The emotional history of the gothic novel, 1790–1810

Tracey Davina Jones

Doctor of Philosophy

March 2025

Keele University

Abstract

This thesis examines the role of emotions in a selection of Romantic-period gothic novels: Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*, Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian*, Charlotte Smith's *The Old Manor House*, Regina Maria Roche's *Children of the Abbey*, and Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya.* I use seventeenth- and eighteenth-century debates around passions, appetites and affections to explain how emotional responses were understood by philosophers including Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, and Adam Smith, and in turn were depicted by authors. Novelists' representations of individual states of feeling interact with social and institutional vocabulary and feed into debates around value, response and regulation of emotions within a changing society. The thesis employs Barbara Rosenwein's *Emotional Communities* (2006), which emphasises how social groups share, promote and value specific emotions, and how within society there are divergent, overlapping or competing emotional communities, creating personal tension when the values of one community appear to conflict with another. The thesis works with William Reddy's *The Navigation of Feeling* (2001), which demonstrates that emotions are not innate but learned, exploring how "emotional regimes" work to shape individual emotions to create a sense of emotional coercion and suffering where their goal differences prevail. By relating novels to their sociocultural as well as intellectual contexts, this thesis contends that the gothic novel from 1790-1810 depicts characters in ways that highlight conflicts between the values and emotional priorities of the middle classes, with their emphasis on virtue and individual merit, and a backwards-looking aristocracy with hereditary conservative values. It explores sites of emotional oppression as well as ones of emotional refuge, showing that institutions associated with religious and political repression such as the abbey and convent, serve both functions and that the domestic family, due to prevailing inheritance laws and customs, can form an equally repressive regime, stifling independence and individualism.

Table of Contents

Chapter One

Introduction

This thesis sets out to examine the role of emotions in early gothic novels from 1790-1810. When looking at emotions historically as rendered in artworks, there are two approaches: bridging the past and the present through a shared, universalist understanding of emotions, or putting emotions into the context in which they were represented. It is the latter approach that I intend to adopt by using the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century debates around passions, appetites and affections in order to understand how emotional responses were interpreted by philosophers and, in turn, depicted in a relatively new genre – the gothic novel – which paid especial attention to heightened states of feeling. Kate Barclay terms this "the forensic historicist contextualist approach" and it is commonly used for interpreting fiction as it recognises how imaginative depictions of emotions interact with the social and institutional vocabulary of the time.[1] By applying the theories associated with the history of emotions to a limited range of authors from this historical period, I show how these authors engaged with and responded to the debates of the time regarding how to value, respond to and regulate emotions within a changing society, and how individual emotional experience might be shaped by the larger influence of what Barbara Rosenwein terms "emotional communities".[2]

This thesis, then, approaches a representative selection of Romantic-period gothic novels through the history of emotions, applying to Lewis, Radcliffe, Smith, Roche, and Dacre concepts that have not been adduced in previous scholarship. William Reddy in *The Navigation of Feeling* (2001) demonstrates that emotions are not innate but learned and

[1] Kate Barclay, *Sources for the History of Emotions: A Guide* (London: Routledge, 2020), pp.115, 119.
[2] Barbara Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling: A History of Emotions, 600-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

explores how “emotional regimes” work to shape the emotions that individuals feel, in ways that can create a sense of emotional coercion and suffering in cases where the goals of the individual conflict with those of the wider social group. Meanwhile, Barbara Rosenwein’s *Emotional Communities* (2006) emphasises how social groups share and promote specific emotional values, but also how within any given society there are always divergent, overlapping or competing emotional communities, which may create tension within an individual if the values of one community to which they belong appear to conflict with those of another. Working in these frameworks, and relating novels to their sociocultural as well as intellectual contexts, this thesis contends that the gothic novel at the turn of the nineteenth century frequently depicts individual characters in ways that highlight conflicts between the values and emotional priorities of the rising middle classes, with their emphasis on personal virtue and individual merit, and a backwards-looking aristocracy with its roots in hereditary conservative values. Often seen in partnership with the ruling regime, and coded as retrograde, the convent and the abbey featured in gothic novels show how these spaces can be sources of emotional refuge, implementing Francis Hutcheson’s concept of benevolence, or regimes of conflict and terror, prone to legalism, enforced restraint and hypocrisy. However, the domestic family structure can form an equally oppressive regime, in which inheritance laws and customs impose restrictions on junior family members, stifling independence and individualism. The thesis contends that the social values of these gothic novels draw on eighteenth-century debates about the moral sense, typified by the writings of Hutcheson.

