revealed as intentionally using beauty to deceive. When Ambrosio first sees the devil, he represents himself as 'a figure more beautiful than fancy's pencil ever drew…the perfection of whose form and face were unrivalled'.[55] He does not represent a Burkean concept of beauty, contrasted and wholly removed from the sublime, but rather 'his form shone with dazzling glory' with both his eyes and expression 'betraying the fallen angel and inspiring the spectators with secret awe'.[56] He is 'sublimely beautiful'. [57] That beauty, however, disappears when he reveals his

[50] Shaftesbury, Lord Anthony Ashley Cooper, 'An Enquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit' in *Characteristicks:* Volume II (London: John Darby, 1727), 5-176 (p. 11)
[51] Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment: Volume 2: Shaftesbury to Hume* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 53
[52] Robert Ryan, 'Byron's "Cain": The Ironies of Belief', *The Wordsworth Circle,* 21.1 (Winter 1990), 41-45 (p. 42) Ryan suggests that Byron's *Cain* must be read as a 'radical ambivalence', which is pulled towards the opposite poles of an affirmation of the transcendent and a profound discomfort with established Christian theologies. Ibid., p43
[53] Heber, 'Commentary' on 'Cain', in *The Works of Lord Byron: Complete in One Volume* (London: John Murray), p. 320
[54] Ibid., p. 320
[55] Matthew Lewis, *The Monk*, 2 vols (Dublin: W. Porter/N. Kelly, 1797), II, p. 68. As Donna Heiland notes, this pattern of deceptive beauty leading a revelation of 'sublimity incarnate' in Mathilda equally but reads this transformation along gendered lines ignoring the underlying theology which has a male devil following the same trajectory. Donna Heiland, *Gothic and Gender: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), p. 37
[56] Lewis, *The Monk*, II, p. 69
[57] This pairing of beauty and sublimity is, of course, an impossibility in Burke's system which is constructed on the concept of the opposition of beauty and sublimity. However, the pairing of beauty and sublimity appears in many other critics including Longinus, who states that the sublime has the appearance of beauty. Trapp asserts that whatever is sublime is beautiful and Needler considers sublimity to be the highest form of beauty.

true form in Ambrosio's prison and appears 'in all that ugliness which since his fall from heaven had been his portion'.[58] Dacre's devil follows a similar trajectory. Having 'clothed' himself as the Moorish servant Zofloya throughout the narrative, at the denouement 'no traces of the beautiful Zofloya remained, -but in his place…stood a figure, fierce, gigantic, and hideous to behold!'[59] In both cases, the beautiful is overtly shown to be a façade, part of a wider (theologically orthodox) focus in both novels on issues of external/internal dissonance and hypocrisy. However, while the beauty of the demonic is revealed overtly as 'perverse' in both narratives, the reality of his sublimity appears to remain.

In *The Monk* the devil's terrible sublimity becomes more explicit when he reveals his true form:

> 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 twined themselves round his brows with frightful hissings.[60]

The ugliness of the figure precludes beauty but not sublimity.[61] The power, size, audial sublimity of his hissing snakes, inherent danger of the figure and the emphasis on supernatural fear all accord with concepts of the terror sublime as does the 'associative' sublimity of the scene: lightning, thunder and earthquakes. When the devil chooses the location (rather than being summoned), he drags Ambrosio to an almost overly sublime mountain-top setting where Ambrosio is almost overcome by the 'wildness of the surrounding scenery'. [62] There is practically a checklist of sublime techniques and effects. Height, vastness, the power of the waters, isolation, roaring sound, chiaroscuro, jagged lines and wilderness form the visual core of the scene. It produces a fear linked inseparably, for

[58] Ibid., II, p. 255
[59] Charlotte Dacre, *Zofloya, or The Moor,* 3 vols (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1806), III, p. 256
[60] Ibid., II, pp. 255-6
[61] The concrete division of 'beauty' and 'sublimity' in Burke allows for the interplay of ugliness and sublimity. While others, such as Addison, have represented the sublime as a form or excellence of beauty, by the late eighteenth century the possibility of an 'ugly' sublimity widely existed. Uvedale Price, for example, suggests that ugliness combined with terror is a recipe for the sublime. Uvedale Price, *An essay on the picturesque, as compared to the sublime and the beautiful* (London: J. Robson, 1794), p. 163
[62] Lewis, *The Monk,* II, p. 262

Ambrosio, to the demonic figure beside him: the outward manifestation in nature of the demonic identity of his companion.

We find a similar trajectory in *Zofloya,* a narrative transition from demonic beauty to 'true' terror sublimity. Where *Zofloya* diverges from *The Monk,* however, and where the text offers a new dimension for analysis, is in its representation of the 'demonically human' through the aesthetic of the sublime. It is also at the centre of an interpretative controversy between critics such as Diane Hoeveler, who argue that *Zofloya* is essentially a morally and theologically conservative text, and critics such as Kim Ian Michasiw and Donna Heiland who argue that *Zofloya* has a more heterodox subtext. For Hoeveler, Victoria's eventual punishment highlights a conservative tendency: a theologically and morally orthodox depiction of the punishment of a sinner underpinned by a desire to control female subjectivity.[63] In contrast, Michasiw suggests that 'Dacre's narrator is of the devil's part and knows it perfectly well' and that she sympathises with the positions, feelings and actions of Victoria.[64] The depiction of the demonic is inextricably connected to this debate and, as I will show, a more accurate understanding of the aesthetic strategies of its demonic depiction offer a possible solution to this controversy.

The connection between the demonic and the sublime is evident throughout *Zofloya*. As the novel progresses, the scenery gradually becomes increasingly sublime and we creep 'upwards' – from Venice, to a castle in the Appenines, to a bandit's cave in the mountain heights, until finally ending upon a sublime precipice. The increased physical sublimity of its settings reflects the growing influence and power of the demonic – the devil in Zofloya's skin. This demonic other is likewise increasingly associated with the natural sublime: 'the deeper and more gloomy the solitude, the more probable that … Zofloya would choose it for his haunt'.[65] This connection between the sublime and the demonic is not limited to the devil himself but extends to the 'demonically' human in the character of Victoria who develops from a 'seductive beauty' into a seemingly 'sublimely powerful figure', an arbiter of life and death.[66]

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[63] Diane Long Hoeveler, 'Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya:* A Case Study in Miscegenation as Racial and Sexual Nausea,' *European Romantic Review,* 8:2 (1997), 185-199
[64] Kim Ian Michasiw, 'Introduction' in *Zofloya, or The Moor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), px
[65] Dacre, *Zofloya,* II, p. 203
[66] Heiland, *Gothic and Gender,* p. 44

Events marking Victoria's gradated spiritual decline are allied consistently to increasing 'sublimity'. Take, for example, the morning of Lilla's kidnap:

> The loud solemn roar of the foaming cataract, dashing from a fissure on the opposite side into the precipice beneath, broke upon her ear. – She *fearlessly* advanced, however, till she gained the summit, while louder and more stunning became the angry sound of the waters. *Here, for a while she decided to remain*.[67] (My emphasis)

Victoria's advance is not 'indifferent' but 'fearless'. She does not simply pass through the landscape but 'decide[s] to remain'. Neither of these facts is indicative of the alienation from the sublime we find in Radcliffe, where villains are marked by a spiritual incapacity for sublime appreciation. Rather, they are indicative of a personal identification with the sublime landscape. Victoria can 'fearlessly advance' into the sublime because it is (or is becoming) her natural setting as it is Zofloya's. As she progressively gives in to her demonic passions, her location becomes ever more sublime. From the rocky precipice from which she contemplates Lilla's kidnap, to the storm illuminated forest where she decides to impersonate her, to the cliffs over the 'bottomless abyss'[68] that saw Lilla's brutal murder, to the mountain recesses of her surrender to Zofloya: step by step along the path of evil and the path of damnation, her setting becomes increasingly sublime and increasingly elevated.

Echoing *The Monk,* this pattern of increasing evil/increasing sublimity reaches its apogee in the final scene:

> on the summit of a mighty rock! – Zofloya led her to its uttermost brink; extreme terror filled the soul of Victoria, but she could not speak. – Involuntarily she cast downwards her eyes. -A dizzying precipice, that made the sense stagger, yawned at her feet; far, far in its bottomless abyss, battled the deafening cataract, which from the summit of the adjacent rock, tumbled a broad tremendous stream, till broken mid-way in its course by some rude projection, it divided into numberless dancing sprays, and branches of foam, uniting again at a considerable distance beneath, and thundering as it fell with resistless fury down the rugged sides of the precipice, whose hollow bosom sternly re-echoed to the mighty sounds.[69]

As in *The Monk* there is a terrible sublime excess here, both audial and visual: height, fear, infinity, depth, deafening sound, power, eternity, vastness, brokenness edges, the infinite

[67] Dacre, *Zofloya,* III, p. 30
[68] Ibid., III, p. 96
[69] Ibid., III, pp. 227-8

('numberless'), distance, ferocity, and the overwhelming are all mingled here. 'Behold me as I am!' then cries the devil.[70] The 'truly demonic' and the seemingly 'truly sublime' manifest simultaneously and appear to be inherently bound. The 'truth' of the devil's sublimity leads us towards a reading of theological perversity and a heterodox reading of the underlying moral ideologies of the text. However, we must examine the final scene of punishment before leaping to such a conclusion. [71]

> In the final moment, the devil,
>
> grasped more firmly the neck of the wretched Victoria – with one push, he whirled her headlong down the dreadful abyss! as she fell, his loud demoniac laugh, his yells of triumph, echoed in her ears, and a mangled corse, she was received in the foaming waters below.[72]

In one moment, not only is Victoria punished but her growing sublimity is stripped away. It is revealed to be a partial and polluted thing; a seeming strength forged out of a renunciation of the human that has not moved her towards divinity but rather towards its perverse shadow: the demonic. She becomes 'wretched', weak, helpless, a 'mangled corse' and an object of disgust. Decoding the use of the sublime here as it refers to the 'humanly demonic' suggests an apparently 'orthodox' reading of Victoria's passage as essentially one of a willed descent into evil and an accompanying punishment. Female desire is still 'outlawed, transgressive, and impermissible'.[73] Her sublimity has been revealed as perverse and thus her utterances, choices, thoughts and stances have been undermined. However, if we look to the representation of the demonic in this scene, specifically as it relates to the sublime, we begin to find a more subversive subtext. While Victoria is cast down, the devil remains elevated on his 'sublime height' and participating actively in the terribly sublime soundscape of Victoria's demise with his 'demoniac laugh, his yells of triumph'. Demonic sublimity is reinforced at the expense of human 'sublimity'.

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[70] Ibid., III, p. 233
[71] Diane Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The professionalization of gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës,* (University Park Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 1998)
[72] Dacre, *Zofloya,* III, pp. 234-5
[73] Heiland, *Gothic and Gender,* p. 48

This devil features not only as tempter but as punisher, claiming for himself the 'triumph' of Victoria's castigation, saying 'the glory of thy utter destruction is *mine'*.[74] Whether as an oppositional force or as a servant of the Divine will (*Zofloya* leaves this question unclear), the devil not only remains 'on high' but has effectively appropriated the Divine position of the 'judgment seat'. There is an intriguing juxtaposition here: the desirer has been punished but the object and instigator of that desire remains aloft, sublimely triumphant. What remains is an unresolved tension between two aesthetic realities pulling in different directions. The novel's revelation of the perversity of both Victoria's assumed sublimity and Zofloya's deceptive beauty, reflects a broadly orthodox conception of the Divine ordering of the world through a providential punishment of the guilty. It is a gesture, however, which cannot erase all the subversive subtexts of the narrative. The 'sublime triumph' of the devil suggests the possibility of a subversive sympathy with the transgressive motions of the text, which question religious and social mores and concepts of virtue, investigate female desire and ideas of female subjectivity, and gesture towards a radical ambivalence towards the theologies of Divine order and sin which underlie them.

The side-effect of this alignment of the demonic figure, aesthetically and functionally, with the Divine (judgment) is the spectre of a further subversive theology, questioning the righteousness of a God whose 'emissary' or analog is a sublimely terrifying and unutterably cruel devil. We find a similar instance, in a more exaggerated form, of the devil as agent of Divine punishment in *The Monk.* In the final scene the devil does not merely stand 'on high' but 'darting his talons into the monk's shaven crown, he sprang with him from the rock… continued to soar aloft till reaching dreadful height'.[75] Just as the final image of Lewis' devil reflects a higher degree of physical positional sublimity than Dacre's, his villain's end aims at a more hyperbolic expression of loss of sublimity. He becomes an abject, broken thing 'blind, maimed, helpless and despairing, venting his rage in blasphemy and curses, execrating his existence'.[76] This demonic 'rise' and human 'fall' is reflected equally in the area of moral sublimity. Ambrosio's corruption is contrasted to the devil's disdain for his vices. Ambrosio's belated, self-seeking and fear-induced pleas for Divine benevolence elicit moral disgust in the devil who berates him, crying, 'Would you feign

[74] Dacre, *Zofloya,* III, p. 234
[75] Lewis, *The Monk,* III, p. 265
[76] Ibid., III, p. 266

penitence, and again act a hypocrite's part? Villain.'[77] However, in Lewis' demonology, there is no question about the oppositional nature of the relationship between demonic and Divine with the devil crowing over the fact that 'Heaven itself cannot rescue you from my power'.[78] This clear suggestion of an oppositional relationship combined with the final 'true' sublimity of the demonic points to the possibility of a heterodox reading of a text which tacitly 'takes the devil's side' and a denunciation not only of Ambrosio but of the religion he represents: a persecuting church whose rigid legalism leads to the hypocrisy the devil condemns. The hyperbole of Ambrosio's demise, while representing an 'orthodox' denunciation of spiritual pride[79] – the original sin[80] - also reflects a potentially subversive declamation of the evils of established religion through the metonym of monkish hypocrisy.

In both texts, the theo-aesthetics of demonic depiction leave room for heterodox moral and theological subtexts. As noted in my commentary on *Zofloya*, there is an inherent questioning of the 'goodness' of God in a narrative where the demonic and the Divine become conflated in the 'task' of punishment. Geary has argued for a complete absence of divinity in these narratives, arguing instead that the Divine has been replaced with the purely daemonic.[81] However, it is overly simplistic to imply an atheistic perversity to these novels written by two authors who never openly expressed atheism. On the contrary, as the editor of Lewis' memoirs notes, despite obviously subversive tendencies in both his life and work, the theologically orthodox mini-sermons Lewis delivered and recorded while in Jamaica are 'strangely opposed to those charges of infidelity which at an early period of his

[77] Ibid., III, p. 265
[78] Ibid., III, p. 264
[79] Ambrosio's crimes are, of course, numerous: 'Abandoned hypocrite! Inhuman parricide! Incestuous ravisher!' The devil makes clear, however, the originating, and arguably most heinous, sin is that of pride: 'You it was who thought yourself proof against temptation, absolved from human frailties, and free from error and vice! Is pride then a virtue?' Lewis, *The Monk,* II, pp. 263-4
[80] The concept of pride as the 'original sin' (both as regards Satan's fall from heaven and man's first sin) is part of a long tradition in both Catholic and broadly Protestant traditions. Although disagreements have occurred as to the exact understanding of 'original sin,' pride as both an innate and originating sin (originating other evils) and as temporally the first sin (either demonic or human) are relatively constant features of the debate. The teachings of Aquinas and Augustine summarise these concepts. According to Aquinas, 'Man's first sin consisted in his coveting some spiritual good above his measure: and this pertains to pride. Therefore, it is evident that man's first sin was pride.'* Augustine stresses the ubiquity of pride as the 'root' of all sin: 'For what is the origin of our evil will but pride?'**
* Aquinas, 'Question 163', in *Summa Theologica,* XII, p. 253
** (Augustine, *City of God*, trans. by Rev. Marcus Dodd, 2 vols (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1871), II, p. 25
[81] Geary, *Supernatural in Gothic Fiction,* p. 63

life were affixed to his character'.[82] Little is known about Dacre or her religious beliefs. As Micashiw notes, in reference to the bewildering range of pseudonyms she employed, 'the woman behind these shifting positions is very hard to locate'.[83] Thanks to Ann Jones research,[84] we know that though born into a Jewish family, she died in the Anglican church and her obituary (conventionally) tells us of her 'purity and sublime greatness of soul [which] enabled her patiently and piously to endure'.[85] The extant ambiguity as to the personal theologies of both writers does not preclude atheistic tendencies but their obvious interactions with theism, render an exclusively atheistic reading unjustifiable. We must undertake an investigation of the theistic readings of this sublime perversity.

The Sublime of Judgment

Then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats – Matthew 25: 31-2

Lewis' 'The Isle of Devils', originally published as an inset metrical tale in the 1833 *Diary of a West India Proprietor,* offers an entry point to a more theologically focused account of both *The Monk* and *Zofloya.* The warning against perverse beauty and the hypocrisy of appearance is repeated in the monk's warning to the heroine that her beautiful, half-demonic child is Satan's 'subtlest snare' for 'the Fiends most dangerous are those spirits bright, /who toil for Hell and seem like sons of light'. [86] We do not, however, find a journey from deceptive beauty to authentic sublimity. Her child is never other than beautiful and its demonic father only ever sublimely 'dark and majestic'.[87]

Despite this incipient sublimity, it is only at the end of the tale that this figure becomes unequivocally sublime:

> But now far different were the looks he bore;
> No bending knee, no suppliant glance was seen,

[82], *The Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis,* 2 vols, (London: Henry Colburn, 1839), II, p. 152
[83] Michasiw, 'Introduction' to *Zofloya,* p. xi
[84] Ann Jones, 'Charlotte Dacre', in *Ideas and Innovations: Best Sellers of Jane Austen's Age,* (New York: AMS, 1986), pp. 224-49
[85] Quoted in Michasiw, 'Introduction' to *Zofloya,* p. xi
[86] Matthew Lewis, *The Isle of Devils,* (London: George T. Juckes, 1912), p. 35
[87] Ibid., p. 20

Proud was his port, and stern and fierce his mien.[88]

This sublimity is, in a sense, more perverse than that which we find in either *The Monk* or *Zofloya;* far from throwing an incorrigible sinner to their doom, he kills his own children. The change, however, occurs at the same narrative moment as in the two novels, highlighting something obscured by their move from deceptive beauty to true sublimity. The moment in which the devil becomes most sublime, is the moment that he becomes an agent of judgment. In 'The Isle of Devils'*,* his actions are an indictment of the unnatural mother who abandons her own children and 'break their hearts who live alone for you'.[89] We may object to the justice of this punishment but it remains a moment of judgment similar to those found in *Zofloya* and *The Monk.*

There are two further points to be taken from this moment of revelatory sublimity. First, the demonic figure becomes unequivocally sublime only when he casts aside the humility, kindness, creeping subservience and love that he has previously shown after acknowledging that 'My love, my service, only wrought disdain'.[90] In effect, his perfected 'terror sublimity' comes at the expense of (admittedly perverted) expressions of love, sacrifice, care and faithfulness. It is an abandonment of the multiplicity necessary to the Divine sublime. Thus, it becomes clear that the 'true sublimity' of the demonic is only ever a partial or perverted form of sublimity: an exclusive concentration on the terror sublime portrayed often with such excess that it becomes the very definition of Schimmelpenninck's 'deformed' variant of the sublime: the horrible.[91] Demonic sublimity does not necessarily represent atheistic authorial views but both creates, and arguably leads to an ambivalent discomfort with, the theological perversity found in Burke. That is, we find an 'Old Testament' God of Terror disunited from the God of Redemption made flesh in Christ. Geary argues that in *The Monk* we find a numinous of 'unalloyed terror'[92] in a world where 'God does not truly exist but the devil does' and where 'providence, secularized out of existence, leaves only unappeasable terror'.[93] Peter Brook likewise argues that 'these forces do not

[88] Ibid., p. 36
[89] Ibid., p. 37
[90] Ibid., p. 36
[91] Mary Schimmelpenninck, *Theory of the Classification of Beauty and Deformity* (London: John and Arthur Arch, 1814), pp. 428-9
[92] Geary, *The Supernatural in Gothic Fiction,* p. 63
[93] Ibid., p. 63

derive, or no longer derive, from a traditional conception of the Sacred'.[94] While both critics are correct in focusing on 'daemonic dread', they are wrong to disassociate this from the deity. Neither *Zofloya* nor *The Monk* desacralises the demonic - rather they 'daemonise' the Divine - erasing his mercy and turning it to vengeance. The devil, whether understood as the Lord's tool or his opponent, becomes an avatar of Divine wrath and a representative of a deity of condemnation without grace.

The second key issue highlighted by a reading of 'The Isle of Devils' is the connection between judgment and sublimity. There is a 'sublime of judgment', which relies not only on incidents related in the text but on an underlying narrative with which the text interacts: a Christian conception of salvation, damnation and Divine judgment. To understand this concept, we may briefly return to our investigation of Milton. The abiding association of *Paradise Lost* with the sublime is not due only to a few scenes removable from a general context but to the overarching theological narrative informing it. As Dennis argues, in *Paradise Lost*, '*Milton* owes this Greatness and this Elevation to the Excellence of his Religion'.[95] Satan's sublimity lies not only in himself but in the God behind him – the deity undefeated - and the 'wrath and vengeance of an angry God'.[96] Whenever we 'see' Milton's Satan, there is a shadow of inaccessible light behind, of a greater being, a greater story, a cosmic war, a providential plan and a greater judgment.

The connection between sublimity and judgment was part of an eighteenth-century tradition whose distinctive aesthetics are encapsulated, as Morris argues, by the early eighteenth-century vogue for poems on the Day of Judgment.[97] The images deployed are vast, terrifying, obscure and redolent with power. Far more important to the 'sublimity' of the works, however, are the 'mysterious terrors of Christianity'[98] that inform them. Morris' use here of the term 'terror' is somewhat misleading though. Terror, in these poems and the biblical source, is only a part of the narrative. Chosen verses from Isaac Watt's *The Day*

[94] Peter Brooks, 'Virtue and Terror: The Monk,' *English Literary History,* 40:2 (Summer 1973), 249-63 (p. 263)
[95] John Dennis, *Advancement of Modern Poetry,* p. 207
[96] Ibid., p. 460
[97] Poems such as Young's *A Poem on the Last Day* (1713)*,* Isaac Watts *The Day of Judgment,* Aaron Hill's *The Judgment Day* (1721), Newcomb's *The Last Judgment of Men and Angels* (1723) or John Pomfret's *Dies Novissima: or The Last Epiphany* (1702) illustrate this trend.
[98] Morris, *The Religious Sublime,* p. 116

of Judgment (1706) provide a working example of the aesthetic strategies of these judgment poems:

> Such shall the noise be and the wild disorder,
> (If things eternal may be like these earthly)
> Such the dire terror, when the great Archangel
> Shakes the creation,

The visual and audial 'imagery' of the judgment day reflects Burkean categories of the sublime in its emphasis on power, noise and fury. The 'supernatural' nature of these events, which defy both man and the laws of nature, is a key component of their sublimity. They remain obscure, beyond the power of the verbal and visual description ('if things eternal may be like these earthly'), reflecting the representational difficulties of that which is 'beyond human' already.

> Hopeless immortals! how they scream and shiver,
> While devils push them to the pit wide-yawning
> Hideous and gloomy, to receive them headlong
> Down to the center.

In depicting the judgment of the guilty, we appear to move beyond the sublime and into the sphere of the 'horrible:' abject hopelessness, finality and horror without a hint of spiritual 'elevation'. It is a depiction full of 'mysterious terrors' but without the overarching narrative structure of the salvation story, it remains horrifying rather than sublime. The necessary accoutrement to ensure sublimity is found in the following verses, which contextualize the above within a larger narrative not only of punishment but of salvation.

> Stop here, my fancy: (all away ye horrid
> Doleful ideas); come, arise to Jesus;
> How He sits God-like! and the saints around him
> Throned, yet adoring!
>
> Oh, may I sit there when he comes triumphant
> Dooming the nations! then ascend to glory
> While our hosannas all along the passage

Shout the Redeemer.[99]

We are taken out of the province of pure horror and here meet with the sublimes of joy and admiration. The horrors of punishment have become part of a larger narrative of judgment and redemption, of eternal, Divine grace and of eternal punishment for those *deserving* of it. The trochaic emphasis on 'while' highlights the simultaneous nature of the events, the juxtaposition which produces sublimity rather than horror or simple joy. In practice, the last two stanzas are arguably unnecessary, as anyone aware of the overarching narrative will project it onto the text causing this scene of punishment to reflect Divine mercy as much as it does physical and psychological horror.

In both *The Monk* and *Zofloya,* we find an echo of this imagery of judgment in the lightning, thunder and storm-wracked, earth-moving revelation of the demonically sublime. Mirroring the Divine imagery of the judgment day it becomes, in essence, a coded reference to a belief in an overarching global providence. The parity between Watt's description of sinners being cast down and the denouements of both *Zofloya* and *The Monk* are clear. The devil may be enacting the punishment but the sublimity of its nature points to a Divine hand, a Divine judgment and a Divine providence at work – the shadow of impenetrable light behind the devil's perversely sublime exterior. Ambrosio's long and torturous death replays Satan's own fall, encoding within itself the falsity of Satan's claim to defy heaven by replaying his own loss of power and sublimity on the body and soul of his 'victim'. A side effect of this reading are the questions that arise therein about demonic and, by association, human agency. In both *The Monk* and *Zofloya,* the question of determinism and free will remains vexed. Emphasis is placed on the choices offered to both protagonists but equally on the inevitability of their fall.[100] This seeming inevitability points to a Calvinist conception of double predestination, which becomes both the theological underpinning of the novel and the target of its theo-aesthetically coded ambiguity: the devil who is both triumphant

[99] Isaac Watts, 'The Day of Judgment', in *Horae Lyricae: Poems Chiefly of the Lyrical Kind in Two Books* (London: S. and D. Bridges, 1706), pp. 40-42

[100] In both cases, significant emphasis is placed on upbringing as determining their character and future actions. Victoria's mother is the recipient of multiple authorial asides filled with blame (not to mention Victoria's own condemnation of her mother) and Ambrosio's character is shown to have been formed by the Church's corruptive practises. As Milbank notes, Ambrosio's refusal of the divine, leads to a darkly providential pattern to his fate: 'refusing the finger of God in one's life just opens another and darker operation of Providence as … the conclusion reveals that each action he believed to be his own choice was controlled and manipulated.' Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 85

and defeated, rebel and agent, a daemonic reflection of a God of wrath and a demonic antagonist to a God of justice.

In both *The Monk* and *Zofloya* there is an exclusive emphasis on the terror sublime, on Divine wrath, judgment and fear, on 'terror rather than virtue;'[101] on punishment rather than mercy. *Zofloya* is more radical than *The Monk* in this sense. While Raymond, Agnes and Lorenzo are all, arguably, rewarded in *The Monk,*[102] horrific deaths await every character in *Zofloya.* There is an emphasis on punishment rather than the promises of salvation, something made particularly explicit in the final paragraphs of both novels; *Zofloya* finishes on an exhortation to avoid the path of vice and *The Monk* on the scene of Ambrosio's misery. This skewed or diminished vision, this incomplete conception of Divine justice without Divine mercy, is echoed in both texts' almost exclusive use of the terror sublime. This does not necessarily blind the reader to the over-arching narrative of damnation/salvation that both novels' judgment scenes evoke. However, both thematically and aesthetically, the only God that appears in their fictional worlds is a God of vengeance. Therein lies the theological perversity of the works.

What we find in both these sublime demonic depictions is a series of tensions between orthodox and perverse theologies, between orthodox moralities and progressive sympathies (especially in terms of sexual morality), between demonic and human self-determination and determining providence, between appearance and reality, between doubt and belief, between despair and hope. Demonic sublimity questions divinity even as it reinforces it. It is not a replacement for the Divine or a rejection of providence. It does not represent, as Geary asserts, 'that the numinous may break free of an inherited doctrinal context, returning now as a pleasing shiver, now as primitive dread'.[103] Rather the demonic sublimity of Lewis' and Dacres' devils is borrowed from the Divine as it defies it and daemonises the Divine while it bows to it. They are not atheist texts but rather, in Judith Wilt's terms, 'heretic texts' for they do not reject the faith they reflect but 'maintain a

[101] Brooks, 'Virtue and Terror', p. 249
[102] Theirs is, admittedly, a comparative goodness, which is certainly not based on orthodox moral rules, especially as regards chastity. They are, however, arguably rewarded in different proportions for suffering, faithfulness, love and bravery after undergoing various forms of 'refining.'
[103] Geary, *The Supernatural in Gothic Fiction,* p. 21

profound and fruitful link with the orthodoxy that defines their terms'.[104] They exist in a questioning space of ultimately unresolved tensions, of, as Joel Porte terms it, a 'profound religious malaise',[105] which is informed as much by Christian narratives as by skepticism. As such they are an important reflection of the ambiguities and uncertainties of the theological space in which both Dacre and Lewis resided – in which the challenges of philosophy, materialism, skepticism, deism, and conflicting theologies exist alongside religious belief. They echo an increasing unease with traditional understandings of the Divine, especially a broadly Calvinist conception of arbitrary election, but stop short of rejecting a Christian framework.

A Devil of Mysterious Appearance

'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour' – 1 Peter 5:8

The particularities of Gothic demonic depiction in the English tradition are further illustrated by a useful contrast with the Scottish Presbyterian model. I make no claims for the absolute ubiquity of this form in the Scottish Gothic or the Scottish Presbyterian tradition. James Hogg's *Mr Adamson of Laverhope* (1829), for example, largely follows the English pattern; there is a significant correlation between a demonic appearance and 'associative' sublimity ('Anon a whole volume of lightning burst from the bosom of the darkness'[106]) and an emphasis on punishment (you 'will heap the coals o' Divine vengeance on your head, and tighten the belts o' burning yettlin ower your hard heart!').[107] However, when we move away from more obviously folkloric examples, there is a general trend of

[104] Judith Wilt, *Ghosts of the Gothic: Austen, Eliot, & Lawrence* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 8
[105] Joel Porte, 'In the Hands of an Angry God: Religious Terror in Gothic Fiction', in *The Gothic Imagination: Essays in Dark Romanticism,* ed. by G. R. Thompson (Washington State University: Washington State University Press, 1974), 42-64 (p. 43). This malaise, for Porte, is specifically related to a fearful and f
[106] James Hogg, 'Mr Adamson of Laverhope' in *The Shepherd's Calendar,* 2 vols (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1824), I, p. 54
[107] Ibid., p. 37

demonic depiction that differs both aesthetically and theologically from the English tradition.

Tabish Khair suggests that the depiction of the Devil in the Scottish Gothic is simply part of a wider Anglo-Gothic trend.[108] However, the Scottish tradition not only manifests differently but is part of a widely divergent tradition of demonic discourse and depiction. The Scottish Gothic Devil draws from a rich folk tradition, with an emphasis on mysterious shape-shifting supernatural demonic creatures.[109] However, folk conceptions of the demonic existed in England, this is not a uniquely Scottish phenomenon. The difference between the Scottish Presbyterian and English literary traditions can be traced predominantly to differing religious histories. The Scottish tradition is intimately connected to a Presbyterian Calvinist theological understanding of the Devil as a real and active evil in the world, an understanding fostered by a politico-religious history in whose rhetoric the devil played a central part.[110] It is a tradition rooted directly in biblical teaching on the devil as tempter, false-teacher and deceiver of mankind and a strict Calvinist doctrine of total depravity which, as Milbank notes, presents Satan as the true 'god of this world'.[111]

Scotland and England had different reactions to the Protestant Reformation. Whereas England adopted an Anglicanism which was, as Milbank notes, a compromise between Catholic and Reformation theological practice,[112] there was a much more violent and resolutely Calvinist movement in Scotland, which resulted in the establishment of the Scottish Kirk as a Presbyterian Church. Thomas Nashe noted in 1594 a dramatic change in depictions of the devil due to the increase of Puritanism: the English manifestation of the radical Protestant Reformation spirit which had taken root in Scotland. 'The divell of late is growen a puritan, and cannot away with anie ceremonies...and will not be invocated with

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[108] Tabish Khair, *The Gothic, Postcolonialism and Otherness: Ghosts from Elsewhere* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)

[109] For example, the eponymous brownies who are referenced in Hogg's *The Brownie of the Black Haggs.* Ultimately, of course, there is a more mundane explanation. The supposed brownies are hidden covenanters.

[110] The Scottish Reformation of 1560 began a lengthy period of political unrest in Scotland framed in terms of religious division. Both sides portrayed the conflict as 'the war between a vengeful God and his great enemy the Devil, both directly intervening in human lives.' J Wormald, 'Witchcraft', in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology,* organizing editor: Nigel M. de S. Cameron, general editors: David F. Wright, David C. Lachman and David E. Meels, (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1993), p. 879

[111] Milbank, *God and the Gothic*, p. 30. Milbank suggests that this emphasis is a broadly Protestant one but this ignores the different theological positions of the Church of England and the Church of Scotland and their relation with stricter and more lenient forms of Calvinism.

[112] Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 43

such solemnity as he was wont… private and disguised he passeth too and fro, and is in a thousand places in an houre.'[113] Although the concept of the demonic pact survived in witchcraft superstitions in Scotland, the anti-ceremonial forms of radical Reformation Protestantism caused a fundamental change in paradigm in terms of demonic depiction. The Calvinist emphasis on self-examination, particularly for proof of election, also encouraged an inward focus that manifested in an acute emphasis on human depravity and the devil's action in the world.

In contrast, the English Gothic model relies principally on more literary paradigms. William Perry claims that 'it is Milton, and not Revelation, that has created [its] particular concepts of Hell and Heaven and Satan and God'.[114] The English Gothic's devil's debt to Milton is clear but there is equal debt owed to the Faustian narrative, whose most famous exponents are Christopher Marlowe (1592) and Johann Goethe (1808, 1834).[115] This tale of a cynical and sensuous over-reacher's pact with the devil has its roots in Reformation Germany[116] as a cautionary tale portraying the devil's ability to deceive and condemns spiritual pride and blasphemous self-sufficiency.[117] It also has links to the Jobian narrative. This is particularly clear in Goethe's version in his addition to the tale, the 'Prologue in heaven', which depicts God's wager with Mephistopheles over Faust's soul. The Faustian narrative, though, has always owed a debt to the Jobian tale in its emphasis on a protagonist chosen as special and put to the test. Faust is a failed Job, a Judas in Job's clothing. His sins are the devil's own – overreaching pride.

The model we find in the English Gothic is that of a 'special case' Faustian pact as I will demonstrate with *The Monk*. First, we have a 'special' protagonist, Ambrosio, worthy of particular demonic attention. Ambrosio warrants this label due to his position of spiritual authority ('the Man of Holiness'[118]); his own opinion of himself (he as 'superior to the rest of

[113] Thomas Nashe, *The Terrors of the Night* (London: John Danter for William Jones, 1594), p. 27
[114] William Gilmer Perry, 'English Literature's Debt to the Bible,' *The North American Review,* 198:693 (1913) 227-239 (p. 233)
[115] There are, of course, significant differences in both incident and emphasis in these texts – my account highlights the basic narrative similarities.
[116] The anonymous 1587 German chapbook *Historia von D. Johann Fausten* is the first example of a published text.
[117] John R. Williams, 'Introduction', in *Faust and the Ur-Faust,* trans. with an Introduction and Notes by John R. Williams, (Ware: Wordsworth World Classics, 2007), p. viii
[118] Lewis, *The Monk,* I, p. 18

his fellow creatures' with 'no single stain upon his conscience'.[119]); and his propensity for evil ('hell boasts no miscreant more guilty than yourself'.[120]). Second, there is a narrative of temptation to illicit pleasures which lead to an ultimate, explicit surrender of the soul. This idea of the possibility of the soul's transfer between two oppositional powers suggests both the hostile nature of the devil's relationship to the Divine (although it does not remove the possibility of the devil's unwilling service to the Divine will) and places emphasis on the demonic/Divine relationship above that of the demonic/human relationship. Lastly, the devil is described as having a distinctive appearance, arguably largely conned from medieval Catholic depictions of the demonic, which will always ultimately be revealed.[121] None of these tropes has any specific biblical precedent.[122]

The sublimity of the demonic is the necessary correlate of these tropes: a superhuman devil for a superhuman protagonist and an opponent of Divine sublimity who can offer opposition through his own sublimity (however borrowed and perverse). What we find in the English Gothic, and reflected in its aesthetic strategies, is a distance from specific biblical paradigms of demonic action in the world. New Testament accounts of the devil's interaction with the human are ignored for an overarching narrative of the relationship between God and the devil. The devil's 'function' and 'meaning' is mediated through his relationship to the Divine rather than the human. He appears as an enemy only of the wicked, not the godly. The Scottish Gothic's depiction of the Devil, by contrast, is rooted in just these biblical accounts of the interaction between the human and the demonic: a different theological focus, which necessitates a different aesthetic of demonic representation.

The essence of this Scottish tradition is manifested in the difficulty inherent in identification of the demonic. This difficulty owes nothing to deceptive beauty. The Scottish devil is hard to identify precisely because his appearance is not understood through visual

[119] Ibid., I, p. 45
[120] Lewis, *The Monk,* II, p. 263
[121] This link between the English tradition and a Catholic heritage is largely ignored but manifests not only in the visual imaginary of the devil. The similarities in plots between French Jesuit-Raised Jacques Cazotte's *The Devil in Love* (1772) and Lewis' *The Monk* are particularly suggestive of an Anglican/Catholic tradition of demonic thought and representation.
[122] The idea of the demonic pact has much closer links to folkloric and witchcraft traditions again based not on biblical exegesis but rather on church (arguably originally Catholic) teaching and traditions.

markers. Rather, the protagonist must recognise demonic patterns of behaviour and we, as readers, must recognise fictional patterns of representation based strongly on biblical teaching. 'Be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour' (1 Peter 5:8). As Calvin comments, the Devil here is imagined as the 'adversary of the godly',[123] a constant presence in the world seeking continually to bring anyone he can to destruction. This figure may wander in disguise, a false teacher or an anti-Christ who 'come[s] to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly [is a] ravening wolf'. (Matthew 7:15) The devil is dangerous precisely because he can't be recognised.

In *Justified Sinner,* our first glimpse of the demonic Gil-Martin is of 'a young man of mysterious appearance'.[124] There is nothing remarkable about his appearance (except, as I will discuss later, his doubling of Robert) nor is there any associative sublime appended to his entrance into the narrative. He appears in a number of guises throughout the book, appearing, at different times, to resemble different people. His face changes but it is always that of an ordinary man. The mystery lies in the impossibility of identification. There is no idea here of deceptive beauty or sublimity and as a consequence no emphasis on the relationship between divinity and the demonic.

On the contrary, the difficulty in identifying the Devil from other humans confounds the human and the demonic, raising uncomfortable questions about man's similarity to the Devil and his own connection to evil. This is further underlined by the phenomenon of the devilish double. When Robert first meets Gil-Martin, he realises that Gil-Martin was 'the same being as myself!'[125] Ironically, Robert later misidentifies the devil as a guardian angel thanks to this likeness – a parody both of Robert's self-aggrandising tendencies and of the ineffable beauty of the English devil's borrowed countenance, which must make secretly prowling the world for the unwary problematic. The Devil does not limit himself to appearing to Robert in his own likeness. Robert's blackouts, during which he acts with no later knowledge of his actions, suggest possession. His ability to be in two places at once, both bed-ridden and stalking his brother, suggests that the Devil is taking his form and

[123] John Calvin, *Commentaries on Catholic Epistles*, trans. and ed. by Rev. John Owen (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1860), p. 150
[124] James Hogg, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of Justified Sinner* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1824), p. 174
[125] Ibid., pp. 175-6

acting in his place. As the novel progresses, the line between his own identity and his double's becomes increasingly unclear.

This demonic doubling of the protagonist introduces two key features of Calvinist doctrine. The first of these, as Gibben points out, is the idea of the 'divided self'[126] with man composed of 'flesh' and 'spirit'.[127] Calvin explains the terms thus: Under the name of flesh…is meant the nature of man' and 'the Spirit signifieth a refourmed nature, or the grace of regeneration, what thing else then is the flesh but the olde man?'[128] In other words, man contains both good and evil, his redeemed self is still acted upon by his unredeemed (old) self. As Milbank argues, Robert's demonic double appears at the moment when he finally believes in his own election. He 'den[ies] his own duality' and it is made literally manifest in his demonic other.[129] The devilish double underlines man's internal duality by erasing the difference between the human protagonist and the possibly demonic other, hinting at the 'devil' in all of us. In doing so, it underlines an emphasis on total depravity. What often remains ignored in criticism is the inherent counterpoint of this concept of total depravity: the reality of redemption. The doctrine of 'original sin' states that everyone is 'sinful at birth' (Psalm 51:5) due to the inheritance of sin from the first father, Adam.[130] They are thus in need of the redemption offered by Christ. Milbank suggests that the double functions as a reminder of a 'dark and dualist universe' of double predestination in which 'we are blind as well as bound' if not elect.[131] However, Scottish Hogg's text both reflects an underlying Calvinist dualism and resist its extremities. Even those who are not saved, such as Robert, are within reach of salvation various times. 'One of the good angels […] commissioned by

[126] Gibben, Crawford, 'James Hogg and the Demonology of Scottish Writing', in *The Lure of the Dark Side: Satan and Western Demonology in Popular Culture,* ed. by Christopher Partridge and Eric Christianson (London: Equinox, 2009), 171-181 (p. 174)
[127] Galatians 5:16-17: 'This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and there are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.'
[128] John Calvin, *A Commentarie of M. Calvin upon the Epistle to the Galatians,* trans. by R. V. (London: Thomas Purfoote, 1581), p. 128
[129] Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 165
[130] See Romans 5:12-21. The theory of original sin stems from Augustinian thought and is central to many systems of Christian theology. It explains how 'sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned' (Rom 5:12) and thus through one man, Jesus, all can be saved. The ability of one man to atone for all rests on one man's ability to bring sin to all.
[131] Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 152

the Almighty'[132] comes to Robert, his hand is stayed against his brother and he almost repents.

Embedded in this possibility of salvation is a refutation of an extreme doctrine of election, the antinomianism to which Robert subscribes and which is one of the main foci of criticism in the novel. Antinomianism is a '"fanatical" doctrine of double predestination:'[133] the belief that both the elect and the damned are predestined to their states irrespective of their actions. Therefore, 'no bypast transgression, nor any future act…could be instrumental in altering' one's election.[134] In such a theology, as Robert maintains, the elect can sin with impunity, encountering the Pauline question, 'Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?' (Romans 6:1) with a resounding 'yes'. Rejecting this teaching, Hogg's depiction of the demonic double encodes the possibility of salvation for even the worst of sinners alongside an almost Arminian emphasis on saving faith: faith and repentance can save.[135]

The Scottish devil is both theologically and aesthetically conceived in relation to the human rather than the divine. The emphasis is on a devil who, through all too human disguise, inserts himself into the world of the human. The absence of sublimity allows him to move within this space and for the ambiguity of his identity to remain. This focuses our attention on the duality of all men, rather than the incipient evil of a few. The insistent 'normality' of the Scottish Gothic devil does not diminish his power to corrupt but rather offers a more egalitarian vision of demonic interaction in the human world. One need not be 'special' to qualify; the Scottish Gothic leaves no-one safe. The reader may sit in judgment upon a Victoria or an Ambrosio, safe in our perceived moral distance from those who 'few have ventured as far as … in the paths of sin'.[136] By contrast, the Scottish devil, which all too often wears our own face, leaves us with no such comfort. He prowls around 'as a roaring lion' and may appear at any time to anyone. This is highlighted by an inset tale in *Justified Sinner.* Robert's valet Penpunt tells a story of the devil disguising himself as a preacher and deceiving the people of Auchtermuchty. Robert considers himself a special case, a

[132] Hogg, *Justified Sinner,* p. 240
[133] Louis Simpson, *James Hogg: A Critical Study* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1962), p. 170
[134] Hogg, *Justified Sinner,* p. 173
[135] Romans 10: 9: 'If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord", and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.'
[136] Dacre, *Zofloya,* III, p. 233

'champion in the cause of Christ and his Church'.[137] Others view him more realistically as nothing more than 'a selfish and conceited blackguard, who made great pretences of religious devotion'[138] undistinguished by any extraordinary capacity for evil. Penpunt's tale highlights that Robert, far from being a 'special case', is one of a number who are open to the Devil's influence due to their extreme antinomianism. He is a symptom of a shared sickness rather than a unique figure. This emphasis on false teaching and perverted theology is key to understanding the function of the Scottish devil.

The devil of the Scottish Gothic comes not as a deceiving angel, tempting you with the flesh, but as a false teacher, distorting your understanding. He engages in what Douglas Gifford identifies as 'the game of souls'.[139] In this 'game', the 'Devil must not actually lie to Robert; Robert must become his victim within a framework of 'truth''.[140] The following example demonstrates this technique, for here Gil-Martin mixes biblical texts and erudite sophistry to deceive Robert by 'explaining' Ecclesiastes 9:10:

> whatever thine hand findeth to do, do it with all they might, for none of us knows what a day may bring forth. That is, none of us knows what is pre-ordained, but whatever it is pre-ordained we *must* do, and none of these things will be laid to our charge.

While each of the components here is individually biblically sound,[141] the Devil ties them together in such a way as to distort their meaning. This 'new' meaning condones whatever action Robert commits by suggesting it was predestined and inevitable. This 'game of souls' is rooted in biblical precedents regarding the devil's interaction with 'mankind', for the devil

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[137] Hogg, *Justified Sinner,* p. 202
[138] Ibid., p. 151
[139] Douglas Gifford, 'James Hogg: The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner', in *Scottish Literature in English and Scots,* ed. by Douglas Gifford, Sarah Dunnigan and Alan Macgillivray, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), p. 303
[140] Ibid., p. 303
[141] The quote is taken from Ecclesiastes 9:10, which emphasises the fleeting nature of man's life and using, rather than wasting, the time allotted. 'None of us know what it preordained' may refer to a number of biblical passages on the obscurity of God's plans like that we find in Mark 13:32: 'But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.' 'Whatever it is pre-ordained we *must* do' refers to the concept predestination of Romans 8:30: 'Whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whome he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.' 'None of these things will be laid to our charge' refers to the doctrine of substitutionary atonement according to which Jesus 'once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust' (1 Peter 3:18) that we may be 'counted for righteousness' (Romans 4:5)

'was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him'. (John 8:44) It was his lies in the Garden of Eden that tempted Eve to eat the apple, signalling the arrival of death in the world. The second precedent is found in Jesus' 'temptation in the wilderness' in which the devil tempts Jesus three times with truths that are yet temptations. [142] In the second temptation, the Devil quotes from Psalm 91:11-12, using the scriptural promise that angels will protect him, to encourage Jesus to jump from a height and sinfully to 'test the Lord thy God'(Matthew 4:7). In the Scottish Gothic, the devil is a tempter, misusing scripture, distorting theology and speaking 'truth in a way which achieves the effect of lies'.[143] His role is not simply that of a deceiver, as we find in the English Gothic, it is that of a false testifier, a twister of truth, an enemy of God and man, who seeks to lure even the most careful away into theological error.

The English and the Scottish traditions of demonic depiction engage in different theological tasks, both of which are defined and supported by different aesthetic strategies. The Scottish Gothic's devil is unidentifiable, often wears a human face, doubles the human and thus represents the inherent duality of the soul in keeping with the Scottish Presbyterian emphasis on a Calvinist conception of internal duality and universal depravity. The Scottish Gothic warns of the devil's hand in the everyday theological lives of all in keeping with the radical Reformation emphasis on right doctrine. Such a depiction of the demonic does not challenge the existence of God but questions human theologies[144] and reinforces the importance and possibility of free-will and salvation both in its frequent connection to a rejection of antinomian teaching and in the recognisable salvific counterpoint of man's inherent duality. Mercy is as much a feature of the Scottish Gothic as judgment. Heaven intervenes as well as hell. In contrast, the demonic sublimity of the English Gothic devil places at the forefront the relationship of the Divine and the demonic. While the devil's sublimity may be revealed as perverse, it is as likely to represent a perverse concept of the divine, a distorted vision of a diminished deity who offers little but

[142] Matthew 4:1-11
[143] Gifford, 'James Hogg,' p. 299
[144] Hogg was an enemy to both 'deists' and 'the slave of superstition' though it was the first of these that he viewed as 'more contemptible.' James Hogg, *A Series of Lay Sermons on Good Principles and Good Breeding,* (London: James Fraser, 1834), p. 298

terror.[145] It mixes orthodox moral theologies about the sin of pride and the slippery slope of sin with a questioning attitude to the problem of free-will and determinism. In the English Gothic, demonic sublimity and its exclusive emphasis on the terror sublime, erases the line between demonic and Divine judgment, picturing a devil who is punisher as well as tempter, an agent as much as an opponent of the Divine, and a God of wrath but not of mercy. In both traditions, the theological ramifications of the demonic in the narrative are intrinsically linked to the aesthetic strategies of demonic depiction. In the following chapter, I will move beyond a consideration of the aesthetic of the Gothic in its depiction of the supernatural, and focus instead upon Gothic interactions with contemporary debates surrounding a specific manifestation of the supernatural – the dream.

[145] Ironically, the Scottish Presbyterian Gothic, arising in a more strongly Calvinist tradition, points to a more Arminian reading of the relationship of the human and the Divine, whereas the English Gothic in its depiction of the demonic often creates a 'perverse' conception of the Deity in line with extreme Calvinist theology.

Chapter 4: "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesie": Gothic Dreams

And it shall come to pass in the last days (faith God) I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesie, and your young men shall see visions; and your old men shall dream dreams - Acts 2:17

In the previous chapters, I have shown that the transcendent, the Divine and the theological, far from disappearing in the Gothic, remain wound through the very structures of the texts themselves. In this chapter, I turn to one of the central questions concerning the interplay of the theological and the Gothic: the depiction of the supernatural. The supernatural, in a range of forms, is a keystone of the early Gothic, from the avenging ghosts of Walpole and the phantasmal shadows of Radcliffe to the prophetic dreams of Clara Reeve and the demons of Matthew Lewis, Charlotte Dacre and James Hogg. Gothic criticism repeatedly depicts the early British Gothic as a reflection of wider secularisation. Robert Geary, for example, suggests that the supernatural becomes increasingly untethered from a 'traditional religious framework'[1] and its use becomes tied to the aesthetic production of fear and a theologically empty experience of the numinous.

There has been some resistance to this narrative. Glen Cavaliero suggests that Gothic texts 'show little or no concern with metaphysical reality as such'[2] and that 'preternaturalist motifs [were] designed for aesthetic effect'.[3] However, he notes that 'for a religious person spirit is no mere 'aspect'; it is the primary reality, and any discussion of the supernatural which does not allow for such belief and take it seriously is self-stultifying from the start.'[4] Contemporary theological discourse and the potential for belief must be taken into account when reviewing the use of the supernatural in Gothic texts. Diane Hoeveler notes that

> the process of secularisation that occurs in the gothic is not a simple forward-moving trajectory that we would recognize as the Enlightenment project, but more of an

[1] Robert Geary, *The Supernatural in Gothic Fiction: Horror, Belief and Literary Change* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), p. 16
[2] Glen Cavaliero, *The Supernatural and English Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. viii
[3] Ibid., p. 26
[4] Ibid., p. 15

> oscillation in which the transcendent and traditional religious beliefs and tropes are alternatively preserved and reanimated and then blasted and condemned by the conclusions of the works.[5]

Hoeveler here usefully notes the necessity of recognising a variety of co-existent conceptions of the supernatural, however her continued emphasis on a rationalising discourse effectively reproduces the narrative of the gradual abandonment of belief.

Hoeveler's concept of secularisation is based on the work of philosopher Charles Taylor's *The Secular Age* (2007) but, in its emphasis on a rationally secularizing tendency, avoids the more radical implications of the work. Robert Miles notes the wider relevance of Taylor's theory to the work of Radcliffe and the Gothic. Miles, in accordance with Taylor, argues that that 'the separation of Church and state and the decline of religion',[6] which often form the popular conception of secularisation, are inadequate either to measure or represent the secularising process of the eighteenth century. For Taylor, secularism can be more accurately understood as 'an unheard of pluralism of outlooks, religious and non- and anti- religious' than by the absence of theological discourse.[7] For Taylor, in a secular society, 'we cannot help but be aware that there are a number of different construals, views which intelligent, reasonably undeluded people, of good will, can and do disagree on'.[8] In other words, secularisation is not a process in which belief disappears, rather belief is broken up with multiple discourses allowed to exist simultaneously. The implications of this for the Gothic are of central interest to any attempt to discuss the theological underpinnings of the incidents and beliefs depicted therein. Multiple discourses intersect, at times competing and at times coexisting, in many early Gothic texts: texts that tease out the reality, meaning, importance and nature of the supernatural; the theological continues to be a primary interpretative framework.

One of the most prolific manifestations of the potentially supernatural in the Gothic is the dream. Thus, in this chapter, I will investigate the depiction of dreams in early Gothic

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[5] Diane Hoeveler, *Gothic Riffs: Secularizing the Uncanny in the European Imaginary 1780-1820* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2010), p. xvi

[6] Robert Miles, 'Popular Romanticism and the problem of belief', in *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic,* ed. by Dale Townshend and Angela Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 117-134 (p. 123)

[7] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 437

[8] Ibid., p. 11

fiction and the multiple discourses with which they both explicitly and implicitly engage. In doing so, I will map the intersection of various conceptions of the dream - medical, theological, cynical, enthusiastic – which provide both the historical background to the concept of the dream in the eighteenth century and a picture of the contemporary discussion. A focus on the dream will allow for a considered investigation of theologies of the supernatural within Gothic fiction away from the arguments of 'spectacalisation' and 'empty signification', which surround the issue of more 'dramatic' manifestations of the supernatural and their undeniable affective impact. [9] Dreams rarely perform an affective function for the reader in creating terror or horror as they are explicitly experienced as unreal. In order to engage effectively with the contemporary understanding of the dream reflected in the Gothic, we must first escape modern conceptions of the dream and its function and operation.

The Purpose of Dreams

For God Speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumbering upon the bed: Then he openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instruction, That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword - Job 33:14-17

In a modern, de-theologised conception of the dream, it is essentially purposeless, in that it has no externally imposed purpose. As Hoeveler states, dreams are considered 'a privileged site of meaning' in which 'highly charged signifiers intersect with highly ambiguous signifieds'.[10] This meaning, however, is not imposed from an external power but conceived of psychoanalytically; dreams offer insight into the unconscious of the dreamer. Criticism on the famous dream sequences in Radcliffe's *Romance of the Forest* (1791)

[9] Clergy suggests that by the end of the eighteenth century, supernatural manifestations had become either a 'source of aesthetic pleasure' or a spectacle. In both cases, the depiction of the supernatural manifestation was disassociated from the possibility of belief. Emma Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 54

[10] Diane Hoeveler, 'The heroine, the abbey and popular Romantic textuality: *The Romance of the Forest* (1791)' in *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic,* ed. by Dale Townshend and Angela Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 100-117 (p. 102)

exemplifies the application of explicitly psychoanalytical conceptions of the dream to critical work on Gothic dreams. Hoeveler, for example, assesses Adeline's dreams as 'a veritable treasure trove of adolescent anxiety' where we find ourselves 'in the very rudimentary realm of the unconscious mind … within the psyche and subjectivity of the Gothic heroine'.[11] Elisabeth Bronfen argues that Adeline's dreams represent a kind of 'gothic hysteria', a form of phantasy work that she characterises as a 'malady of imagination'.[12] For Bronfen, the heroine phantastically navigates her own position within the gothic family romance in dreams soaked with imagery pertaining to castration, seduction and the primal fantasy.[13] While not all critical works take a directly psychoanalytical approach, they remain influenced by a modern psychoanalytical conception of the dream. Devandra Varma summarises the default attitude of the modern critic when he argues that dreams are 'that realm of mysterious subconsciousness which flows eternally like some dark underground river beneath the surface of human life'.[14]

Such an understanding of dreams fosters a critical response to fictional dreams in which their 'purpose' is conceived of purely narratively or aesthetically. In Bronfen and Hoeveler's accounts, for example, dreams function as tools of characterisation or offer insight into the underlying 'psychic drama' of the text. The dream, effectually, descends into the realm of allegory but can also serve a direct narrative function as a revelatory catalyst. Adeline's dreams, for example, provide her with the necessary impetus to confront the riddle of the abbey, of her parentage and of her father's fate. As Varma notes, dreams frequently function in Gothic text as tools to uncover the past, [15] releasing pertinent information as required into the narrative. They may also reveal the future, indicating the resolution of the tale (as in *Romance of the Forest*) or creating a sense of dramatic tension (as in Lorenzo's dream in *The Monk* (1796) which prophesies in allegorical form the grisly events of the novel). In her discussion of Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron,* Emma Clery points to another potential narrative/aesthetic function of the dream, arguing that 'the use of dreams as omens is designed […] to protect the feelings of the reader from being too

[11] Ibid., p. 102/104
[12] Elisabeth Bronfen, *The Knotted Subject* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 150
[13] Ibid., p. 152
[14] Devandra Varma, *The Gothic Flame* (London: Arthur Barker Ltd, 1957), p. 80
[15] Ibid., p. 80

violently aroused'.[16] Dreams, according to Clery, act as a 'distancing' form of the supernatural: a filter which monitors and controls the affective impact of the work.

While not without value, these readings of Gothic dreams rest upon anachronistic assumptions as to the nature of the dream and its essential purposelessness. They largely ignore a contemporary understanding of the dream, its nature, function and provenance, and the theological valence of dreams for contemporary readers. There are inevitably some similarities between contemporary and modern understandings of the dream but it is vital to understand the difference in framing of these apparently overlapping views. The idea that dreams can reflect internal reality is a standard feature of Early Modern dream discourse. In 1594, Thomas Nashe argues that 'a Dreame is nothing else but the Eccho of our conceipts of the day'[17] and 200 years later, in 1794, Malcolm Macleod asserts that 'the soul in a dream beholds herself as in a mirror'.[18] As the use of the term 'soul' implies, this self-revelation is conceived of theologically rather than 'psychoanalytically'. As Thomas Tryon notes in 1689, 'there [is] scarce any thing that more discovers the secret bent of our minds and inclinations to Virtue or Vice, or this or that particular evil…than these nocturnal sallies and reaches of the Soul'.[19] Dreams reveal the condition of the soul and its weighting towards evil or good, towards the 'flesh' or the 'spirit'. As Charles Stewart underlines in his investigation of the erotic dream, this revelation of the hidden is not a manifestation of the 'repressed' but rather of the 'suppressed'. What comes to light in dreams is what the 'intentional self-making' of the day 'with conscious and intentional acts of exclusion', based often on religious conviction, hides through the construction of a behavioural façade, bodily self-control or self-deception.[20]

Whilst this self-revelation continued to be understood theologically, the discourse surrounding the mechanics of its function changed significantly over the course of the eighteenth century. Sasha Handley notes the impact of the 'neurological turn',[21] beginning in the seventeenth century, which over the next century saw an almost complete move

[16] Emma Clery, *Women's Gothic,* 2nd edn (Tavistock: Northcote House, 2004), p. 33
[17] Thomas Nashe, *The Terrors of the Night* (London: John Danter for William Jones, 1594), p. 15
[18] Malcolm Macleod, *The Mystery of Dreams Revealed* (London: J. Roach, 1794), p. 20
[19] Thomas Tryon, *A Treatise of Dreams and Visions* (([n.p.]: [n. pub],1689), p. 6
[20] Charles Stewart, 'Erotic Dreams and Nightmares from Antiquity to Present', *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute,* 8:2 (June 2002), 279-309 (p. 281)
[21] Sasha Handley, *Sleep in Early Modern England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016), p. 20

away from the previous explanatory emphasis on 'humours' and 'vapours' with the stomach as 'source' of dreams. [22] This previous emphasis, as we see in the work of Thomas Tryon, on the predominant humour and/or vapour as the source of dreams meant that dreams were understood to reflect, in broad strokes, the predominant traits of the dreamer. Handley argues that Thomas Willis' ground-breaking work on the brain in 1660, in which 'he identified the motions of the brain and nerves as the key to all bodily operations, including sleep'[23] marked a turn to an ever-increasing emphasis on the neurological roots of dreams furthered and popularised by such neurological pioneers as William Cullen or George Cheyne. Equally important in the developing 'neurological' or 'proto-psychological' understanding of the dream was association theory, which was both explicitly and implicitly referenced by dream theorists. Joseph Priestley, for example references both Locke and Hartley in his discussion on the possible content and sources of dreams.[24] Associationist ideas are also reflected less explicitly in the writing of thinkers like Reverend Saalfeld who, while asserting that dreams predominantly reproduce images or thoughts 'experienced' during the day, suggested that associated concepts, images and emotions may also dominate the dream. The anonymous author of a piece on dreams in the *Dublin Literary Gazette* of 1830 clarifies the impact of association on our dreams: arguing that 'We dream more often of those old associations which have momentarily flitted across our imagination, called into brief but vivid existence by some of the countless circumstances' of the day.[25] Such a view of dreams meant that the 'self-reflection' which they allowed was conceived of as both broader (reflecting things beyond their current concerns) and more precise (reflecting not simply a general bent) than earlier conceptions of the dream.

These medicalised understandings of the dream co-existed with a theological discourse. The earlier we turn in the history of dream discourse, the greater the theological

[22] Thomas Tryon offers a standard formulation of this idea: Sleep is 'a partial temporary Cessation of animal Actions, and the functions of the external Senses, caused (immediately) by the weakness of the Animal Faculty, proceeding from a sweet and stupefying Vapour, arising from the Concoition and Digestion of the Alimentary food.' Tryon, *Dreams and Visions,* pp.11-2

[23] Handley, *Sleep*, p. 32

[24] 'Man is formed with various senses, by means of which he receives all his primary ideas; and these ideas are the elements of all our knowledge; those which Mr. Locke calls *ideas of reflexion,* according to Dr. Hartley, whose observations on this subject are the latest, and by far the most accurate of any…being nothing more than combinations of simple ideas, originally derived from impressions made by sensible objects.' Priestley, *Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever Part III containing an Answer to Mr Paine's Age of Reason,* 2nd edn (Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1795), pp. 45-6

[25] [Anon.], 'Dreams' in *Dublin Literary Gazette,* 23, (June 5, 1830), p. 363

emphasis and the darker the conception of the dream world. Thomas Nashe argues, in his influential 1594 treatise *The Terrors of the Night,* that

> The Night is the Divells Blacke booke, wherein he recordeth all our transgressions […] the divell keepeth his audit in our sin-guilty consciences, no sense but surrenders to our memorie a true bill of parcels of his detestable impieties. The table of our hart is turned to an index of iniquities, and all our thoughts are nothing but texts to condemn us.[26]

In sleep, Nashe argues, reason, the faculty that differentiates man from beast and which defines him as created 'in the image of God' (Genesis 1:27), shuts down. Thus, in sleep man is open to attack, his soul controlled entirely by the 'sinful nature' and the influence of the devil. The theological underpinnings of such a position are the reality of demonic interference, the possibility of demonic free agency and an internal duality not simply between body and soul but between the 'sinful nature' (or 'Flesh') and the redeemed or new self ('Spirit'). Nashe's conception of the dream is the least 'secular' in any sense of the term but we find these underlying principles repeated throughout eighteenth-century dream discourse.

Elements of Nashe's work find an echo in Tryon's *Treatise of Dreams and Visions* (1689), but Tryon represents a significantly different conception of both sleep and dreams, one which became increasingly dominant. Instead of conceiving of the sleeping self as completely vulnerable spiritually, he argues that while the five external senses sleep, a number of internal senses are awake. He identifies the inner senses as common sense,[27] Phantasie[28], Judgment, and Memory. Of these four, judgment is always absent and memory sometimes lacking[29] but 'common sense' and 'phantasie' continue to function in sleep and it is these sources, potentially wholly disconnected from demonic influence, which provide the images and motifs of dreams. The impact of empiricist thought is evident in the emphasis on the fact that the dream's images are things 'already seen'. Despite this 'scientific' conception of the *material* of dreams, there is a continued theological narrative. For Tryon,

[26] Nashe, *Terrors,* pp. 1-2
[27] Common sense: 'where all the diverse Objects apprehended, or rather communicated by the outward Senses, are assembled, and gathered together.' Tryon, *Dreams and Visions,* p. 16
[28] The Phantasie 'makes new or compounded Images or Conceits of its own' from the material of the common sense.' Ibid., p. 16
[29] Tryon connects the ability to remember dreams with the virtue of the dreamer.

as the body and external senses sleep, the soul has 'shaken off for a time the Fetters of the Senses' and is 'on the Wing'[30] able not only to recreate material from the day but to have 'secret intercourses [with] Spirits' and 'wonderful Communications of the Divine Goodness'.[31] While the soul 'flies free', its dominating essence (evil or good, 'Flesh' or 'Spirit') dictates the nature of its dreams while the soul 'enjoys' freer communion with the spiritual world.

Lockean empiricism was increasingly influential in eighteenth-century dream discourse. Locke's assertion that all knowledge derives from experience (supplied by our external senses) and reflection[32] and his vehement refutation of the 'soul's' ability to think while the body sleeps are echoed not only in Tryon but in the majority of dream texts contemporary to the Gothic. In 1764, Saalfeld writes that in the natural dream only pre-existent ideas and 'objects absent from the body; and which formerly were impressed on the imaginative faculty'[33] appear and that there will be 'confusion and disorder, in connecting the images'[34] as the faculty of judgment or reason is not active. While most writers do not reference these concepts as explicitly as Saalfeld, they continued to underpin conceptions of the dream.

Humean scepticism was also influential, although to a far lesser degree. In his 1748 essay 'Of Miracles' Hume declares prophecy (and the prophetic dream) to be a miracle[35] and suggests that:

> A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very

[30] Ibid., p 3
[31] Ibid., p. 3
[32] 'Our observation employed either about external sensible objects, or about the internal operations of our minds, perceived and reflected on by ourselves, is that which supplies our understandings with all the materials of thinking.' John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* 4 vols (New York: Valentine Seaman, 1824), I, p. 108
[33] Reverend Saalfeld, *A Philosophical Discourse on the Nature of Dreams,* trans. from the German (London: T. Becket and P. A. de Hondt, 1764), p. 5
[34] Ibid., p. 32
[35] 'What we have said of miracles may be applied, without any variation, to prophecies; and indeed, all prophecies are real miracles; and, as such only, can be admitted as proofs of any revelation.' David Hume, 'Of Miracles', appended to *An Enquiry into the Pretensions of Richard Brothers* by A Freethinker, (London: J. Parsons, 1795), p. 46)

> nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined.[36]

This scepticism questions the possibility of any source for dream material beyond that of our 'sensation' and reflection'.[37] This conception of the dream is echoed in the anonymously authored *Anti-Canidia* (1762), which argues that belief in modern dreams as prophecy is 'an abuse of sense and reason' formed from ignorance, 'credited by the vulgar and illiterate' and represented as true by the 'artful deceit of imposters'. [38] Other writers less directly engaged with Hume retain an emphasis on wholly 'natural' explanations of dreams. John Ferriar in his *Theory of Apparitions* (1813), for example, equates dream visions with hallucinations as products of a diseased mind. More commonly, however, we find that thinkers combined Humean scepticism with theological belief by rejecting as unjustifiable superstition a conception of the dream as universally 'significant', but accepting the possibility of supernaturally located dreams.[39]

Ferriar's use of the term 'hallucinations' suggests one of the principal discourses connected to predominantly materialist readings of the dream, within dream discourse and Gothic literature: the connection between mental disorder and dreams. As Tyron notes, there is 'an Affinity or Analogy between *Dreams* and *Madness*'[40] and dreams may function as a cause or symptom of madness. Increasingly, hallucinations, troubled sleep, nightmares and sleep paralysis were understood as a symptom of neurological malfunction. Such a connection is reflected in a number of Gothic texts. In William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794), in which the relentlessly pursued protagonist is repeatedly forced to interrogate his grasp of reality, the line between dream, madness and reality is questioned. Just as Caleb has begun to consider his previous torments 'a distempered and tormenting dream',[41] the behaviour of all those around him changes and he questions whether 'some alienation of [his] own understanding generated the horrid vision' and 'endeavoured to awaken from [his] dream'.[42] Dreams here, denuded of theological signification, become potential symptoms of an 'alienation of the understanding'. The anonymously published 'The

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[36] Ibid., p. 24
[37] Locke, *Human Understanding,* pp. 108-9
[38] [Anon.], *Anti-Canidia* (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1762), p. 41/44
[39] Saalfeld, *Philosophical Discourse,* p. 111
[40] Tryon, *Dreams and Visions,* p. 249
[41] William Godwin, *Caleb Williams*, 2nd edn (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1796), III, p. 236
[42] Ibid., III, p. 240

Astrologer's Prediction or The Maniac's Fate' (1826) offers an example of a text where the relationship between madness and dreams is inflected with theological undertones. The night before killing his wife, Reginald has a dream in which he sees his mother calling for his wife's death. A day before, he had vowed that 'thy Reginald cannot harm thee',[43] but he later kills her in a fit of 'determined madness'.[44] Here the dream functions as both symptom and cause of madness: a representation of his disturbed intellect and a catalyst for his descent into homicidal rage. The text, however, confuses a straightforward 'medical' reading of the dream with a discourse of occult prophesy (the astrologer's prediction), predestination and supernatural influence. The dream occurs on a fantastic boundary between reality and delusion, the supernatural and the natural.

As this brief analysis of 'The Astrologer's Prediction' suggests, despite the influence of empiricism, cynicism and neurological understandings of the dream, theologised conceptions of both sleep and dreams remain prominent in contemporary discourse and within Gothic literature. There continued to be a 'persistent fusion of natural and supernatural explanations'.[45] Even writers as virulently sceptical as the author of *Anti-Canidia* and Ferriar allowed exceptions for biblical examples, thereby allowing the possibility of divinely influenced dreams. Ferriar, for example, explicitly states 'that the following treatise is applicable, in its principles, to profane history and to the delusions of individuals only…What methods may have been employed by Providence, on extraordinary occasions, to communicate with men, I do not presume to investigate'.[46] Ferriar's use of the term 'providence' is indicative of a broader trend within dream literature: the use of specifically religious terminology.

'Providence' frequently appears in discussions of the dream; 'soul' is almost universally found. Tryon's assertion that in sleep, the body sleeps while the *soul* remains active is implicitly or explicitly repeated in the majority of sleep texts. Furthermore, from Charles Drelincourt's exceptionally popular *The Christian's Consolation Against the Fears of Death* (1641) and Andrew Baxter's *An Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul* (1733) to

[43] [Anon.], 'The Astrologer's Prediction', in *The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales,* ed. by Christ Baldick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 63-81 (p. 68)
[44] Anon, 'The Astrologer's Prediction,' p. 69
[45] Handley, *Sleep,* p. 28.
[46] John Ferriar, *A Theory of Apparitions* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1813), pp. ix-x

the more accessible work of Joseph Addison in *The Spectator 110* (1712) or the dream treatise of Malcolm Macleod (1794), dreams are widely represented as proof of the immortality of the human soul and examples of a working providence. Dreams demonstrated the ability of the soul to function without the body, implying its immateriality and immortality. As Robert Cox notes, there was a 'parallel [drawn] between sleep and death: the putative liberation of the soul in both states from bodily constraint'.[47] For writers and thinkers like Drelincourt sleep was not only the evidence of the soul's immortality:

> We need go no farther than ourselves to find the Image of Death, and of the Resurrection. For is there any Thing that can express Death more perfectly than our dead Sleep, that stupefies the Senses, puts a Stop to the Spirits of our Bodies, and binds up our most active Faculties? … But as soon as such a Person comes to awaken again, to open his Eyes, and to stir and act, he represents a most perfect Image of the Resurrection.[48]

Sleep was, as well as a 'memento mori',[49] a foretaste of death itself and waking was a foretaste of resurrection. Both in the extra-fictional world and in literature, therefore, dreams perform a basic theological function: the nightly reiteration of the wages of sin and the promises of salvation. Tryon further suggests that dreams offer a glimpse of eternity. He poses the question: 'let us suppose a man in a terribly Melancholy frightful Dream, were never to awake, but to continue eternally in this imagined Agony and Dread', would that not be hell? That which is experienced in the dream is 'essential' or 'real' to the soul and may act as an earthly foretaste of the world to come: a warning, a comfort, a punishment.

It is clear that Gothic dreams, intersecting with contemporary discourse, have the ability not only to perform a narrative function but an ideological one. They act as 'in-text' 'evidence' of providence and the immortality of the human soul. This tendency is endemic within the multiple factional collections of dream, vision and apparition narratives which proliferated throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[50] Joseph Addison, for

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[47] Robert Cox, 'The Suburbs of Eternity: On Visionaries and Miraculous Sleepers', in *Worlds of Sleep,* ed. by Lodewijk Brunt and Brigitte Steger (Berlin: Frank and Timme, 2008), 53-75 (p. 63)

[48] Charles Drelincourt, *The Christian's Defense Against the Fears of Death,* trans. by Marius D'Assigny, 22nd edition (London: J. Buckland et al., 1789), p. 390

[49] Cox, 'The Suburbs of Eternity,' p. 63

[50] Many of these collections indiscriminately featured multiple manifestations of the supernatural. All the following include specific examples of theologically understood dreams: Joseph Glanvil, *Saducismus Triumphatus* (1681); J. Aubrey *Miscellanies* (1696); Daniel Defoe *An Essay on the History and Reality of*

example, in his discussion of Glaphyra's dream, in which her deceased husband calls her to him, states that 'the example deserves to be taken notice of, as it contains a most certain proof of the immortality of the soul and Divine providence'.[51] The dreams of the Gothic are frequently similarly represented as evidence of an active providence. In *The Old English Baron* (1778), for example, dreams are indispensable catalysts of the denouement: the accession of Edmund to his rightful position. Edmund's dream, which provides knowledge otherwise unavailable to the hero, is a significant part of the evidentiary proofs, which 'when together furnish a striking lesson to posterity, of the over-ruling hand of Providence'.[52] They are, moreover, evidence of an *active* providence.

Gothic criticism rarely engages with the multiplicity of different theological conceptions of providence but Reeve's emphasis on revelatory dreams as instruments of providence has numerous specific theological ramifications. Geary suggests that Reeve uses dreams as instruments of providence, 'working mostly through second or natural causes'.[53] He suggests that this representation of providence is essentially analogous to a broadly Latitudinarian understanding of providence as confined to working within 'natural laws'. As Robert Mayhew articulates, for Latitudinarians 'the distinction between the providential and the miraculous was straightforward: a miracle was an action *against* the course of nature, whereas Providence was God guiding human actions to a favourable conclusion *by means of* natural laws'.[54] In such a conception of guiding providence, the 'government of the eternal God over all things' is implied as he 'works out all for the good of those who love him' (Romans 8:28) and there is a necessary assumption of 'Divine total prescience' encompassing 'all things that ever were, now are, or ever shall be[55] for he could no otherwise work through immutable natural laws for the current good. Such a conception of providence inevitably raises potentially problematic questions about the reality of free will.

Apparitions (1727); Anonymous, *Life after Death; Or The History of Apparitions, Ghosts, Spirits or Spectres* (1758); Malcolm Macleod, *The Mysteries of Dreams Revealed* (1794).

[51] Joseph Addison, 'Spectator 110 (Friday July 6th, 1711)', in *The Works of Joseph Addison,* 3 vols (New York: Harper Brothers, 1837), I, p. 170

[52] Clara Reeve, *The Old English Baron* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 136

[53] Geary, *Supernatural in Gothic Fiction,* p. 35

[54] Robert Mayhew, 'Gothic Trajectories: Latitudinarian Theology and the Novels of Ann Radcliffe,' *Eighteen Century Fiction,* 15.3-4 (April-July 2003), 583-613 (p. 597)

[55] [Anon.], *A Practical Discourse on Providence,* (London: [n. pub], 1830), p. 7

Such a view of providence is not, however, entirely in keeping with the prophetic and clearly supernaturally influenced dreams of, for example, Reeve and Radcliffe. Contemporary discourse, following Hume, places 'prophetic dreams' within the realm of the miraculous and therefore 'active' or 'special' rather than 'natural providence'. In his discussion of the sources of dreams, Saalfeld, for example, illustrates how the supernatural dream defies the neurological conditions of the natural dream in, for example, its ability to represent the unknown. Reeve and Radcliffe's use of the prophetic dream should not be conceived of as a distancing attempt, denying active providence or the possibility of the present day miraculous in accordance with 'rational religion'. Rather, they offer a refutation to a purely 'natural' theology, affirm Divine intervention and largely avoid implications of total predestination. God's actions become contingent, his power absolute, the exact nature of his omniscience undefined and his interactions with humanity indicative not only of the strict regulations of a wrathful God, but the particular care of a loving one.

In *The Old English Baron,* Edmund and Sir Philip's dreams both function as proof of active guiding Providence. They are also used to engage with the concept of the immateriality and immortality of the soul. The ability to commune with the dead or spirits in the dream world, as Edmund does, reinforces the notion of the soul's activity during sleep. Tryon states that:

> the Eye of the mind and soul is Incorporeal, and therefore it can well see, apprehend and comprehend things incorporeal and Spiritual, especially when it shakes off, and as it were quits itself of the Chains and heavy fetters of its earthly Tabernacle…as comes to pass in Visions and Dreams.[56]

Once free from the body, the soul can commune with other equally non-material entities – in the case of *The Old English Baron,* with apparitions. In the novel, spiritual communications either occur exclusively in dreams (Sir Philip) or dreams function as a gateway to further communication reinforcing Tryon's concept of the special state of dreams.

The dreams of *The Old English Baron* fulfil a further theologically informed function. Dreams, depending on their content, can legitimise or disparage weltanschauungs, characters or events. A general trend in dream discourse is the suggestion that prophetic

[56]Tryon, *Dreams and Visions,* pp. 178-9

dreams are accessible only to the virtuous. The dreams of Sir Philip and Edmund, therefore, confer virtue on both without further proof. Macleod and Tryon go so far as to restrict pleasant dreams to the virtuous, arguing that dreams 'prove a punishment to the wicked in this world, as delightful dreams prove an enjoyment of bliss to the virtuous'.[57] Such an interpretation appears to be appropriated by Reeve in her descriptions of Edmund's dream. Not only is he validated by experiencing spiritual communications in his dream but when he goes back to sleep 'every succeeding idea was happiness without allay'.[58] Such an assertion serves no other purpose than the theologically informed one of representing Edmund's virtue and his ultimate destination, in keeping with the Tryonian concept of dreams' participation in one's eternal state.

It is clear from the examples above that medicalised explanations of the dream did not preclude the possibility of a supernatural source for dreams. A significant number, if not a majority, of dream texts combine the 'medical' and 'theological' overtly in describing the provenance of dreams. Saalfeld, a German cleric whose *Philosophical Discourse* was translated into English in 1764, offers the most fully developed example of this trend.[59] Saalfeld applies Lockean empiricism, Humean scepticism and associationism to his description of the 'domestic' dream, his definition of the wholly natural dream. He also delineates, however, angelic/demonic and Divine dreams. While not abandoning his 'medical' understanding of dreams, a reliance on external stimuli and previous experience as the basic 'material' of the dream, he conceives of a possible external source for the organisation and import of the dream. It is here that we begin to move firmly away from a modern conception of the essential 'purposelessness' of dreams (in any sense external to the mind's mental processes) in both real life and fiction.

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[57] Macleod, *Mystery of Dreams,* p. ix

[58] Reeve, *Old English Baron,* p. 39

[59] I do not wish to suggest the direct influence of Saalfeld's work but rather its reflection and summarisation of much contemporary dream theory. The *Monthly Review*'s review is relatively antagonistic but this antagonism is directed at one specific theological suggestion, Saalfeld's most controversial argument: the possibility that we are condemned because of our dreams. The *Monthly Review's* reaction to this doctrine should not be taken as universal but is indicative of the fact that this was a particularly controversial line of argument regarding dreams and widely rejected. It should also be noted, however, that the critique is a theological one rather than an attack on the possibility of supernatural dreams laid out within the text. [Anon.], 'Review of *A Philosophical Discourse on the Nature of Dreams'* in *The Monthly Review or Literary Journal,* Vol XXX (London: R. Griffiths), p. 492

A theologically informed concept of the dream, in which the identity of a separate soul is implicit, the possibility of external agencies' influence of the dreams is mooted and the dream is conceived of as a possible vehicle of providence, involves a conception of the dream as significative. The dreams of the Gothic are written and conceived of as purposeful beyond the level of narrative, within the text as well as without it. The significance of a dream is intimately connected with its source. Few texts agree in the emphasis they place on the *probable* sources of non-natural dreams and there is no single linear development of an argument in this regard. Nashe (1594) asserts the ascendency of the demonic over the dream world, Joseph Glanvil (1681) allows the possibility of both divine/angelic and demonic sources for dreams, and Tryon (1689) admits the possibility of 'spirits' interacting with the living in dreams although this is a view rarely repeated.[60] Joseph Priestley (1795) rejects the idea of modern Divine interference in dreams arguing that 'no persons have immediate communications with God except prophets'[61] while admitting the possibility of the interference of 'lying spirits'.[62] In order to successfully analyse the conceived source and 'purpose' of Gothic dreams, it is necessary to give an overview of the possibilities rather than presuming a dominant and universalising discourse. I will then map these discourses onto Reeve's *The Old English Baron* and Matthew Lewis' *The Monk.*

In his *Philosophical Enquiry* (1764)*,* Saalfeld offers a contemporary summary of many of the perceived purposes of the angelic/divine[63] and demonic dream. According to Saalfeld, divine/angelic dreams are 'intended for instruction', 'monitory' or 'comminatory'.[64] Those dreams which are for instruction may present knowledge of the past, future or present. Monitory and comminatory dreams offer either a submersion in the present or a representation of the future, whose 'accomplishment shall happen, if men change not their conduct'.[65] Through the use of exemplars, Glanvill highlights further functions of the

[60] The writer of Anti-Canidia (1762), Joseph Priestley (1791), Reverend Saalfeld (1764) and Daniel Defoe (1726-7) appear to explicitly reject the possibility of spirits of the dead conversing in dreams.
[61] Joseph Priestley, *Letters to Members of the New Jerusalem Church* (Birmingham: J. Thompson, 1791), p. 46
[62] Ibid., p. 61
[63] Some writers, such as Saalfeld, specify between these two sources of the dream, however, the functions performed by these dreams are broadly similar. I have used both terms to imply reference to theories which favour either a directly Divine narrative (Saalfeld) as well as those which subscribe to one of Divine influence through angelic agency (Tryon).
[64] Saalfeld, *Philosophical Discourse,* p. 47
[65] Saalfeld, *Philosophical Discourse,* p. 48

divine/angelic dream as a source of comfort and protection and as an agent of providence.[66] The dreams of both Sir Phillip and Edmund in *The Old English Baron* are divine/angelic dreams. As already discussed, they function as tools of providence, suggest the immortality of the soul, and act as proof of the virtue and ultimate salvation of both characters. Closer attention reveals that these dreams also perform other specific functions.

Sir Philip dreams that he is 'hurried away by an invisible hand, and led into a wild heath, where the people were inclosing the ground, and making preparations for two combatants' and he hears a voice say 'Forbear! It is not permitted to be revealed till the time is ripe for the event: Wait with patience on the decrees of Heaven.'[67] This dream foretells the future and in doing so, prepares Sir Philip to meet it and provides comfort: a 'solution' to his friend's unavenged murder. The vision is accurate – Philip faces off in mortal combat against the murderous Walter Lovel – and thus aligns itself theologically with a concept of Divine omniscience which encompasses not only the present and past but also the future. The action of the inexorable 'invisible hand' here suggests a Calvinist understanding of 'total omniscience:' a future both divinely known and unavoidable. However, the effect of the dream is not a sense of helpless inevitability but an impression of Divine justice. Lovel's death has been witnessed and will be avenged by Divine decree and Philip far from being a Divine pawn, becomes a willing agent of the Divine.