There are existing studies of the Romantic-period gothic novel that explore the treatment of emotion, but these have tended to concentrate on individual emotions such as fear, as in David Punter’s *The Literature of Terror*, which explores this emotion in the more prominent novels of the period such as Matthew Lewis’s *The Monk* (1796) and Ann Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). By contrast, I am interested in exploring how

gothic novels of the Romantic period represent a wider range of emotional experiences and in examining the complex interplay between different emotions, such as fear, grief, desire and moral guilt. Rather than isolating a single affective response, my study investigates how these novels depict emotional states as dynamic and influenced by social and cultural forces. I aim to consider how the gothic engages with contemporary discourses on the management and regulating of emotions, particularly in relation to evolving ideas of sensibility, self-control and moral discipline. In doing so, my work seeks to expand our understanding of the gothic as a space for negotiating complex emotional landscapes and for exploring how emotions can both destabilise and reinforce social order. Therefore, I read the gothic as a literary form that builds on the techniques of earlier sentimental novels, relying on the reader's imagination to elicit a sympathetic response to the depiction of the characters' inner feelings. However, I also argue that gothic literature differs from these by setting the action in a more extreme environment, often including hauntings, family secrets, intrigue and mystery, which allows authors to explore a darker range of emotions such as fear, madness and obsession.

Meanwhile, feminist critics such as Diane Long Hoeveler have broadened research by pointing to the suffering of women in these novels, highlighting works by lesser-known women writers such as Charlotte Dacre. During this period, changes in the social structure, including the shifting dynamics of family, marriage and work, created a new uncertainty regarding women's roles and identities, while older systems, such as primogeniture and patriarchy, continued to restrict women's freedoms. My work aims to continue these explorations of the gothic's treatment of the relationship between emotion and gender, by attending to moments which focus on the emotional responses depicted in situations which reflect on both male and female conduct. My analysis demonstrates that the gothic both presents and challenges the ideals of femininity advocated in contemporary conduct books, exploring the conflicts between women's personal desires and societal expectations and

revealing the tension between individual emotional expression and the collective emotional norms enforced by the prevailing moral and cultural standards. However, I also develop beyond the work of earlier critics to include a greater focus on the ways in which these novels also explore masculine gender expectations and the social expectations of and constraints upon male expression of emotion, emphasising the broader implications of gendered emotional regulation.

Because this project is concerned with emotions represented in fiction, it also attends to the contemporaneous reader responses to its case studies. As the evidence that historians of reading work with is patchy, these responses are largely confined to professional reviews. I have read these reviews against the grain, seeing their often-censorious treatment of the moral and gender values and corruptive influences of the fiction as evidence of how the literature contributes to shifts in understanding of feeling in the wake of sociocultural change. In *From Passions to Emotions*, Thomas Dixon argues that the word "emotion" only came to be used in its modern sense later in the nineteenth century and that before then theorists more commonly referred to "passions", "affections", or "sentiments". Moreover, he points out that alongside this change in terminology came changes in ways of thinking about emotions: earlier writers tended to relate emotions to the soul and discuss passions and affections in largely religious and theological terms, whereas later thinkers came to adopt a more secular, psychological approach.[3] Whatever the terminology used, however, Dixon points out that the concepts of affections and sentiments have historically been used as a method of understanding the gap between thinking and feeling.[4] These emotions are also linked to moral values shaped by a culture within the changing structure of society. By eschewing realism, gothic authors could

[3] Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions* pp.4-5.
[4] Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, p.13.

highlight and critique the changing nature of society by exposing fears and prompting anger at injustice. These feelings apply to the ordinary reader and can be seen in the critics comments.

The Historic and Philosophical Context

A central contention of this thesis is that gothic novels, though often understood in their era as populist or sensationalist trash, drew on a shared but unstable semantics of emotions that were being worked out in a tumultuous social context at the latter end of the eighteenth century, at the tale end of debates in philosophies of mind, the body, and ethics. Eighteenth-century philosophers interpreted differences between the body and the mind as physical sensations, reflections and comparisons based on experience. This section presents the history of ideas that form the intellectual contexts for the novels discussed in later chapters.