The Old English Baron offers an example of the divine/angelic dream but offers no demonic parallel. Saalfeld argues that demonic dreams 'are intended to promote evil'[68] and that 'Devils can act upon us, and excite dreams, continue or carry them on, and by them attempt our ruin'.[69] Demons may influence our dreams by stimulating pre-existent images or thoughts as we find in *The Monk*. The morning after Mathilda reveals themself, Ambrosio 'awoke heated and unrefreshed' because his dreams had featured Mathilda and the Madonna in sexual situations.[70] These dreams pave the way for the debauchery of the day. The dreams contain images and expand on thoughts already familiar to Ambrosio, and reflect his soul and desires, but function as part of the Devil's scheme to draw Ambrosio into

[66] Joseph Glanvil, *Saducisimus Triumphatus* (London: J. Collins, 1681), pp. 45-55
[67] Reeve, *The Old English Baron,* p. 11
[68] Saalfeld, *Philosophical Discourse,* p. 28
[69] Ibid., p. 30
[70] Matthew Lewis, *The Monk,* 2 vols (Dublin: W.Porter/ N. Kelly, 1797), I, p. 77

temptation, allowing his 'lust…to break forth'[71] and playing on his moral and spiritual weakness. The aim of demonic dreams, as Saalfeld explains, is principally to lead the dreamer into temptation, whether into real world sin or into 'dream sin'. In *The History of the Devil* Daniel Defoe suggests that 'consent to the fact in sleep' is criminal in itself.[72] A belief in 'dream crime', as Saalfeld articulates, depends on your view of the will's functionality during sleep. If the will and judgment are conceived of as separate faculties, while judgment sleeps, will may remain functional and therefore blameworthy.[73] The question of dream sin remains vexed in theological debate and no final answer is given in *The Monk.* In his final, gloating speech, the devil notes the importance in Ambrosio's fall of the 'moment of seduction'. Whether his 'dream sin' or the actual consummation of the sexual act with Mathilda represents this 'moment of seduction' is unclear.

The Monk offers another instance of demonic dreaming, which reflects Saalfeld's second criterion of a demonic dream: a 'bad end or tendency'. [74] In Satan's triumphant speech, he claims that 'it was I who warned Elvira in dreams of your designs upon her daughter'.[75] This dream, taken at face value, appeared to have a Divine provenance as a forewarning of an approaching disaster. However, its demonic nature, confirmed by Satan himself, is evident in its consequences. It leads to Elvira's death and to Ambrosio's descent into matricide. Here we have another example of the demonic dynamic illustrated in the last chapter – a lie dressed as truth. A Divine warning points to an avoidable event, a demonic one precipitates you into your own fall. What becomes clear, from this pertinent example, is the importance of the question of interpretation to the depiction of Gothic dreams.

The Interpretation of Dreams

'Quench not the spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things: hold fast that which is good' - 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21

'And they said, we have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God?' - Genesis 40:8

[71] Ibid., I, p. 264
[72] Daniel Defoe, *The History of the Devil* (Durham: G. Walker, 1826), p. 809
[73] This is the theological position to which the *Monthly Review* objects.
[74] Saalfeld, *Philosophical Discourse,* p. 27
[75] Lewis, *The Monk,* II, p. 264

In Gothic texts the reader and dreamer are called on to interpret the source and meaning of the dreams they witness. Unlike the dreams of the Romantic imagination, allied as they are with arguments as to original genesis, fancy, creativity and the self-transcending powers of the human mind, the dreams of the Gothic are almost always framed as either externally influenced or as a symptom of insanity. Both acts of interpretation (of source and significance) are therefore of critical importance to the narrative's plot and to its theological/ideological framework. Our modern conception of the dream has often obscured this relationship of Gothic dreams to the supernatural. This is particularly evident in critical work on Radcliffe, where Walter Scott's claims for the ubiquity of the 'explained supernatural' continues to be widespread. The idea that 'all the circumstances of her narrative, however mysterious, and apparently superhuman, were to be accounted for by natural principles',[76] is challenged by the prophetic dreams of Adeline in *The Romance of the Forest* and Vivaldi in *The Italian.* These dreams, as Milbank notes, are explicitly framed as supernatural.[77] Individual dreams must be interpreted as to source and meaning but, unlike ghosts in Radcliffe, the possibility of the supernatural dream is never questioned.

Saalfeld's *Philosophical Discourse* offers the most complete 'schema' of dream types – the Divine, the demonic/angelic and the domestic - and one which maps most closely onto Radcliffe's work. The 'domestick' dream is entirely 'natural' and arises from 'the thoughts we had while awake'.[78] It presents the dreamer with the 'hoped for good'[79] of their waking hours, for good or evil, and thus holds a mirror to the dreamer's soul and preoccupations. Nightmares are filled with the failure of the 'hoped for good'. Neither reason nor judgment are active during these dreams and they will be confused, disconnected and even distorted. They will also be 'obscure' (difficult to remember), non-significant (having no 'intended' outcome) and the dreamer is held wholly responsible for their content. Demonic/angelic dreams, while having different sources, share the same 'mechanics'. They follow many of the rules of the 'domestick dream'; they are constructed of images and preoccupations of the day although they may be expanded by angelic or demonic powers. While still often

[76] Walter Scott, 'Biography of Ann Radcliffe', in *Prose Works of Walter Scott* (Paris: A. and W. Galignani, 1827), p. 468
[77] Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 102
[78] Saalfeld, *Philosophical Discourse*, p.13
[79] Ibid., p. 17

confused and episodic, they 'contain discourses intentionally put together'. [80] They are lively (easy to remember) and will always be significant. Thought not necessarily prophetic, they will have for their end 'our happiness or misery, which [they] manifest by the event'. [81] Angelic dreams will 'instruct us in what regards our happiness, and warn us against what may be detrimental thereto'.[82] In demonic dreams, 'Devils can act upon us, and excite our dreams, continue or carry them on, and by them attempt our ruin'.[83] In other words, these dreams will lead us into sin either in the dream or the real world although we are only 'responsible' for dream content if we 'consent' to it. The third category of dream, Divine dreams, have a similar end to angelic dreams but 'must be what is consistent with, and explicable only by, the power of the Creator'.[84] They will therefore feature fully connected narratives, previously unknown knowledge and have real world significance. They are always 'prophetic', in that they represent communication with the Divine. Saalfeld notes, however, that both demonic/angelic and Divine dreams can 'prophesy' and 'reveal future' things and that 'the issue must verify Divine dreams'.[85]

Before attempting to map these categories in Radcliffe's work, it is necessary to lay out briefly the content of the dreams for later reference. In *Romance of the Forest,* Adeline has four significant dreams. The first of these occurs early in the novel before she meets La Motte. In the dream, she walks with her supposed father through the forest. He holds a mirror up in which she sees herself bloody and beaten and she hears a warning voice that tells her to "Depart this house, destruction hovers here,"[86] as, of course, it does. The other three dreams all occur at the ruined Abbey and in quick succession. In the first dream, she enters a chamber that she has *never seen before*, where she finds a dying man who attempts communication before sinking away. She wakes in terror but cannot stop the onset of the next dream, in which she wanders through a different part of the abbey before seeing a distant figure who she initially moves to follow but who starts chasing her. Again, she wakes in terror before entering the final dream in which she sees the figure from the

[80] Ibid., p. 37
[81] Ibid., p. 10
[82] Ibid., p. 30
[83] Ibid., p. 30
[84] Ibid., p. 42
[85] Ibid., p. 47
[86] Ann Radcliffe, *Romance of the Forest,* ed. with introduction and notes by Chloe Chard (Oxford: Oxford World Classics, 1998), p. 41

previous dream and follows him to a room containing the coffin of the man from the first dream in this series. There she notes a wound in his side pouring blood. She hears a voice speaking 'in the voice she had heard before',[87] which arguably represents the voice from the very first dream, creating a sense of continuity of both source and signification. As Clery notes, they are 'perhaps the most powerful, strange, and enduringly frightening examples of Radcliffe's supernaturalist writing'[88] untethered from any in-text rationalising explanation.

The dreams are all very deliberately constructed as supernatural. They are all 'lively', and contain clear, connected discourses even across dreams. They are, furthermore, all significant. The first is a warning, whose function is to prepare Adeline for flight, and the second set of dreams present Adeline with warnings of her own danger (the pursuit) and the information requisite to discover her own identity and bring her father's murderer to justice. The supernatural nature of the dreams is highlighted by the emphasis on their inclusion of objects that are very explicitly unrelated to the concerns of the day. In the dream trilogy, Radcliffe emphasises that Adeline 'retired to rest' 'oppressed by her own cares and interested by those of Madame La Motte'.[89] Adeline's mind has been occupied with thoughts of Louis' departure, the unexplained absence of Theodore and the possibly proximity of her adoptive father but not on the content of the dreams – the mystery of the abbey and of her own identity (of which she is as yet unaware). More importantly, they present Adeline with knowledge she had no previous access to. The next day, she finds 'a suite of apartments…terminating in one exactly like that where her dream had represented the dying person'.[90] In this room, unknown before the dream, she finds the manuscript detailing her father's last days and a rusty dagger, which together allow for the prosecution of her father's murderer. The prophetic content of these dreams is 'verified by the event' and Adeline becomes an agent of providence: 'She was suffered to live as an instrument to punish the murderer of her father.'[91] If any further evidence were needed that these dreams are framed as explicitly supernatural, Adeline identifies them as such.

> The longer she considered these dreams, the more she was surprised: they were so terrible, returned so often, and seemed to be so connected with each other, that she

[87] Ibid., p. 110
[88] Clery, *Women's Gothic,* p. 71
[89] Radcliffe, *Romance of the Forest*, p. 118
[90] Ibid., p. 115
[91] Ibid., p. 343

> could scarcely think them accidental; yet, why they should be supernatural, she could not tell.[92]

Recognising the 'signs' of the supernatural dream, she accepts the possibility of their supernatural origin.

Adeline's dreams may be considered as either angelic or divine. As Saalfeld notes, it is often difficult to differentiate between them due to their similar functions. As the dreams represent the past, they do not presume the foreknowledge of a necessarily Divine dream. Vivaldi's dream in *The Italian* (1797), in contrast, is more clearly of the 'second' order (demonic or angelic) and a demonic source is implied. The dream is lively but does not present a connected narrative. It simply features images of the monk who has been persecuting Vivaldi and a bloody knife. The dreams present us with subjects upon which Vivaldi has mediated that day - the identity of the monk who has been tormenting him and his suspicions about Schedoni – but there is also a supernatural element. The dream reveals that which was previously unknown: the monk's feature, which 'Vivaldi did not recollect ever having seen before'.[93] The 'revelation' of the dream receives immediate verification as when he awakes he sees both the monk with his face revealed and the dagger. Thus far, as with Elvira's dream in *The Monk,* we might suppose the source of the dream to be angelic. However, a demonic origin is hinted by the mental and spiritual harm which arise from the dream. It plunges Vivaldi further into the whirlpool of terror and superstition. On confronting the monk, Nicola di Zampari, 'an unusual dread seized upon him; and a superstition, *such as he had never before admitted in an equal degree*, usurped his judgment'.[94] (My emphasis) The effect of the dream, in other words, was to cast Vivaldi into deeper theological error and towards mental collapse.

In her use of the term 'superstition' in relation to Vivaldi's reaction to his dreams, Radcliffe highlights the issue of interpretative strategies. When we think of the potentially supernatural in Radcliffe, we often focus on the infamous 'explanations' and the rationalising tendency they appear to demonstrate. Just as important, however, in the Radcliffean deployment of the potentially supernatural is the pause before revelation which

[92] Ibid., p. 110
[93] Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian,* 2 vols, (Dublin: F. Wogan et al., 1797), II, p. 196
[94] Ibid., II, p. 198

can extend over hundreds of pages. This is a space of 'fantastic hesitation' in the Todorovian sense as we remain caught between natural and supernatural explanations.[95] This 'hesitation' in Radcliffe has been primarily discussed for its affective value but it is also a theoretical hesitation. Radcliffe forces the reader to confront and interpret the potentially supernatural and, in the case of dreams, both interpret the source and respond appropriately. Radcliffe highlights three key theological errors into which we may fall when confronted with our dreams: three erroneous interpretative practices. The first of these is superstition; the interpretative practice demonstrated by Vivaldi. Just as important, misleading and potentially dangerous, however, are godlessness and enthusiasm.[96]

Radcliffe's texts, like many others, contain repeated admonitions on avoiding the error of superstition. Similar warnings echo throughout dream discourse. Saalfeld is a representative voice when he warns us that

> Superstition is the first by-path, into which the bulk of mankind precipitately hurry, to the destroying their own happiness, by false interpretations of dreams, and to the obstructing their own peace of mind.[97]

Superstition, for Saalfeld, is inherently negative and this negativity is 'verified by the event': the unhappiness of the superstitious subject. The problem, however, is not belief in the possibility of supernatural dreams but rather an over-credulous and unreasoning belief in the 'significance' of *all* dreams. 'Superstition' should not be understood broadly as simply belief in the supernatural. For Radcliffe, Saalfeld and their contemporaries, superstition had a specific meaning contrasted with theological enthusiasm.[98] Hume defines superstition's particular qualities, arguing that its root is 'weakness, fear, melancholy, together with

[95] Tzvetan Todorov defines the 'fantastic' as 'the hesitation of the reader…as to the nature of an uncanny event. Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1973), p. 157

[96] In *The Progress of Romance* (1785), Clara Reeve has her mouthpiece Euphrasia comment somewhat contemptuously on the sectarian evangelising tendencies of Brooke's *Juliet Grenville* that 'between Deism on one hand, and fanaticism on the other, people of rational piety, and moderation, are in no very good situation.' This emphasis suggests the necessity for critical engagement with the avoidance of these frameworks of interpretation as of particular interest to Gothic novelists like Reeve and Radcliffe. (Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance,* 2 vols (London: W. Keymer, 1785), II, p. 43

[97] Saalfeld, *Philosophical Enquiry,* p. 111

[98] As noted in the first chapter, however, there was a familiar relationship in that superstitious (Catholic) and enthusiastic (Dissenting) could become conflated or develop into each other over time as Enthusiast groups become more structured and manipulative.

ignorance'.[99] It is this combination of ignorance, weakness and fear that leaves the superstitious person open to external manipulation. Hume connects superstition to the Catholic Church but also notes that all religious hierarchies tend towards the manipulation of the superstitious and ritualised superstitious practices and beliefs as method of control. In *The Italian,* Vivaldi's 'prevailing weakness', as Schedoni diagnoses, is 'a susceptibility which renders [him] especially liable to superstition'.[100] Vivaldi's over-credulous belief in the supernatural leads to his 'over-reading' events throughout the novel and tinges all his interactions with the potentially supernatural, including his dream, with a terror that leaves him open to manipulation from external forces. Terror is a symptom of a superstitious attitude to the supernatural.

While superstition is partially defined by its openness to deception from external forces, enthusiasm is defined by self-deception. Hume argues that enthusiasm is a form of 'phrenzy', where reason is over-ridden and the enthusiast believes themselves to have privileged intellectual and/or emotional access to the Divine and the transcendent.[101] For Hume, the roots of enthusiasm are 'hope, pride, presumption, a warm imagination, together with ignorance'.[102] Such a definition of theological enthusiasm echoes throughout the discourse on dreams and has two targets. The first of these are the Enthusiastic religious movements, such as the Methodists, within which special revelation and supernatural dreams were valorised. There was a prevailing idea that Enthusiasts over-interpret dreams, erroneously attributing them with Divine origin. As Robert Cox suggests, however, in reality 'even those most disposed to accept the possibility of direct Divine revelation… were keen to emphasise the sobriety, humility, and rationality of their dreamers'.[103] John Wesley, for example, warns:

> "Believe not every spirit; but try the spirits, whether they be of God." [Do not] judge of the spirit whereby anyone spoke, either by appearances, or by common report, or by their own inward feelings: no, nor by any dreams, visions, or revelations,

[99] David Hume, 'On Superstition and Enthusiasm', *The Philosophical Works of David Hume,* 4 vols (Edinburgh: Adam Black and William Tait, 1826), III, 77-85 (p. 81)
[100] Radcliffe, *The Italian,* II, p. 320
[101] Hume, 'On Superstition and Enthusiasm', p. 82
[102] Ibid., p. 82
[103] Cox, 'The Suburbs of Eternity,' p. 65

> supposed to be made to their souls. [They should be] tried by a further rule, to be brought to the only certain test, the law and the testimony.[104]

The bible becomes the testing point of individual revelation and the nature and source of a dream may be judged by its accordance with existing revelation: the moral and theological truths of the bible. In Radcliffe's *Udolpho* there are overt warnings against superstition but implicit warnings throughout about an indulgence in 'enthusiasm' in the sense delineated here: a belief in special access to the divine/sublime within a received theological framework. Emily is not deceived by outside sources manipulating her fear but rather by her own 'spiritual pride' in her privileged access, through sensibility, to other realms of knowledge. As I will explore more fully in the next chapter, *Udolpho* shows Emily's continual struggles against the phrenzies of enthusiasm.

A second form of enthusiasm is identified with the visionary practices of religious renegades like the Richard Brothers, Joanna Southcott, the French Prophets, John Ward or Swedenborg who all began their own 'religions'. To the established church and established Dissenting movements, this over-weaning confidence in their own access to secret knowledge has turned them into deluded heretics for whom 'reason has no manner of right to intermeddle in spiritual affairs'.[105] 'The Astrologer's Prediction' provides an example of a Gothic portrayal of this second form of enthusiasm, one ungoverned by any text or tradition. Reginald, believing himself to have privileged access to occult realities, reads his own dreams as revelation. In these dreams a 'sylph of heaven approached' and 'revealed' his mother who prompted him to kill his wife in his dream.[106] The dream echoes with the markers of untethered enthusiasm: communion with angelic spirits, a language of revelation and a distorted conception of individual predestination linked to specific access to occult knowledge. The result is murder and insanity. The dangers of such an 'enthusiastic' interpretative practice are clear: harmful self-delusion.

The third erroneous interpretative practice is that of 'godlessness'. Saalfeld cautions that 'some of those who would avoid superstition on the one hand, are betrayed into a by-

[104] This teaching is clearly a paraphrase of 1 John 4:1-3. John Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley,* 2 vols, (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1903), I, p. 86
[105] [Anon.], *Life After Death* (London: [n. pub], 1758), p. 67
[106] [Anon.], 'The Astrologer's Prediction,' p. 68

path on the other, and reject all dreams, as insignificant sallies of our imagination'.[107] In order to avoid superstition they fall into a practice of habitual disbelief. Macleod notes that this is particularly problematic in regards to dreams as those 'who disbelieve all revelation by dreams, must discard almost the whole book of Genesis'.[108] Dreams are a medium of Divine revelation throughout scripture. While the relevance of biblical examples to the current reality was debated, many readings of Acts 2:17 (which echoes Joel 2:28) suggested a continuity between Old and New Testaments and between biblical times and the current day in terms of God's use, or potential use, of the dream:

> And it shall come to pass in the last days (saith God) I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesie, and your young men shall see visions; and your old men shall dream dreams.

The idea of the dream as a potential instrument of the Divine is clear here and could not be denied without mounting an attack on scripture and Christianity itself. A 'godless' interpretive strategy is found throughout Radcliffe in the postures of her villains, who are always the most dismissive of 'superstition'; they are incapable of perceiving the difference between superstition and belief.

In *The Romance of the Forest,* Radcliffe offers a model of interpretative practice regarding dreams that negotiates a space between the three erroneous courses of superstition, enthusiasm and godlessness. Adeline's strategy is reflective of Saalfeld's:

> If God instructs us at a time when our understanding and will, as well as our passions, are laid asleep, and at rest: This may serve to teach us, that we are duly to consider his revelations, in a calm state of mind, and then without precipitation pass a judgment upon them.[109]

In other words, we are to remain open to the possibility of an event's supernatural nature without rushing into interpretation. Often this will entail waiting upon 'verification by the event' or allowing the dream to 'prepare' the dreamer for real world events. Adeline models this practice in her long consideration of her dreams, her reasoned decision as to their supernatural nature and her refusal to attempt to interpret their meaning immediately. Adeline's dreams are ultimately revealed as divinely inspired as their place in the

[107] Saalfeld, *Philosophical Discourse,* p. 116
[108] Macleod, *Mysteries,* p. xvi
[109] Saalfeld, *Philosophical Discourse,* p. 75

providential scheme of the novel is exhibited and the truth of their revelations is confirmed. Adeline avoids superstition by a reasoned consideration of the dreams; enthusiasm by refusing to rely on a supposed privileged spiritual access to decode the dreams immediately; and godlessness by entertaining the possibility of the supernatural.

The importance of correctly interpreting dreams is highlighted in *The Monk.* Ambrosio's implicit interpretation of his lustful dreams as purely natural leaves him open to the stratagems of devils. Elvira's interpretation of a demonic dream as angelic/divine leads to her murder. While both these dreams have known sources, Lorenzo's dream offers an interpretive puzzle for the reader. He sees his own wedding to Antonia where 'an unknown rushed between them…on his forehead was written in legible characters – 'Pride! Lust! Inhumanity!'[110] The creature goes on to ravage Antonia before being 'plunged into the gulph' attempting, but failing, to drag her with him.[111] The dream functions as an allegorical prophesy of the book's plot: the mutual attraction of Lorenzo and Antonia is symbolised by the wedding; the demonic figure represents Ambrosio and his rape of Antonia; Ambrosio's damnation, Antonia's spiritual escape and Lorenzo's helplessness are symbolised by the denouement. As a prophesy, the dream is clearly supernatural, a fact reinforced by the dream's vividness, its connected narrative and its lasting impression. Unlike Adeline, however, Lorenzo does not consider this possibility and shrugs off the dream, taking no advantage of any warning it contains. While he dismisses the dream as natural, its source and purpose remain a puzzle for the reader. The dream may be divinely inspired but, if so, its only purpose is comfort – a reassurance of Antonia's ultimate destination. The connection between the demon and Ambrosio is suggested but not made explicit, no specific warning is offered and the disastrous yet eschatologically hopeful conclusion of Antonia's story is made, through its appearance in the dream, inevitable. Alternatively, it can be read, like Elvira's dream, as demonic. The dreams of *The Monk* are deceptive.

If demonic, the dream offers a vision of the future in keeping with Saalfeld's comments on the prognosticating powers of the devil, namely that 'the devil can…also disclose future events' but that these prognostications will only be the natural

[110] Lewis, *The Monk,* I p. 32
[111] Ibid., p. 32

consequences of present circumstances.[112] The key components of the dream are Lorenzo's and Antonia's affections, the inner reality of Ambrosio and the plan already put into motion by the devil to lead him into sin. The future predictions (the rape and death of Antonia) are in keeping with the present conditions. If we conceive of the dream as demonic, its purposes must be understood as demonic and can be 'verified by the results'. The dream has little effect except to suggest the inevitability of the events of the novel, creating an underlying narrative of predestination and injustice – exactly the theological perversities highlighted in the previous chapter. The question remains, however, as to whether these theological perversities are a discomforting theological implication of a prophetic angelic dream or the product of the dream narrative itself, which produces the inertia needed for the completion of its prophesy. Misinterpreting dreams is a dangerous business.

Dangerous Dreams

'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?' - Jeremiah 17:9

But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat - Matthew 13:25

He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt though trust: his truth shall be they shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terrour by night - Psalm 91:4-5

During much of the medieval and Early Modern period, as Handley asserts, 'sleep was understood to be replete with earthly and spiritual dangers[113] 'Body and soul, both…required protection during the defenceless hours of sleep'.[114] Gabriele Klug explains the theological premises underlying such a view:

> According to medieval theology, the need to sleep was a Divine punishment for the fall of man and a daily reminder to mankind of their sinfulness, weakness and imperfection. Therefore, sleep was seen in a rather negative light, representing ideas of remoteness from God, lost time...., loss of control over body and soul, and absence of rational regulation.[115]

[112]Saalfeld, *Philosophical Discourse* p. 62
[113] Handley, *Sleep,* p. 69
[114] Ibid.*,* p. 69
[115] Gabrielle Klug, 'Dangerous Doze: Sleep and Vulnerability in Medieval German Literature', in *Worlds of Sleep,* ed. by LodeWijk Brunt and Brigitte Steger (Berlin: Frank and Timme, 2008), 31-53 (p. 33)

Undefended by the will, the sleeper became peculiarly susceptible to attacks both physical and spiritual. Moreover, sleep frequently functioned as a metaphor of spiritual unreadiness. At a literal level, to die in one's sleep was to risk one's salvation with a soul unprepared for its final journey. At a metaphorical level, 'sleep was equated with the dangerous sleep of the soul – those who would not be woken up in time would have to face damnation'.[116] Such a conception of sleep, Klug argues, is echoed throughout medieval literature with both sleep and dreams represented as times of particular vulnerability and often productive of death, injury or rape. The continued relevance of this conception of the dream in the Early Modern period is found in Nashe's *Terrors of the Night* and echoed in the fictional work of Milton in *Paradise Lost.* Milton's depicts Satan's initial 'contact' with Eve (Book IV, Lines 800-804):

> Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve;
> Assaying by his devilish art to reach
> The organs of her fancy, and with them forge
> Illusions as he list, phantasms and dreams.[117]

Sleep is the time of particular vulnerability for Eve and dreams are the chosen medium of the Devil's influence.

As dream discourse developed over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, an increasingly medicalised emphasis on the natural sources of dreams led to a diminished focus on the danger of dreams. The 'natural' category of dream continued to expand and dreams which Nashe would not have hesitated to classify as demonic, were identified by Saalfeld as a 'natural' dream based on the thoughts and preoccupations of the dreamer. While this 'natural' dream was still understood to have moral importance, it more accurately functioned as a guide to the dreamer themselves and their own spiritual state. While culpability for dream sin continued to be debated, the sin committed was increasingly seen as internally produced rather than externally prompted. Accompanying this turn away from a purely 'dangerous' conception of sleep, was an increased emphasis on the Divine possibilities of sleep and on a more positive conception of the sleep state: one of restoration rather than entrapment and of 'soul freedom' rather than 'soul imprisonment' in the darkness of a useless body and an absent reason.

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[116] Ibid., p. 37

[117] John Milton, *Paradise Lost,* 2nd edition (London: S. Simmons, 1674), pp. 108-9, Book IV, Lines 800-4

When considering the Gothic, we might expect the discourse of 'dark sleep' to be predominant. 'Dark sleep's' connection to the demonic, the dangerous, the deceptive and the transgressive is certainly Gothic material. In the previous sections, I have suggested that Vivaldi, Ambrosio and Lorenzo's dreams are of potentially demonic origin but these dreams occur within a discourse where both demonic and Divine dreams are equally probable and need considerable decoding. *Zofloya* offers a more complete conception of 'dark sleep'. It is in sleep that Lila is kidnapped and Henriquez is tormented by the dreams which lead to his rape by Victoria after they leave him 'unable longer to contend with the powerful delusions of his disordered fancy'.[118] It is in dreams that the devil as Zofloya first appears to Victoria as a guide and a temptation: 'I it was, that under semblance of the Moorish slave…appeared to thee first in thy dreams, luring thee to attempt the completion of thy wildest wishes'.[119] Sleep is the access point of demonic interference and a state of vulnerability for all characters in the novel.

The demonic dreams of *Zofloya* illustrate two ways in which such dreams function. In Henriquez' dream, disconnected images, repetition and the evocation of strong emotion (love and relief at Lila's apparent return) defeat reason, elicit madness and prepare the mind for deception. They demonstrate the demonic use of dreams to 'disease' the mind. Here the 'form' of the dream is instrumental in its effect and the weakness of the sleeping mind is taken advantage of in order to promote waking 'sin'. In contrast, the impact of Victoria's dreams comes from their content. In her first dream, Victoria beholds 'Zofloya' as a 'noble and majestic form'[120] and in the second, 'he haunted her dreams; sometimes she wandered with him over beds of flowers, sometimes over craggy rocks'.[121] In both dreams, these images are a form of visualised temptation. Kim Micashiw argues that Zofloya is 'Victoria's real sexual object'[122] and these dreams certainly fulfil an erotic function, leading Victoria into an affective and physical attraction to the devil himself.

Victoria's first dream also serves a deceptive function. It introduces the devil as Zofloya and places 'Zofloya' in the demonic counselling role that he would never have

[118] Charlotte Dacre, *Zofloya,* 3 vols, (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1806), II, p. 79
[119] Ibid.*,* III, p. 233
[120] Ibid., II, p. 111
[121] Ibid.*,* II p. 134
[122] Kim Ian Micashiw, 'Introduction' in *Zofloya,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. xx

himself accepted. Victoria's dreams also frequently fulfil a prophetic function. Her first dream allegorically echoes the later events of the novel. Victoria is offered the chance to avert Henriquez' marriage: 'Wilt thou be mine?' exclaimed the Moor in a loud voice, 'and the marriage shall *not be'.*[123] There is a twofold temptation here: towards Zofloya and towards the crimes requisite for the end she desires – the devil both introduces desires and relies on her already 'deceitful heart' to seduce her to evil. Although the dream prophesies success in averting Henriquez' marriage, he then turns into a 'frightful skeleton'.[124] This prophesy of Henriquez' demise does not fulfil a monitory function, as we would expect in a Divine dream, but rather acts as an intensifier of guilt. The 'truth' here is not used to deceive but rather to test and Victoria shows 'a most exquisite willingness[125]' to engage in the sins her dreams call her to despite all warnings. The prophetic nature of the dreams, more explicit in the third dream which is more specific in its predictions, raises an interesting theological question about the role of the devil, mirroring the debate already raised in the previous chapter. The devil's access to detailed prescient knowledge suggests that his role is that of a Divine rather than free agent.

While *Zofloya* demonstrates that 'dark sleep' frameworks exist within the Gothic, it does not reflect a universal trend within the Gothic. It is representative rather of a later trend, aligned with the horror school and a concentration on 'numinous dread'.[126] It is also connected to the theological perversities, instabilities and uncertainties explored in the last chapter. Namely, an emphasis on wrath rather than mercy, justice without grace, the problem of evil, questions concerning the reality of free will, and the role of the devil. The work of authors, such as Radcliffe, with a more 'positive' and affirming theology of Divine multiplicity, care and guiding (rather than punishing) providence is reflected in a completely distinct conception of sleep, one which mirrors the development of the extra-fictional dream debate, and a rejection of a 'dark sleep' narrative. Within Radcliffe's work, there is an almost obsessive emphasis on a positive conception of sleep. In *The Romance of the Forest,* of course, it is sleep that saves Adeline in the monitory and prophetic dreams it brings. In *The Italian* the most notable incident involving sleep is Schedoni's attempt to murder Ellena.

[123] Dacre, *Zofloya,* II, p. 113
[124] Ibid., II, p. 114
[125] Ibid., III, p. 234
[126] Geary, *The Supernatural in Gothic Fiction,* p. 8

While it appears at first that sleep makes her vulnerable to attack, it is precisely in this state of sleep that she is able to defeat not only the immediate attack but future threat. For Radcliffe, sleep isn't a point of weakness but an opportunity for Divine communication, bodily repair and soul freedom.

Secular dreams

For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams - Zechariah 10:2

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God - 1 John 4:1

The 'persistent fusion of natural and supernatural explanations of sleep',[127] noted by Handley, was not static over the period of the Early British Gothic. 'There was a diverse spectrum of opinions about the natural and supernatural causes of different sleep and dream states, which could sometimes coexist and overlap.'[128] There were, however, distinct trends notable in both dream discourse and Gothic fiction. The wider discourse became increasingly medicalised and popular condemnation and politicised fear of superstition and enthusiasm grew and with it an increasing emphasis on 'natural' explanations. There was a tendency to underplay demonic dreams as they lacked the biblical security of Divine dreams and were more closely connected with the fears of superstition. In contrast, Gothic fiction emphasises supernatural dreams. There is also a move from a fairly orthodox emphasis on Divine dreaming in the terror Gothic to an increased emphasis on the demonic dream in the horror Gothic. This change, while not mirroring the dominant trends in dream discourse, reflects the fragmentation of belief or the secularising process, as understood by Taylor and existing in a space of discourse, doubt, belief and secular choice. At the intersection of the Gothic and the Romantic, with all its 'irony, contingency and the indetermin[acy]'[129] this secularising tendency begins to come explicitly to the fore of Gothic texts. They openly explore multiple interpretations of the dream, usually occupy a fantastic space of

[127] Handley, *Sleep,* p. 28
[128] Ibid.*,* p. 29
[129] Miles, 'Popular Romanticism and the Problem of Belief', p. 118

uncertainty and explore the boundaries of madness, self-deception and revelation in their representation of the dream.

Mary Shelley's 'The Dream' (1831) is an example of this 'secular' trend. Constance goes to St Catherine's shelf to court the supernatural dreams associated with the location. We are told that 'many a vision…she had that fearful night'[130] in which she saw a terrible premonition of her beloved Gaspar's future if she didn't marry him: 'with soiled and tattered garments, with unkempt locks and wild matted beard. His cheek was worn and thin; his eyes had lost their fire.'[131] Her heart then whispers that 'this was my doing' upon which 'a veil fell from [her] eyes; a darkness was dispelled before [her]'.[132] Upon waking, she marries him. There is a sense of the fantastic in the description of her dreams – a tension between natural and supernatural (divinely inspired) explanations. They represent an actual epiphany as she learns that 'to make the living happy was not to injure the dead; and … how wicked and how vain was that false philosophy which placed virtue and good in hatred and unkindness'.[133] Likewise, there is nothing within the narrative of the dreams themselves to suggest that they are anything but prophetic, a monitory dream displaying a future to be avoided composed, as far as we are aware, of 'absent objects'. There is, however, a dissenting view presented.

The king is a sceptic, who thinks Catherine 'infatuated' and suggests that those who sleep on the ledge 'take the disturbed visions that such uneasy slumber might produce for the dictate of heaven'.[134] The narrator also offers a comment at this stage in apparent support of the king's position, saying that 'there is no feeling more awful than that which invades a weak human heart bent upon gratifying its ungovernable impulses in contradiction to the dictates of conscience'.[135] The suggestion is that Catherine will either be induced by the physical conditions into nightmares, which she will interpret as she sees fit, or that she will deceive herself into having visions. However, this polyphony of dissenting voices produces the fantastic rather than a negation of the dreams as supernaturally influenced. No voice speaks after that of Catherine as she recounts her dream, her epiphany

[130] Mary Shelley, 'The Dream' in *Mathilda and Other Stories,* (Ware: Wordsworth, 2013), 213-225 (p. 225)
[131] Ibid., p. 225
[132] Ibid., p. 225
[133] Ibid., p. 225
[134] Ibid., p. 220
[135] Ibid., p. 221

appears to be genuine and her dreams can logically be interpreted as angelic or wholly natural. Shelley leaves us with an act of testimony. Two possible explanations have been given: a supernatural dream in accordance with long standing tradition and which results in a theologically sound change of heart, or a self-deceptive natural dream followed because it agrees with the dreamer's pre-existing desires. The narrative forces us to weigh these options, acknowledging all the difficulties involved in testimony but avoiding a Humean total dismissal of it by prioritising the voice of the testifier as the last speaker. The text confronts us with the supernatural, asking whether we can believe or whether belief itself is only a trick with which we deceive ourselves.

In James Hogg's 'Singular Dream' (1811) various differing sources and interpretations are again suggested by the narrative itself. I will conclude this chapter with an investigation of the Hogg narrative, which functions as a sort of summary in itself of various arguments within dream discourse and represents the apotheosis of a knowing, ironic and playful engagement with the theological conception of the dream. In a 'Singular Dream',[136] a 'correspondent' visits the house of Mr A. T. who has an evil word to say about everyone and everything, prophesying that 'we are all in the very jaws of destruction'.[137] As the tale opens, the correspondent appears to be in awe-filled agreement with Mr A. T.'s sagacity though we are told, with more than a hint of irony, that his 'ideas being wound up to the highest pitch of rueful horror, [he] fell into a profound reverie',[138] in which he dreams about his host. Mr A. T. appears as a lector reading on the iniquity of women but as the reading continues and the correspondent gets a closer and longer look at the beautiful ladies of the church, his visual perception of Mr. A. T. changes. A woman next to him pointing to Mr A. T. states that 'he [is] the devil'[139] and he begins to change into a black sow. Called to action and hoping to 'rid mankind of their greatest enemy, by felling him at one blow',[140] the correspondent strikes out but this action takes him out of the dream where he is found to be beating Mr. A. T. in good earnest. It becomes clear as he exits the house and speaks to a fellow guest that Mr A. T. had been abusing him at the time and he is suspected of having attacked him for this reason with the dream being nothing more than an excuse. As David

[136] The original title was 'Evil Speaking Ridiculed by an Allegorical Dream'.
[137] James Hogg, 'A Singular Dream', in *Tales of Love and Mystery* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1985), 37-47 (p. 38)
[138] Ibid., p. 40
[139] Ibid., p. 42
[140] Ibid., p. 42

Groves notes 'we find that the narrator's letter has been an elaborate defence against a charge of assault.'[141] This throws into a new light his apparently naïve and credulous retelling of Mr A. T.'s strictures on various stations in society, including the judiciary, and on the dream narrative itself; the possibility emerges that the dream was little more than a 'far-fetched vindication' of a crime. [142]

The story calls into question the reality of the dream, let alone its source. The theological connotations of the dream, however, are nonetheless explored within the text. The dream functions as a form of allegory: one which is potentially constructed as such by the narrator within the textual world. It represents an explicitly theologised condemnation of the 'mischievous disposition' of continual condemnation which makes it 'impossible to be long in the company of the latter, without conceiving ourselves to be in a world of fiends'.[143] Such discourse leads to negative spiritual consequences for all hearers. The dream is therefore represented as a form of Divine personal revelation and its function is both transformative and punitive. The narrator suggests that the dream and its consequences are 'a kind of judgment inflicted on us both for a dangerous error'.[144] In suggesting these readings of the dream, he supports his innocence not by a 'far-fetched tale' so much as by the imputation of righteousness attendant upon being the recipient of Divine correction and revelation and in the 'good end' of the dream – his own transformation.

Interestingly, the dreamer's interpretation of the source and meaning of the dream changes throughout the tale. We may choose to read this ironically (he is attempting to find the best story for himself) or unironically (he undergoes an actual change of perspective). In either case, multiple discourses are deliberately invoked and weighed. After the beating, his friend asks 'what the devil was it [] that offended you?' He replies, 'the devil, I believe it was'.[145] Judging by the apparent 'ends' of the dream, in this case a violent altercation, he labels the dream demonic. It is only upon further consideration that the physically negative consequences are reinterpreted as a judgment inflicted on both aggressor and victim. Hogg plays with concepts of the dream, placing angelic, demonic and natural explanations before

[141] David Groves, 'Introduction', in *Tales of Love and Mystery,* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1985), 1-31 (p. 10)
[142] Ibid., p. 10
[143] Hogg, 'A Singular Dream', p. 147
[144] Ibid., p. 45
[145] Ibid., p. 43

the reader forcing them not only to compete but to intersect. For however invented the dream, however ill-interpreted, however natural, it is *true*. The correspondent is 'fined for resisting the devil'[146] as he conceives it and resist him, he does. Whether the devil is inside his dream or inside his soul, a 'devil' is confronted and it appears that a dream may be theologically inspired even when it never happened. However cynical, ironic or unclear the dreams of the Gothic, they rarely escape the theological. In our sleep, neither God nor the devil are so easily put aside. As the next chapter explores, the same can be said of the ghost narratives of the Gothic although the terms of the debate change – the question becomes not one of the interpretation of ghostly encounters but of their possible existence.

[146] Ibid, p. 45

Chapter 5: "Test the Spirits": Ghosts and Apparitions of the Gothic

If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead - Luke 16:31

In the previous chapter, I explored the ways in which the dreams of the Gothic are informed by theological conceptions of the dream. The emphasis in Gothic dream accounts is on the interpretation of an accepted 'event'. This emphasis on 'interpretation' rather than 'possibility' cannot be directly transferred to a consideration of the ghostly.[1] The ubiquity and continued mystery of dreams left them firmly within the remit of theological interpretation. Ghost-sightings, on the contrary, were usually experienced at second hand, as a result of testimony. Thus the 'evidence' for ghosts, for the average person, was 'less than the evidence of our senses'[2] and open to challenge as a testimony, which, moreover, was by its nature often declaimed *a priori* as the result of ignorance and either enthusiasm or superstition. David Hume's 'Of Miracles' highlights the potential problems of testimony as the basis for belief: 'the opposition of contrary testimony', 'the character or number of witnesses' and 'the manner of their delivering of their testimony'.[3] Ghost testimony was particularly suspicious as it was often related to private (rather than public) experience and associated with heightened, unpredictable emotions capable of distorting perception. The enduring association of ghost stories, articulated in John Locke's 'Of Education' (1698), with the 'indiscretion of servants' and nursemaids' tales connected ghost 'testimony' with the lower classes, women and youth rather than the 'ideal' educated rational adult male subject.[4] Moreover, ghost tales frequently fit into that category of testimony which Hume articulates as so incredible, because it testifies to an event outside natural laws, that 'the incredibility of a fact…might invalidate' the testimony.[5] In both contemporary ghost

[1] Throughout, I use the term 'ghostly' to refer to any manifestation which appears as apparently human yet immaterial. In other words, a manifestation which can be read as a ghost (the spirit of the dead). However, it also allows for the inclusion of other interpretations of these figures as demonic or angelic apparitions. I will use the term 'ghost' only when referring to the spirits of the departed.
[2] David Hume, 'Of Miracles' appended to *An Enquiry into the Pretensions of Richard Brothers* (London: J. Parsons, 1795), p. 17
[3] Ibid., p. 22
[4] John Locke, 'Of Education', in *The Works of John Locke,* 3 vols (London: Arthur Bettesworth, 1727), 1-98 (p. 61)
[5] Ibid., p. 23

discourse and Gothic fiction, then, the focus is not only on the interpretation of ghost-sightings but on their very possibility.

Before investigating the particularities of 'ghost' discourse in the period, it is worth noting that the distinction between the 'dream' and the 'ghost' above does not represent a complete contemporary separation of the two. Sasha Handley asserts in relation to Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron* (1778) that 'Edmund's vision may have been little more than a wishful reverie' as it occurred in a dream. [6] However, this fundamentally misunderstands the contemporary conception of the porous interrelation of the dream and the ghostly. As a reflexive reaction, the idea of a ghostly encounter being 'just a dream' certainly appears in contemporary accounts. For example, in the anonymous *Life after Death* (1758), one ghost-seer 'believed all this to be a Dream, and considered it no otherwise' and the authorial voice questions 'if he had been at all waking'.[7] However, the author presents the story as having 'a better foundation of credit'[8] than similar tales of ghostly return. The authorial interjection of 'if he had been at all waking'[9] suggests both the possibility and irrelevance of the ghost's appearing in a dream. Both medicalised and theological accounts of the dream could actually support the 'reality' of ghosts that appeared in dreams. As Handley notes, new theories of optics led to the idea that 'given that the physical eyes were so easily cheated, a ghost that was seen by the inner eyes assumed greater credibility'.[10] Theologically, as I have noted, Thomas Tryon argued that sleep is the soul in a state of freedom from the body and thus a means through which sleepers are able to communicate with the dead 'for Dreams are Incorporeal and the Souls deceased have no other way to impart their secrets'.[11] Such a view continued through the eighteenth century. Daniel Defoe's popular *The History and Reality of Apparitions* (1727)[12] expands on Tryon's theory by allowing for the possibility of ghosts/apparitions appearing outside of dreams as well, to the coarser faculties as well as to the soul: 'there may be Dreams without Apparitions, as there may be Apparitions without

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[6] Sasha Handley, *Visions of an Unseen World: Ghost Beliefs and Ghost Stories in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2007), p. 201

[7] [Anon.], *Life after Death* (London: [n.pub.], 1758), p. 45 The story referenced is that of the appearance of George Villiers' ghost.

[8] Ibid., p. 44

[99] Ibid., p. 45

[10] Handley, *Visions of an Unseen World,* p. 132

[11] Thomas Tryon, *A Treatise of Dreams and Visions* ([n. p]: [n. pub], 1689), p. 68

[12] This work was reprinted in 1735, 1752, 1770 and 1791.

Dreams; but Apparition in Dream may be as real an Apparition as if the Person who saw it was awake.'[13]

Gothic writers often celebrated this ambiguity. Mary Shelley, in her essay 'On Ghosts' (1824), tells us that she 'never saw a ghost except once in a dream'.[14] She suggests that science has driven out a belief in the ghostly but that 'beyond our soul's ken there is an empty space' which 'bestows on the feeling heart a belief that influences do exist to watch and guard us, though they *be impalpable to the coarser faculties*'[15] (my emphasis). As for Tryon, for Shelley it appears that ghost-viewing in dreams is privileged above ghost-viewing in the 'material world'. In Adeline's series of dreams in Ann Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), the figure of her father may be considered as a ghost (spirit of the dead) or apparition (supernatural figure appearing human) [16] but he is more than an 'image' of the past. He has considerable agency in the dream, for example, we are told that she heard his voice 'call her'.[17] Furthermore, Adeline reflecting back, speaks of 'the apparition, which she now believed she had really seen'.[18] Whether the ghost/apparition appears in a dream or when awake is irrelevant to judgments about its reality. The pivotal question of when 'there is a real apparition haunting us, or showing itself, to us, and when not'[19] is not necessarily answered by the oneiric status of the ghost.

The question of the reality of the ghostly in Gothic texts is frequently underestimated or dismissed by Gothic criticism. There is a dominant narrative that claims that by the late eighteenth century ghost belief had largely disappeared, and that the Gothic was complicit with the process of secularisation understood as the erosion of supernatural belief. The 'explained supernatural' is frequently seen as reflective of a 'prevalent rationalistic temper',[20] with texts like Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) read as a

[13] Daniel Defoe, *An Essay on the History and Reality of Apparitions* (London: S. Roberts, 1727), p. 201
[14] Mary Shelley, 'On Ghosts' in *The London Magazine*, (London: Taylor and Hessey, 1824), IX, 253-356 (p. 254)
[15] Ibid., p. 254
[16] I will use this distinction throughout this chapter.
[17] Ann Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest,* ed. with introduction and notes by Chloe Chard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 108
[18] Ibid., p. 141
[19] Defoe, *History and Reality of Apparitions,* p. 206
[20] Glen Cavaliero, *The Supernatural and English Fiction: From the Castle of Otranto to Hawksmoor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 23

'denial of the traditional spirit world'.[21] Critics have emphasised the use of the ghostly primarily for affect or spectacle. For Emma Clery, by the mid-eighteenth century the supernatural had been 'processed, reproduced, packaged, marketed and distributed by the engines of cultural production' and 'levelled to the status of spectacle'.[22] As Clery continues, 'the unreality of these tales now goes without question; 'poetic faith', the voluntary suspension of disbelief, replaces 'rural faith'. The primary goal of this 'poetic faith' is presumed to be the evocation of emotion.[23] While this argument emphasises the increasing sense of the aesthetic value of terror and the ghostly, it evades the importance of the theological uncertainty surrounding them. Diane Long Hoeveler, once again deploying Charles Taylor's concept of the secular, recognises the conflicting discourses surrounding the ghostly and suggests that the Gothic represents a 'secularizing of the uncanny, a way of alternately valorising and at the same time slandering the realms of the supernatural'[24] through the 'oscillation in which the transcendent and traditional religious beliefs and tropes are alternately preserved and reanimated and then blasted and condemned by the conclusions of the works'.[25] For Hoeveler, this pattern becomes a function of a de-theologising secularising process and a form of 'secular theology.[26] However, she underestimates the prevalence of ghost-belief, the variety of different theologies concerning the ghostly and the complexity of the theological work that is often encoded in these figures.

Accounts which rely on the assumption of the gradual disappearance of ghost belief, as Handley notes, all build on the claims of Keith Thomas' seminal *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971) and the subsequent 'prevailing characterisation of the period as a time of dwindling belief in the preternatural world, dominated instead by discourses of empiricism, desacralisation and rationalism'.[27] In doing so, they present a falsely linear framework of development for ghost belief. There is no straightforward correlation between a growing

[21] Terry Castle, *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 121
[22] E. J. Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction 1762 – 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 17
[23] Ibid., p. 5
[24] Diane Hoeveler, *Gothic Riffs: Secularizing the Uncanny in the European Imaginary 1780-1820* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2010), p. v
[25] Ibid., p. xvii
[26] Ibid., p. 15
[27] Handley, *Visions of an Unseen World,* p. 5

emphasis on empiricism, reason and the medicalisation of the discourse and a completely secularised narrative. Rather, as with the dream and in keeping with Charles Taylor's concept of secularisation, 'different construals' existed simultaneously. [28] The sceptical productions of writers such as David Hume or John Ferriar did not master, nor even adequately map, the discourse around ghost beliefs. Jonathan Barry, in his case study of the Lamb Inn incident in the 1760s, has shown how frequently a significant gap exists between 'public infidelity and private belief'.[29] Gothic tales connected 'with the expectations and tastes of readers rather than simply reflecting the views of an isolated and culturally dissonant individual'.[30] As such, Gothic stories not only utilise familiar folkloric tropes but engage with and reflect contemporary understandings of the ghostly. As Jane Shaw advocates, we must engage with the importance of Christianity during the period as a 'lived religion',[31] which offered not only a set of concrete beliefs but an interpretative framework with which to confront accounts of the ghostly. These beliefs are not limited to Catholicism or Enthusiastic Dissent with which they are often associated. Owen Davies notes the continuance of ghost beliefs in all theological traditions. Methodism may have helped 'inflame popular superstitious beliefs',[32] but Anglican clerics 'were far from being a homogenous group following the same orthodox position' with many either complicit with or actively supporting ghost beliefs.[33]

A History of Ghost Belief

He that goeth down to the grave, shall come up no more - Job 7: 9

For the Sadducees say, that there is no Resurrection, neither Angel, nor spirit - Acts 22:8

[28] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 11

[29] Jonathan Barry, 'Public Infidelity and Private Belief? The Discourse of Spirits in Enlightenment Bristol', in *Beyond the Witch Trials: Witchcraft and Magic in Enlightenment Europe,* ed. by Owen Davies and Willem de Blécourt (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 117-44 (p. 117)

[30] Handley, *Visions of an Unseen World,* p. 11

[31] Jane Shaw, *Miracles in Enlightenment England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 9

[32] Owen Davies, 'Methodism, the Clergy, and the Popular Belief in Witchcraft', *History,* 82:266 (1997), 252-262 (p. 252)

[33] Owen Davies, *Witchcraft, Magic and Culture 1736-1951* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 22

While it is possible to trace significant lines of development in ghost belief, it is not simply a case of older 'superstitious' beliefs being replaced by sceptical attitudes. None of the positions noted in the historical survey below were extinct by the early nineteenth century. They survived both in specific denominational approaches to the ghostly and as part of a complicated and continually shifting web of ghost-beliefs, which was frequently reanimated by reported ghost-sightings and ensuing debates. There were reversals and revivals of belief and theological reframings of the rationale both for and against ghost-belief. Briefly mapping this complex history of ghost-belief enables a more nuanced understanding of the ghostly figure as it appears, or ultimately fails to appear in the case of the 'supernatural explained', in the Gothic.

The Reformation marked a significant change in ghost beliefs. Prior to the Reformation, ghost beliefs were widespread and 'closely associated with the theology and devotional practice of the Catholic Church'[34] and particularly the doctrine of Purgatory. Purgatory was the only non-permanent after-life state. There, souls were punished in accordance with their sins, undergoing a purifying process before their release. As Shane McCorristine notes, under this system 'the world of ghosts was remarkably well-ordered, secured and explainable both doctrinally and logically'.[35] Souls in purgatory were able to return to beg the living to facilitate their passage or offer warnings on the state to come. Ghost-belief reinforced both the doctrine of Purgatory and the power of the Catholic Church in this world and the next through both paid masses for the dead and the practice of the purchase of indulgences. As such, it became a prime doctrinal target of Reformation thinkers who viewed it as both 'unscriptural and unscrupulous'.[36]

Reformation thinkers dispensed with the doctrine of purgatory and with it 'the theological rationale that explained *how* dead souls were able to return to earth'.[37] The rejection of ghosts became a divisive doctrinal issue and 'in the century following the Reformation ghost belief, at least among the elite, was divided along strictly confessional

[34] Handley, *Visions of an Unseen World,* p. 1
[35] Shane McCorristine, *Spectres of the Self, Thinking about Ghosts and Ghost Seeing in England,* 1750-1920 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p27
[36] Handley, *Visions of an Unseen World,* p. 2
[37] Ibid., p. 2

lines'.[38] Ghost belief became associated with 'superstition', in the sense outlined by David Hume as 'weakness, fear, melancholy together with ignorance' exploited by a Church with enough 'sanctity of life [and] impudence of cunning' to mould that fear for its own ends.[39] Nicola di Zampari and Father Schedoni's manipulation of Vivaldi's ghost-belief in Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797) is a paradigmatic Gothic example of this fear of Catholic manipulation of 'superstition'. Gothic texts also recognised these doctrines as a double-edged sword: a weapon that relies on an institutionalisation of a framework of belief as likely to make the wielder of the weapon as vulnerable as their victim. In Edward Du Bois' Gothic parody of William Godwin's *St Leon* (1797), *St Godwin* (1800), for example, St Godwin escapes the inquisition precisely because 'the inquisitor's superstition led him firmly to believe' in a ridiculous tale of demonic kidnap. [40]

This rejection of purgatory and associated ghost-belief was primarily theological rather than scientific. Protestant Reformation theology emphasised the unbridgeable gap between the world of the living and the dead: 'he that goeth down to the grave, shall come up no more' (Job 7:9). Martin Luther admits the impossibility of concrete knowledge of 'the state of spirits that have departed from the body, before the resurrection and the day of judgment' but maintains that they are 'sundered and separated altogether from the world and from this generation'.[41] Human return is therefore impossible but this does not translate into a complete denial of 'apparitions'. A literal understanding of ghosts as the returned spirits of the dead was largely replaced by what Jo Bath and John Newton term the 'demonological interpretation'.[42] This is the idea, as Luther defines it, that 'all ghosts … are not men's souls, but evidently devils that amuse themselves thus to deceive the people with false claims and lies, or unnecessarily to frighten and trouble them'.[43] As a dominant

[38] Jo Bath and John Newton, "Sensible Proofs of Spirits": ghost belief during the later seventeenth century', *Folklore,* 117.1, (April 2006) <http://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.mmu.ac.uk/action/aboutThisJournal?show=aimsScope&journalCode=rfol20>
[Last accessed 14.06.2019]
[39] David Hume, 'On Superstition and Enthusiasm', in *The Philosophical Works of David Hume*, 4 vols (Edinburgh: Adam Black and William Tait, 1826), III, 77-85 (pp. 81-83)
[40] Edward du Bois, *St Godwin: A Tale of the Sixteenth, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century by Count Reginald de St Leon* (London: J. Wright, 1800), p. 110
[41] Martin Luther, 'Easter Sunday, or Third Easter Day' in *Church Postil 1544: Summer Postil,* trans. by John Nicholas Lenker (1905), http://www.lutherdansk.dk/1%20Web-AM%20-%20Introduction/Kirkepos.htm [last accessed 17.06.2019]
[42] Bath and Newton, 'Sensible Proof of Spirits'
[43] Luther, 'Easter Sunday, or Third Easter Day'

interpretative model, the demonological interpretation had declined by the early eighteenth century, but its longevity is demonstrated by its appearance in Defoe's *Essay on the History and Reality of Apparitions* (1727).

Defoe's development of the 'demonological' interpretation includes the possibility of the action of beneficent spirits, partially to combat the demonological interpretation's tendency rather to spread than contain 'superstitious' fear:

> Almost all real apparitions are of friendly and assisting Angels, and come of a kind and beneficent Errand to us, and that therefore we need not be so terrified at them as we are; if it be true that when any evil Spirit does appear, it is limited by a Superior Power.[44]

As well as emphasising the possibility of angelic 'apparitions', Defoe focuses on the limited nature of their power. This emphasis on the subordination of the 'apparition' to a broadly Providential framework that denied spirits free agency became a consistent, if not unproblematic, element of Protestant theologies of the ghostly.

This limitation of spirit activity was based on the subordination of the 'ghostly' to a providential framework. In Post-Reformation Protestant theology, providence began to take the place of a miraculous world-view in part as a reaction to Catholic use of miracle claims to assert doctrinal legitimacy. A miraculous world-view incorporates the possibility of direct Divine intervention as 'a miracle is the violation of the law of nature'.[45] A providential framework replaces such 'miracles' with 'special providences'. These were 'events for which God had foreseen the need' and which he had 'built into his plan for humanity'.[46] They conform to, rather than break, the laws of nature. The subordination of the ghostly to a providential framework therefore supposes that the pre-conditions for ghost or apparition appearances already exist as part of the 'natural laws' of the material and spiritual world. In the case of the ghost, this supposes a location of soul-survival and consciousness after death and before the resurrection of the end-times. The demonological interpretation requires a belief in immaterial spirits both Divine and demonic.

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[44] Defore, *The History and Reality of Apparitions,* p. 3 The subject of Defoe's actual beliefs are a point of critical debate but I use the source as representative of ideas available and popularly purchased in the public domain throughout the eighteenth century.
[45] David Hume, 'Of Miracles,' p. 24
[46] Shaw, *Providence in Early Modern England,* p. 229

The providential framework favoured the demonological interpretation as Protestant theology had no purgatory to explain the 'soul-survival' that was a pre-condition of ghost appearances under providence. The anonymous writer of *Anti-Canidia* (1762) vehemently objects to the mixing of providential and ghostly discourse, asking whether 'the sovereign Creator of the world will pervert the order and course of providence; disturb the souls of persons departed to their separate state'.[47] This theoretical uncertainty manifests itself in Gothic texts through a range of attitudes towards the compatibility of the 'ghost' and the providential as I will explore more fully in my analysis of 'explained supernatural' narratives. Broadly, however, the providential world-view allows for the returns of ghosts and the appearance of apparitions only with God's permission and under his direction. The anonymous *Life after Death* suggests many of the common 'purposes' of ghostly visits: 'the discovery of truth; the exposition of some horrid crime, or as warnings to impious and guilty persons to avert, by a timely repentance, the vengeance of heaven'.[48] In these examples, ghosts/apparitions are envisioned as secondary causes of God's providence as we find, for example, in the ghostly return of Edmund's parents in *The Old English Baron*, whose purpose is to restore the rightful line and avenge their own deaths.

The influence of both the demonological interpretation and its concomitant subordination of the 'ghostly' to the providential is exemplified in Radcliffe's work, most explicitly in her second novel, *A Sicilian Romance* (1790). Madame Menon is questioned as to whether 'disembodied spirits were ever permitted to visit this earth'.[49] While the question could easily be interpreted as directly questioning the existence of ghosts (those who have been 'dis-embodied'), Menon's reply creates a deliberate ambiguity:

> Who shall say that anything is impossible to God? We know that he has made us, who are embodied spirits; he, therefore, can make unembodied spirits.[50]

By contrasting 'embodied' and 'disembodied' spirits here as separate creations, Menon echoes the demonological interpretation's suspicion or rejection of 'ghosts' in favour of

[47] [Anon.], *Anti-Canidia: Or Superstition Detected and Exposed* (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1762), p. 21
[48] [Anon.], *Life after Death,* p. iv
[49] Ann Radcliffe, *A Sicilian Romance,* 2 vols (London: Hookham and Carpenter, 1792), I, p. 82
[50] Ibid., I, p. 83

'apparitions'. She ends her discourse with what appears to be almost a paraphrase of Defoe and certainly a transparent representation of a similar interpretative model:

> Such spirits, if indeed they have ever been seen, can have appeared only by the express permission of God, and for some very singular purposes; be assured that there are no beings who act unseen by him; and that, therefore, there are none from whom innocence can ever suffer harm.[51]

Her theory of the ghostly is predicated not upon a debate about their existence but rather emphasises the providential framework which confines ghostly activity.

Madame Menon entertains the possibility but does not argue for the absolute existence of 'apparitions'. In order fully to understand the theological intricacies of her position, it is necessary to investigate the way in which the discourses surrounding 'miracles' and the 'ghostly' converged in the Post-Reformation period. In early post-Reformation theology, the rejection of the Catholic theological frame of purgatory placed 'ghosts' within the category of the miraculous. One Protestant response to Catholic support of both ghosts and other miracles as 'evidence' of its power and authority was the doctrine of the 'Cessation of Miracles',[52] which stated that miracles, while occurring in 'biblical times', ceased 'after the early church had been established',[53] as their specific use had been to build up the early church. However, during the seventeenth century, and thanks to the proliferation of Dissenting groups around the interregnum, 'some Protestants began to incorporate a belief in, and experience of, miracles into their religious practice and theology'[54] as signs of authority, correct doctrine or apostolic succession. The tension between these two theological strands of interpretative practice and between competing denominational claims surrounding the proliferation of Protestant 'miracles' produced a changing attitude to the miraculous (and to special providences), influenced by and symbiotic with the rise of empirical sciences. On the one hand, the sceptical practices

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[51] Ibid., I, p. 84

[52] Such doctrines did not first appear at this period. Augustine, for example, clarifies in his *Retractions* that 'These miracles were not permitted to last till our times, lest the soul should always seek visible things.'* Similarly it was not ubiquitous in Protestant theology at any time. Luther, for example, believed in miracles of healing. However, there is a significant trend and expansion of this doctrine at this period along clearly denominational lines.

* Augustine, *Earlier Writings,* trans. John H. S. Burleigh (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), p. 220

[53] Shaw, *Miracles in Enlightenment England*, p. 1

[54] Ibid., p. 1

regarding specific miracle claims inherent in the doctrine of 'the Cessation of Miracles' laid the groundwork for deistic scepticism. On the other, a middle ground appeared, one that involved an increasingly empirical approach to the investigation of miracle claims.

Rather than an *a priori* judgment, claims were investigated according to the theories of English experimentalism. Jane Shaw usefully distinguishes between two different scientific or philosophical approaches to miracles. Following Peter Dear, she differentiates between the French 'mathematical' method, working from an assumption, which examples illustrate, and English experimentalism, working from a specific 'experiment' to form a judgment or law. Experimentalism is defined in part by an openness of mind and an attempt to set up 'matters of fact' by observation and enquiry. Shaw highlights how this approach, when applied to miracle claims, attempts to balance the demands of reason and revelation, tracing the middle way between atheism or deism, and enthusiasm or superstition. As Handley notes, this approach expanded to ghost claims in this period as 'reports of ghostly visits and supernatural occurrences were consequently dissected and anatomised by enlightened philosophers, medical practitioners, ladies and gentlemen of fashion, and some of the leading lights of natural philosophy'.[55] This sort of 'open' enquiry was a 'middle road' not only because it critically assessed 'Enthusiastic' Dissenting miracle claims but also equally offered a response to the rising 'threat' of atheistical scepticism. As Keith Thomas notes, 'as atheism became a greater threat to true religion…they became sympathetic to the ideas of ghosts'.[56]

In Madame Menon's disquisition on ghosts, we can trace the complicated undercurrents of this historical change and its continuing relevance in the eighteenth century. She begins her discussion by stating that:

> We should consider the limited power of our minds, and that we cannot understand many things which are indisputably true. No one yet knows why the magnetic needle points to the north; yet you, who have never seen a magnet, do not hesitate to believe that it has this tendency, because you have been well assured of it, both from books and in conversation.[57]

[55] Handley, *Visions of an Unseen World,* p. 2
[56] Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (Aylesbury: Penguin Books, 1973*,* p. 705
[57] Radcliffe, *Sicilian Romance,* I, p. 83

Using the example of magnets, she evokes both natural philosophy and its methods, placing the discussion on the level of scientific enquiry. Simultaneously, she rejects *a priori* assumptions about the possibility of the supernatural and underlines the limitations of rational enquiry ('the limited power of our minds'). She thereby also emphasises the impossibility of miracle claim investigations as the basis of doctrine, either through the refutation or confirmation of a miracle claim. She implicitly supports, therefore, an interpretation of the ghostly as a tool of confirmation rather than conversion. In doing so, she echoes but subverts the Humean atheistic assertion that 'a miracle can never be proved, so as to be the foundation of a system of religion'[58] by undermining the primacy of the scientific interpretation.

Madame Menon continues by asserting that:

> Since, therefore, we are sure that nothing is impossible to God, and that such beings *may* exist, though we cannot tell how, we ought to consider by what evidence their existence is supported. I do not say that spirits *have* appeared; but if several discreet unprejudiced persons were to assure me that they had seen one, I should not be proud or bold enough to reply "it is impossible." [59]

Here, she places an emphasis on the possibility of ghosts/apparitions and discredits unsupported atheism or disbelief. In Radcliffe's texts, only villains reject the supernatural on principle. While many critical accounts of Radcliffe's work focus on the rejection of superstition and triumph of 'Enlightenment values', Madame Menon's comments display a more intricate navigation of a discourse that views a belief in the possibility of ghosts as an appropriate remedy for the atheistic and appropriate scepticism as a remedy for both 'Catholic' superstition and 'Dissenting' enthusiasm.

The debate around the supernatural in the eighteenth century disparaged both 'Catholicism' and 'Enthusiasm' as interpretative models. Through the eighteenth century, however, they were increasingly viewed not only as separate threats but as symbiotically inter-related. George Lavington's *The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared* (1749) draws parallels between Catholic and Enthusiastic interpretative practice regarding miracles and reflects the fear that Catholicism was an insidious force capable of 'infecting'

[58] David Hume, 'Of Miracles,' p. 42
[59] Radcliffe, *Romance,* pp. 83-4

Protestant beliefs. As the author notes, 'I would not be understood to accuse the Methodists directly of Popery, though I am persuaded they are doing the Papists work for them'.[60] The Enthusiastic Dissenters, the writer continues, are a 'composition of Enthusiasm, Superstition, and Imposture' in which 'Catholic' style superstition ('Religion scared out of its senses') and Enthusiasm ('Religion run mad') have combined to create 'Religion turned hypocrite'[61] and spread 'infidelity and immorality'.[62] Enthusiastic Dissent throws off the shackles of the orthodox in order to affix superstitious shackles of its own as Dissenting groups develop into organised churches. Neither superstition nor enthusiasm are limited to a specific denomination – they represent models of religious practice which escape exclusive association with one specific group.

The fear of this interrelation of Enthusiastic and superstitious modes of interpretation and belief is clearly illustrated in Radcliffe's *Udolpho.* Annette's ghost belief, like that of many Gothic servants, while connected in part to her lower social status, is coded as Catholic. It is the product of an easily manipulated 'ignorant' superstition which reflects older forms of Christianity. Her terrified reactions and constant litany of 'they say' and 'all I have heard'[63] offer a paradigm of 'superstitious belief' defined by fear and the reception of beliefs from an external source. The bourgeois heroine Emily's interpretative practice, on the other hand, is more closely linked to Enthusiasm, which, according to Hume, relies on 'hope, pride, presumption, a warm imagination [and] ignorance leading to conviction of 'individual religious authority'.[64] Her interpretations (or, rather, misinterpretations) of the novel's mysteries represent a form of 'enthusiastic' self-deception and false revelation.

The threatening interrelation of 'superstition' and 'enthusiasm' is seen clearly in the infectious nature of Annette's superstition and its consequences for Emily. As Kathleen Hudson notes, Emily's 'increasingly questionable sense of reality [at Udolpho] is significantly

[60] George Lavington, *The Enthusiasm of the Methodists and Papists Compared,* 2nd edn (London: J. and P. Knapton, 1749), p. 11
[61] Ibid., p. 80
[62] Ibid., p. 11
[63] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho,* 4 vols (London: G. G. & J. Robinson, 1794), II, p. 226
[64] Shaw, *Miracles,* p. 11

influenced by the subjective viewpoint of the storyteller servant'.[65] Hudson suggests that this relationship is essentially positive, 'provid[ing] Emily with the imaginative and creative processes necessary for surviving' her trials.[66] However, this underestimates their detrimental effect on Emily's ability to both understand and navigate her situation. Annette's supernatural beliefs do, as Hudson suggests, reflect an alternative world view seemingly allied with a more stable sense of self and a practical ability to navigate the world. However, it is her fear that is infectious. Having passed on the received story about Laurentini's 'murder' and her ghost, we are told that 'Annette had now infected [Emily] with her own terrors'.[67] While Emily verbally rejects Annette's stories in an attempt to model appropriate behaviour and protect her own 'Protestant' identity, she later ponders the story with considerable care. Unlike Annette, she is not restricted to the 'received law' about the ghosts but 'added those thousand nameless terrors, which exist only in active imaginations, and which set reason and examination equally at defiance'.[68] Her Protestant scepticism of 'Catholic superstition' has become a voluntary submission to enthusiastic terror.

While critiques of both superstition and enthusiasm led in the eighteenth century to a broadly sceptical approach to ghost sightings, the contrary threats of atheism, deism and Socinianism also placed ghost sightings at the forefront of a theological defence of the integrity of the bible, the existence of the immaterial soul and of an afterlife. The story of the 'Witch of Endor' became a focalising point for these discussions as the only 'ghost' story in the bible. The 'Witch of Endor' 'raises the spirit' of the prophet Samuel for Saul (1 Samuel 28:3-25). The writer of *Anti-Canidia* includes a critique of this passage as a fundamental part of his rejection of spirit belief. He engages with theological paradigms, including the belief that spirits cannot return from the dead; the good (Samuel) cannot be commanded by the bad (the 'witch'); and the improbability of God using Samuel to speak to Saul when he has refused to speak through living prophets. These are then combined with materialist critiques on the visibility of the non-material, the impossibility of the non-material speaking and a close reading of the passage which draws attention to the witch's practices of

[65] Kathleen Hudson, *Servants and the Gothic, 1764-1831: A Half-Told Tale* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press), p79
[66] Ibid., p78
[67] Radcliffe, *Udolpho,* II, p. 205
[68] Ibid, p. 207

obfuscation and suggests trickery.[69] Such readings putatively defended Christian orthodoxy, but they were seen as rejecting the literal truth of the bible and thus construed as a 'danger to public morality and the very foundations of theological belief'.[70] During much of the eighteenth century, the absolute rejection of ghosts was viewed therefore as implicitly involved in this critique of biblical veracity , as *Life after Death* makes clear:

> Atheists, deists, and free-thinkers, may ridicule the notion of ghosts and apparitions, every true believer of the christian religion, cannot doubt the reality of such appearances; as the holy scriptures abound with authorities in support of them nor indeed, is prophane history less copious in like accounts.[71]

Here, the atheist *a priori* rejection is imagined as not only a form of irreligion but as an anti-rational form of fanaticism. The rejection of the possibility of ghosts is represented as a 'doctrinal' issue – a secular theology as dangerous or irrational as enthusiasm or superstition.

Jonathan Barry's case study of the 'Lamb Inn' incident of 1761-62 demonstrates the way in which these interpretative tensions – between fears of superstition, enthusiasm, and atheism – manifested in contemporary discourse. Charges of credulity, fraud and manipulation were met with arguments that 'it was the sceptics, rather than they, who were being dogmatic'.[72]Almost 70 years later, Walter Scott in *Letters on Demonology* (1830) reflects a similar emphasis on unbiased yet sceptical openness to belief as an antidote to atheism: 'The abstract possibility of apparitions must be admitted by everyone who believes in a Deity, and His superintending omnipotence.'[73] There was an increasingly medicalised discourse around ghost-sightings; Scott lists the influence of strong emotions, drunkenness, sleep, the use of intoxicants, illness, a guilty conscience, association and the infectious nature of superstition.[74] However, as Barry notes, these medicalised 'tools' of interpretation were, as in Scott, regularly subordinated to 'religious and ideological ideas – polarised

[69] [Anon.], *Anti-Canidia,* pp. 10-12
[70] McCorristine, *Spectres of Self,* p. 49
[71] Anonymous, *Life after Death,* p. iv
[72] Barry, 'Public Infidelity and Private Belief,' p. 127
[73] Walter Scott, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* with an introduction by Henry Morley, 3rd edn (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1887), p. 11
[74] Scott, *Letters,* pp. 12-3

around the concepts of fraud and enthusiasm on the one hand, and of Scriptural example and Sadduceeism on the other'.[75]

This use of the term Sadduceeism points to a pivotal aspect of the support of ghost-belief: a defence of the immortality and the immateriality of the soul. The title of Joseph Glanvill's *Saducismus Triumphatus* highlights the way in which 'factual' ghost narrative collections were produced as 'anti-Sadducean literature'. [76] This use of the term 'Sadducee' references Acts 22:8, 'For the Sadducees say, that there is no Resurrection, neither Angel, nor spirit'. Three brief examples demonstrate the term's widespread usage in the eighteenth century. Lord Shaftesbury (1711) defines the 'Sadducee' as 'a Materialist, and Denyer of the Soul's Immortality'.[77] The satirical poem 'The Frightened Farmer' (1742) printed in *The London Magazine* details a comic false apparition encounter but frames its narrative with an arch repudiation of the 'modern Sadducee' who refuses to acknowledge 'goblins, elves and apparitions'. Instead these modern Sadducees talk of

> mere *illusion,* strength of *fancy,*
> Long *prejudice,* and early *fears*
> *Notions* imbib'd in younger years,
> And gross *deception* of our senses.[78]

The usage here is partly ironic but suggestively mirrors the tense discourse between converse denunciations of credulity and 'Sadduceeism' during this period and the connection of the later with a medicalised or sceptical discourse around ghosts. Byron's usage of the term in Canto II in *Childe Harolde* (1812) suggests its continuing relevance as a lens through which to view the 'ghost question' into the nineteenth century:

> If, as holiest men have deem'd, there be
> A land of souls beyond that sable shore
> To shame the doctrine of the Sadducee
> …
> How sweet it were in concert to adore

[75] Barry, 'Public Infidelity and Private Belief', p. 137
[76] Bath and Newton, "Sensible Proof of Spirits"
[77] Shaftesbury, *Characterisiticks Vol. 3 Miscellaneous Reflections on the Preceding Treatises, and Other Critical Subjects,* (1727), p. 77
[78] Anonymous, 'The Frightened Farmer', in 'The London Poetical Essays January 1742/March 1742', in *The London Magazine,* vol. 11 (London: Charles Ackers, 1736-1746), 44-5/149-50 (p. 149)

With those who made our mortal labours light![79]

Byron mixes classical imagery with the theological concept of the Sadducee and of a heaven filled with devotion to a Christian deity. To deny the possibility of spirits is to act the Sadducee and bring into question the existence of an immortal soul, the Christian afterlife, the resurrection of the end-days and even the possible divinity of Jesus.[80]

The term 'Sadducee' was frequently used in denouncements of Unitarian, or more broadly Socinian, preachers such as Joseph Priestley, as we see in the critique in verse *The Sadducee* (1778). This poem conflates the denial of Christ's divinity ('The Sadducee, speaking of Jesus, says, 'He is only a Man like ourselves.'[81]) with the denial of apparitions ('What e'er thou mak'st us, thou'lt not make a *Devil!'*) [82], the rejection of the immateriality of the soul ('Next, thy own soul annihilate, and gone!') [83] and anti-trinitarian theology. The first formal Unitarian denomination was started by Theophilus Lindsey and Joseph Priestley in 1774, and it is notable that the rise of the Gothic coincides with the increasing visibility of the Unitarians and the connection of rational Dissent with revolutionary sentiment.[84] It would be overstating the case, however, to suggest that the Gothic's use of the ghostly is simply a conservative reaction to growing Deist, Atheist and Unitarian (Socinian) discourse. As Geary notes, the Gothic was hardly a form of literary Methodism, attempting to raise the Divine with the dead for if so 'the form's semiotic procedures would have been quite different and its handling of the numinous far less indecisive'.[85] Still, ghost depictions must be understood in the wider context of their use to repudiate purely materialist doctrines that denied the existence of a soul.

The materialism against which ghost-belief stood was not a monolithic atheist conception. Rather, thinkers such as Joseph Priestley and David Hume represent two

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[79] Lord Byron, 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage', in *The Works of Lord Byron: Complete in One Volume* (London: John Murray, 1841), 1-62 (p. 17)

[80] To deny the separation of body and soul effectively brought into question the 'full divinity' of Christ as he, like all other humans, becomes a material body whose identity is indivisible from this material form.

[81] Anonymous, *The Sadducee: A Poem Occasioned by Several Publications and Particularly Disquisitions relating to Matter and Spirit by Joseph Priestley* (London: J. W. Pasham, 1778), p. 11

[82] Ibid., p. 17

[83] Ibid., p. 18

[84] in the impassioned speeches and inflammatory rhetoric of figures associated with Rational Dissent (such as Richard Price) celebrating the French Revolution, the spectre of a threatening Enthusiasm and the ghost of sectarian violence during the Interregnum was resurrected.

[85] Geary, *The Supernatural in Gothic Fiction,* p. 20

different strands of materialist discourse. For Hume, 'the Gospel alone'[86] is responsible for a belief in the immateriality and immortality of the soul. There is no practical distinction between body and 'soul'. This denial of the immaterial immortal soul is likewise a rejection of any concept of an afterlife: 'what reason to imagine, that an immense alteration, such as is made on the soul by the dissolution of the body, and all its organs of thought and sensation, can be effected without the dissolution of the whole?'[87] For Priestley too, the body and 'soul' are indivisible as 'the corporeal and mental faculties, inhering in the same substance, grow, ripen, and decay together'.[88] Priestley, however, does not interpret this material understanding of the soul/body relation as a critique of Christianity but rather as a defence of it. For Priestley, the concept of the immateriality of the soul is a heathen ingraft. Like Hume, he maintains that the body dissolves with the soul but 'it continues in a state of dissolution, till it shall please that Almighty Being who called it into existence to restore it to life again'.[89] His belief in an afterlife relies solely on bodily resurrection. Ghost-beliefs, therefore, operated as a corrective not only to atheist but also to theologically heterodox positions such as Unitarian materialism.

By the end of the eighteenth century, there was no singular response to the question of the ghostly. Narratives of materialist scepticism intertwined with theological repudiations of ghost narratives. Scientific explanations of specific ghost sightings were often subordinated to the demands of theological frameworks that emphasised the possibility of ghosts or apparitions. As Shaw notes, supernatural belief and empirical enquiry were often as symbiotic as they were contradictory. Condemnations of open-minded enquiry into 'supernatural' manifestations were answered with accusations of secular fanaticism. Suspicion of ghost-belief as credulous, superstitious and enthusiastic remained in tension with a contradictory fear of the radical politics and theological heterodoxy of Rational Dissent and atheism. An admonition not to fear the supernatural was not necessarily an admonition not to believe in it. The rejection of ghosts is not necessarily the rejection of apparitions. There was a continuous and unresolved tension throughout the period, partly

[86] David Hume, 'On the Immortality of the Soul', in *Essays on Suicide and the Immortality of the Soul by the late David Hume: A New Edition,* (Basil: James Decker, 1799), p. 15
[87] Ibid., p. 22
[88] Joseph Priestley, *Disquisitions relating to Matter and Spirit,* 2nd edn, 2 vols (Birmingham: J. Johnson, 1782), I, p. 69
[89] Ibid., p. 69

due to the lack of a coherent theological framework for ghost-belief within Protestant theology. The following case studies demonstrate three variant strands of the 'explained supernatural' and the way in which these narratives engaged with different theological paradigms for the rejection or support of ghost-belief.

The 'Explained Supernatural'

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God - 1 John 4:1

Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them - Leviticus 19:31

Any investigation of the 'explained supernatural' must inevitably commence with its most famous exponent, Ann Radcliffe. As I have already demonstrated, the 'supernatural explained' is far from universal in her novels. The case is, however, less clear with regards to the question of ghosts than that of dreams. Radcliffe's language creates a deliberate ambiguity, which favours the demonological interpretation. Throughout her work, in serious discourse about the possibility of 'ghostly figures', as in Madame Menon's disquisition outlined above, her preferred term is 'disembodied spirit'[90] or 'spirit'.[91] 'Ghost' is only used by Catholically coded characters (such as Annette) or in mocking reference to ghost belief.[92] When discussing 'sightings', about which there is any sense of ontological ambiguity, Radcliffe reverts to the term 'apparition'. When Emily finally finds her dying aunt in *Udolpho,* for example, she questions whether she is an 'apparition', [93] thus reflecting a real uncertainty about her aunt's status as living or dead. Radcliffe's linguistic coding suggests the complexity of her interaction with ghost and spirit belief; those instances that are allowed to create 'fantastic' tension are deliberately distanced from a concrete theological position on 'ghosts' by using the more ambiguous 'apparition'. This does not, however, amount to a complete repudiation of 'ghosts'. In *Udolpho,* for example, the possibility of a demonological interpretation for ambiguous instances lies in tension not only with the sceptical 'solutions' of a number of mysteries but with ghost beliefs too. St Aubert expresses hope that 'we shall

[90] Radcliffe, *Sicilian Romance,* I, p. 82; Radcliffe, *Udolpho,* I, p. 182

[91] Radcliffe, *Udolpho,* IV, p. 100. This term is used in the discussion between the Baron de Saint Foix and the Count de Villefort.

[92] 'Spectre' is also used in these contexts.

[93] Radcliffe, *Udolpho,* III, p. 65

be permitted to look down on those we have left on earth'[94] and the Count and Baron's debates around the visibility of 'spirits' and their ability to return[95] inform both Emily and the reader's engagement with possible ghosts.

The 'explained supernatural' in Radcliffe is often associated with a specifically anti-Catholic Enlightenment rationality, as we see in the work of Alison Milbank, Jerrold E. Hogle and David Durant. They argue, respectively, that the 'supernatural explained', is part of a 'de-mystifying process',[96] that it reflects a 'Dissenting Christian Deist' attitude, [97] and that the ghostly represents not 'the needed corrective for an over-rationalistic age' but a 'monstrous' irrationality.[98] Allegorical readings rely to a great extent on this assumption of an 'Enlightened rejection' of the real supernatural. For Clery, for example, the 'ghosts' of Radcliffean fiction represent the female predicament, as 'the supernatural describes the experience of a woman defined by property laws', in other words, her position 'as a mere instrument, her qualifications for humanity – rationality, emotions – are superfluous'.[99] This is made horrifyingly literal in *Sicilian Romance,* in which the supernatural explanations of the mother's cries point to the effective 'ghostliness' of this living figure. However, while this reading draws out the allegorical possibilities inherent in the text's use of the 'explained supernatural', it does not engage with the very real 'fantastic hesitation' surrounding it.

Radcliffe's aesthetic and affective strategies are key to understanding the theological valence of her 'ghostly' figures. As I have noted, aesthetic theorists like Edmund Burke and John Dennis emphasised the value of the 'affect' of 'terror' and highlighted 'Demons, Apparitions of all sorts, and more particularly the Spirits of Men departed' as particularly strong sources of both terror and the sublime. [100] In 'On the Pleasures Derived from the Objects of Terror' (1773), Anna Letitia Barbauld builds on this affirmation to suggest that

[94] Ibid., I, p. 180
[95] Ibid., IV, p. 100
[96] Alison Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 37
[97] Jerrald Hogle, 'Recovering the Walpolean Gothic: *The Italian: Or, The Confessional of the Black Penitents* (1796-7)', in *Ann Radcliffe and Romanticism,* ed. by Dale Townshend and Angela Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 151-167 (p. 151)
[98] David Durant, 'Ann Radcliffe and the Conservative Gothic', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900,* 22.3 (Summer, 1982), p. 19
[99] Clery, *Rise of Supernatural Fiction,* p. 120
[100] Dennis, 'The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry', pp. 437-8

'the agency of invisible beings' and 'forms unseen, and mightier far than we'[101] lead to sublimity and a concomitant expansion of the mind into a 'new world which is laid open to its view'.[102] This aesthetic appreciation of the supernatural is outlined by Clery as one of the three key responses to the supernatural that arose in the eighteenth century: the supernatural as pure spectacle (which I will address in the next section); a belief in the 'real' supernatural; and an aesthetic/affective repurposing of the ghostly in fictional accounts.[103] A contemporary term for this 'aesthetic' supernatural was the idea of the 'poetic supernatural' as outlined by Scott, who suggested in 1810 that the supernatural had been 'now universally abandoned to the use of poetry'.[104] Many critics, such as Patricia Meyer Spacks, have taken this to mean that 'emphasis on the intrinsic value of the emotions derived from contemplation of the supernatural makes finally irrelevant the problem of whether the unearthly can be *believed* in'.[105] However, such readings obscure the continued importance of theological frameworks of interpretation.

The ghostly was 'a matter for discussion; the question of belief or non-belief was a real and lively issue'.[106] Rather than being disassociated from the question of ghost-belief, the affective strategies surrounding ghostly depictions could be used to stimulate engagement with the possibility of their reality. As Emma Mason notes, the 'central occupation' of both 'evangelical dissent' and 'eighteenth-century religious poetry' in reaction to over-rationalised religion was 'to move the reasoning reader into the emotional experience of faith'[107] for what the 'mind may reject', the 'emotions unfailingly accept'.[108] Affective strategies were central to the theological projects of these texts and we find a similar strategy emerging in works of the Gothic, including Radcliffe's.