The traditional Christian viewpoint put forward by thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas and St Augustine had argued that appetites, passions and affections were unruly and needed to be controlled by the will and informed by reason. This view was still supported in the mid-seventeenth century by Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan*, who argued the will was merely a stronger appetite which preceded an action and suggested a lack of control over the emotions. Augustine went on to link passion to suffering and the Fall of Man, and as a result of original sin, he insisted, Christians needed to gain control over these movements of the soul and direct them towards God.[5] They argued that the soul had higher functions, known as “affections”, and lower ones, as “appetites” and “passions”. Appetites of the soul are hunger, thirst and sexual desire, and the lower passions are disturbances of the body which include love, hope, hate, fear and anger, in contrast to the higher affections of more refined love, sympathy and joy, which are attributed to the divine. The Anglican theologian Joseph Butler, who wrote in

[5] Barclay, *Sources for the History of Emotions*, p.42.

the early eighteenth century, wanted to replace the concept of strength of appetite with a more reflective element of conscience, moral sense or divine reason. He felt rational self-interest was more in harmony with virtue and the public interest.[6] If passions and affections were viewed as mechanistic, and perception as a mere function of the mind, then the will becomes less important as there is no control.[7] This raises the question of whether the act of will is conscious or unconscious, voluntary or involuntary, and a question of culpability.[8] The will becomes central to the idea of control and raises the question of whether a person is accountable for their actions and can be held morally responsible for the consequences. If passions were movements of the will and the soul, intending to do good or evil when applied to an act then it determines whether it will be seen as good or evil. The intention of the will then becomes virtuous or vicious.[9] The concept of control is taken up by the gothic novel which portrays the vicious as abandoning all restraint.

Departing from the traditional Christian view Hume in *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40) argued the basis of morality could not depend on someone's will, not even that of an omniscient deity. If there are no objective moral facts, then it is our own sentiments that we project onto the world. Virtue and vice are not qualities derived from a person or action, and there is no virtue or vice inherent in an object. This makes virtue or vice dependent on cultural norms, which aligns with Rosenwein's ideas of emotional communities. For Hume virtue and vice are secondary qualities of the mind, mirroring our own feelings of approval or disapproval. It is our own feelings that form this moral distinction. The quality of a virtuous or vicious person derives from our projection of internal impression onto the object.[10] Where

[6] Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, p.85.
[7] Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, p.22.
[8] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), ed. Pauline Phemister (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.142.
[9] Barclay, *Sources for the History of Emotions*, p.43.
[10] Elizabeth Radcliffe, 'Francis Hutcheson', *Blackwell Companion to Philosophy: A Companion to Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Steven Nadler, (Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2002), p.488.

approval or disapproval results from external circumstances Hume termed these virtues artificial, as they depended on justice and observance of laws and agreements. The Natural virtues he considered innate include friendship, faithfulness, generosity, courage, mercy, fairness, patience, good humour, perseverance, prudence and kindness. Among the social virtues which benefitted mankind, he included good nature, cleanliness and decorum. These he compared to the monkish values of celibacy, fasting, penance, mortification, self-denial, humility, silence and solitude which he claimed stupefied the understanding, hardened the heart, obscured the fancy and soured the temper.[11] This negative view of monastic life, common to anti-Catholicism in mid-eighteenth century Britain, is reflected in the gothic novel, especially *The Monk*, with convents and abbeys often being places of imprisonment rather than refuge. The pejorative assessment of what was seen as foreign restrictive regimes did not, however, mean the gothic endorsed an unrestrained liberal attitude. The eighteenth century favoured a sense of personal responsibility and control, subjecting the will to reason. For eighteenth-century novels to convey a moral to their readers the passions and affections portrayed must be within a person's control and subject to reason. Victoria, the protagonist in *Zofloya* (1806), blames her parents' lack of discipline and her mother's bad example for her wayward behaviour. Yet when she wants to rid herself of her husband, she makes the informed and reasoned decision to poison him. In contrast, Ellena in *The Italian* (1797) reviews her own behaviour towards the abbess, after she has been cruelly treated, and believes she has acted fairly and firmly when asserting her rights. Both women had a choice in how they responded and both made different decisions; the reader's reaction to them would reflect this.