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[101] Anna Letitia Aiken and John Aiken, *On Romances* and *On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror, with Sir Bertrand, a Fragment',* 1773 at UpEnn English, http://www.english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Etexts/barbauldessays.html [last accessed 25.06.2017]
[102] Ibid.
[103] Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction,* p. 34
[104] Walter Scott quoted in O. Parsons, *Witchcraft and Demonology in Scott's Fiction* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1964), p. 14
[105] Patricia Meyer Spacks, *The Insistence of Horror* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 97
[106] Ibid.*,* p. 28
[107] Emma Mason, 'Poetry and Religion', in *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry,* ed. by Christine Gerrard (Chichester: Wiley and Sons, 2014), 53-69 (p. 53)
[108] Spacks, *The Insistence of Horror,* p. 33

A common complaint, for contemporary and modern critics, regarding Radcliffe's use of the 'supernatural explained' is that these episodes 'always deliver less than they promise'.[109] Thomas Noon Talfourd, Radcliffe's first biographer, focuses on the 'problem' of her 'explained supernatural', viewing it as extraordinary that 'a writer thus gifted' should waste the 'superstitious apprehensions' she worked to create on explanations rooted in 'mere physical causes'.[110] As he notes, Radcliffe uses a 'delicate hand' to pluck the strings of terror, uncertainty and suspense by the masterful use of 'mysterious hints and skilful contrivances',[111] only to resolve them by reference to banal explanations utterly incommensurate with the emotion raised. He notes that 'all the feelings created up to the moment of explanation, and which it has been the very object of the author to awaken, have obeyed the influence of these very principles, which at last she chooses to disown'.[112] This suggests, as Kilgour argues, that 'the gap between drawn-out suspense and perfunctory revelation itself reveals that the author's real interest is not in revelation but suspense'.[113] The hesitation is as important as its resolution. As Talfourd's complaint implies, not only the 'feeling' but also the emotional interpretative framework created by Radcliffe's aesthetic strategies survives the 'revelation'. Talfourd further notes that Radcliffe's supernatural is 'not only possible, but congenial'.[114] Here, he points to the way in which her ghostly appearances reflect contemporary ghost-belief and, particularly, its 'congenial' doctrines, such as the immateriality of the soul, the existence of a 'spiritual realm' and, very pointedly in *Udolpho*, the retention of personal identity after death. Radcliffe manipulates engagement with these beliefs and interpretative frameworks though her use of dread, suspense and uncertainty, which engage the reader affectively with the process of ghost interpretation.

Radcliffe creates and prolongs moments of 'fantastic tension' between the seemingly 'obvious' supernatural explanation and the possibility of a material explanation. This uncertainty is manifested by her characters who veer between fear, curiosity and self-castigation for 'superstition'. Geary argues that the expectation of a material resolution

[109] Judith Wilt, *Ghosts of the Gothic : Austen, Eliot, & Lawrence* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 136
[110] Thomas Noon Talfourd, 'Memoirs of the Authoress', in *The Posthumous Works of Anne Radcliffe with A Memoir of the Authoress,* 4 vols (London: Henry Colburn, 1833), I, 1-132 (p. 115)
[111] Ibid., I, p. 111
[112] Ibid., I, p. 116
[113] Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 130
[114] Talfourd, 'Memoirs', p. 115

means that Radcliffe's narratives 'require no suspension of disbelief because they require no belief at all'.[115] It would be more accurate to suggest that her novels *allow* no suspension of disbelief. Radcliffe consistently re-enacts interpretative confrontations with not only the 'ghostly' but with supernatural dreams, mysterious noises and remarkable coincidences. By focalising through her heroines, and subordinating our knowledge to theirs, we are forced into the same interpretative choices as the protagonists. With them, we experience the tension between natural and supernatural explanations, enthusiastic terror, superstitious credulity, and a fear of atheistic scepticism. As Jacqueline Howard notes: 'Emily's hunches, intuitions, and intense imaginings so often could have been right that they bolster faith in the irrational.'[116] Emily's confusion and attempts at interpretation form the pattern for the reader's own. The theoretical and theological questions at stake escape the page as we use extra-fictional logic to confront the 'fantastic hesitations' created and prolonged by the text and are confronted by the 'simultaneous necessity and impossibility of defining absolute truth' in relation to the spiritual world.[117]

While many seemingly supernatural incidents receive an explanation, such as the mysterious music ultimately traced to Laurentini, a number of ghost incidents remain ambiguous and unexplained. Terry Castle's influential theory on the relation of the 'ghosts' of Radcliffe's Gothic to 'the spectralization of the other' continues to influence attempts to account for this ambiguity. Castle does not ignore the interaction of competing discourses. She highlights St Aubert's faintly expressed hope that 'disembodied spirits watch over the friends they have loved'.[118] For Castle, however, the debate between the Baron de Saint Foix and the Count de Villefort on whether spirits are ever 'permitted to return to the earth' and whether, if so, they are visible,[119] demonstrates Radcliffe's 'resolute' endorsement of the Count's sceptical position and a negation of St Aubert's hope.[120] Before questioning Castle's reading of this 'triumph' of scepticism, it is worth noting that there are fundamental theological differences between the subject matter of these instances. While both pertain to the immateriality and immortality of the soul, St Aubert focuses on the

[115] Geary, *The Supernatural in Gothic Fiction,* p. 43
[116] Howard, *Reading Gothic Fiction: A Bakhtinian Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 127
[117] Glen Cavaliero, *The Supernatural and English Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 14
[118] Radcliffe, *Udolpho,* I, pp. 180-1
[119] Ibid., IV, p. 156
[120] Castle, *The Female Thermometer,* p. 121

location of the soul immediately after death. The debate between the Count and Baron, in contrast, focuses on ghostly return and the scientific properties of the soul. A comparison between these two incidents therefore creates a misleading false equivalence.

In reference to the debate itself and the apparent triumph of rational scepticism, Emily acknowledges that the Count 'had much the superiority of the Baron in point of argument'.[121] This superiority, however, is quickly undermined by the mystery surrounding the 'haunted wing' in Chateau le Blanc. The Baron's particular form of fear-mongering, affect-driven, reason-resistant and gleefully indiscriminate ghost-belief is mocked. However, the count's original 'sceptical fanaticism' is undermined, and we find him applying empirical modes of investigation that ultimately prove inconclusive. The uncertainty around the haunted wing persists until the reappearance of Ludovico. This meeting appears to erase lingering uncertainty but Ludovico's unlikely appearance as rescuer appears as an instance of special providence. Milbank depicts Radcliffe's revelations as an 'unmasking' in which an 'image of falsehood – an idol – is unmasked, akin to the false church'.[122] However, the reality is more complicated; one system of magical providential explanation is replaced with another – the supernatural is superseded by the 'naturally' providential and the characters cannot escape what Colin Manlove denominates 'the ultimately supernatural character of reality'.[123] The echoes of the interpretative uncertainty remain, adding fuel to the conviction of a transcendental reality. This ambiguity is reinforced when we consider the issues surrounding the 'authority' of the Count's 'voice'. His pronouncements about both Valancourt and Du Pont are shown to be inaccurate. The Count is not St Aubert. Like his house – half-ruined, half-modernised, midway between La Valeé and Udolpho– he marks a middle point between the fanatical scepticism of Montoni and St Aubert's uncertain but hopeful 'voice of authority'. His views on the 'ghostly' therefore come under suspicion.

In Castle's reading, scepticism wins, with Castle maintaining that 'vulgar apparitions of folk superstition' are absent and ultimately replaced with 'ghosts' which are 'subjective, delicately emotional in origin, the subtle protrusions of a yearning heart'.[124] Those

[121] Radcliffe, *Udolpho*., IV, p. 100
[122] Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 37
[123] Colin Manlove, *Christian Fantasy: From 1200 to the Present* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), p. 77
[124] Castle, *The Female Thermometer,* p. 121

characters in the novel that possess sensibility are 'haunted', surrounded by phantoms, both living and dead, who are ultimately the 'products of refined sentiment, the characteristic projection of a feeling heart'.[125] Castle notes the way in which this 'spectralization' of the other reflects radical changes in the conception of the relationship between self and other in the period. The rise of Romantic individualism meant 'a growing sense of the ghostliness of other people'[126] whose relation to us is defined by our 'internalised image' of them.[127] Within Castle's reading the supernatural is 'not so much explained in *Udolpho* as it is displaced' into the world of the secular and the psychological. [128] However, this reading, rather than being a totalising explanation of the ghostly phenomena, is only one of numerous interpretative frameworks implicitly suggested by the text. Castle's concept of spectralization relates to the contemporary explanation of ghosts as 'recollected images'[129] that are projected by the mind after being triggered by 'association'.[130] Radcliffe's 'fantastic hesitations' create tension between different 'rational' explanations of ghost-sightings, including that of association, and the possibility of the reality of the ghostly: between being haunted by our memories or haunted by the dead.

Using the same example as Castle, we can see the way in which this tension is created and maintained. Emily returns to La Valeé and views St Aubert's vacant chair and 'almost fancies' that she sees him:

> There was an arm chair, in which he used to sit; she shrunk when she observed it, for she had so often seen him seated there, and the idea of him rose so distinctly to her mind, that she almost fancied she saw him before her. But she checked the illusions of a distempered imagination, though she could not subdue a certain degree of awe.[131]

There is a clear evocation here of 'association' and of the 'recollected images' of St. Aubert being the cause of the sighting. However, if we consider the formal techniques involved in the representation of the incident, it becomes apparent that Radcliffe deliberately creates

[125] Ibid., p. 121
[126] Ibid., p. 123
[127] Ibid., p. 123
[128] Ibid., p. 124
[129] John Ferriar, *Theory of Apparitions* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1813), p. 62
[130] Addison, 'Spectator 110', p. 169
[131] Radcliffe, *Udolpho,* I, p. 253

an affective response of hesitation and uncertainty.[132] There is a shift of perspective here and a turn to free indirect discourse, which allows us to 'momentarily embody the protagonist's consciousness as well as stand apart from and judge it'.[133] Radcliffe's use of the phrase 'almost fancied', for example, suggests this move into a 'performance of' Emily's 'consciousness'.[134] The 'almost' is a conversational modifier that appears to mirror Emily's own thoughts. The use of 'fancied' means we are tied to Emily's perceptions rather than to the realm of objective truth. The lingering emotion, the 'certain degree of awe', blurs the line between reality and unreality, with the 'fancy's' effect being both emotionally and theologically consistent with an actual sighting. After this incident, Radcliffe does not abandon the sense of supernatural possibility but maintains an affective uncertainty about the reality of the ghostly. Emily is disturbed by a 'rustling sound'[135] that inspires a supernatural interpretation. Here there is a bathetic revelation – it is her dog Manon. However, within ten pages, we return to a similar 'fantastic hesitation:' due to the 'infirm state of her nerves *may* be attributed what she imagined, when, her eyes glancing a second time on the arm chair…the countenance of her dead father appeared there' (my emphasis).[136] We *may* read this vision as an externalisation of her guilt at looking illicitly at her father's papers, or as a result of the infirmity of her nerves. However, Radcliffe's deliberate use of the modal of probability 'may' and another ambiguous switch to Emily's perspective unsettles the certainty of this judgment. Radcliffe deliberately creates an unresolved sense of tension around these events but also importantly links them to specific theological considerations regarding the ghostly.

St Aubert's hope that 'disembodied spirits watch over the friends they have loved'[137] is continually resurrected by the ambiguous 'seeing' of St Aubert. After the first sighting in the chair, Emily's 'thoughts dwelt on the probable state of departed spirits, and she remembered the affecting conversation, which had passed between St Aubert and La Voisin,

[132] Isabel Rivers notes a similar technique in the work of theologians like Phillip Doddridge. She suggests that he pre-empts 'rationalist doubts' by using reporting language to present claims of divine intervention or communications. The language performs a double function therefore of presenting these claims while simultaneously avoiding the charge of unthinking Enthusiastic (or superstitious) belief.
[133] Thomas Manganaro, 'Free Indirect Discourse and the Problem of Will in Two Novels by William Godwin,' *Studies in Romanticism,* 57.2 (2018), 301-323 (p. 302)
[134] Ibid., p. 302
[135] Radcliffe, *Udolpho,* I, p. 254
[136] Ibid., I, p. 273
[137] Ibid., I, pp. 180-1

on the night preceding his death'.[138] We are clearly meant to associate this incident with the 'congenial' concept of the ghostly advocated by St Aubert. Emily's response to the 'rustling sound' moments later is terror. Then 'her dissipated reason returning, 'What should I fear?' she said. 'If the Spirits of those we love ever return to us, it is in kindness.'[139] This serves as a complementary reinforcement of providential conceptions of the ghost or apparition and of the integrity of individual identity after death evoked by the ambiguous sightings of St Aubert. Uncertainties regarding discrete incidents, or even clear resolutions, do not negate the theological content of the moment. The affective and formal strategies of the depiction engage us with the question of whether we as individuals survive our own deaths. It is not, as Milbank suggests, 'the haunting effect of memory' which 'holds together the double truth that Emily's father is dead to her yet alive to God'[140] but rather an enforced fantastic hesitation with the possibility of his ghostly continuation. The ghosts of Radcliffe, however, are only ever ghosts of confirmation rather than conversion. Radcliffe's ghosts thereby avoid the problematic associations with 'superstitious' and 'enthusiastic' appropriation of miracles and the ghostly for theological or denominational gain.

The 'resolved' rather than 'ambiguous' hauntings in Radcliffe, furthermore, frequently function to literalise the theological connotations of the 'haunting' rather than simply, as in Clery's account, working as an allegory of a socio-political reality. In *Sicilian Romance,* for example, the ghostly sounds and lights caused by the protagonists' imprisoned mother represent, in effect, a folkloric and providence-driven narrative of revenge in which a 'ghost' returns to indicate the guilt of their aggressor and catalyse their own revenge. Providence, understood here as evidence of God's existence, God's activity and God's love, is transposed from the ghostly to the human plane but the distinction between the two blurs. The imprisoned mother also conforms to the theological subtext of the ghostly figure. The ghostly emanations are effectively proof of life. The text literalises the concept of both life *after* death (her 'resurrection' from her entombment) and life *in* death (her continued existence after her 'death'). The theological resonances of the 'ghostly' survive the ghost's expulsion from the text.

[138] Ibid., I, p. 254
[139] Ibid., I, p. 255
[140] Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 102

Radcliffe's particular brand of the 'supernatural explained', with its ambiguity, uncertainty and theological complexity, relies on the reader's affective engagement with 'fantastic hesitations'. Her version of the 'explained supernatural', however, is not the only iteration that we find in the early British Gothic. Eliza Parsons's *The Castle of Wolfenbach* (1793) and Carl Friedrich Kahlert's *The Necromancer: Or, The Tale of the Black Forest* (1794) liberally translated by Peter Teuthold[141] represent two different manifestations of the 'supernatural explained'. Each version is connected both to different aesthetic/affective tactics and to different theological projects.

In *The Castle of Wolfenbach,* Matilda enters a ruined castle while fleeing from her nefarious uncle. She is warned by the garrulous Bertha that the castle is haunted by 'strange noises, groans, and screams.[142] Affective tension is, however, notably absent. Bertha finishes her account by saying that 'the ghosts never come down stairs…they were some of your high gentry, I warrant'.[143] Her response immediately introduces a note of comedy which provides an ironic social critique rather than fomenting fear.[144] Although Matilda hears these noises, 'she did not suffer her mind to dwell on the causes being supernatural, she conceived there must be some mystery which, on the following day, … she resolved, if possible, to explore'.[145] The reader is not placed in a position of 'fantastic hesitation' but rather is given a practical mystery to solve. We later learn that Victoria, the imprisoned Countess of Wolfenbach, has been ordered by her husband to 'rattle a chain…groan, and make such kind of noises as may appal those who come here' to keep people away from her place of imprisonment.[146]

Despite the novel's explicitly articulated engagement with theological questions, such as providence, the virtue of suffering and the authority of God, there is no discussion

[141] The original version of *The Necromancer* was a collection of German stories. I have chosen to include them as examples of a trend in the early British Gothic, because Teuthold's translation into English represented a transformation of the original material and his thread narrative, of a series of connected incidents of the 'supernatural explained,' represents a distinct English version of the text.
[142] Eliza Parsons, *Castle of Wolfenbach,* 2 vols (London: William Lane, 1793), I, p. 8
[143] Ibid., I, p. 8
[144] Hudson notes that servant narratives frequently offer a different world view which 'requires the accidental or intentional destabilisation of the status quo'. * In this case, Bertha's comment both enacts a ridiculed 'lower-class' superstition while effectually pointing at the underlying reality connected to the origin of the false rumours of the ghostly apparition: an upper-class manipulation of ghost belief for personal gain which involves all classes. Hudson, *Gothic Servants,* p6
[145] Parsons, *Castle of Wolfenbach,* I, p. 15
[146] Ibid., I, p. 263

of the ghost question. Matilda explains that 'as I never had my mind occupied by any ghosts and could not conceive any actions of my life had subjected me to the terror of supernatural visitations, I believed there must be some other cause … for the noise'.[147] Here, the 'ghost' is rejected but the reference to 'supernatural visitations' suggests that the demonological interpretation and a providential frame for demonic intervention underlines the text. The world of the novel is one of clear binaries between good and evil, in which demons are only allowed to torment evil-doers: 'if we perform our duties towards God and man … Providence will always preserve us from evil'.[148] The novel has a strongly providential framework but ghosts are absent from, and inimical to, Parsons's conception of providence. The novel suggests a view of ghosts as implicitly 'miraculous' rather than 'providential' – truly supernatural, rather than preternatural events. It thereby reinforces a theology of distance between the living and the dead and rejects the possibility of 'soul survival' before the final resurrection.

In *Wolfenbach,* belief in ghosts is associated with superstitious manipulation through fear. The purpose of the Count's trick was to 'appal' guests to the Castle to hide his own crimes. The overlapping critique of 'enthusiasm' and its connection to the ghostly or supernatural is suggested by an exchange between the Count and his servant Joseph. In replying to Joseph's denial that he has heard ghosts, the Count notes 'the silly imagination of some people conjure up frightful fancies, and endeavour to impose them upon others as realities'.[149] The emphasis here is not only on inherited stories but those created by the enthusiastic 'imagination', which then become tools in the manipulation of others completing the circle of enthusiasm and superstition.

Kahlert's *The Necromancer* similarly emphasises ghost belief as a form of credulity open to external manipulation. The narrative presents the reader with a series of interconnected tales of the seemingly supernatural – including a wild hunt, ghostly visitations and necromantic consultations – which are ultimately revealed to be the result of the trickery of the 'necromancer' Volkert. Unlike *Wolfenbach,* Peter Teuthold's English translation of the text leaves significant gaps between the presentation and interpretation

[147] Ibid., I, p. 48
[148] Ibid., I, pp. 38-9
[149] Ibid., I, p. 88

of its supernatural mysteries. The first supernatural mystery posed by the text is Hellfried's meeting with Volkert-in-disguise, a narrative which involves a ghostly visitation from his mother, magical detective skills and necromantic arts. The natural explanation of these events is deferred until the end of the novel even though a true report of the machinations involved is among the papers given to Hellfried in the opening frame narrative. A 'fantastic hesitation' is artificially created and sustained but the aim is not to create meaningful engagement with the possibility of ghost-belief. We are harshly and mockingly warned that belief is credulous and foolish throughout. One of the narrators of the interconnecting tales, a lieutenant, warns his companions that everything will be 'either deceit or the effects of a deluded fancy',[150] but the rush of terrifying, seemingly inexplicable phantasmagorical images and scenes defy both his and our rational impulses. The reader is forced to dwell in the space of indecision and, moreover, confront their complicity with their own deception. Another narrator, the Austrian, upon realising Volkert's deception, cries out: 'I will forgive thee, I will pronounce thee my benefactor, my saviour, only speak, tell me I am not deceived!'[151] He has become a willing participant in his own deception. We believe because we wish to. *The Necromancer* warns the reader about imposture and throws their own credulity back in their faces.

In *The Necromancer,* not simply ghost belief but an openness to ghost belief is attacked. To adopt an open attitude to the question of belief, the text suggests, is to be laid open to manipulation. The Austrian had 'always treated with scorn such supernatural events' but the chink in his armour was that he 'never liked to make those matters a subject for ridicule'.[152] He boasts that 'I believe nothing…that I have not seen; let us make a trial how far the common talk of his [Volkert's] supernatural arts deserves to be credited'.[153] This 'experiment' leads to Volkert being able to introduce a 'phantom' to influence and control the Austrian and his friends. This type of curiosity is not just ridiculed but portrayed as having 'real-world' consequences.[154] It is Herman and the Lieutenant's curiosity about the

[150] Carl Friedrich Kahlert, *The Necromancer; Or, The Tale of the Black Forest,* trans. by Peter Teuthold, 2 vols (London: William Lane, 1794), II, p. 87
[151] Ibid., II, p. 17
[152] Ibid., I, p. 130
[153] Ibid., vol. 1, p. 146
[154] The parallels here with Goldsmith's denunciation of the questioning attitude of the Cock-Lane ghost committee of enquiry due to its support of a manipulation of ghost-belief to 'make one man compleatly

castle, after all, that leads to the 'tempest of woe'[155] that the robbers, who have been living there disguised as the 'wild hunt', unleash on the local village. The consequences of ghost-belief also reach beyond the material world. The Lieutenant agonises over his decision to let Volkert escape specifically because he could 'drag into the gulf of perdition many of my fellow creatures'.[156] Ghost-belief here is not simply a question of material error but a theological mistake.

The ghosts that Volkert 'raises' are theologically Catholic and come explicitly 'from purgatory'.[157] There is a clear anti-Catholic dimension to the rejection of these ghosts, which is echoed elsewhere in the narrative, for example in Volkert's defence of robbing the Catholic church. Even though *The Necromancer* does not support a literal belief in necromancy, it reflects the theologically inflected criticism of *Anti-Canidia*, which connects necromancy, though delusive, to the 'embrace of stupid and idolatrous superstitions'.[158] Necromancy, thus understood, is not simply unreal, it is also an act of defiance against God. This condemnation of necromancy and scepticism towards the ghostly in *The Necromancer* is rooted not simply in a rationalist rejection but an aggressively Protestant theological stance. The frame narrative includes clues as to the nature of the specific theological framework involved. A narratorial note comments that Herman is now dead and 'Hellfried, too, is awaiting the solemn morn of resurrection'.[159] The theology implicit in this statement is an affirmation of the soul's 'inactivity' between death and the final resurrection. Even in a text as resolutely critical of ghost belief as *The Necromancer,* the roots of that critique are as likely to be theological as sceptically rational.

The 'explained supernatural' is thus inflected with a number of different significations in the early British Gothic. Radcliffe's use of affect and ambiguity creates a world full of supernatural potential, dragging both characters and readers into contemplation of the theological ramifications of the ghostly. Parsons's pragmatic pre-empting of fantastic hesitation emphasises a providential theology from which ghosts are

unhappy' are evident. Goldsmith, *The Mystery of the Cock Lane Ghost Revealed* (London: W. Bristow, 1742), p. 17

[155] Kahlert, *The Necromancer,* I, p. 189

[156] Ibid., I, p. 31

[157] Ibid., I, p. 11

[158] [Anon.], *Anti-Canidia,* p. 9

[159] Kahlert, *The Necromancer,* I, p112

excluded. Kahlert, in Teuthold's loose translation, mocks the credulity of ghost belief in order to warn against the manipulation of 'superstitious' fear; he specifically attacks Catholic theologies of the dead and warns against open-mindedness to the possibility of the 'ghostly'. These examples demonstrate the ways in which theological undercurrents are integral to ghostly depictions in the period, even when the ghosts themselves are rationally explained away. Not all ghosts in the Gothic disappear, however. As with the 'explained supernatural' or 'ambiguous supernatural', a diverse range of theological frameworks and projects underlie these depictions of 'real' ghosts.

The 'Real' Supernatural

And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest though? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel - 1 Samuel 28: 13-14

The debates surrounding the 'Witch of Endor' provide a useful map to the theological frameworks of interpretation underlying many appearances of the 'real supernatural' in early Gothic texts, such as Radcliffe's posthumously published *Gaston de Blondeville* (1826). As Coleman Parsons notes, there were three principal interpretations of this biblical passage: 'the vision of Samuel was a messenger of God, a delusion of the sorceress, or a cheat of Satan'.[160] The first position was, broadly speaking, a naïve support of the veracity of the bible, the immortality of the soul and a providential framework although it favours a demonological interpretation of 'Samuel'. *Anti-Canidia* is representative of sceptical arguments based on the last two positions. While raising 'scientific' objections, its rejection is primarily theologically informed. He suggests that the causes to which ghostly intervention is subscribed are frivolous and 'unworthy the dignity of providence' whose business is 'the reclaiming of a sinner, and to save but one soul from everlasting perdition'.[161] He further argues that the ambiguity and obscurity of ghostly sightings is incompatible with the task of redemption as it leads to 'superstitious awe, rather than a

[160] Parsons, *Witchcraft and Demonology,* p. 4
[161] [Anon.], *Anti-Canidia,* p. 24/23

religious love'.[162] 'Ghosts' therefore present problems of interpretation, cast doubt on the importance of central biblical miracles (such as the resurrection of Christ) and are incommensurate to the real purposes of providence.

Gaston foregrounds these problems of interpretation. *Gaston*'s depiction of the supernatural is not, as Clery suggests, a sort of throwback to the cautious descriptiveness of Reeve'[163] but rather a phantasmagoria of supernatural incidents. The frame narrative, a found manuscript written by a monk, does not succeed in 'maintain[ing] a rationalist distance from superstition'.[164] Its authorship is suggestive but ultimately incapable of negating the force of hundreds of pages of supernatural activity that are integral, rather than additional, to the story of ghostly revenge. Angela Wright's comprehensive reading of *Gaston* also downplays the importance of the supernatural. She details the way in which *Gaston* functions as a political riposte to Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), positing that 'Radcliffe's romance tells the story of a fallen country, fallen not because of French encroachment, but because of a loss of dignity in the role of kingship'.[165] For her, the ghost is a 'silent and shadowy presence' and a poor copy of *Hamlet*'s avenging spirit, whose function is to be ignored, along with Woodreeve's cries of injustice, by a weak and tyrannical king.[166] Such a reading, while highlighting the political subtext, ignores the important theological work undertaken in *Gaston* and Radcliffe's deliberate foregrounding of the problems of interpretation. The principal focus of the novel is on how people respond to the seemingly supernatural.

The reader of *Gaston* is presented with one supernatural encounter after another. Not only is there the central ghostly figure, who beckons, glows and points people to death, but the narrative also contains an assortment of magical minstrels, disembodied voices, magically appearing blood, a magical sword, magical jewellery and magical tapestries. Each of these instances is produced to prove the guilt of Gaston and/or his dastardly accomplice the Prior, and the innocence of the merchant Woodreeve. The recurring motif of the novel

[162] Ibid., p. 24
[163] E. J. Clery, *Women's Gothic: From Clara Reeve to Mary Shelley,* 2nd edn (Tavistock: Northcote House publishers), p. 67
[164] Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction,* p. 111
[165] Angela Wright, *Britain, France and the Gothic, 1764 – 1820: The Import of Terror* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 117
[166] Ibid., p. 118

is the recasting of supernatural 'proof' of innocence as 'proof' of guilt. The blood that magically appears on Gaston as a sign of guilt is publicly reread by the dastardly Prior as 'acts of sorcery'.[167] The same occurs with every supernatural manifestation including the ghostly figure's murder of Gaston with a flaming sword spelling out 'justice'.[168] Convinced by the Prior that this was once again an example of Woodreeve's 'mischievous arts',[169] the King 'promised to sign a warrant for the prisoner's death'.[170]

The susceptibility of these supernatural signs to misreading echoes the criticism of miraculous signs and ghost appearances given by the writer of *Anti-Canidia*. They are fundamentally unstable as theological signifiers. At Woodreeve's trial, the king comes 'fortified against the evidence, to abide by his first opinion'.[171] Supernatural interventions and ghostly apparitions are read, this suggests, according to an existing framework of understanding rather than through the creation of a new one. They are useless as tools of conversion, and can only confirm what is already 'known'. The eventual appearance of the ghost in the King's chamber, which results in the freedom of Woodreeve, is represented as no more inherently convincing than any other manifestation of the supernatural. The king remains obdurate in his doubt until the ghost threatens to 'call up one, who may no more deceive'.[172] It is clear at this point that fear motivates the King's change of heart: 'his courage failed'.[173] Supernatural manifestations, Radcliffe stresses, are fundamentally incoherent. They are, as in the case of the Witch of Endor, the subject of too many competing modes of interpretation, none of which provide any evidence for themselves beyond their own framework of understanding. It is ultimately 'superstitious fear' alone that conditions any response outside that existing framework.

Radcliffe's engagement with the supernatural in *Gaston* echoes the arguments of theological scepticism in the period. The novel, however, appears to affirm a demonological interpretation, particularly in its representation of the Archbishop's reaction to the 'ghost'.

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[167] Ann Radcliffe, 'Gaston de Blondeville', in *The Posthumous Works of Anne Radcliffe with A Memoir of the Authoress,* 4 vols (London: Henry Colburn, 1833), II, p. 282
[168] Ibid., II, pp. 380 - 382
[169] Ibid., II, p. 390
[170] Ibid., II, p. 391
[171] Ibid., II, p. 250
[172] Ibid., III, p. 22
[173] Ibid., III, p. 22

The Archbishop is arguably the most authoritative figure in the novel and his response is to repeatedly cross himself and he refers to the 'ghost' as an 'evil sprite'.[174] Stephen Greenblatt notes in reference to the ghost of Hamlet's father that a demoniacal or hellish reading is consistent with the 'results' of his ghostly intervention.[175] Similarly, both the archbishop's reaction (a warding off of evil) and the violently vengeful (rather than 'just') results of the ghostly intervention point to such a reading of *Gaston*. The evil Prior questions Woodreeve's motives, saying 'Call not that a love of justice, which is blind vengeance in its blackest shape'.[176] Although his words are aimed at an innocent target and motivated by self-preservation, it is impossible to ignore the possibility of their application to the ghostly figure. The Archbishop's seemingly accurate reading of the supernatural throughout suggests a theologically conservative conception of the relationship between official Church theology and acceptable ghost-belief. The Archbishop is the official representative of the Church. His evil counterpart, the Prior, is denounced as 'no true son of the church'.[177] The monkish narrator undoubtedly has a vested interest in portraying the Catholic Church in the best possible light, but as I have discussed in the first chapter, these two characters are also used to reflect differing manifestations of not only the Catholic but the contemporary Anglican church. He is a representative of the state Church and, as such, the evocation of his unique ability accurately to interpret 'supernatural signs' suggests a conservative caution towards individual attempts to interpret the supernatural. The appeal to authority here suggests that for Radcliffe, enthusiasm rather than superstition is the primary threat.

Clery's argument that the eighteenth century saw a turn to a 'hedonistic and aestheticised'[178] use of the supernatural resulted not only in her category of the 'aesthetic' supernatural but also in the rise of the 'spectacular' supernatural. The 'spectacular supernatural', she argues, arose from a *'mode of reception* for the purported appearance of marvels which initially ridicules and rejects' them. [179] Clery's theory is not, as Handley notes, unproblematic. It imposes an inaccurate chronology on the development of ghost depiction. Clery's emphasis on the Cock-Lane ghost incident as a turning-point in the rise of the

[174] Ibid., II, p. 91
[175] Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 237
[176] Radcliffe, *Gaston,* II, p. 171
[177] Ibid. III, p. 40
[178] Clery, *Rise of Supernatural Fiction,* p. 24
[179] Ibid., p. 25

'spectacular ghost' ignores the plethora of other haunting episodes in England which both pre- and post-date the Cock Lane Ghost (such as the Lamb Inn incident – 1761-2 – and a headless spectre in St James' Park in the 1780s.) [180] She represents the Cock-Lane incident as both discrete and uniquely significant rather than one in a number of similar incidents that led to the perpetual re-enactment of the debates around the possibility and interpretation of the ghostly. As such, her argument rests on 'an underestimation of the extent of genuine ghost belief in the second half of the eighteenth century'.[181] However, the concept of the 'spectacular' ghost is useful in interrogating the contemporary differentiation between narratives of 'fantastic hesitation' and those that confronted the reader with 'real ghosts' who existed according to a system of belief essentially restricted to the fictional world of the narrative.

A clear contemporary differentiation between 'aesthetic/affective' ghost depictions (which create 'fantastic hestitation') and 'spectacular ghosts' is demonstrated by Mary Shelley's essay, 'On Ghosts' (1824). In this piece, Shelley represents her own experience of the ghostly ('I never saw a ghost except once in a dream),[182] two sightings from credible witnesses and a 'spectacular tale' by Matthew Gregory Lewis. The two eye-witness accounts stage the question of the reality of ghosts by appealing to reliable testimony (that of 'two individuals distinguished the one for courage and the other for sagacity');[183] evidentiary accounts; and affective strategies of, alternately, pathos (the hope that the 'dearly loved' can return) [184] and terror (the suspense surrounding the death and ghostly appearance of a suicide). The last story, a ridiculous tale by Lewis, depicts demonic cats and is presented as 'probably not so authentic as these [accounts], but perhaps more amusing'.[185] The 'real' ghost accounts occupy the debated literary space of the factional, but Lewis's narrative demonstrates the purely spectacular supernatural, whose appearance requires a knowing suspension of belief, and whose purpose is amusement. If Radcliffian ghosts (shrouded with uncertainty) conform to the principle of 'terror' as laid out in Radcliffe's essay 'On the Supernatural in Poetry' (1826), then spectacular ghosts, like those of Horace Walpole and

[180] Handley, *Visions of an Unseen World, p. 147*
[181] Ibid., p. 146
[182] Shelley, 'On Ghosts', p. 254
[183] Ibid., p. 256
[184] Ibid, p. 254
[185] Ibid., p. 256

Matthew Lewis, conform to her definition of horror. Radcliffe's ghosts 'expand the soul and awaken the faculties to a high degree of life' through the obscurity and uncertainty surrounding their depiction. Walpole and Lewis' 'spectacular ghosts' 'contract, freeze, and annihilate' the reader. [186] This is not to suggest, however, a lack of theological valence.

Handley notes that the affects of 'awe, reverence and fear' elicited by ghost depictions existed because the 'ontological status of ghosts was uncertain'.[187] They dwelt on the 'boundary between fact and fiction'.[188] McCorristine notes the way in which 'factual' ghost narrative collections fell into the 'factionality trap' with the ghostly 'never to be definitively lodged in either mode of meaning'[189] as affect and spectacle became as important as the 'facts' of the case. Conversely, as Clery notes, sceptical collections, such as those by John Ferriar, were effectively collections of ghost stories: 'The ridicule of scepticism could not repress the compulsive element of fascination which threatened to reify in a new and indestructible form the object of mockery.'[190] Similarly, even the most 'spectacular ghosts' of the Gothic could not escape entirely this liminal space. They were overtly fictional, required an almost complete suspension of disbelief, but relied for their effect ultimately on underlying existing concepts of the ghostly. The ghosts of Walpole and Lewis throw the reader into a world of Divine retribution, overwhelming providence, eternal consequence and a threatening spirit-world beyond human control. The affect that it engenders doesn't disappear with the closing of the final page. Both terror and horror rely on a concept of the possible reality of the feared object, which may be the ghost itself or the theological understanding of the world it represents.

Alison Milbank notes that Horace Walpole was a 'proclaimed infidel'[191] and suggests that in *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) he was influenced by a 'savage satirical view of miracles' shared with his friend Conyers Middleton. Middleton's sceptical *Free Inquiry into the Miraculous Powers which are Supposed to Have Existed in the Christian Church through*

[186] Ann Radcliffe, 'On the Supernatural in Poetry', in *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal,* 1826, Part 1 (London: Henry Colburn, 1826), 145-152 (p. 149)
[187] Handley, *Visions of an Unseen World,* p. 119
[188] Ibid., p. 119
[189] McCorristine, *Spectres of the Self,* p. 16
[190] Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction,* pp. 26-7
[191] Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 71

Several Successive Ages (1747) [192] challenged the miracles of the early Church as impostures. Milbank asserts, however, that despite this rejection of the miraculous, Walpole attempts a broadly providential framework.[193] For Geary, the fundamental purpose of *Otranto* is to integrate the providential (from modern romances where 'nature is copied with success') [194] and the supernatural (from ancient romances where 'all was imagination and improbability'.) [195] The ghosts of *Otranto* - the grandfather who steps from the portrait, the skeletal hermit who appears to Frederic, the vision of the beatified Alfonso, and the giant limbs around the castle - all serve 'providential' purposes: the defence of the innocent, the revelation of crime and the return of the rightful heir. The stated and over-arching moral is delivered by Friar Jerome: 'A tyrant's race must be swept from the earth to the third and fourth generations'[196] which is itself a paraphrase of the oft-repeated (Exodus 20:5, 34:7, Deuteronomy 5:9) warning that God promises to 'visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation' (Numbers 14:18).

Geary suggests that 'Walpole seeks to impose a 'conventional providential context' but that 'the supernatural in *Otranto* 'escapes from the providential context'[197] through the excess of its supernatural depictions. There is superfluity and an irrationality to many of the manifestations of the supernatural which become, as Hogle notes, 'floating signifiers disconnected from their former [Catholic] meanings'.[198] The great arm, for example, serves little narrative and no ideological purpose. If it is a miracle, it is a thoroughly 'frivolous' one. While Geary sees this as a failed attempt to combine the providential and the supernatural in the narrative, it is rather a deliberate attack on the concept of providence itself. These 'miracles' are not ghostly apparitions, 'unworthy the dignity of providence';[199] rather, they are a fitting match for a perceivedly monstrous doctrine.

As Geary notes, the special providence in *Otranto* manifests as pure Divine wrath. The innocent are sacrificed, the contested castle itself is 'thrown down'[200] and the heir

[192] Ibid., p. 71
[193] Milbank, *God and the Gothic,* p. 71
[194] Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (London: [n. pub], 1793), p. 7
[195] Ibid., p. 7
[196] Ibid., p. 158
[197] Geary, *The Supernatural in Gothic Fiction,* p. 25
[198] Hogle, 'Recovering the Walpolean Gothic', p. 164
[199] [Anon.], *Anti-Canidia,* p. 24
[200] Walpole, *Otranto,* p. 195

apparent is left with a lifetime to 'indulge the melancholy that had taken possession of his soul' at the death of Matilda.[201] The 'moral' – the punishment of the children of the iniquitous to the third and fourth generation – ties the tremendous excesses of the text's supernaturalism to an 'unworthy' providential narrative. The authorial rejection of this providential motto is explicitly suggested in the Preface to the first edition, which questions the principle behind the warning, doubting that 'ambition curbed its appetite of dominion from the dread of so remote a punishment'. [202] This implicit critique of inherited guilt touches one of the central doctrines of many Christian denominations: original sin. Romans 5: 12 tells us that 'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men' (Romans 5: 12). Here we find outlined the basic premises of original sin, universal corruption and substitutionary atonement. All men are guilty through Adam's (one man's) sin and may be redeemed through Jesus' (one perfect man's) sacrifice. In critiquing the intergenerational punishment in *Castle of Otranto,* Walpole obliquely critiques this Augustinian understanding of original sin and with it the foundational premises of most dominant Christian denominations.

While ignoring the wider theological ramifications of Walpole's use of ghostly excess, both Geary and Hogle note the anti-Catholic tendencies endemic to Walpole's use of the ghostly. The trappings of his ghosts are frequently explicitly Catholic, as we find, for example, in the ghostly Alfonso's ascension accompanied by Saint Nicholas. The worship of saints and the belief in their ability to interpose themselves into human affairs is peculiarly Catholic. Walpole's first Preface similarly draws attention to them as specifically Catholic beliefs 'believed in the darkest ages of Christianity'.[203] An anti-Catholic theology of ghosts is frequently found in 'real ghost' narratives. These 'spectacular' ghosts turn Catholic ghost-beliefs into horrific spectacle.

In Matthew Lewis' *The Monk*, the 'Bleeding Nun' is a lone ghost in a sea of demonic figures. The story is first introduced through the sceptical eyes of Agnes and Raymond, who hope to exploit the credulity of those around them by impersonating the nun and effecting Agnes's escape from the Castle of Lindenberg. While it would appear that the 'real'

[201] Ibid., p. 220
[202] Ibid., p. vii
[203] Walpole, *Otranto,* p. v

appearance of the nun functions as a rebuttal to this scepticism, it actually forms a 'spectacular' rebuttal to the specific theologies embodied by the nun. She is, from the first appearance, a 'horrifying' spectacle': 'Her head was enveloped in a long white veil; her nun's dress was stained with blood; and she had taken care to provide herself with a lamp and dagger'.[204] She is also distinctly 'embodied' as Raymond was able to 'clasp her in [his] arms'.[205] The Porter expresses confusion when Agnes as the bleeding nun knocks at the door as this was 'totally incompatible with the immaterial nature of the spirit'.[206] Her embodied state means that her narrative function is explicitly separated from the principal theological underpinnings of eighteenth-century Protestant ghost belief: the distinction between 'soul' and 'body'. While this ghost maintains the power to horrify, she is distanced from any 'Protestant' discourse of ghost-belief. It is a fact that underlines her fictionality. She does not produce the mind-expanding terror that Radcliffe would later outline. Raymond's response closely (and pre-emptively) echoes Radcliffe's description of horror's ability to 'contract, freeze, and annihilate'. [207] He 'gazed upon the spectre with horror too great to be described. [His] blood was *frozen* in [his] veins'.[208] The ghost is pure narrative spectacle, but this does not reflect a rejection of ghost-belief so much as a rejection of the particularly Catholic trappings of the ghost who 'fain would repose in [her] grave, but stern commands force [her] to prolong [her] punishment'.[209] She is a purgatorial spirit who begs that 'thirty masses be said for the repose of my spirit'.[210] As such, she becomes part of the spectacle of Catholic excess within the novel and Lewis' 'sustained attack…on the hypocrisy, superstition, and moral corruption of the Catholic Church'.[211]

The residual theological valence of the ghosts of Walpole and Lewis is highlighted by comparison with the more explicitly de-theologised work of William Godwin. Godwin depicts ghosts in *Mandeville* (1817), but, while presented as 'real', they are attached explicitly to historical and psychological meanings that deliberately overwrite the theological potential of the figures. Godwin, in describing the Ulster rebellion, refers to the

[204] Matthew Lewis, *The Monk,* 2 vols (Dublin: W. Porter/ N. Kelly), I, p. 181
[205] Ibid., I, p. 181
[206]Ibid., I, p. 192
[207] Radcliffe, 'On the Supernatural in Poetry,' p. 149
[208] Lewis, *The Monk*, I, p. 187
[209] Ibid., I, p. 200
[210] Ibid., I, p. 201
[211] Howard, *Reading Gothic Fiction,* p. 191

drowning of 180 English Protestants at 'Portnedown' Bridge.[212] He includes a popular folkloric account of the ghostly results of this incident:

> An extraordinary consequence followed upon this. The apparitions of several of the persons thus murdered, were shortly seen nightly on the surface of the river in which they perished…This vision continued for many days; the spirits uttered horrible and terrifying cries, and imprecated revenge on their murderers; so that many of those persons who had not shrunk from the destruction of the Protestants while alive, could not endure the presence and the voices of the ghosts after death.[213]

Godwin uses existing folklore, but his footnote references John Ferriar's 'endeavour to account for ghosts from natural causes'.[214] Ferriar explains the phenomenon in two ways, first by giving a physical explanation of the ghost sightings as corpses decomposing and becoming upright in the water. Second, this sight, he argues, triggered audial hallucinations and 'the sounds complained of … were mere delusions', due to the fact that 'when the mind is loaded with a sense of insupportable guilt, partial insanity is at hand'.[215] Godwin, with these explanations very much in mind, includes these ghostly figures as faithful manifestations of existing folklore, an example of the externalised conscience, and as a form of historical repetition: a past that cannot be escaped.

While many examples of 'real ghosts' in Gothic fiction are 'spectacular', a final variant represents a believing response to their scepticism. This is exemplified by Clara Reeve's 'correction' of Walpole's excessive supernatural in *The Old English Baron.* Like Geary, Reeve read Walpole's literary experiment not simply as an attempt to combine the ancient and modern styles of romance but to combine the marvellous/miraculous with the providential; she argues that 'the machinery is so violent, that it destroys the effect it is intended to excite'.[216] For Reeve, it both exceeds the bounds of aesthetic taste, 'instead of attention, excit[ing] laughter'[217] and fails to keep within the 'verge of the probable'[218] by failing to place the apparitions within an acceptable theological and providential framework.

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[212] The actual historical location is 'Portadown' but Godwin consistently uses 'Portnedown'.
[213] William Godwin, *Mandeville: A Tale of the Seventeenth Century in England,* ed. by Tilottama Rajan (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2016), p. 77
[214] Ibid., p. 77
[215] Ferriar, *A Theory of Apparitions*, pp. 140-1
[216] Clara Reeve, *The Old English Baron,* ed. by James Trainor, (Oxford: Oxford World Classics, 2003), p. 3
[217] Ibid., p. 3
[218] Ibid., p. 3

Reeve, in her attempt to rewrite *Otranto* and avoid its defects,[219] does not attempt to combine the 'supernatural' and the 'providential'; rather she seeks fully to subordinate the former to the latter by representing ghosts as active agents of a benevolent providence. The dream appearances of Edmund's parents place the ghostly figures in the novel firmly within the province of a providence acting through second causes to restore Edmund to his rightful place.[220]

What Reeve's novel demonstrates is the continuing existence and influence of such ghost beliefs, which she represents as fully compatible with a theologically orthodox, and providential understandings of the world. They also implicitly act as proof of the immateriality of the soul, life after death and the continuance of individual identity. Such ghosts are rare in the Gothic but there are other examples such as those found in T. J. Horsley Curties *Ethelwina*: *or, The House of Fitz-Auburne* (1799). A similar introductory emphasis is placed on the possibility of the ghostly as Curties notes that 'such a circumstance will not appear unnatural or improbable'.[221] The ghost here also serves a providential purpose, intervening to save Ethelwina from the treacherous Leopold and, as in *The Old English Baron,* revealing the secret of his own murder which ultimately leads to the just punishment of the perpetrator. Both Curties and Reeve's positions as fairly orthodox Anglicans highlights the survival of ghost belief outside Enthusiastic Dissenting and Catholic circles.

As I have argued in this chapter, the ghosts of the Gothic appear in many forms. Even within the work of a single author, such as Radcliffe, ghosts can perform a number of different functions. Radcliffe's ghosts are always, however, theologically informed, from the affective and theoretical 'fantastic hesitation' in her use of the 'supernatural explained' and the 'ambiguous supernatural' to the supernatural excess of *Gaston* and its problematisation of the interpretation of ghostly visitations. In both 'explained supernatural' and 'real ghost' Gothic narratives, Catholic conceptions of the ghostly are often overtly rejected and the connection of ghost-belief with the manipulation of the superstitious and the excess of enthusiasm is underlined in both the anti-Catholic excess of *The Monk* and the sceptical

[219] Ibid., p. 4
[220] Geary, *The Supernatural in Gothic Fiction,* p. 34
[221] T. J. Horsley-Curties, *Ethelwina; or, The House of Fitz-Auburne,* 3 vols (London: Minerva Press, 1799), I, p. ii

unveiling of *The Necromancer.* Far from representing a clear trajectory with regards to the attempt to combine providential beliefs with the supernatural, these texts represent a variety of theologically informed conceptions of the relation of the providential to the ghostly: symbiotic (*The Old English Baron*), inimical (*The Castle of Wolfenbach*) and mutually self-destructive (*The Castle of Otranto*). Medicalised and sceptical explanations of specific phenomena (*The Necromancer*) and de-theologised accounts that stress the allegorical significance of the texts (*Mandeville*) sit alongside theological critique of the premises behind the ghostly eruptions of the novels. Far from a homogenous secularizing or secularised form, the early British Gothic reflects, sometimes within one novel, a complex web of interlocking theologies to which the ghost is integral. In the next chapter, I explore the contrary manifestation of mortal immortality in the Gothic – embodied immortality – which, like the spectacular ghosts of the Gothic combines a use of figures disassociated from extra-fictional belief in their possibility but underpinned by specific theological conceptions of what it means to be human.

Chapter 6: “If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die”: Embodied Immortality

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and they are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would - Galatians 5:16-17

If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness - Romans 8:10

If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortifie the deeds of the body, ye shall live - Romans 8:13

In the previous chapter, I investigated the way in which ghost narratives are inherently intertwined with discourses surrounding the soul’s immortality. Both ghosts and apparitions alike testify to the existence of a purely spiritual, immaterial and immortal realm. Ghost represents a form of ‘disembodied’ immortality whose existence is questioned and debated in line with theological considerations of the ‘mortal immortality’ inherent in a Christian concept of human nature in which ‘The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life’ (Romans 6:23). Both bodily death and soul immortality are here represented as integral to the human experience. In the form of immortal wanderers, created immortal monsters, vampires and successful alchemists, we find an early British Gothic obsession with another form of mortal immortality: ‘embodied immortality’. Like the spectacular real ghosts of the Gothic, these accounts feature supernatural figures understood to be real within the fictional world of the text; there is no real question of their extra-fictional reality. Rather than placing in question the division of ‘body’ and ‘soul’ and the existence of supernatural beings, these ‘mortal immortals’ rely for their meaning on an underlying theological framework that presumes this body/soul distinction. However, they as frequently critique as propound the theological systems to which these beliefs pertain.

The dynamics of the inter-relation of body and soul were the focus of debate throughout the eighteenth century. Descartes influential dualist conception of the body and mind or body and soul suggested that the body and soul were distinct materials that were

'nighly conjoined' and 'blended therewith; so that it make up one thing'.[1] This became an increasingly prevalent explanation of the already accepted Christian conception of a body/soul duality, largely replacing a model in which the body and soul were viewed as completely and utterly distinct. A Hobbesian materialist denial of a difference between body and soul was taken up, as suggested in the last chapter, by Socinian, atheist and deist thinkers but the popular conception of the human condition, influenced by the Christian framework prevalent at the time, emphasised the distinction. Even while differing, these concepts of the mechanics of the interrelation of the body and soul (excepting a purely sceptical materialism) rested on an underlying Christian conception of this distinction connected to but not synonymous with the differentiation between flesh and spirit.

As outlined in Galatians 5: 16-7, the spirit and the flesh are imagined as two antagonistic and ultimately incompatible elements: 'The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and they are contrary the one to the other.' 'Soul/spirit' are broadly indivisible as concepts: both refer to the immortal, immaterial part of the human that shares its essence with the immaterial immortal Divinity. The relationship between the 'body' and the 'flesh' is, however, more complex. The 'flesh' is not the literal physical body. It is rather 'all the weakness, frailties, and corruption of our mortal state'.[2] The 'Flesh' is all that is 'mortal' – subject to death and subject to corruption. The body is not evil in and of itself. In their prelapsarian state, bodies were 'perfect'. In keeping with a conception of original sin and total depravity, our current bodies, however, are indelibly 'corrupted' by the 'flesh' as manifested or literalised in the decay and corruption of the physical body.[3] 'The wages of sin is death' (Romans 6:23) but this death is not only individually earned, rather it is an inheritance: 'by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men' (Romans 5: 12). We are born into a 'fleshly' body, born, in other words, into death.

Charles Drelincourt, a French Protestant whose popular *The Christian's Consolation Against the Fears of Death* (1641) was frequently republished throughout the eighteenth

[1] René Descartes, *Six Metaphysical Meditations Wherein it is Proved that There is a God and that Mans Mind is Really Distinct from his Body,* trans. by William Moltneux (London: B. G., 1680), p98
[2] James Relly, *The Sadducee Detected and Refuted, in Remarks on the Works of Richard Coppin* (London: M. Lewis, 1764), p. 27
[3] Ibid., p. 28

century, outlines three forms of death: the natural, the spiritual and the eternal.[4] The 'natural' is the 'separation of the soul from the body'; the spiritual death is the 'separation of the soul from God our creator'; and the eternal death is hell or the ultimate death.[5] When death entered the world, both spiritual death (separation) and natural death (mortality) entered too. However, Jesus's death offers redemption and 'spiritual life'. 'If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness.' (Romans 8:10) The 'flesh' must be rejected and the body, which it infects, cast off if Salvation is to occur: 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortifie the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' (Romans 8:13)

Although debates arose about the nature of the resurrection after death – whether spiritual or corporeal – and to whom this possibility was extended, the necessity of bodily death to the 'resurrection to eternal life' was unchallenged. 1 Corinthians 15:36 warns that 'that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die'. The 'spiritual' salvation of the soul, or the resurrected 'incorruptible body' (the Resurrection body), depended on the death of the 'corrupt' body/flesh. As we are told in 1 Corinthians 15:53: 'For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality.' This immortality, it should be noted, was not a guarantee of salvation.[6] There will be a 'resurrection of both the just and unjust' (Acts 24:15), both a 'resurrection of life' and a 'resurrection of damnation' (John 5:29). Shedding the body, the soul is freed from its 'mortal' cage to enter eternity, and, as Victor Sage notes, a common analogy of the period is the idea of the body as a 'mansion of the soul'– a temporary dwelling place.[7] The Gothic frequently takes this 'congenial' image and rewrites the body as a prison of the soul. Winzy, in Mary Shelley's 'The Mortal Immortal' (1833), from whose title this chapter takes its name, describes his immortal body as a 'tenacious cage for a soul which thirsts for freedom'.[8] The text more broadly illustrates

[4] Charles Drelincourt, *The Christian's Consolation Against the Fears of Death,* trans. from the French, (Edinburgh: A. Murray and J. Cochran, 1771), p. 30.
[5] Ibid., pp. 30-32
[6] The exception is found in Universalist theologies. As Michael Watts notes Unitarians generally held doctrines of eternal punishment in 'abhorrence' believing that 'the souls of the wicked would not suffer everlasting punishment but would be annihilated.' Universalist theologians, such as Universalist missionary Elhana Winchester, took this a step further arguing for universal salvation. Michael Watts, *The Dissenters: Volume II, The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 83
[7] Victor Sage, *Horror Fiction in the Protestant Tradition* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1988), p. 1
[8] Mary Shelley, 'The Mortal Immortal', in *Mathilda and Other Stories* (Ware: Wordsworth Classics, 2013), 295-309 (p. 307)

the ways in which Gothic texts explicitly reflect Christian concepts of the body/soul division and immortality.

In this short tale, Winzy is a 'very young immortal'[9] who accidentally drank Cornelius Agrippa's[10] *elixir vitae,* thinking it was a potion to cure love. The story engages with multiple concepts of immortality, which can be divided roughly into two categories of 'earthly' and 'spiritual'. The immortality of fame, of embodiment in future generations and of literal physical immortality are forms of 'earthly' mortality contrasted with the 'spiritual immortality' of the soul freed from the body. Winzy's bodily immortality is not certain. He only drank half the potion and begins his memoirs by questioning 'Am I, then, immortal?'[11] A potential sign of bodily mortality – the fact that he 'detected a grey hair in his brown locks that very day'[12] – is his catalyst for writing his memoirs. This timing suggests a continued obsession with 'earthly immortality' and a paradoxical fear of death for a man who has 'lived on for many a year – alone, and weary of myself – desirous of death, yet never dying'.[13] His initial assessment that his memoirs are a way 'to pass some few hours of a long eternity'[14] is eventually shown to be (self-)deceptive. Reflecting at the end of the tale, he admits that he 'would not die, and leave no name behind'.[15] His last 'design 'is to make a journey of discovery' which will result in his name being 'recorded as one of the most famous among the sons of men'.[16] While immortal, he is not indestructible. He views this journey both as a 'good' way to die and as a fitting legacy - to the extent that if successful he plans to 'free himself' through suicide. His acceptance of bodily death is dependent on this concept of a fitting legacy – an 'earthly' immortality of fame.

Winzy describes his memoirs as a 'miserable vanity'. This is not the 'vanity' of self-admiration but rather the biblical use of vanity as 'emptiness; uncertainty; inanity' or 'a fruitless desire; fruitless endeavour'.[17] His pronouncement echoes the despairing cry of the

[9] Ibid., p. 295
[10] Cornelius Agrippa was a famous 16th century thinker and alchemist. He is one of the alchemical writers read by Frankenstein in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818/1831).
[11] Shelley, 'The Mortal Immortal,' p. 295
[12] Ibid., p. 295
[13] Ibid., p. 306
[14] Ibid., p. 295
[15] Ibid., p. 307
[16] Ibid., p. 307
[17] Samuel Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language*, 8th edition, (London: A. Millar, 1793)

writer of Ecclesiastes: 'vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity' (Ecclesiastes 1:2). Winzy recognises the emptiness of the 'immortality of fame' that the literary memorialisation of himself represents. He acknowledges the supremacy of the spiritual immortality dependent on bodily death, which sets 'at liberty the life imprisoned within and so cruelly prevented from soaring from this dim earth to a sphere more congenial to its mortal essence'.[18] He refers to death as 'the fate of all the children of Adam', [19] which connects this rejection of the physical explicitly with the concept of original sin and the 'fleshly' body. His bodily immortality is a form of damnation, leaving him lonely, bored, despairing and deprived.

This torment is not simply the result of specific losses or individual conditions but of a change inherent to the process of immortalisation. He has become essentially other, losing 'all that really bound [him] to humanity'.[20] However, he continues 'trapped in the flesh' both literally and metaphorically, unable or unwilling to give up earthly immortality even while acknowledging it as a deformed and worthless facsimile of true immortality. In his memoirs, he almost erases himself, focusing instead predominately on Bertha. It is not simply, as Elena Anastasaki suggests in her romantic interpretation of their relationship, that 'the story of his life ends with her'.[21] His narrative gives Bertha 'immortality', a facsimile of the physical immortality she craved when 'at last she insinuated that I must share my secret with her.[22] Bertha, obsessed with the physical world, vain, jealous and capricious, is immortalised by his memoirs, as both a 'dark-eyed, dark-haired girl' and a 'mincing, simpering, jealous old woman'.[23] She has believed in earthly immortality and thus is granted it, but Winzy cannot believe and allows himself to fade from the text. He leaves us with the memory of his last hope of eternity: total and complete self-annihilation by 'scattering and annihilating the atoms that compose my frame'.[24]

[18] Shelley, 'The Mortal Immortal', p. 307
[19] Ibid., p. 303
[20] Ibid., p. 305
[21] Elena Anastasaki, 'The Trials and Tribulations of the *revenants:* The Narrative Techniques and the Fragmented Hero in Mary Shelley and Théophile Guatier,' *Connotations,* 16,1-3 (2006-7), p. 33
[22] Mary Shelley, 'The Mortal Immortal', pp. 303-4
[23] Ibid., p. 305
[24] Ibid., p. 307

Mary Shelley wrote multiple works that investigated concepts of 'reanimation and immortality'[25] or isolated prolonged life, from full length novels such as *Frankenstein* (1818/1831) and *The Last Man* (1826) to short stories such as The Mortal Immortal' (1833), 'Roger Dodsworth: The Reanimated Englishman' (1863) and 'Valerius: The Reanimated Roman' (1819). Each of these narratives has an open ending. Whether the text ends with a dangerous journey with an unknown outcome (*Frankenstein,* 'The Mortal Immortal'); the beginning of a new stage in the protagonist's life ('Valerius'); an incomplete found narrative (*The Last Man*); or speculation as to the protagonist's fate ('Roger Dodsworth), each narrative ends in ambiguity. This proliferation of open endings is not simply a stylistic development on Shelley's part as Anastasaki suggests.[26] Rather, the theological framework of the 'mortal immortal' tale itself demands an open ending. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798) ends with the mariner departing to tell his story again to some other unwilling listener. William Godwin's *St Leon* (1799) ends with a memoir closed and a life to live. In Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820)*,* Melmoth's 'ultimate destination is uncertain'.[27] We are left with the Wanderer's own dream of his damnation and, a 'kind of track *as if* a person had dragged, or been dragged'[28] (my emphasis) to the edge of a cliff. The mortal immortals of Gothic fiction continue to wander because their endings are not written.

The decline of the doctrine of purgatory in Britain left a mytho-theological gap for which Protestant theology offered no replacement. As Stephen Greenblatt notes, purgatory was represented using 'the traditional imagery of Hell' with an added 'image of rescue'.[29] Without purgatory, the world becomes a 'state of probation'[30] and eternity hangs on a number of years that appear infinitesimal compared to the prospective punishment or reward. This left Protestant conceptions of Divine justice open to critique as we find in

[25] Elisabetta Marino, 'The Themes of *Reanimation* and *Immortality* in Mary Shelley's Short Stories,' *British and American Studies,* 21, (2015), 25-31 (p. 25)
[26] Anastasaki, 'The Trials and Tribulations of the revenants,' p. 34
[27] Marie Mulvey- Roberts, *Gothic Immortality: The Fiction of the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross,* (Oxon: Routledge, 1990)*,* p. 141
[28] Charles Maturin, *Melmoth the Wanderer* (London: Penguin English Library, 2012), p. 682
[29] Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 54
[30] William Godwin, 'On the Present Life of Man Considered as a State of Probation for a Future World', in *Essays (Never Before Published)* (London: Henry S. King & Co., 1873), 27-57 (p. 49)

William Godwin's *On the Genius of Christianity Unveiled* (1876)[31] where he opines that 'the longest life would seem an insufficient in which to decide the condition of a sensitive and reasoning creature for all the ages of eternity'.[32] What Purgatory offered was a model of hard-earned redemption, punishment and, pivotally, hope. Despite the post-Reformation spread of broadly Protestant eschatological doctrines, the mytho-theological need served by the doctrine of purgatory remained. The mortal immortals of Gothic fiction represent a fictional response to this theo-mythic gap. Their bodily immortality is a form of prolonged damnation – 'an endless existence of expiation'[33] – but without a 'natural death', there can be no 'eternal death' in Drelincourt's terms. They therefore carry a double theological burden: symbols of damnation and of hope. Even the damned, these figures suggest, may be saved.

Immortal Wanderers

'Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever. Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden - Genesis 3:22-23

Now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brothers blood from thy hand…a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth - Genesis 4: 11-12

If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; though wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water - John 4:10

But the son of man hath not where to lay his head - Matthew 8:20

The division between body and soul, flesh and spirit underlies all of the early Gothic representations of 'mortal immortals'. As Marie Mulvey-Roberts notes, these Gothic immortals were a mixture of the 'heretical and the fallen' who struggle with an immortality in which 'loneliness and guilt force them to wander'.[34] Immortality is figured as a form of penance or punishment, a sacrifice of the spiritual to the bodily and a subordination of the

[31] Though published posthumously, this collection of essays and fragments represents a long-term project of Godwin's, which offers a useful lens on his earlier work. Published as *Essays, Never Before Published*, I will follow common practice in referring to Godwin's title for his proposed collection.
[32] Godwin, 'On the Present Life', p. 58
[33] O. Bryan Fulmer, 'The Ancient Mariner and the Wandering Jew,' *Studies in Philology,* 66.5 (Oct., 1969), 797-815 (p. 801)
[34] Marie Mulvey-Roberts, *Gothic Immortality: The Fiction of the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross* (Oxon: Routledge, 1990), p. 8

incorruptible to an endless corruption. However, these mortal immortal figures do not fulfil only one theological function, nor is their relationship to this body/soul distinction without complexity. The Gothic's 'mortal immortals' build on various pre-existing models of mortal immortality with both theo-mythic – Adam, Cain, the Wandering Jew – and literary – Faust – antecedents. Critics Marie Mulvey-Roberts and Carol Margaret Davison, in their investigations of the 'Rosicrucian hero' and the Wandering Jew respectively, both mirror a problematic focus on only one fictional forebear as a dominant narrative informing Gothic Wanderers.[35] They thereby dismiss the important differences between these models and the specific theological discourses which inform their characters. We must engage with the multiplicity of intertextual sources and the way in which Gothic texts deliberately evoke different forebears. Before exploring specific Gothic texts, therefore, it is necessary to review these figures and the theological narratives that inform the Gothic's explicit and implicit reference to them. *Melmoth* explicitly references each prototype, and thus will be used to exemplify some of the ways in which Gothic texts engage with these archetypes.

Upon first inspection, the biblical Adam appears out of place in an overview of 'immortal' prototypes. After all, he is responsible for the 'mortality' of humankind and the loss of the earthly immortality of the incorrupt prelapsarian bodies. 'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men' (Romans 5: 12). His sin, however, offers the model for the principle transgression of many mortal immortals: rebellion against Divine limitations. His crime was an attempt to defy and equal God. Satan's temptation to eat from the 'tree of knowledge' was a temptation to equality with Divinity: 'For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; *and ye shall be Gods* knowing good and evil' (Genesis 3: 4, my emphasis). God casts Adam out 'lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever' (Genesis 3:22). The over-reaching wanderers of the Gothic are frequently figured as second Adams. Those who drink the *elixir vitae* doubly defy God by eating both of the 'tree of knowledge' and the 'tree of life' and are, accordingly, doubly damned. In *Melmoth,* this link between

[35] There two studies are essentially incompatible as Mulvey-Roberts forefronts the figure of the 'Rosicrucian' seeker after immortality and Davison that of the unwilling 'vampiric Wandering Jew'. * Both use these predominant paradigms to structure their investigations of what are often the same Gothic texts, such as *Melmoth.*
* Carol Margaret Davison, *Anti-Semitism and British Gothic Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p4

Adam and 'immortal' over-reachers is made explicit: 'If I have put forth my hand, and eaten of the fruit of the interdicted tree, am I not driven from the presence of God and the region of paradise, and sent to wander amid worlds of barrenness and curse for ever and ever?' asks Melmoth.[36] Here, Adam's temporal banishment is reimagined as eternal. As Alison Milbank notes, the Melmoth-Adam here stands juxtaposed to Christ as in Romans 5:17: 'For if by one man's offence, death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ.' As Milbank argues, 'whereas Christ took on and accepted human vulnerability and suffering', the Melmoth-Adam 'escapes it, only to be trapped in his body and in the monotony and alienation of his immortality, in contradistinction to Christ's redemptive death and true resurrection'.[37] Melmoth is a second Adam: a dark counterpoint to the Christian theological conception of Christ as 'second Adam'.

Faust is a type of Adamic figure, a God-defying over-reacher. Originally based on 'notorious but obscure magician' Johann Georg Faust (c. 1480 - 1540),[38] Faust's narrative was popularised through the anonymous German chapbook *Historia von D. Johann Fausten* (1587) as a warning written from a Lutheran perspective showing the price of pride, arrogance and demonic over-reaching. The basic tale was retold various times, most famously in Christopher Marlowe's *Faustus* (c. 1592) and Goethe's *Faust* (Part 1 – 1806, Part 2 – 1832). While the focus of each tale changes, and different theological overtones or perspectives are highlighted,[39] the basic narrative is that of a scholar who exchanges his soul for knowledge and power over a specified lifespan. Like Faust, Melmoth makes a bargain for a specific period of prolonged life (150 years) at the cost of his soul. However, unlike Faust, his prolonged life is figured as a continual quest to escape this very 'immortality' and so regain his soul by tempting others to take his place. As Veronica Kennedy notes, Melmoth 'is at once Faust and Mephistopheles, the seeker after forbidden knowledge and the

[36] Charles Maturin, *Melmoth the Wanderer* (London: Penguin English Library, 2012), p. 676
[37] Alison Milbank, *God and the Gothic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 203
[38] John R. Williams, 'Introduction', in *Faust and the Ur-Faust,* trans. with an Introduction and Notes by John R. Williams (Ware: Wordsworth Classics of World Literature, 2007), vii-xxi (p. vii)
[39] This is exemplified by the different endings – Marlowe's Faustus is irredeemably damned and Goethe's is ultimately 'saved'

tempter'.[40] Melmoth cannot escape his own iniquity. He remains condemned or condemns another. The initial fall cannot be reversed.

Another key archetype is Cain. The biblical narrative figures Cain as the first murderer who, after his own sacrifice was looked on with displeasure, kills his brother Abel. The original punishment that God delivers echoes the Adamic curse: 'now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brothers blood from thy hand…a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth' (Genesis 4: 11-12) This punishment is an exile but not, as with Adam, to a settled other location; rather, it is the curse of wandering. This is not only a physical wandering, as Cain acknowledges, so much as an entry into a spiritual wilderness (spiritual death) as God informs them that 'from thy face I shall be hid' (Genesis 4:14). Cain complains, 'I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth and it shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me' (Genesis 4: 14). God's response is an expansion of his 'curse:' 'the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him' (Genesis 4:16). Cain's mark becomes simultaneously a sign of condemnation and of invulnerability, a mark of damnation and of protection. It is a seal of embodiment and a man who cannot die is a man who cannot be saved.

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the traditional understanding of Cain as a monstrous criminal was frequently reimagined. Byron's *Cain* (1821), for instance, unlocked the subversive theological potential of the figure. Here, Cain becomes a rebellious questioner who points to the injustice of God's decrees: 'My father could not keep his place in Eden/ What had *I* done in this? – I was unborn.'[41] He kills his brother in a fit of rage as they argue over the altar Abel raised, while critiquing the very act of sacrifice: 'This bloody record/ Shall not stand in the sun, to shame creation!'[42] This also functions as an implicit critique of theologies of substitutionary atonement. While repenting the murder, he never fully disassociates himself from the demonic discourses on the 'omnipotent tyrant…whose evil is not good'.[43] He becomes a symbol of rebellion but, like Milton's Satan in the Romantic imaginary, one who bears with him the punishment of his

[40] Veronica M. S. Kennedy, 'Myth and the Gothic Dream: C. R. Maturin's "Melmoth the Wanderer", *Pacific Coast Philology,* 4 (Apr., 1969), 41-7 (p. 42)
[41] Lord George Byron, 'Cain', in *The Works of Lord Byron: Complete in One Volume* (London: John Murray, 1841), 316-40 (p. 319)
[42] Ibid., p. 336
[43] Ibid., p. 321

own crime. He is, as Joel Porte argues, a 'guilt-haunted wanderer' suffering an 'unremitting punishment.'[44] Even more explicitly than in the original Cain narrative, life in the flesh is figured here as a form of punishment. It is Adah, not Cain, who complains that he might be killed by those he walks among, while Cain exclaims, 'Would they could!'[45] An invulnerable body is to Cain an evil far greater than death. The figure of Cain is, therefore, during this period theologically unstable, a point that becomes particularly clear in *Melmoth.*

Describing Melmoth's relationship with Immalee, Monçada notes that when Melmoth is with her, his 'purpose seemed suspended'.[46] This is the point in Maturin's narrative at which the Cainian comparison is suggested. With Immalee, 'he thought for a moment he was not the Cain of the moral world, and that the brand was effaced, at least for the moment'.[47] The effect of this passage is to humanise the demonic Melmoth, and by dint of the interpenetration of the two figures of Melmoth and Cain, Cain is also 'humanised'. Melmoth's damning indictments of Church, society and religion connect him to the Cain of Byron's imaginary. However, there is also a factor connected to this humanisation which is more clearly theological in nature. There is a tension between Maturin's High Calvinist support of double-predestination, and therefore the inevitability of Melmoth's damnation, and a Romantic ideology of the salvific power of love. Melmoth's relationship with Immalee suggests both that there is something redeemable in Melmoth and that there is a doomed desire for redemption. Earthly love is not sufficient to save Melmoth, and there is no suggestion of repentance. The question becomes whether this humanisation reinforces a doctrine of arbitrary predestination, in which the seeds or appearance of goodness is available to all men but election only to the few, or a representation of free will misdirected, seeking salvation in earthly, rather than divine, love.

The Wandering Jew is another pivotal forebear of the Gothic 'mortal immortal' and the only one of the archetypal figures whose punishment is consistently represented as immortality. A number of separate stories feed into the Wandering Jew legend as it appears

[44] Joel Porte, 'In the Hands of an Angry God: Religious Terror in Gothic Fiction', in *The Gothic Imagination: Essays in Dark Romanticism,* ed. by G. R. Thompson (Washington State University: Washington State University Press, 1974), 42-64 (p. 50)
[45] Byron, 'Cain', p. 338
[46] Maturin, *Melmoth,* p. 370
[47] Ibid., p. 370

in the eighteenth century.[48] While folkloric accounts exist from at least the thirteenth century, the story was popularised in written form in the 1602 *Kurtze Beschreibung und Erzehlung von einem Juden mit Namen Ahasverus.* This influential version became a standard form of the tale, and made some important changes to the 'original' sources. R. Edelmann notes, for example, that the emphasis on the figure's Jewish identity, rather than being an intrinsic part of the myth, was a sign of the rising anti-Semitism of the period.[49] The Wandering Jew became a 'symbol of the Jew' 'carrying the collective guilt'[50] of the Jewish people. As Davison notes there was an anti-Semitic conflation of the Wandering Jew and Cain as figures with the 'popular view of the Jews as a criminal and conspiratorial nation of Christ-killers with indelibly bloodied hands…derived from the story of Cain'.[51] Ahasuerus, denier of Christ, becomes a metonymic representation of the Jews as killers of Christ who are in turn both allegorically and literally the descendants of Cain: re-perpetrating his fratricidal crime and suffering his exile. Although, as Davison notes, anti-Semitism continued to be rife in Britain in the period, with the toleration debates of the 1790s rarely stretching to include the Jews and Jewish Emancipation not occurring until 1858, the figure had, to a great extent at that point in that tradition been 'divested…of his Jewish significance'.[52]

'The Wandering Jew' in Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) illustrates the eighteenth-century conception of the figure in the English tradition. The 'sin'

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[48] See, Eino Railo, *The Haunted Castle: A Study of the Elements of English Romanticism* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1927); Edelmann, R., 'Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew: Origin and Background', in *The Wandering Jews: Essays in the Interpretation of a Christian Legend,* ed. by Gali Hasan-Rokem and Alan Dundes (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 1-11; K. Anderson, 'Popular Survivals of the Wandering Jew in England', in *The Wandering Jews: Essays in the Interpretation of a Christian Legend,* ed. by Gali Hasan-Rokem and Alan Dundes (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 76-105; Marie Mulvey-Roberts, *Gothic Immortals: The Fiction of the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross* (Oxon: Routledge, 1990).
There are three principle traditions. 1) The popularly understood immortality of 'the disciple Jesus loved' based on John 21: 22 'If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?' However, within John this is reported as a misconception. John 21: 23 'Yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die: but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?' 2) The 'Malchus' tradition, which conflated the guard injured by Peter when Christ was arrested and the High Priest's servant in John 8:10 who struck Christ. 3) The Cartiphilus tradition of Pontius' Pilate's doorkeeper, Cartiphilus, who either struck Jesus or told him not to tarry. The first of these is positively imagined form of Wandering immortality, which had been largely ousted by the negative conceptions of the Wandering Jew.

[49] R. Edelmann, 'Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew: Origin and Background', in *The Wandering Jews: Essays in the Interpretation of a Christian Legend* edited by Gali Hasan-Rokem and Alan Dundes (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 1-11 (p. 7)

[50] Edelmann, 'Ahasuerus', p. 7

[51] Davison, *Anti-Semitism,* p. 41

[52] Ibid., p89

of the Wandering Jew is that of having struck or mocked Jesus on the road to Golgotha. In 'The Wandering Jew' he cries,

> …"Awaye, thou king of Jewes,
> Thou shalt not rest thee here."[53]

Jesus' reply was an immediate rebuke and a curse:

> "I sure will rest, but thou shalt walke,
> And have no journey stayed."[54]

The 'Wandering Jew' is punished by both an unending 'mortal immortality' (an exile from the spiritual) and a ceaseless earthly exile:

> No resting place could he finde at all,
> No ease, nor hearts content;
> No house, nor home, nor biding place:
> But wandering forth he went.[55]

The borrowing here from the Cain narrative is clear. The Wandering Jew also acts as the dark mirror of Christ: 'but the son of man hath not where to lay his head' (Matthew 8:20). Christ has no 'earthly home' because he is 'not of the world' (John 17:14), but the Wandering Jew has no other 'citizenship' than the world. He is therefore doubly exiled, disallowed any place of belonging. Immortality is not punishment enough. To it has been added eternal separation from the human as well as the divine. This punishment is independent of repentance:

> With grieved conscience still,
> Repenting for the heinous guilt
> Of his fore-passed ill

While the idea of the Wandering Jew as a 'contrite sinner' is not intrinsic to the legend, it does nonetheless reflect the popularity in the English tradition of the figure as contrite, abstemious and charitable. There was no strong English tradition but, as G. K. Anderson

[53] [Anon.], 'The Wandering Jew', in *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry,* 3 vols (London: Bickers and Son, 1876), II, 293-6 (p. 293)
[54] Ibid., p. 294
[55] Ibid., p. 294

notes, there were discernible trends in English representations of the Wandering Jew – the most atypical being the depiction of the Wanderer as continually thirsty.[56]

The function of the Wandering Jew is that of a 'witness to the truth of Christianity, as he was an eye-witness of the Crucifixion and personally assured by Christ of the second-coming'.[57] For both Christ and the Wandering Jew, errancy was a central part of their 'mission'. Christ will rest so the Wanderer will wander, taking Christ's place in spreading the good news. An eternal punishment as distorted reflection of eternal victory:

> The world he hath still compast round
> And seene those nations strange,
> That hearing of the name of Christ,
> Their idol gods doe change[58]

Although seemingly on a Divine mission, the 'Wandering Jew' still 'desir[es] to be dissolv'd',[59] reiterating the emphasis on his immortality as a punishment rather than a gift.

The relevance of the Wandering Jew to *Melmoth* is suggested by the title of 'The Wanderer'. Melmoth wanders, entrapped in a lasting embodied punishment and he functions as a witness, not, like the Wandering Jew of folklore, to Christ's divinity and resurrection but to the accuracy of Maturin's hypothetical proposition:

> 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!

Melmoth becomes both the 'enemy' of mankind and the witness to his own failure for 'none have consented' to his diabolic substitution.[60] Like the Wandering Jew, though, the price for this witnessing is steep and seemingly incommensurate with the original crime: 'If my

[56] G. K. Anderson, 'Popular Survivals of the Wandering Jew in England', in *The Wandering Jews: Essays in the Interpretation of a Christian Legend* edited by Gali Hasan-Rokem and Alan Dundes (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 76-105 (p. 77)
[57] Maccoby, 'The Wandering Jew as Sacred Executioner', p. 250
[58] Anonymous, 'The Wandering Jew', p. 295
[59] Ibid., p. 294
[60] Maturin, *Melmoth,* p. 675

crimes have exceeded those of mortality, so will my punishment'.[61] His punishment began not when he faces mortal death, but at the moment that he accepted an unnaturally prolonged life: an embodied longevity, dedicated to temptation, degradation and failure.

Melmoth also demonstrates the characteristic thirst of the Wanderer. When he appears to his descendent at the end of the novel, he asks 'Have you aught to quench my thirst?' On being given a glass of water, 'the Wanderer raised it to his lips, and tasted a few drops, then replacing it on the table… with a laugh, wild but no longer ferocious…'[62] His response to the drink suggests both desperation and the impossibility of relief. Anderson suggests that the tradition of the thirst of the Wandering Jew is a case of 'a transference of the thirst of Christ to the man who traditionally insulted him'.[63] This does not explain, however, the transference of this thirst to Melmoth. The answer to his thirst, I suggest, is found in the biblical usage of 'thirst' imagery: a 'thirst after righteousness' (Matthew 5:6), a thirst for 'living water' of which Christ is the font (John 4:10-15) and a 'thirst for God' (Psalm 42:2). The language of thirst is frequently used as a metaphor for a longing for 'spiritual life'. As with the story of Immalee, Melmoth, through this thirst, symbolically performs the desire for salvation. His fruitless attempts to assuage his physical thirst represent his equally fruitless attempts to assuage his spiritual thirst through earthly paradigms of salvific 'love' or substitutionary damnation.

Maturin's *Melmoth* does not directly address one of the most theologically problematic aspects of the Wandering Jew story, namely, the severity of the punishment 'attributed to Jesus himself'.[64] Jesus' act of seemingly petty vindictiveness in condemning the Jew is juxtaposed with the salvific sacrifice which follows, as well as the final plea to 'forgive them for they know not what they do' (Luke 24:36). This problematic core of the myth, a tyrannical and seemingly arbitrary divinity, was frequently foregrounded in Gothic and Romantic representations. The figure became, in Maccoby's scathing terms, 'one more example of the Romantic hero – a wandering hero, isolated from normal society, expiating some crime which, in the last resort, was a praiseworthy act of rebellion against a tyrannous

[61] Ibid., p. 675
[62] Maturin, *Melmoth,* p. 674
[63] Ibid., p. 81
[64] Edelmen, 'Ahasuerus', p. 4

authority'.[65] While Maccoby ignores the continuing theological valence of the figure, his claim points clearly to a recasting of the Wandering Jew in the mould of the Gothic-Romantic anti-hero. His eternal embodiment is a punishment whose meaning mirrors the 'orthodox' conception of the body/soul, spirit/flesh divide. The meaning of this 'punishment', however, has changed, and rather than representing a demonic preference for the fleshly, it becomes a testimony to an unforgiving God.

Gothic Wanderers

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there - Psalm 139:7-8

Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* (1796) features a character specifically named as the Wandering Jew. It is worth noting, though, that this identification comes not from the character or narrator but from Raymond's uncle, 'a cardinal duke'.[66] Bearing in mind the novel's consistent anti-clerical bias, the cardinal's authority is questionable and the mysterious stranger's refusal to comply with a request for information leaves his identity uncertain. He is in fact a composite figure. On the one hand, there are a number of characteristics that connect him to the Wandering Jew. He is depicted as having unusual longevity, he is unable to kill himself and his wandering is of a forced nature. The figure presents us with the terms of his wandering, saying that 'fate obliges me to be constantly in movement; I am not permitted to pass more than a fortnight in the same place'.[67] This statement reinforces the involuntary nature of his wandering. He also demonstrates quite specifically the English tradition's emphasis on the Wandering Jew as a worker of often supernaturally inflected good deeds,[68] entering the text to lay the dead (the bloody nun) and to free the living.

On the other hand, however, the character is equally informed by other archetypal Wanderers. The superstitious townspeople, for example, identify him as a possible 'Doctor Faustus'. Furthermore, his necromantic practices in communicating with the bloody nun

[65] Maccoby, 'The Wandering Jew as Sacred Executioner,' p. 254
[66] Lewis, *The Monk,* I, p. 207
[67] Ibid., I, p. 197
[68] Anderson, 'Popular survivals of the Wandering Jew,' pp. 76-105

underline this connection to the Faustian seeker of hidden knowledge. He uses Catholic symbols ('a small wooden crucifix') in a fairly demonic rite ('dipping in it [a cup of blood] one end of the crucifix, he described a circle in the middle of the room. Round about this he placed various reliques, sculls, thigh-bones, &c).[69] There is a conflation of the demonic and Divine in his actions, which is exacerbated by the question surrounding his identity. The mysterious mark on his forehead 'reveals the added influence of the story of Cain'.[70] The mark causes both 'reverence and horror'[71] in the living and dead alike and the stranger reveals that 'such is the curse imposed upon me…I am doomed to inspire all who look on me with terror and detestation'. In Lewis' imagining, the mark of Cain keeps the 'Cainian' figure alive through complete and total alienation from his fellows. Where the nature of Cain's mark as 'blessing' or 'curse' is ambiguous in the biblical presentation, Lewis imagines it as an additional cruelty. Though his identity is ultimately wrapped in uncertainty, each element of the character – the 'Wandering Jew', Cain and Faust – adds another characteristic that serves a subversive theological function. The Wandering Jew's curse of longevity and wandering, the Cainian mark turning a punishment into an unbearable torment, and the Faustian rite's conflation of the demonic and Divine all articulate a powerful critique of Divine justice, which has become nothing more than Divine wrath.

The subversive potential of the Wandering Jew is made explicit in Percy Bysshe Shelley's juvenile 'The Wandering Jew' (1877) and, more particularly, 'The Wandering Jew's Soliloquy' (1877). Not published until after Percy's death, it was rejected by its potential first publisher as 'atheistical'.[72] Subtly, his original title was *The Victim of the Eternal Avenger.* Maccoby argues that Shelley 'saw the Wandering Jew as one of those rebels against authority, such as Adam, Prometheus and Faust, who defy the tyranny of God'.[73] However, in 'The Wandering Jew', Paulo (the eponymous Wandering Jew) becomes an object primarily of pity rather than a figure of defiance. His crime is that 'I mocked our Saviour, and I cried, / Go, go.'[74] It is a crime that he acknowledges as such, saying

[69] Lewis, *The Monk,* I, p. 149
[70] Eino Railo, *The Haunted Castle,* kindle, 4825/8927
[71] Lewis, *The Monk,* I, p. 150
[72] Dobell, Bertram, 'Introduction', in Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Wandering Jew: A Poem,* ed. by Bertram Dobell (London: Reeves and Turner, 1887), xiii-xxxii (p. xv)
[73] Maccoby, 'The Wandering Jew as Sacred Executioner,' p. 243
[74] Percy Shelley, *The Wandering Jew,* ed. by Bertram Dobell (London: Reeves and Turner, 1887) p. 28

But, ah! The all-wasting hand of Time,
Might never wear away my crime![75]

His cause of complaint is the injustice of the punishment's severity: a result of the 'avenging sway' and 'avenging ire' of the deity.[76] Paulo, echoing Milton's Satan, later claims that it is

Vain from myself the attempt to fly,
Sole cause of my own misery.[77]

This is not, as it first appears, a reversal of his earlier position. While damned to an eternity of embodiment by the deity, it is his own 'flesh', the cage of his soul both 'literally' and metaphorically, that becomes his torturer. However, the hope frequently attached to the figure of the mortal immortal continues to exist for Paulo. Whether this is his own framework of interpretation only or whether it is sanctioned by the text is unclear. Paulo seeks a demon's help to end his life, but ultimately refuses to sign the document because of a fear of eternal consequences:

Flash'd on my mind the infernal deed,
The deed which would condemn my soul
To torments of eternal flame[78]

Paulo does not view his current separation from a 'natural death' as antithetical to the possibility of future salvation. He awaits the day of judgment that is to decide his fate.

More defiant in tone, the appended 'The Wandering Jew's Soliloquy' places a similar emphasis on Divine injustice, drawing parallels between the Wandering Jew and other victims of Divine wrath. Bemoaning his own inability to die, the Wandering Jew defies God to kill him like 'the myriad sons of Israel' who in the 'noonday pestilence [God] slew'; he envies their 'vengeful violent fate'.[79] There is an oxymoronic quality to this desire. His desire for death is rooted in a conception of eternal bodily life as inherently evil as he longs for 'freedom from…our mortal state' in order to 'taste etherial pleasure' (The Wandering Jew).[80] His desire for extinction thus conversely upholds a traditional conception of the

[75] Ibid., p. 30
[76] Ibid., p. 32
[77] Ibid., p. 33
[78] Ibid., p. 45
[79] Ibid., p. 69
[80] Ibid., p. 14

soul/body and spirit/flesh division while attacking the deity associated with this theological supposition. The 'Soliloquy' also compares the Wandering Jew to

> our primal parents for their bower of bliss
> (Reared by thine hand) for errors not their won
> By Thine omniscient and foredoomed, foreknown.[81]

This reference to 'primal parents' evokes a conventional theology of the impact of Original Sin. By tying the Wandering Jew and his complaints to the Adamic figure, Shelley questions the fairness of the punishment not only of the Jew but of mankind. He also raises the question of the agency behind the act of disobedience. 'Foredoomed', they could not escape their fate, nor could their 'progeny'. Shelley here merges the critique of the Wandering Jew's punishment with a more wide-ranging attack on the theological concepts of original sin, total depravity and predestination. He demonstrates the way in which the figure of the Wandering Jew, and the haunting echoes of biblical narratives encoded in the figure, can be used to destabilise the theological suppositions connected with it.

William Godwin's *St Leon* (1798) presents us with a far more complex wandering figure. As Susan Manly notes, for Godwin, 'dissent and debate, [and] the encouragement of free speculation, were essential elements'[82] of fiction. Godwin confronts us with different frameworks of interpretation, all of which necessitate readerly engagement with the theological, philosophical, political and social ideas presented in the text. *St Leon* tells the story of the eponymous French nobleman who, after involving himself and his family in ruin, meets a mysterious stranger calling himself Zampieri. Zampieri offers the secrets of both the philosopher's stone and the *elixir vitae.* The novel thereafter follows the peregrinations and tribulations of St Leon, including the loss of his family, multiple imprisonments and various failed experiments of living as an infinitely rich 'mortal immortal'. Death is positioned as a point of release. Zampieri, in offering the secrets of immortality, states that 'to die is the election of my soul'.[83] This clearly echoes the theological conception of mortal immortality, which pits body against soul. However, the case is not that simple.

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[81] Ibid., p. 69
[82] Susan Manly, 'William Godwin's "School of Morality"', *Wordsworth Circle,* 43.3 (Summer 2012), 135-42 (p. 142)
[83] William Godwin, *St Leon: A Tale of the Sixteenth Century,* ed. by William Brewer (Peterborough: Broadview editions, 2006), p. 159

The majority of critics have investigated *St Leon* through its philosophical, political, or ethical underpinnings.[84] It is frequently read in dialogue with Godwin's *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793)[85] and particularly in regards to the theme of immortality broached in the appendix 'On Health, and the Prolongation of Human Life'. Therein Godwin articulates a secular concept of old age as a form of stagnation over which the mind may, eventually, be able to demonstrate its mastery in accordance with his views on human perfectibility. 'Immortality' is positively imagined and the 'human lifespan is represented as limited, limiting and, indeed, incarcerating'. [86] This turns the theological conception on its head and is more broadly in keeping with secular Enlightenment attitudes towards human progress and the idea that 'death need no longer be obligatory, but an optional extra'.[87]

Both David Collings and Andrea Charise view *St Leon* as an 'acute, implicitly self-critical'[88] response to 'On Health'. For Charise, it functions as a mediated response to Thomas Malthus' *An Essay on the Problem of Population* (1798) by investigating the claims raised by Malthus in contradiction to 'On Health'. Namely, she suggests it shows the 'destructive consequences of human immortality as revealed within a socially conceived context of population'.[89] This reading, however, ignores that fact that it is not St Leon's immortality but his unlimited wealth which disrupts the social order, as we see, for example, in Hungary where he unbalances the local economy. The 'failure' of St Leon's immortality is

[84] Thomas Salem Manganaro focuses on the question of volition*; Andrea Charise reads *St Leon* as a response to Enlightenment conceptions of both aging and immortality**; Peter Melville discusses the ethics of lying***; Tilottama Rajan stresses the text's engagement with the question of political and social justice; and Ian Ward reads the text as a confrontation of ultra-rational and 'sentimental' values*****.
* Thomas Salem Manganaro, 'Free Indirect Discourse and the Problem of Will in Two Novels by William Godwin,' *Studies in Romanticism,* 57.2 (2018), 301-323
**Andrea Charise, "The Tyranny of Age": Godwin's *St Leon* and the Nineteenth-Century Longevity Narrative,' *ELH,* 79.4 (Winter 2012), 905-33
***Peter Melville, 'Lying with Godwin and Kant: Truth and Duty in "St Leon",' *Eighteenth Century,* 55.1 (Spring 2014), 19-37
*****Tilottama Rajan, *Supplement of Reading: Figures of Understanding in Romantic Theory and Practice* (Cornell University Press, 1990)
*****Ian Ward, 'A Man of Feelings: William Godwin's Romantic Embrace,' *Law and Literature,* 17.1 (Spring 2005), pp.21-46
[85] Although *Political Justice* was originally written in 1793, Godwin revised the text in a second (1795, dated as 1796) and third edition (1797, dated 1798)
[86] Charise, "The Tyranny of Age," p. 907
[87] Mary Mulvey-Roberts, "A physic against death': Eternal Life and the Enlightenment – Gender and Gerontology," in *Literature and Medicine During the Eighteenth Century,* ed. by M. M. Roberts and Roy Porter (London: Routledge, 1993), 151-167 (p. 152)
[88] David Collings, 'The Romance of the Impossible: William Godwin in the Empty Place of Reason' *ELH,* Vol. 70, No. 2, (Fall 2003), 847-874 (p. 848)
[89] Charise, "The Tyranny of Age,' p. 919

not for Godwin, as Tilottama Rajan notes, necessarily inherent in immortality itself. The problem lies in the fact that St Leon's immortality is fundamentality different from the form of immortality imagined in 'On Health' where he argues that 'genuine social transformation', the necessary condition of human immortality, 'must arise incrementally from within society, rather than being imposed upon it from the outside'.[90] It is a social rather than a solitary condition and dependent on a vision of the perfectibility of 'humanity'.

St Leon does not attain immortality through any of the natural processes outlined by Godwin in *The Enquiry.* Rather, it is through the intrusion of an external principle that his immortality is achieved. The *elixir vitae* is a very specifically individual 'magical panacea, a dangerous illusion running counter to [Godwin's] own line of thought'.[91] St Leon's interest in the elixir is not a partially praise-worthy quest for knowledge, as Mulvey-Roberts and Charise suggest. There is a clear motif of temptation in his acquisition of the secret. St Leon did not seek knowledge of eternal life; he was presented with the possibility of learning a secret 'such as kings would barter their thrones to purchase'.[92] 'Curiosity, restless curiosity'[93] is certainly one motive, but it is an artificially and manipulatively aroused curiosity. Ultimately St Leon recognises that it is 'the sordid love of gold'[94] that is his principal motive. His immortality 'fails' therefore precisely because it is the antithesis of the 'immortality' of communal good and gradual improvement posited by Godwin in *Political Justice*: a broadly utilitarian vision which emphasises the good of the whole above the progress of the individual.

While these readings of the political and philosophical underpinnings of the failure of St Leon's immortality to match the utopian vision of 'On Health' point to an important aspect of the novel, they ignore the clearly evoked theological resonances of St Leon's immortality. The emphasis on temptation in the 'transfer' of immortality between Zampieri and St Leon and the palimpsestic depiction of Zampieri as descendent of Faust, the Wandering Jew, Adam and Cain, causes the discourse of immortality in the text to escape the purely secular frames of interpretation investigated thus far. Although the theological

[90] David Collings, 'Romance of the Possible: William Godwin in the Empty Place of Reason,' *ELH,* 70.2 (Fall 2003), p. 848
[91] Mulvey-Roberts, *Gothic Immortals,* p. 25
[92] Godwin, *St Leon,* p. 158
[93] Ibid., p. 158
[94] Ibid., p. 160

valence of Godwin's text is rarely addressed in modern criticism, it was a key component of contemporary critique. The *Antijacobin* review implied that the 'evils' of Godwin's philosophy 'will only be discovered by the initiated in the mysteries of Godwinian philosophy'[95] but both the *Antijacobin* and the *British Monthly* inveigh against what they both consider the text's overt theologically 'irreligious' or 'profane' content.[96] While St Leon is nominally Catholic, both St Leon's and the Inquisitor's theologies form a reflection and critique of Christianity more generally.[97] Contemporary reviewers are all too aware of this elision, with one complaining that 'in various parts of this work, he has taken occasion to *sneer* at Christianity'.[98] *St Leon* is clearly engaged in a theological critique, and, as such, the text is best read in concert not only with Godwin's philosophical thought but also with his 'theological' work. I will therefore be using Godwin's posthumously published collection *On the Genius of Christianity Revealed* as a reference throughout.

Zampieri, when he enters the text, is a theologically coded immortal wanderer. His description of his own immortality echoes the narratives of Cain and the Wandering Jew in its emphasis on exile, persecution, and enforced wandering:

> Hated by mankind, hunted from the face of the earth, pursued by every atrocious calumny, without a country, without a roof, without a friend; the addition that can be made to such misfortunes scarcely deserves a thought.[99]

St Leon likewise becomes a wanderer who understands his immortality as leading inexorably to a form of perpetual exile: 'destined by nature to wander a solitary outcast on the face of the earth'.[100] However, St Leon, the retrospective autodiegetic narrator of his own story, places this comment on the predestined nature of his exile at a moment before his access to immortality. This ties it to the multiple exiles that he experienced before

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[95] Anonymous, '*Antijacobin* Review of *St Leon'* (January/February 1800), in *The Romantics Reviewed: Contemporary Reviews of British Romantic* Writers, ed. by Donald H. Reiman, Part C: Vol. 1 ([n.p.]: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1972), p. 23

[96] Anonymous, '*British Monthly* Review of *St Leon*' (January 1800), in *The Romantics Reviewed: Contemporary Reviews of British Romantic* Writers, ed by Donald H. Reiman, Part C: Vol. 1, ([n.p.]: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1972), p. 196/9

[97] Godwin underlines the perceived proximity of Anglicanism and Catholicism in his essay 'On Contrition'. As highlighted in the first chapter, the depiction of Catholic characters, figures and institutions was often used both in contemporary sceptical works and Gothic fiction as a representative of religion more generally. William Godwin, 'On Contrition', in *Essays (Never Before Published)* (London: Henry S. King & Co., 1873), 77-96 (p. 81)

[98] Anonymous, '*Antijacobin Review,'* p. 29

[99] Godwin, *St Leon,* p. 158

[100] Ibid., p. 119

immortality, the consequences of the loss of his property and reputation. There is a symmetry between his experiences before and after receipt of the 'great secret', which undermines his own perception of this immortality and its relation to exile. In reading *St Leon,* the complexity of Godwin's narrative strategies must be taken into consideration. There is a clearly ironic distance between authorial and narratorial perspectives, which begins in the Preface with St Leon's rhetorical question: 'What is political liberty, compared with unbounded riches and immortal vigour?' [101] The distance from the authorial voice of Godwin, a continuous and vociferous proponent of philosophical anarchy, is clear. This narratorial distance highlights the fact that St Leon's own representation of his life is rather a framework of interpretation than a representation of literal truth: a fact that must be kept in mind in the following discussion of St Leon's portrayal of his own immortality.

St Leon clearly applies a theological framework of interpretation to his own immortality. The asserted connection between immortality and perpetual exile evokes both the archetypal model of the wanderer and the corresponding theological frameworks of interpretation: embodied life as a form of punishment and the body as a trap for the soul. He underlines this relationship explicitly by stating that 'this body was formed to die; this edifice to crumble into dust; the principles of corruption and mortality are mixed up in every atom of my frame'.[102] Here the corrupt and incurably 'mortal' nature of the body, despite its immortality, is underlined. The connection with life or embodied life as a form of torment is also evident in St Leon's musings on death:

> I could not resolve to die: death had too many charms to suit the self-condemnation that pursued me. I found a horrible satisfaction in determining to live, and to avenge upon myself the guilt I had incurred.[103]

Here, continued life is imagined as a form of earthly punishment and death as a release.

A seemingly pivotal difference between St Leon and the models of mortal immortality which act as intertextual referents for his character is his changing physicality. A defining characteristic of the Wandering Jew is his apparent physical stasis. The eternally un-aging body of the Wandering Jew is an externalised representation of his inability to

[101] Ibid., p. 54
[102] Ibid., p. 188
[103] Ibid., p. 121

escape the 'flesh' and to move through and past natural death into spiritual life. In contrast, St Leon's body changes and ages. Having been held in the inquisition for twelve years, he emerges an old man. Upon drinking the *elixir vitae*, he is 'revived', [104] thus undergoing a form of 'resurrection' that is seemingly at odds with the stasis of the Wandering Jew and the physically marked nature of Cain. He undergoes what he describes as a 'metamorphosis', which tended 'in the eyes of all that saw [him], to cut off every species of connection between [his] present and [his] former self'.[105] This metamorphosis, however, is only an outward one, and only a facsimile of the 'true resurrection' on Judgment Day when 'we shall all be changed…when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality' (1 Corinthians 15: 51, 53). He remains trapped in a mortal body. This return to youth is actually a reinforcement of stasis rather than a sign of metamorphosis. In his 'Of the Rebellion of Man', Godwin suggests that 'the original impulse of man is uncontrollableness'[106] – a mixture of the love of novelty, adventure and power[107] – which is like 'a spring within us, that found the perpetual restraint of being wise and sober insupportable'.[108] For Godwin, this 'rebelliousness' diminishes with age for 'as the newness of life subsides, the power of temptation becomes less'.[109] St Leon's is a perpetual return to the uncontrolled, the unformed and the imperfect. This secular authorial Godwinian conception of 'rebelliousness' is clearly analogous with Christian concepts of the 'triumph of the flesh'. In reading of St Leon's resurrection, we must keep this Godwinian philosophical reading (an authorial interpretation) and the theological reading (a narratorial interpretation) in mind: St Leon's interpretation (as we shall see) may be wrong, but the dynamic of regressive self-generating stasis is real. The self-deceiving narratorial voice presents the reader with a doubled vision of this resurrection: first, as a true 'revival' and secondly, as a form of theologically understood entrapment. St Leon depicts his 'revival' as a revival into death, a rededication to the 'flesh' over the spirit.

[104] Ibid., p. 343
[105] Ibid., p. 344
[106] William Godwin, 'On the Rebelliousness of Man', in *Thoughts on Man, His Nature, Productions and Discoveries* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1831), 93-111 (p. 105)
[107] Ibid., p. 96
[108] Ibid., p. 93
[109] Ibid., p. 107

St Leon's depiction of his dream after drinking the *elixir vitae* highlights this interpretation of his immortality as a surrender to the 'flesh'. In this oneiric reverie he is transported into a world of sensual pleasure in which he becomes the object of worship of nubile dancers.[110] The theological subtext of this dream was highlighted by Godwin's contemporaries. *St Godwin* (1800), Edward Du Bois' satire of *St Leon*, represents St. Godwin as giving himself wholly over to 'the sins of the flesh' after his resurrection: he 'followed the dictates of [his] passion…*Liberty and no constraint!*'[111] There is a deliberate evocation here of Romans 6:20, 'When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness' and the biblical paradox of slavery to 'fleshly' freedom. Du Bois underlines in bold the theological implications of Godwin's text. This idea of surrender to the 'flesh' suggests that his immortality is a form of self-generating or self-perpetuating entrapment. While St Leon judges himself later as a 'monster that did not deserve to exist',[112] he never once entertains the possibility of rejecting the elixir and eternal life. There is a tension in this decision between a sense of St Leon's 'free choice' to drink the potion (and surrender to the 'flesh'), and the sense of entrapment in and by the body/flesh. St Leon's frequent self-justifications highlight this sense of the invincibility of his 'fleshly' passions and the soul's inevitable defeat. In justification of his gambling frenzy, for example, he cries 'How every malignant and insufferable passion seemed to rush upon my soul!...It was the night of the soul!'[113] His sins and his immortality are simply irresistible in St Leon's eyes.

That St Leon's revival represents a form of stasis rather than metamorphosis is echoed in the formal techniques of cyclical repetition that inform the structure of the novel: the constant recurrence of narratives of persecution, imprisonment, failed bribery and escape. St Leon always recurs to the same errors in a constant cycle, each precipitated by 'rebelliousness' – a love of novelty, adventure or power - or, in theological terms, sin. The Hungarian adventure, his last, offers a salient example. For Rajan, Melville and Mulvey-Roberts, this acts as a 'turning-point' in the novel,[114] at which St Leon abandons the selfish unconsidered practices of the past and 'devotes himself to benevolent action', however

[110] Godwin, *St Leon,* p. 343
[111] Du Bois, *St Godwin,* p. 203
[112] Godwin, *St Leon,* p. 355
[113] Ibid., p. 100
[114] Tillotama Rajan, *Supplement of Reading*, p. 190

misguided.[115] However, as his second life begins, he is filled not with compassion but rather with a sense of 'ambition'.[116] Ostensibly seeking to counteract the effects of a bloody conflict, his 'reckless' and selfish motivations are clearly predicated on the love of novelty, adventure and power. He expresses a desire 'to engross and to feel the benefits that attend upon *novelty'*[117] (my emphasis) and views the 'captured towns and smoking villages…the defenceless mother and her offspring brutally insulted and massacred, as fitting accoutrements of a 'noble scene' for his future enterprise. St Leon moreover expresses a 'rapturous admiration for the exploits of the heroic Huniades'[118] who were partly responsible for this destruction reflecting his earlier love of military glory and 'adventure'.[119] His chief motivation though is power and praise, he dreams of life among people 'who would be indebted to my beneficence for every breath they drew'.[120] His 'mission' to Hungary is as self-directed and 'reckless' as his earlier attempts to live out his immortality; he repeats his error using a different set of tools. There is no revolution in feeling, thought or understanding for St Leon. Rather, he seeks consistently to play the role of the God he thinks his immortality has made him.

St Leon's conflation of 'immortality' and 'divinity' is evident in the dream produced by drinking the *elixir vitae,* in which he becomes an object of worship. St Leon's story is both a Faustian and Adamic narrative; there is a tempter, a lust for forbidden knowledge and an act of defiance against the limits laid down by the deity. The elixir is both a 'cursed' temptation and the instrument of defiance against God. St Leon understands his situation not as a retelling of the Adamic parallel but as a blasphemous fulfilment of its implicit promise: 'And the LORD God said, Behold, *the man is become as one of us,* to know good and evil. And now lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever…the Lord God sent him forth from the garden' (Genesis 3:22-3. My emphasis). Having metaphorically taken hold of the 'tree of the fruit of life', his theological conception

[115] Mulvey-Roberts, *Gothic Immortality,* p. 33
[116] Godwin, *St Leon,* p. 346
[117] Ibid., p. 359
[118] Ibid., p. 360
[119] Davison suggests that in St Leon's acceptance of the elixir, a 'once moral Christian is effectively and unnaturally transformed into an immoral Jew' through an abandonment of 'Christian' chivalric values in favour of a 'Jewish greed.'* However, throughout the text, Godwin's militaristic activities (and those of his son) are viewed with significant suspicion. The glory of war is shown to be hollow.
*Davison, *Anti-Semitism,* p107
[120] Godwin, *St Leon,* p. 360

of himself has fundamentally altered and he views himself as different from 'mankind' not only by degree but in type: 'How could I, an immortal, hope ever hereafter to feel a serious, an elevating and expansive passion for the ephemeron of an hour!'[121] He has, in his own mind, essentially reversed the Adamic prohibition and become 'as one of them'. Importantly, for St Leon, immortality is a cause of perfection ('he has as few temptations to obliquity as omnipotence itself')[122] rather than, as for Godwin, being its fruit.

There are, therefore, two distinct perspectives generated by St Leon himself about his immortality, and both are theologically informed. He wavers between theological paradigms of inherited and blasphemous immortality as divinity and a cursed embodied immortality. From St Leon's narratorial perspective, these two interpretative frameworks remain in tension throughout the text. While St Leon attempts to reflect on and 'present his self-deceptions repentantly',[123] the cycle of self-deception is never complete. He misinterprets his own motives, morality and immortality in the light of theological frameworks of interpretation that not only misinterpret his situation but form part of the mechanism of its continuation.

The flaw in his system, which leads to his peripatetic entrapment, is his theological conception of both his immortality and his universe. He is not, as many critics, both contemporary and modern, argue, an atheist figure. While we may certainly read through his pronouncements to an authorial voice critical of established Christianity, St Leon's own views stay within the margins of the theologically orthodox. Instead, we must investigate the distance between authorial and narrative voice to understand the way in which these two perspectives merge and diverge within the text and the implication that this has for a theological reading. That St Leon's fundamental error is the theological nature of his frameworks of interpretation emerges from Marguerite's strictures on St Leon's immortality. She emphasises the isolation that she views as an essential feature of the condition.

> Equality is the soul of real and cordial society. A man of rank indeed does not live upon equal terms with the whole of his species; but his heart also can exult, for he

[121] Godwin, *St Leon,* p. 189
[122] Ibid.*,* p. 187
[123] Manganaro, 'Free Indirect Discourse and Will in Godwin,' 317

has his equals. *How* unhappy the wretch, the monster rather let me say, *who is without an equal.* [124] (My emphasis)

Like God, St Leon has become 'without an equal'; his immortality is conflated with divinity and Marguerite's critique, not of St Leon but of his state, becomes a displaced reflection on God. This conception of the isolation of God as a form of monstrosity is found in other works of the period. In Byron's *Cain,* for example, the devil says of God:

> …But let him
> Sit on his vast and solitary throne,
> Creating worlds, to make eternity
> Less burthensome to his immense existence
> And unparticipated solitude!
> Let him crowd orb on orb: he is alone
> Indefinite, indissoluble tyranny![125]

While Byron attacks a monolithic conception of God, Godwin more specifically animadverts on the idea of the 'traditional' Christian construct of the divine. His 'On the Character of God as described in the Scriptures' (1887) depicts the God of scripture - vengeful, wrathful and vindictive – and suggests that 'we might with sufficient propriety adopt the inference, God is the devil'.[126] St Leon is not simply blasphemously struggling after divinity. Rather, his immortality and divinity are avatars for each other: immutable, eternal, unequalled, isolated, inhuman, monstrous. The implicit criticism of the Christian conception of God, which Godwin codes into Marguerite's speech, unsettles all of St Leon's specifically theological frameworks of interpretation and raises suspicions about their validity through critiquing the theological system to which they belong.

If we are to understand the difference between authorial and narratorial conceptions of St Leon's immortality, we must consider this question in the light of two of the cornerstones of Godwinian philosophy: a belief in human perfectibility and in the doctrine of necessity.[127] In *Political Justice,* Godwin writes that 'perfectibility' is 'one of the

[124] Godwin, *St Leon,* p. 227
[125]Byron, *Cain,* p. 321
[126] William Godwin, 'On the Character of God as Revealed in the Scriptures', in *Essays (Never Before Published),* (London: Henry S. King & Co., 1873), 233-251 (p. 243)
[127] Both these positions actually have their roots in Godwin's Calvinist past. Human perfectibility is not in itself a secular notion as the bible envisions continual transformation: 'But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the

most unequivocal characteristics of the human species' and that man 'may be presumed to be in a course of progressive improvement'.[128] This concept is incompatible with a theology of predestination, total depravity or 'original sin', all of which fundamentally deny the possibility of perfectibility in life. These often-interdependent theological positions suggest a continual conflict between soul/body and spirit/flesh, which is unresolved without death. Godwin's philosophy emphasises a symbiotic relationship of 'mind' and 'body' and the future possibility of humans reaching perfection as a species in the body. Both St Leon's own conception of his immortality and the reality of his immortality as revealed in the text initially appear to contradict the possibility of perfectibility through his moral and spiritual stasis.

The novel, however, does not function as a critique of the possibility of 'perfectibility' or the possibility of immortality as Charise suggests. 'Perfectibility' is not the doctrine that every individual will become perfect over time, nor is it one that is linked to 'mechanic' or automatic progress. In Godwin's philosophy, perfectibility is a necessary quality within humanity but must be understood within the light of the doctrine of 'necessity'. Necessitarian thinking accounts for human behaviour with a materialist conception of the world, one which places human action within the same framework of 'cause and effect' that governs the material universe. It acknowledges the power of 'circumstance' over individual histories. In 'On Health', Godwin notes interpretative positions that hinder the progress of perfectibility one of which is that 'vanity prompts us to suppose that we have reached the goal of human capacity'.[129] For St Leon, an immortal 'cannot his better situation; no man can come into rivalship or competition with him'.[130] His own framework of interpretation, rather than his condition itself, defines him and serves to entrap him in a form of stasis and cyclical repetition rather than progress. Perfectibility is not so much alien to his condition as it is to his conception of it.

The difference between the reality of his situation and his perception of it is highlighted by the immediacy and violence of his change of relationship with his family on

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Lord' (2 Corinthians 3: 18) Godwin's personal conception, however, was broadly secular and confined to 'this life' with no necessity of an envisioned eschatological realm of perfection. The concept of necessity has its roots in a concept of pre-destination.

[128] William Godwin, *An Enquiry into Political Justice,* p. 16

[129] Godwin, 'On Health'

[130] Godwin, *St Leon,* p. 187

accepting Zampieri's secrets: 'they were now in a manner nothing to me…how can a man attach himself to anything, when he comes to consider it as the mere plaything and amusement of the moment!'[131] Later after taking the *elixir vitae* he says: 'I before believed, I now felt, that I was immortal.'[132] His change in judgment, attitude and relationship occurs before the reality or even the *feeling* of his immortality; it is a construct of his frame of interpretation. Having supposed our own perfection, we can 'choose' not to attempt improvement. St Leon receives the 'gift' of immortality as an external imposition, as a form of perfection, rather than working towards a 'course of progressive improvement'. His immortality thereby forms a break in the course of perfectibility and, in his use of the elixir, a continual chosen return to, in Godwinian terms, a state of recklessness or, in St Leon's theological framework, a return both to a state of slavery to the flesh and, conversely, a perfected position of semi-divinity. St Leon attempts to improve the success of his 'experiments upon the endowments of the stranger'.[133] However, this is a practical rather than moral or spiritual attempt at improvement. St Leon either dismisses the necessity of change, thanks to his 'pride and self-complacency'[134] or conversely believes in its impossibility.

St Leon sees his immortality and his 'fall from happiness'[135] in terms of a passive inheritance and an external imposition. For him it is either a gift of god, who 'in his justice has reserved for me this secret',[136] or a curse: 'I was destined by nature to wander a solitary outcast on the face of the earth'.[137] As Manganaro notes, St Leon frequently presents his actions as 'involuntary', providing both the 'psychological and physical causes of them'[138] as in the example of his gambling frenzy. St Leon points to a form of psychological cause and effect, saying 'the very tumult of my thoughts operated strongly to lead me once more to the gaming-table'.[139] He acknowledges the causality inherent to necessitarian thinking and

[131] Ibid., p. 189
[132] Ibid., p. 329
[133] Ibid., p. 359
[134] Ibid., p. 327
[135] Manganaro, 'Free Indirect Discourse and Will in Godwin,' p. 303
[136] Godwin, *St Leon,* p. 187
[137] Ibid., p. 119
[138] Manganaro, 'Free Indirect Discourse and Will in Godwin,' p. 307
[139] Godwin, *St Leon*, p. 98

presents himself as a passive object.[140] However, St Leon conflates predestinatory and necessitarian thinking by presenting the results of his gambling binge as a 'pre-destined' inevitability. It is in this context that he bemoans that 'I was *destined* by nature to wander a solitary outcast on the face of the earth'.[141] By evoking the conception of 'destiny', he moves outside a 'mortal' necessitarian frame and into the realm of theological pre-destination. Manganaro suggests that Godwin's necessitarian philosophy is 'rooted in theories of predestination',[142] but the differentiation between 'necessitarian' and 'pre-destinatory' conceptions of will is vital to understanding St Leon's interpretation of his position and its reality.

In *The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity* (1782), to which Godwin acknowledged his indebtedness, Joseph Priestley details the difference between the two systems of thought.[143] In a predestinatory worldview, 'the whole series of events, from the beginning of the world to the consummation of all things, makes one connected chain of causes and effects, originally established by the Deity'.[144] God is the first cause of every event and everything has been foreseen and ordained. The doctrine of necessity, on the contrary, emphasises the interconnectedness of 'body' and 'soul' (or in Godwin's framing 'body' and 'mind') with each dependent on the other and both, like all matter, responsive to the logic of cause and effect. For Godwin, 'no maxim can be more irrefragable, than that man is to a great degree the creature of the circumstances in which he is placed'.[145] St Leon represents his miseries as the result of necessitarian cause and effect but within a predestinatory framework, which disassociates him from both the responsibility and possibility of change. While Godwin, in his philosophical work, represents the experience of volition as a 'delusive sense of liberty', he acknowledges that it is the root, nonetheless, of the notions of 'virtue,

[140] This type of necessitarian thinking is made doubly explicit in reference to the Hungarian incident. He argues that 'the whole was a chain, every link of which was indissolubly connected from one end to the other.'* As with the gambling incident, he uses this causal chain to remove any possibility of his own culpability.
*Ibid., p. 394
[141] Ibid., p. 119
[142] Manganaro, 'Free Indirect Discourse and Will in Godwin,' p. 308
[143] The fact that Priestley viewed this differentiation as necessary suggests the dangerous ease of conflation between these two frameworks of interpretation.
[144] Joseph Priestley, *The Doctrine of Philosophical Necessity* (Birmingham: J. Johnson, 1782), p. xxii
[145] William Godwin, 'On the Present Life of Man,' p. 62

duty, guilt and desert'. [146] St Leon's predestinatory framework effectively erases the sense of liberty and volition necessary to transformative change.

Godwin depicts St Leon's theological framework of interpretation as a root cause of the necessitarian chain of cause and effect that defines St Leon's immortality. The 'circumstances' that have formed his mind are the 'circumstances' of belief. Until he sheds this conception of a 'fleshly inevitability' and the shadow of a predestinatory framework, he cannot move beyond them and undergo the necessary revolution or gradual evolution of sentiment and understanding which, for Godwin, is the root of human progress. St Leon's fears and hopes place his own immortality into a theological framework that conversely both controls him and is controlled by him. For Godwin, 'the decisions of our will are always in obedience to the impulse of the strongest motive'.[147] Despite St Leon's attempts at self-justification and self-analysis, he remains a fundamentally self-deceiving subject who can neither perceive nor appreciate the 'motive' of his theology. This is not, of course, the only way in which St Leon is self-deceptive; he frequently misrepresents his own motives and casts in a necessitarian mould his own failings. His material motivations are framed as 'necessities'. He cannot move beyond the cycle of overt self-deception and the uncovering of mercenary motivations to a space outside his theological framework of the 'flesh' (bad motivations) versus spirit (good motivations) dichotomy, in which he tacitly admits the victory of the 'flesh'. 'Destined by nature', he frames his understanding of his acts and himself through a theological framework of inevitability. What we find in St Leon is a mind 'conditioned' or 'formed' by an erroneous religious conception of immortality. Rather than being trapped by the flesh, he is trapped by his belief in the flesh. At various points in the text St Leon discusses his 'inability' to resist temptation echoing the Apostolic pronouncement that: 'For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do' (Romans 7:19). However, precisely through viewing it in these terms St Leon becomes incapable of resistance. Rewriting his own experience as a battle between the flesh and the spirit, he creates his own inability to resist.

He casts blame both on himself/his 'flesh' ('his nature') and on an outward (non-material) force ('destined') but in neither case does he see the potential of escape through

[146] William Godwin, 'On the Liberty of Human Actions' in *Thoughts on Man, His Nature, Productions and Discoveries* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1831), 226-242 (p. 235-6)
[147]Ibid., pp. 231-2

the change in consciousness advocated by Godwin. In his own imaginary he is both self-condemned (dominated by 'the flesh') and divinely condemned. His immortality as a form of punishment, however, has never been externally inflicted. 'He could not help it',[148] like the imaginary transgressor of Godwin's 'On the Liberty of Human Actions', but this inability is a condition of the mind. St Leon is not the victim of predestination but rather of an unnatural gift. The philosopher's stone and the *elixir vitae* with which Zampieri present him are, as Rajan notes, a form of unacceptable immortality. It is an individualistic disruption of Godwin's conception of the march of progress and perfectibility. St Leon was not only, as Mulvey-Roberts notes, 'spiritually unprepared for his mortal immortality;' he could not have been ready. St Leon's brief, wistful reference to 'a race of immortals'[149] evokes the Godwinian form of 'good' immortality as a social enterprise. St Leon's failure is 'necessary', driven by the unnatural nature of the gift, his nature, his faults and the theological framework that binds them into place with the promise of inevitability and the shadow of damnation. In 'On the Liberty of Human Actions', Godwin imagines a future state in which we recognise and act upon an understanding of the impact of necessity. Then, he argues, 'our prevailing emotion will be pity, even towards the criminal, who, from the qualities he brought into the world, and the various circumstances which act upon him from infancy, and form his character, is impelled to be the means of the evils, which we can view with so profound disapprobation, and the existence of which we so entirely regret'.[150] St Leon is just such an object of pity. We recognise his self-deception, his foolishness, his selfishness and his intemperance. But in the end, we cannot evade a certain sympathy for this figure not damned by the external agency of a divinity, or as corrupt 'flesh' predestined to condemnation, but a man who has been conditioned to believe himself thus damned. He is self-condemned to eternally repeat errors, which make an unnecessary immortality a hell on earth. St Leon becomes thereby a representative Christian, one who is as imprisoned in his beliefs as he is in his body, living under the 'reign of terror' of his own theology.[151]

[148] Ibid., p. 240
[149] Godwin, *St Leon,* p. 189
[150] Godwin, 'On the Liberty of Human Actions', p. 240
[151] Godwin, 'Preface to 'On a Future State of Retribution,' p. 18

Dead Men Walking

He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day - John 6:56

This closing section focuses on the vampire, the most famous of the early Gothic's mortal immortals, and its relation to the mortal immortality explored above. As Agnes Murgoci notes, vampiric law throws light on 'ideas about body and soul, and about the relation of the body and soul after death'.[152] As with the other mortal immortals of the early British Gothic, the vampiric figure was never wholly extricable from theologies of resurrection, the relationship of body and soul, and discourses of tolerance and damnation. It was never 'neutrally inherited; it was always an element in the contemporary politics of belief'.[153] While there are earlier reported English examples of 'vampiric' revenants and balladic references to 'unquiet' corpses, there was no developed native tradition of the vampire in England in the eighteenth century.[154] Nick Groom and Erik Butler suggest that this makes the vampire as 'vampire' a specifically modern phenomenon.[155] While they are right to note that the vampire entered the British consciousness as an already largely debunked foreign curiosity,[156] we cannot separate the vampire entirely from previous

[152] Agnes Murgoci, 'The Vampire in Roumania', in *The Vampire: A Casebook,* ed. by Alan Dundes (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin), 12-35 (p. 12)

[153] Victor Sage, *Horror Fiction in the Protestant Tradition* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1988), p. xvii

[154] Jacqueline Simpson and Raymond T. McNally both draw attention to 'vampiric' cases in 12th century England in the writing of William of Malmesbury, Walter Map and William of Newburgh. The last of these cases was highlighted by Augustin Calmet in his *Dissertations upon the Apparitions of Angels, Daemons, and Ghosts and concerning the Vampires* (1746/51) and attest to a contemporary association between these pre-vampiric figures and the modern vampire. Features in common with the vampire include: the spread of death associated with the walking corpse; sleep paralysis where the deceased returned to 'crush [his wife] with his weight'; the ability of the clergy to lay the revenant; and the denouncement of the dead man as depraved in life or as 'angry and unshriven.'* In each case, demonic agency was noted as the cause of the vampiric resurrection. The old English ballad 'The Unquiet Grave' also features an embodied return; the dead rebukes the mourner for disturbing his/her rest with her/his grief. There is a sense of vampiric infection in the embodied ghost's threatening 'If you take one kiss from my lily-white lips/Your time it won't be long.'** *Jacqueline Simpson, 'Repentant Soul or Walking Corpse? Debatable Apparitions in Medieval England,' *Folklore,* 114, (2003), 389-402 (pp. 390-2)
** Ruth Harvey, 'The Unquiet Grave,' *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society,* Vol. 4, No. 2, (December 1941), 49-66 (p. 51)

[155] Nick Groom, *The Vampire: A New History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018), p. 4

[156] Both Erik Butler and Nick Groom discuss the debates surrounding the possibility of the vampire in mainland Europe and particularly in Germany. There is no true equivalent in Britain but, as Butler claims, 'the phlegmatic English had reacted with lofty scorn from day one' and, more broadly in the European context, 'after the rash of vampire treatises in the 1730s and 1740s, the monster ceased to provide an object of serious contemplation'. Erik Butler, *Metamorphoses of the Vampire in Literature and Film* (New York: Camden House, 2010), p. 52

revenants without ignoring the ideological, and specifically theological, framework within which these creatures were understood. The Arnold Paul case, reported in the *London Magazine* in 1732, is often seen as the beginning of the 'vampire craze'.[157] Katharina Wilson, however, traces the first mention of the vampire tale to Paul Ricault's *State of the Greek and Armenian Churches'* published in 1679, which although it 'does not mention vampires by name…describes the phenomenon' in terms almost identical to those found in later iterations.[158] What is particular illuminating is the light that this report sheds on the theological connotations attached to the vampire at the point in which it entered the English imagination.

In *The State of the Greek and Armenian Churches*, Ricault ties the vampire myth to the Greek Orthodox 'dreadful sentence' of excommunication. Vampires are those excommunicated by the Church, 'heretics'[159] whose bodies are incapable of corruption as 'the body of an excommunicated person is not capable of returning to its first principles until the Sentence of Excommunication is taken off'.[160] David Keyworth suggests that this vampiric resurrection 'mirrored Christian belief in a future bodily resurrection'[161] but it rather distorts than mirrors this concept. The soul and body remain connected and the bodily 'resurrection' is the resurrection of the corrupted body, rather than the new 'resurrection body' found in 1 Corinthians 15. As Felix Oinas notes, this contrasts with the Catholic understanding of 'the incorruptibility of the bod[y]', which was primarily conceived of as 'a sign of sanctity'.[162] In the vampire, therefore, 'the Catholic model of holiness was blasphemously inverted'.[163] Certainly, the Catholic Divine Dom Augustin Calmet in his popular and comprehensive treatise *Dissertations upon the Apparitions of Angels, Demons, and Ghosts, and concerning the Vampires of Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia* (1746-

[157] Butler, *Metamorphoses of the Vampire*, p. 13
[158] Katharina M. Wilson, 'The History of the Word *Vampire',* in *The Vampire: A Casebook,* ed. by Alan Dundes (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 3-12 (p. 6)
[159] The conflation of the concepts of heresy and vampirism in the Eastern and Orthodox traditions are underlined by the Northern Russian use of the term 'eretik' to mean both 'heretic' and 'vampire.'
[160] Paul Ricaut, *The State of the Greek and Armenian Churches* (London: John Starkey, 1679), p. 276
[161] David Keyworth, 'The Aetiology of Vampires and Revenants: Theological Debate and Popular Belief', *Journal of Religious History,* 34.2 (June 2010), p. 172
[162] Felix J. Oinas, 'Heretics as Vampires and Demons in Russia,' *Slavic and Eastern European Journal,* 22.4 (1978), p. 437
[163] Peter Bräunlein, 'The Frightening Borderlands of the Enlightenment: The Vampire Problem,' *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences,* 43 (2012), 710-19 (p. 716)

51) noted the an underlying 'schismatic' element to the vampire tales of the Greeks.[164] The theological underpinnings of the vampiric figure therefore are implicitly connected if not to an anti-Catholic framework, certainly to a framework engaged in religious othering. As Butler notes, in the Arnold Paul tale this emphasis on religious othering was underlined. The originator of the infection was a Turk who had attacked Paul when working at the border.[165] The vitality and primacy of this interpretation of the vampire and its connection to religious othering is highlighted by an 1823 article 'On Vampirism' from the *New Monthly Magazine,* which reinforces the conception that 'the real source of vampire superstition' was 'Greek priests' and their 'system of excommunication''.[166]

From the beginning of the vampire's eruption into the English Gothic, it has been a creature of 'spectacle'. By the mid-eighteenth century, 'to the learned world, the ontology of the vampire was no longer an issue which required prolix explanations. Vampires did not exist'.[167] The Gothic's early vampires enter their texts in such a way that they remain geographically and theologically distanced from the contemporary English reader. The texts do not engage with a fantastic consideration of the possibility of these figures; rather, they act as symbolic carriers of ingrained theological meanings of religious othering and body/soul and flesh/spirit relations. In two of the earliest accounts, Byron's *The Giaour* (1813) and Robert Southey's *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801), there are minor vampiric incidents. In *The Giaour* there is no vampire proper but rather a vampiric curse intoned by a Muslim fisherman against the Giaour. The framing of the curse transposes the largely Eastern European monster into a Muslim context with references to 'Monkir' (one of the angelic 'inquisitors of the dead'[168]) and the 'Eblis throne'.[169] The emphasis remains, however, on religious otherness. The curse begins:

But first, on earth as Vampire sent,

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[164] Dom Augustin Calmet, *Dissertations upon the Apparitions of Angels, Demons, and Ghosts, and concerning the Vampires of Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia,* translated from the French (London: M. Cooper, 1759), p. 181

[165] Butler, *Metamorphoses of the Vampire,* p. 40

[166] D., 'On Vampyrism' in *New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal,* Vol. 7, (London: Henry Colburn, 1823), p. 147

[167] Bräunlein, 'The Vampire Problem', p. 716

[168] [Anon.], 'Notes' on 'The Giaour', in *The Works of Lord Byron in One Volume* (London: John Murray, 1841), p. 70

[169] Lord Byron, 'The Giaour' in *The Works of Lord Byron in One Volume,* (London: John Murray, 1841), 62-77 (p. 70)

Thy corse shall from it tomb be rent.

The metrical and rhyming emphasis on 'rent' and 'sent' acts to highlight the theologised meanings inherent in this imagery. 'Sent' back to earth, the vampire's lack of agency is underlined and the vampiric sentence is framed as a deliberate, rather than mechanical, element of (divine) punishment. The violence of 'rent' is intensified by the metrical emphasis, which also serves to accentuate and thus underline the 'natural' relation between 'corse' and 'tomb' and therefore the 'body' and 'death'. As Raymond T. McNally notes, the vampire 'really *should* be dead, but its body will not decay' and it is 'unable to return to dust', the necessary prerequisite of salvation. The vampire is trapped between the 'natural' and 'spiritual' deaths outlined by Drelincourt. They are unable both to die naturally and to spiritually live. Their souls remain unnaturally trapped within the 'corse' whose true home is the 'tomb'.

The vampiric curse aimed at the Giaour, condemns him to

> Suck the blood of all thy race,
> …
> Yet loathe the banquet which perforce
> Must feed thy livid living corse.

Earlier Greek folkloric accounts regularly underlined the fact that returning vampires are reported to prey specifically on those known to them. The emphasis in these accounts, as in 'The Giaour', is less on infection than destruction,[170] with vampires rushing 'upon People sleeping in their Beds, suck[ing] out all their Blood, and destroy[ing] them'.[171] What we find is a greater emphasis on the vampiric destruction of families: a dark reversal of the biblical promise – 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house' (Acts 16:31) – and a return to the biblical terror of God's promise to 'visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation' (Numbers 14:18). This

[170] The Arnold Paul case includes a sense of 'infection' with Paul being infected by a 'Turk', a religious other. However, other early accounts in *The Armenian and Greek Churches* and the early 'Travels of Three English Gentlemen' omit this.

[171] [Anon.] 'The Travels of Three English Gentlemen, from *Venice to Hamburgh,* being the Grand Tour of Germany, in the Year 1734' and 'A Journey from Goritia to Labuach, or Lubianz, the Metropolis of Carniola in *The Harlequin Miscellany,* 7 vols (London: T. Osbourne, 1745), IV, 348-359 (p. 358)

conception of the vampire, therefore, while not overtly focusing on a mechanics of infection, mirrors a biblical concept of 'heretical infection'.

In his narrative poem *Thalaba the Destroyer,* Southey includes a lengthy note on the vampire, which summarises a number of eighteenth-century reports and folkloric beliefs taken from Calmet's *Dissertation*. Calmet after sifting the evidence of a number of reports ultimately arrives at a sceptical conclusion regarding the vampire: 'We shall have nothing left, but to deny absolutely, that they ever come again.'[172] The supernatural argument which he is most receptive to, however, is that of demonic possession of the dead of the corpse, noting that 'I do think it absurd to suppose, that, by God's permission, a devil, or soul, may communicate fresh life and motion to a dead body'.[173] Calmet was part of a 'rationalist drive in Roman Catholicism'[174] to apply a scientific methodology to the investigation of the supernatural and it is interesting to note that like the Protestant theologians of the seventeenth century in relation to the ghost, the most acceptable explanation of the possibility of the vampire was effectively a 'demonological' interpretation. In his poem, Southey focuses on just such a demonological interpretation of the vampire; the vampire is not a resurrected woman but rather a corpse inhabited by a demon, though the soul is still present. This is in keeping with Ricaut's report of the belief that 'the Excommunicated are possessed in the Grave by some evil spirit, which actuates and preserves them from Corruption, in the same manner as the Soul informes and animates the living body'.[175]

In *Thalaba,* Thalaba's beloved Oneiza dies and a vampiric 'fiend' appears at her grave.

> "Still art thou living, wretch?!"
> In hollow tones she cried to Thalaba,
> "And must I nightly leave my grave
> To tell thee, still in vain,
> "God has abandoned thee?"
> "This is not she!" the Old Man exclaimed,
> "A Fiend! A manifest Fiend!"[176]

[172] Calmet, *Dissertation,* p. 308
[173] Ibid., p261
[174] Groom, *The Vampyre,* p. 75
[175] Ricault, *Greek and Armenian Churches,* p. 277
[176] Southey, 'Thalaba the Destroyer,' p. 122

Here a demonic spirit has inhabited Oneiza's body and fulfils a key demonic function – the temptation to despair and, specifically, religious despair. The connection to religious othering here is less straightforward than in 'The Giaour', as both protagonist and Oneiza are Muslim. Thalaba is, however, clearly a 'Protestantised' Muslim. As Wallace Brown notes, biblical quotations are substituted for quotations from the Koran and while trying to portray Islam, 'he actually substitutes his own brand of Christian resignation'.[177] Thalaba is a poorly disguised Christian proxy on a Divine quest: the extermination of 'sorcerers'. As Peter Kitson notes his mission is essentially one of a 'displaced iconoclastic Protestant hero, destroying demons of establishment corruption'[178] as an allegorical representation of either, as Kitson suggests, a Dissenting rejection of the Anglican establishment and/or a broadly Protestant rejection of the Catholic. The killing of the vampiric Oneiza sets him free from both narrative and religious stasis and allows him to complete this quest. It also frees Oneiza:

> Its demon tenant fled
> A sapphire light fell on them
> And garmented with glory
> In their sight Oneiza's Spirit stood[179]

The killing of the vampiric self dislodges the demon and ends the torturous imprisonment of Oneiza in the space between 'natural' and 'spiritual' death. The demon of disbelief has been defeated, setting both Oneiza and Thalaba free.

An interesting contrast can be raised between the vampiric models found in *Thalaba the Destroyer* and 'The Giaour'. The demonological model employed in *Thalaba* reflects what, in the English tradition, was an earlier Protestant paradigm of ghost interpretation outlined in the last chapter, which was based primarily on the impossibility of the soul's return from the regions of hell or heaven. However, in *Thalaba* there is clear evidence of a 'soul presence' in Oneiza's plea for her body to be destroyed. Her soul is unable to escape its material body due to its continued animation. This portrayal raises the spectre of the theological incoherence of the vampire but avoids the negative theological implications of

[177] Wallace Cable Brown, 'Robert Southey and English Interest in the Near East,' *ELH,* 5.3 (September 1938), 218-24 (p. 219)
[178] Peter Kitson, 'Oriental Gothic', in *Romantic Gothic:* An Edinburgh Companion (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005, 167-84 (p. 176)
[179] Southey, 'Thalaba the Destroyer', p. 122

the vampire in 'The Giaour' with its connotations of Divine punishment and unwilling action. The activities of the vampire in 'The Giaour' are specifically portrayed as anti-natural. This is not a case of the 'rule of the flesh' but rather a negation of free-will. Encoded in the vampire figure at this point is a clear echo of Byron's atheistic representation in *Cain* of a God 'whose evil is not good'.[180] .

As we can see in both the folkloric accounts and the Gothic and Romantic re-imaginings that most clearly echoed them, the vampiric figure constitutes a nexus of interconnecting theological arguments. This is not to suggest, as McNally warns us, that 'the vampire' is universally or exclusively a 'product of Christian civilization',[181] but rather to point to its inherited and reimagined meaning within the English literary tradition. The broad underpinning of all the accounts so far mentioned is the way in which damnation is manifested through an indissoluble and immortal bond with the flesh. As we see in *Thalaba,* death offers a form of salvation that 'frees the vampires out of the slavery of life into the peace of death, of restoring natural bodily death and natural spiritual continuity to those whose bodies are still unnaturally living'.[182] While the clear references to Divine punishment and demonic interference are absent from later vampiric examples in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Gothic, this familiar connection between damnation and corporeality remains.

John Polidori's 'The Vampyre' (1819) has often been represented as a 'fundamentally different vampire',[183] one which 'completely recast the mythology upon which it drew […and…] set in motion the glorious career of the aristocratic vampire'.[184] On a theological level, however, Polidori's vampire is an echo of earlier folkloric and literary portrayals. It is also worth noting that Polidori's conversion of the vampire into a Byronic aristocrat, while innovative in prose fiction, echoes a similar 'refinement' and sexualisation of the figure

[180] Byron, 'Cain,' p. 321
[181] Raymond T. McNally, *A Clutch of Vampires,* (London: Nel Paperbacks, 1974), p. 9
[182] Judith Wilt, *Ghosts of the Gothic: Austen, Eliot, & Lawrence* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), P. 89
[183] Conrad Aquilina, 'The Deformed Transformed; or, From Bloodsucker to Byronic Hero – Polidori and the Literary Vampire', in *Open Graves, Open Minds: Representations of Vampires and the Undead from the Enlightenment to the Present Day,* ed. by Sam George and Bill Hughes (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 24-38 (p. 24)
[184] Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick, 'Introduction', in *The Vampyre and Other Tales of the Macabre* (Oxford: Oxford World Classics, 1997), vii-xxii (pp. x-xii)

found, for example, in Heinrich August Ossenfelder's 'Der Vampir' (1748) and in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's female vampire, Geraldine, in *Christabel* (1816). These depictions demonstrate the way in which folkloric conceptions of the vampire were already connected to images of 'vampiric' aristocracy or elite, both fictionally and in the political metaphors of vampirism that abounded in the eighteenth century.[185] In England this comparison proliferated preciously because of the overlap of the two images. The connection of both the 'literal' and 'metaphorical' vampire with corruption, sin and ultimately damnation was central to its usage in both fiction and non-fiction.

Ruthven's metaphorically vampiric nature is evident from the beginning of the narrative. He thrives on the sufferings of others, lives off other men's wealth, and, with his 'irresistible powers of seduction',[186] has an insatiable sexual appetite that revels in the theft of 'virtue'. The infectious nature of vampirism is not connected to his blood-drinking, and there is no transference of the vampiric curse. His 'vice', however, is infectious, as he desired that 'the partner of guilt should be hurled from the pinnacle of unsullied virtue down to the lowest abyss of infamy and degradation'.[187] Groom's more general comment about the vampire is particularly relevant in relation to Ruthven: his 'own soul has been annihilated, and [he] wondered through the world spreading a private hell to all with whom it came in contact'.[188] The fact that we engage with an essentially vampiric Ruthven both before and after his 'death' erases the distinction between human and supernatural monstrosity and the metaphorically and literally vampiric.

Upon his death, he arranges for his body to be taken to the 'pinnacle of a neighbouring mount' and 'exposed to the first cold ray of the moon'[189] in what appears to be a recurring ritual of fleshly resurrection. This emphasis on continual death and rebirth

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[185] As Erik Butler notes almost coterminous with the publication of the Arnold Paul case, a 'satirical discourse'* appeared in *The Craftsmen,* which suggested that the 'real' vampires in question were 'ravenous Ministers'.** He further charts the use of vampire as political allegory applied to politicians, book-sellers and speculators who exploited society.***

* Butler, *Metamorphoses of the Vampire,* p. 52

** [Anon.,] 'Political Vampyres' in *The Gentlemen's Magazine* – May 1732 (London: F. Jefferies, 1732), 150-2 (p. 151)

*** Butler, *Metamorphoses of the Vampire,* pp. 54-5

[186] John Polidori, 'The Vampyre', in *The Vampyre and Other Tales of the Macabre* (Oxford: Oxford World Classics, 1997), 1-25 (p. 7)

[187] Ibid., p. 7

[188] Groom, *The Vampyre,* p60

[189] Ibid., p. 16

negates the possibility of salvation as there is no mechanism to break the cycle, which death itself cannot stop. The inescapable tragedy of Aubrey's sister's death is thereby emblematic of a broader hopelessness in the text. If the motif of bodily immortality and its connection to damnation is tinged with a hopeful theological ambiguity around the ultimate fate of the mortal immortal, such a motif is absent from a narrative of continual and potentially infinite bodily resurrections. The death of the body of the vampire is rendered meaningless, and there is no possibility of 'setting free' the soul. However, while the 'open endings' of the 'mortal immortal' tales break the boundaries of a strict Calvinistic determinism, offering the possibility of salvation, the contrasting impossibility of salvation here conversely does not represent a support of predetermination. Polidori was from a Catholic background and the mechanics of his vampire's immortality echo a salvific theology based on works and will.

The role of will is central to the theology underlying the vampiric Ruthven. His willed participation in the continuous cycle of resurrection is represented by the planning surrounding his premature death and his willed commitment to evil is enacted throughout the text. The vampire was 'forced every year, by feeding upon the life of a lovely female to prolong his existence for the ensuing months'[190] but Ruthven's other 'vampiric 'choices, such as his gambling, his uncharitable giving, and his sexual conquests, are outside this vampiric law and represent acts of free volition. His corporeal immortality is therefore a damnation earned by acts of will and works of evil. Polidori's emphasis here is not on theological complexities but rather on a straightforward relation between vampirism and active or willed evil, which manifests in a form of embodied damnation.

There is a clear triumph of the flesh as the dominating force and agent of volition in Ruthven's fate. Butler claims that the vampire represents the fact that 'mankind needs monster in order to set apart a safe place for itself by rejecting is more unflattering and troubling sides to a non-human realm'.[191] However, what we find in the vampire of the early British Gothic is not the inhuman but rather the fully 'human', in the sense of the corrupted fallen flesh removed from any spiritual elevation: unredeemed and irredeemable. The triumphant flesh made man (or woman). 'The Vampyre' is not as Groom suggests, simply a

[190] Ibid., p. 9
[191] Butler, *Metamorphoses of the Vampire,* p8

'tale of sexual bloodlust'.[192] Ruthven's sins of the flesh are numerous and not only or primarily analogous with lust: a defining feature of many later vampires. The sins of the flesh are 'Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like' (Galatians 5:20-22). While various forms of 'deviant sexuality' feature strongly on this list, they are components and symptoms of a wider problem. What is evident in 'The Vampyre' is not simply a sexualisation of the vampire, but a broader and bleaker view of the triumph of the 'flesh'. The 'flesh' is rendered an active and dominant principle that cannot be resisted. Aubrey undergoes a sort of moral or spiritual infection, not through a bite but through his own promise to Ruthven to keep silent about his 'death'. While made in ignorance, Aubrey's promise is the foundation stone of the vampiric curse that robs him of volition and leaves him unable to speak. He is left incapable of saving his sister, making him effectively complicit in Ruthven's crimes. Ruthven is the flesh made manifest, and Aubrey's willed subordination to his will suggests both Aubrey's culpability in his own state and his entrapment in the triumph of the flesh. It is only when Aubrey's suffering infected flesh dies, that the vampiric curse's power over him is undone. His natural death sets him free. The 'flesh', the world and the devil, however, live on.

In Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Christabel* (1816), this broader concept of the flesh is narrowed to a more concrete conflation of vampiric damnation with sexual 'sin'. The sensual sapphic overtones of *Christabel* are clear. The vampiric Geraldine 'in her arms the maid she took'[193] and as William Ulmer notes, Christabel herself in her 'restless tossing…obliquely discloses banished desires the conscience will not own'.[194] The poem, through the inferred sexual sin, stages a narrative of moral infection. Coleridge avoids, however, confirmation of a simplistic vampiric 'external infection' or a 'fall from innocence'. As Ulmer notes, Coleridge's conception of original sin at the period of writing was complex. While still a Unitarian and rejecting the concept of total depravity, he recognises a form of 'Original sin in which we incur no guilt by being human; we inherit no postlapsarian moral debt we are obligated to discharge […but…] We remain grievously unfitted for fulfilment,

[192] Groom, *The Vampyre,* p110
[193] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Christabel' in *Christabel; Kubla Khan, a Vision; The Pains of Sleep* (London: John Murray, 1816), 3-55 (p. 18)
[194] William Ulmer, "Christabel" and the Origin of Evil,' *Studies in Philology,* 104.3 (Summer 2007), 376-407 p. 385

simply because of our human nature'.[195] Christabel and Geraldine are not, therefore, juxtaposed forms of 'good' and 'evil'. Christabel is 'innocent' but flawed while Geraldine acts in part as a manifestation of the sins of Christabel's flesh, that Christabel both accepts and welcomes into her home and into her bed: 'Christabel with might and main/Lifted her up, a weary weight,/Over the threshold of the gate.'[196] Geraldine has agency of her own and emerges as a 'predator',[197] but she is also as much a victim of the vampiric curse, the triumph of the flesh, as Christabel. This is suggested by her grief, her 'low voice and doleful look' as she lies next to Christabel. [198] As such, she adheres to the pattern of the vampiric other or mortal immortal whose damnation causes them to act both 'Faust' and 'Mephistopheles', both 'tempter' and 'fallen', erasing the clear distinction between 'innocence' and 'guilt'.

In John Stagg's 1810 poem 'The Vampyre' a similar emphasis is placed on a coded queer relationship as the root of the vampiric curse. In the poem, Herman explains that he is being haunted by 'Young Sigismund, my once dear friend' who 'sucks from my veins the streaming life'. [199] This queer-coding is emphasised by the solution to the vampiric problem:

> The corpse of Herman they contrive
> to the same sepulchre to take,
> And thro- both carcases they drive,
> Deep in the earth, a sharpen'd stake.[200]

This final penetration indicates the moral root of their vampiric curse. There is a suggestive overlap between theologies of the queer and the depiction of the vampire in the eighteenth century. As Dale Townshend notes, the concept of 'queerness' acts as a 'less anachronistic' concept for the eighteenth century as 'homoerotic activity in Britain at this time lacked a specific definition'.[201] There was a frequent conflation of different forms of 'transgressive' sexuality. The incredibly popular *Onania* (first extant print – 1724) offered a narrow

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[195] Ibid, p. 382
[196] Coleridge, 'Christabel', p. 11
[197] Ulmer, "Christabel", p. 387
[198] Coleridge, 'Christabel,' p. 18
[199] John Stagg, 'The Vampyre (1810), *Poets.org,* https://poets.org/poem/vampyre, [last accessed 29.06.2019]
[200] Ibid.,
[201] Dale Townshend, '"Love in a Convent": or, Gothic and the Perverse Father of Queer Enjoyment', in *Queering the Gothic*, ed. by William Hughes and Andrew Smith (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 11-36 (p. 23)

definition of acceptable sexual activity: the 'carnal commerce of the two Sexes, for the Continuance of the Species'.[202] Sexual activity without this narrowly defined spectrum was linked, as Roy Porter notes, to 'constitutional decline, physical weakness, and, of course, ultimately in some cases, even death'.[203] There is a suggestive mirroring here of the decline displayed by vampiric victims. *Onania* presents a list of physical symptoms including the loss of 'vital fluids' not only for those who engage in a narrowly defined onanism as self-pleasure but those who 'commit Abomination with those of our own sex'.[204] There is also, beyond the pseudo-scientific treatise on the physiological symptoms of non-reproductive sexual activity, a theological foundation which mirrors vampiric discourse.

For the anonymous writer of *Onania,* the body is God's temple (1 Corinthians 6:19) and 'whenever any give themselves over to Uncleanness, they cease to be the Temples of the Holy Spirit…because the spirit cannot dwell with pollution'.[205]Those engaged in queer sexual activity therefore are self-abandoning to the flesh. For the writer of *Onania,* the refusal to engage in reproductive sex reverses the 'natural order': unable to propagate 'naturally', the queer subjects is 'given up to Uncleanness' and 'dishonour their own bodies between themselves', spreading a moral and spiritual infection.[206] He argues that this pollution is 'not only against Nature, but [is] a sin that perverts and extinguishes nature'.[207] Queer sexual activity therefore, not only functions as a sin but recreates the sinner as radically other: the flesh incarnate, no longer fully human. Both *Christabel* and 'The Vampyre' replay this theology of the queer in the bodies of their vampiric protagonists. There is a narrative of infectious sin, a gradual physical decline, a conversion into the radically other and an inability to resist in a flesh abandoned by the spirit. While the modern iteration of the vampire frequently rejoices in sexual and gender fluidity, the Gothic of the early nineteenth century produced sexuality, and particularly queered sexuality, as a form of theologically condemned living death: literally dead men walking.

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[202] [Anon.}, *Onania: or, The Heinous Sin of Self-Pollution and All its Frightful Consequences (In Both Sexes),* 19th edn. (London: C. Corbett, 1759), p. 1
[203] Roy Porter, 'Love, Sex, and Madness in Eighteenth-Century England', *Social Research,* 53.2 (Summer 1986), 211-242 (p. 227)
[204] [Anon.], *Onania,* p. 7
[205] Ibid., p. 6
[206] Ibid., p. 6
[207] Ibid., p. 6

In these examples of vampiric literature, the narrative of infectious 'un-cleanness' becomes increasingly pivotal to the British Gothic conception of the vampire. Ruthven exerts a form of control over Aubrey, which acts as an infection of vampiric purpose, artificially facilitating the destruction of his sister. In Christabel and Stagg's 'The Vampyre', there is a form of sexualised transmission, not of bodily fluids but of queer-coded sexual desire. Although numerous 'secular' accounts of 'vampiric infection' and its connection to contagion narratives exist, it is also a theological concept. Christopher Herbert highlights the way in which vampiric transmission narratives echo Old Testament 'taboo' laws, which illustrate the possibility of physical contagion of 'moral un-cleanness'. This is not exclusively linked to 'blood' transmissions although the infectiously unclean nature of blood is mirrored in the biblical restrictions on contact with menstruating women.[208] This emphasis on blood as the medium of transmission, of course, becomes central to the vampiric myth but this connection is only gradually developing in the early British Gothic although it does clearly appear in Stagg's 'The Vampyre'.

Blood symbolism is connected both explicitly and implicitly in vampiric narratives to two vastly different forms of immortality. As many critics have noted, the vampire offers an inverse depiction of the Eucharistic act, in which communicants drink the blood of Christ (in the Catholic tradition) or drink the wine as a symbol of Christ's redeeming blood and sacrificial atonement (in numerous Protestant traditions). The meaning of vampiric blood-drinking is often understood through a Catholic frame.[209] However, as Christopher Herbert notes, this blood-drinking also echoes the 'sanguinary longings of Wesleyan piety'.[210] The often-sexualised religious rapacity of these Methodist images of blood-drinking[211] and the

[208] Christopher Herbert, 'Vampire Religion', *Representations,* 79.1, 100-21 (p103)
[209] See, for example, Groom, *The Vampyre,* pp. 78-9
[210] Ibid., p. 116
[211] Herbert quotes from a number of hymns from Methodist hymn books. He uses Hymn 112 from *Hymns on the Last Supper* as a particularly salient example of the increasingly sexualised imagery of this eucharistic blood-drinking.*

> We thirst to drink Thy precious blood,
> We languish in Thy wounds to rest,
> And hunger for immortal food
> And long on all Thy love to feast. **

The vocabulary of 'languishing' and 'love' intersects with that of 'blood' and 'thirst,' creating a form of sensualised cannibalistic imagery familiar from vampiric narratives.
* Herbert, 'Vampire Religion,' p. 116

timing of the rise of the specifically blood-drinking vampire in Stagg and Polidori to the increasing institutionalisation and growth of Methodism, intimate a connection between the vampire as religious other and Enthusiastic Dissent. This is particularly suggestive in the light of the vampiric as a victory of the flesh and the eighteenth-century suspicions of false teaching, antinomianism and immorality in Enthusiastic Dissenting groups, whose religious model tended towards the supremacy of passion or emotion rather than reason. In either case, the blood-drinking practices of the vampire are informed by a conception of this thirst as a sort of monstrous damning practice of (enthusiastically or superstitiously) infectious spiritual death.

If the Catholic Eucharist enacts the salvific 'consumption' and Protestant Communion figuratively re-enacts the saving acceptance of Christ's blood (symbol and seal of substitutionary atonement), the vampiric blood-exchange represents a perverse inversion of the ritual. Instead of substitution, there is infection. Instead of life being received through Christ's sacrifice, death is passed from one body to the next. In 'The Vampyre', Sigismund 'drinks away [the] vital blood'[212] of Herman, who anticipates that after death he will also be given over to blood thirst. He warns his wife, Gertrude, 'When dead, I too shall seek thy life,/ Thy blood by Herman shall be drain'd.' Not only is natural death being passed from vampire to victim but also 'spiritual death' – a permanent bond between corrupted flesh and spirit. Before death, Herman cries that 'No pow'r on earth my life can save, / 'Tis fate's unalterable will!'[213] Like St Leon, his self-delusion and complicity in his own 'infection by the flesh' is revealed by the actions of his wife. After Herman's death, Gertrude *chooses* to escape her 'fate' and 'thro' both carcases [Herman and Sigismund's] they drive, / Deep in the earth, a sharpen'd stake!'[214] In this obviously phallic imagery, she seals them in their 'sin'. The stasis of fleshly immortality, and the infectious victory of the flesh, is symbolically recreated as their bodies are pinned down and pinned together. The infectious death of the sexualised blood-drinking of the vampire is defeated as Gertrude refuses the role of the blasphemous divinity of her husband's sexualised blood-thirst

** John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns on the Last Supper,* 2nd edn (Bristol: Felix Farley, 1747), pp. 82-83

[212] Stagg, 'The Vampyre'
[213] Ibid.
[214] Ibid.

The vampiric figure proliferates across later Gothic texts, evolving and gaining a palimpsest of overwritten meanings as it does so. At this particular moment in the early nineteenth century, however, the theological resonance of the vampiric figure remains clear. Whether the avatar of a rapacious church, the victim of a condemning God, the eternal consequences of a submission to the flesh, a literalisation of a damning theology of the queer or a symbol of condemned religious otherness, the vampire is an infectious agent of spiritual death and embodied damnation. Like the other mortal immoral figures of the early British Gothic, the figure is a locus for the interposition of various theological touchpoints. The underlying theologies of all these depictions of 'damned immortality' allow these mortal immortal figures to be used as theological allegories illustrating the respective values of the soul and body, the dangers of the 'flesh' and the mechanics of damnation. They also frequently act as a locus of criticism for both heterodox and orthodox theologies. Whether framed as a vehicle of condemnation of a wrathful divinity or a rejection of predestinatory or necessitarian thinking, mortal immortals can encode a critique of the theological suppositions underlying them. If we ignore the underlying theological valence of these characters, we erase their complexity and the way in which they were deployed and understood by both authors and contemporary readers.

Conclusion

In finishing my thesis with an investigation of the vampire, I appear to be gesturing forward towards later manifestations of the Gothic. Its roots in the eighteenth century, the vampire became one of the Gothic's most familiar and iconic figures, from its most famous iteration in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) to the twentieth-century obsession with his filmic counterpart and the positive ubiquity of the vampire across a range of genres in the twenty-first century, from paranormal romance to urban fantasy to arthouse horror. However, my thesis has not aimed to look forward into the future of the Gothic or suggest that the observations made about the underlying theologies of the vampire in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are universalizable. Like its own literary and mythic forebears - among them immortal wanderers, apparitions and Cain - the early literary vampire becomes one of a number of intertexts informing later manifestations of the creature. The particularities of its theological status, however, are intimately linked to its historical and theological context. The damning queer theologies of John Stagg's 'The Vampyre' are absent from the modern iterations of gender-fluid, sexually ambiguous vampires popularised by Anne Rice. Theologies of fleshly corruption are over-written in depictions of the vampire as superhuman. Polidori's monstrous corrupter becomes the tragic anti-hero of a thousand modern and contemporary romances. Narratives of infectious iniquity are replaced by purposefully de-theologised medicalised paradigms of contagion in texts like Richard Matheson's *I am Legend* (1954). This is not to suggest a strictly linear development or a complete erasure of the theological underpinnings of the early British Gothic's vampire from later iterations. The position of the vampire as religious other is, for example, foregrounded in *Dracula* but it is reframed through a specifically anti-Semitic lens which recasts Catholicism as a source of religious power over the supernatural. The literary vampire cannot escape its past, but there is a historical, social, political and theological specificity to its appearance in any text. In this way, the vampire also functions as a metonym of the tropes, characters and concerns of the early British Gothic more broadly. My thesis has not aimed to provide a universalizable theological framework that may be extrapolated and then applied as a means of understanding the ghosts of the Gothic, its aesthetic strategies,

its creatures or its depictions of religious others. It is rooted in the necessity of engagement with contemporary theological discourses surrounding these subjects.

The theologically focused work of critics like Alison Milbank, Victor Sage, Joel Porte and, to a certain extent, Diane Long Hoeveler offer useful insights into specific texts and the recurrence of particular theological themes, such as the relation to the religious other, the intersection of theological duality with depictions of the doppelgänger, and the fear of a 'daemonic' Calvinist God. However, in producing a monolithic dominant Protestantism throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, these critics simplify contemporary debates and erase the historical specificity of the theological context in which individual texts were produced. In reality, as I have shown, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were rife with internecine debate around a range of theological issues from the theologies of tolerance and the possibility of miracles to the source of dreams and the nature of the connection between the deity and his creation. The proliferation of Dissenting groups and the lack of a single Anglican theology make a concept of a monolithic Protestant theology a superimposed oversimplification of the period. Moreover, in attempting to create a continued unified theological narrative (such as the prevalence of anti-Catholicism or a particular conception of natural theology), we impose a model either of theological conformity between the periods or of a developing theological trend which comes to fruition in the Victorian period. Doing so erases the cataclysmic changes which occurred in the early nineteenth century: the spread of Evangelical Anglicanism and religious revival; the comparative decline of 'rational Dissent'; the rise of spiritualism (which offered completely different paradigms for understanding the relationship of the dead and the living); and diverse church movements, such as the pro-Catholic Oxford Tractarians. To a certain extent, my argument is itself necessarily guilty of partaking in a reductive conception of dominant theological frameworks. In attempting to map general trends and underline prevailing discourses, there is an inevitable erasure of the specificity of each author's and each text's particular theology or, more accurately, the specific historically-located theological discourses which they both deliberately engage with and passively reflect. However, in rooting my investigation of the theology of the Gothic in a historicised investigation of contemporary theological concerns, debates and beliefs, it is possible to identify many of

the strands which compose the complex interwoven tapestry of theological thought underlying the Gothic texts of the period.

The specific theologies that I have explored in this thesis cannot be unproblematically applied outside this period. The toleration debates that form the basis for my investigation of the Gothic's depiction of the Catholic, for example, lose their relevance as a framing discourse after the Catholic Emancipation of 1829. The terms of the ghost debates of the eighteenth century that I use to explore depictions of both the explained supernatural and the Gothic ghost, moreover, are fundamentally changed by the rise of spiritualism and the prevalence of Evangelicalism in the nineteenth century. In turn, the theo-aesthetic discourse of the sublime outlined in my case study of Ann Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) was profoundly changed by the productions of theorists such as Immanuel Kant,[1] John Ruskin and Rudolf Otto. The various understandings of the dream that are echoed in the Gothic novels of the early nineteenth century, for their part, were irrevocably changed by the rise of psychology and its exploration of the Freudian unconscious, which called for new theological paradigms of interpretation in response. In exploring the theology of the Gothic more broadly, we cannot erase the impact or significance of these theological foundations on later manifestations of the Gothic, which reimagine, redeploy and recode the tropes, characters, aesthetics and foci inherited from the early British tradition. However, there is no single theology of the sublime, of toleration, of the ghostly, of dreams, of the conscience, of providence, of immortality or of judgement that is inherent to the Gothic. As I have shown, the Gothic engages with existing debate, not with a universally accepted theological position. In exploring these subjects, we must not try to find a universal theological reality reflected in Gothic texts. Rather, the critic should approach the theology of the Gothic as historically specific, reading Gothic texts as reflecting not what *is* but what was believed to be and recognising the specificity of the contemporary theological debates with which the Gothic deliberately engaged.

What this thesis has offered are various paradigms of interpretation: attention to current debates; the impact of different denominational stances; the uneasy co-existence of multiple different frameworks of interpretation in keeping with Charles Taylor's concept of

[1] His *Critique of Pure Reason,* the text primarily relevant in a discussion of his contribution to the discussion of the sublime, was not translated into English until 1838.

secularisation as 'an unheard of pluralism of outlooks, religious and non- and anti-religious';[2] and, most fundamentally, the importance of the theological to our investigations of the Gothic. In privileging a model of secularisation that focuses on the spread of a rationalism considered largely antithetical to religious belief, the majority of Gothic criticism erases not only the specificity of theological debate but its importance from a consideration of the early British Gothic.[3] Christianity, in a variety of forms, continued in this period, however, to be a 'lived religion'[4] with enormous influence on all aspects of life, thought and belief. Christianity was an integral part of the contemporary imaginary in ways often inaccessible to the modern inhabitant of a largely secular (in the Taylorian sense) world. Even the work of sceptics such as William Godwin cannot be read without reference to the contemporary theological discourses against which they define their thinking. As I have investigated, mapping out the theological positions passively reflected in the texts, the debates deliberately engaged in and the theologies explicitly attacked allows us to uncover ideological depths in Gothic texts rather than accepting a facile conception of the Gothic as either a secularising genre or a reactionary reaffirmation of the spiritual.

The Gothic's depiction of differing Christian denominations, particularly the Catholic, has often been viewed through a framework which concentrates on a politicised understanding of a monolithic Protestant relationship to the Catholic. However, in prioritising the importance of engagement with the theological as a distinct aspect of these portrayals allows for a differentiation between theological critique and theological intolerance and their relation to political critique and political toleration of other religious creeds. It is these toleration debates, and specifically their intimate connection with changing theologies of tolerance, toleration and comprehension, which offer the most useful framework through which to analyse depictions of the Catholic. Moving beyond a stark and restrictive anti-Catholic/pro-Catholic binary, they allow the critic to engage meaningfully with the seemingly contrary impulses in depictions of horrific Catholic

[2] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 437

[3] This conception of secularisation is widely found throughout Gothic criticism. Some notable proponents include Fred Botting, David Punter, Diane Long Hoeveler (although she engages with Taylor's concept of the secular, as I have demonstrated, she constantly reverts back to an anti-religious model), Carol Margaret Davison, Maggie Kilgour, Jacqueline Howard, Robert Geary and E. J. Clery.

[4] Jane Shaw, *Miracles in Enlightenment England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 9

institutions placed alongside positive Catholic figures. A broadly pro-toleration stance is conversely mirrored in many Gothic texts of the period through the diabolic depiction of oppressive Catholic agencies contrasted with the positive or mixed depiction of Catholic characters. Theological tolerance is placed alongside a theo-political critique of oppressive religion and confessional states, thereby intervening in the debate about contemporary political toleration and reflecting changing concepts of theological toleration versus comprehension.

The aesthetics of the Gothic, and particularly the deployment of the sublime, reflect protean discourses around Natural Religion and natural theology that spanned the eighteenth century. As Natasha Duquette notes, writers not only reflected the theo-aesthetic discourses which informed the contemporary understanding of the sublime, but are frequently engaged in a form of veiled hermeneutics: encoding complex theological perspectives in their aesthetic strategies. [5] It is only by recognising the theological content of these aesthetics that we can begin to decode their use. The centrality to Ann Radcliffe's work of an underlying theology of Divine multiplicity, emotionally engaged harmonious religion, a non-gendered Christian ideal and a conception of the natural world as Divine self-revelation are found encoded in her use of theo-aesthetic strategies. An understanding of the theological framework of aesthetic debate in the period similarly allows for a closer engagement with the theologies of the demonic as reflected in the differently aestheticized devils of the English and Scottish Presbyterian Gothic. Charlotte Dacre and Matthew Lewis's use of demonic sublimity reflects an extremely ambivalent position between rejection and belief, which expresses profound unease with the 'daemonic' God of wrath and a determined universe. In contrast, the Presbyterian Gothic's demonic doubles reflect a theology of the demonic both theologically understood and aesthetically coded as an outward manifestation of an inherent inward duality of flesh and spirit based on an assumption of total depravity.

This distinction between body and soul and flesh and spirit, I have shown, is central to contemporary understandings of the supernatural, whether that be in the form of dreams, ghosts, apparitions or the Gothic's 'spectacular' immortals. Theologies of the

[5] Natasha Duquette, *Veiled Intent: Dissenting Women's Aesthetic Approach to Biblical Hermeneutics* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2016), p. 1

relation of the body and soul and flesh and spirit underlie the theological valence of the dream in the Gothic and the interpretation of its meaning and source. The purposeful, prophetic dreams of Clara Reeve and Ann Radcliffe rest upon an assumption of this distinction. The ghost debates that raged throughout the period were predicated on theological renderings of the immateriality and immortality of the soul. The Gothic's tormented immortal wanderers are (or at least believe themselves to be) walking exemplars of the immortal consequences of the victory of the flesh which rests upon a theological assumption of the relation of body to flesh and soul to spirit.

Concepts of providence, the possibility of the miraculous, predetermination, theodicy, God's omniscience or omnipotence, original sin, total depravity and Christian eschatology appear as touchstones constantly throughout the Gothic. There is though no single attitude but rather an active engagement in contemporary debate. There is an obsessive recurrence to different concepts of the reality and function of providence through the morals of Gothic texts; the theo-aesthetic discourses of a world reflecting its providential creator; ghosts as agents of providence; dreams as secondary causes in a providential ordering of the protagonists' lives; and the punishing providence of tales of unresisted and irresistible demonic temptation. They are intricately interwoven with different attitudes towards the relation between salvation and free will through different understandings of the relation between providence and divine foreknowledge and predeterminism. We find critiques of a monstrous Divinity and his arbitrary election in texts such as *The Monk* (1796) or *Castle of Otranto* (1764)*;* a broad acceptance of a Calvinist rendering of double election in Radcliffe's fictions; an almost Arminian emphasis on free will and the possibility of salvation in narratives as diverse as James Hogg's *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) and William Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819). There is no single conception of the providential or its ramifications for divine determinism, nor on the relation of the providential and the miraculous. Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron* (1788) manifests a providential motif inextricably connected to both 'secondary causes' (the dreams) and miraculous events (the magically opening doors). Eliza Parsons' *The Castle of Wolfenbach* (1793) is engaged with an avowal of providence which condemns the possibility of the miraculous. John Stagg's 'The Vampyre' (1807) foregrounds the miraculous of the vampiric resurrection outside a providential narrative by denying a predetermined inability

to escape, breaking the prophetic curse and emphasising the freedom of will of Gertrude to escape her husband's immoral infection. As I have argued throughout this study, the Gothic reflects and engages in a wealth of theological debates and represents in regard to them no single viewpoint. Even the motif of the supernatural explained cannot be understood monolithically as a rejection of the supernatural on either sceptical or theological grounds. Condemnations of religious manipulation (*The Necromancer,* 1794); an emphasis on the possibility of the supernatural (*Mysteries of Udolpho,* 1794); a foregrounding of the problems of interpretation of the miraculous (*Gaston de Blondeville,* 1826); a defence of providence at the expense of the miraculous (*Castle of Wolfenbach*) are all different yet still essentially theological positions taken in response to the possibility of the ghostly.

Beyond the broad strokes of predominant concerns within the Gothic, individual texts, as I have shown, engage closely with particular theologies. The sheer number of theological concerns and debates reflected in the Gothic and discussed in contemporary theology are rarely acknowledged. However, as Jane Shaw notes, the 'lived religion'[6] of Christianity formed a framework through which everything was interpreted from an understanding of sexuality to how mountains were made. Vampires reflect theological understandings of the queer; the depiction of mountainous sublimity engages in the 'Lord's Controversy' about the effect of the original sin on the earth itself; ghostly apparitions are used to reflect on the survival of individual identity after death; prophetic dreams engage in the existing debate about the possibility of direct divine communication. Contemporary theological discourse informs almost every aspect of the Gothic text from the understanding of sleep and the depiction of hymn-singing to the grand narratives of immortality and depictions of the Catholic. It is vital to engage with the theologies which inflect these depictions, move beyond a monolithic conception of the theological landscape of the period and explore the ways in which Gothic novels not only reflect contemporary discourse but actively engage in it. Even in exploring those texts that display a notable sceptical tendency, such as the work of William Godwin and Horace Walpole, we must, I contend, engage with the theological discourses they oppose to understand the full complexity of their projects.

[6] Shaw, *Miracles in Enlightenment England*, p. 9

This project can most usefully be expanded laterally rather than seeking to stretch into a future whose theo-historical circumstances are radically different. The inevitable constraints of this project have led to a concentration on definitional aspects of the early British Gothic. In focusing on the depiction of the Catholic, theo-aesthetics of the sublime and theologies of the supernatural, I have engaged with some of the most obviously theologically valent aspects of the Gothic. However, my choice of subjects was determined predominantly by the centrality of these tropes, aesthetics and concerns to critical discourse around the early British Gothic. There nonetheless remains a rich field for future investigation, both in the light of the theological discourses I have already investigated and through an extension of research into other manifestations of religiosity found in the Gothic. Prayer, confession, repentance, sacraments, concepts of virtue, theologically inflected 'morals', depictions of worship, theological renderings of gendered identities, the representation of the practice and effect of specific sins, the depiction of sermons or private theological discourses on various topics proliferate within the Gothic. Mapping the way these depictions not only engage with specific theologies relevant to themselves but with the wider discourses outlined in this thesis presents a multitude of opportunities for exploring the complexities of the texts and their underlying theological or ideological structures. It also presents the opportunity to investigate further the ways in which Gothic texts were engaged in active and creative theological work. The Gothic was never simply a spectacular popular genre engaged in a simplistic project of either revivifying a belief in the supernatural or secularising the numinous. Rather, it is a dynamic and vital literary form which engaged in complex ways with the theological debates at the forefront of the contemporary mind, and it is only in investigating the Gothic's theo-historical context that we can begin to unearth and investigate the rich theological and ideological potential of the Gothic mode.

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