Along with Hutcheson, David Hume did not believe morality was the product of reason, but of sentiment or feelings. Our beliefs about the world, ourselves and morality

[11] A C Grayling, *The History of Philosophy* (London, Penguin Random House, 2019), p.249.

depend on how human nature is constituted.[12] That constitution comprises not only the personality we are born with, which determines how we react to situations we experience but also the society and culture in which we live and the people who influence our lives. This feeds into the debate over innate characteristics and those shaped by society. John Locke in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689) argues that there was no innate idea of right and wrong based on conscience or faith. He points to the fact that when Europeans travelled abroad they encountered different customs and moral values suggesting there are no universal standards.[13] "[N]o practical rule which is anywhere universally, and with public approbation or allowance, transgressed, can be supposed innate," he argued.[14] In most cultures, murder is considered morally wrong, but if it is an enemy on the battlefield, it becomes a necessary consequence of war. Orlando in Smith's *The Old Manor House* (1793) fights against the colonists in the American Revolutionary War but he feels it is wrong. Smith is suggesting the colonists are fighting oppression rather than rebelling against authority, and the conflict between the protagonist's values and those of the community produces emotional tension. Equally, Edmund Burke opposed the French Revolution because the revolutionists had rebelled against legitimate authority. Both views were held in the eighteenth century but come from different perspectives based on disputants' own beliefs, values and experiences. Locke states: "If we will attentively consider new-born children, we shall have little reason to think that they bring many ideas into the world with them."[15] As children, between birth and being able to vocalize and explain our understanding of the world, we do not have opinions on external objects or sensations. We are merely collecting information about the world around us, through our senses, finding out what is safe and what is harmful. After gathering

[12] Grayling, *The History of Philosophy*, pp.242-43.
[13] Edwin McCann, 'John Locke', *Blackwell Companion to Philosophy: A Companion to Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Steven Nadler, (Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2002), p.357.
[14] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), ed. Pauline Phemister (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.35.
[15] Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, p.42.

information from our senses, our mind processes the sensations to form understanding: "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 understanding with all the materials of thinking."[16] In Lockean epistemology, simple ideas are received by the mind through sensation and reflection and can be interpreted in different ways. A colour-blind person will not see red and green the same way as someone who is not. The sun is our source of light, but how that light came into being, becomes a question of science and theology. The ability to form alternative explanations is the reason why knowledge and morality are not innate. This debate is particularly relevant to *Zofloya*, in which the protagonist blames her parents for not curbing her bad behaviour; this follows Locke's argument which states malfeasance is learned and not based on some inner temperament.

Motivating, or inciting ideas, convey themselves into our mind by sensation and reflection; according to Locke, these are the result of pleasure, pain, power, existence and unity. Locke argues that there is no thought or sensation which is not able to produce pleasure or pain. These two concepts when added to individual sensation and reflection help us to determine what is good or bad for us. This assessment of good and bad can equally be applied to characters in a novel. Good and evil are only associated with "a desire of happiness and an aversion to misery," demonstrating the close relationship between ethical values and emotional reactions in the period.[17] Just as hope is a pleasure in the mind, fear is an uneasiness based on thoughts of future evil, with anger based on an uneasiness stemming from an injury, resulting in revenge. As Locke maintains, these sensations begin in the mind and can be stimulated by the written word, as we recognise situations that make us feel

[16] Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* p.54.
[17] Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* p.31.

uneasy, thus provoking a feeling of fear. The gothic, by introducing heightened states of suspense, induces a fear of future evil in the reader as we wait to see what will happen to the character. The gothic authors discussed in this project were chosen to highlight the different ways that passions cause both internal and external changes in the body to attribute gestures and non-verbal characteristics to reinforce feelings: aspects not always considered in other studies. An example of an emotion that is caused by an external action, but manifests as an uneasiness of the mind, is shame, whereby we believe something indecent has been done that will be valued with less esteem by others and does not necessarily cause a physical reaction such as blushing. Pleasure and pain are not the only driving forces behind emotional reactions, according to Locke, but they can also be the result of cultural norms bringing shame when we transgress society's standards.

In common with Locke, Hume saw passions as impressions or sensations relating to pleasure or pain, but whereas other thinkers separated negative passions from positive affections Hume saw passions as the motivation for human beings to act. In *A Treatise of Human Nature*, he stated "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions and can never pretend to be any other office than to serve and obey them."[18] Passions are a part of the natural world, but human beings still regulate them and if this is not done by reason or will, then self-regulation must come from somewhere else. To demonstrate the function of passions in different situations Hume divides them into two types, calm and violent. Calm passions caused no disorder of the soul and were judged on their results or outcomes, often being mistaken for reason. Among these calm passions were sentiments of beauty and morality, benevolence, love of life and kindness to children. To be motivated by a calm passion is to want to do something good. Violent passions include love, hatred, grief, joy, pride and

[18] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40), ed. Earnest Mossner (London: Penguin Classics, 1985), p.462.

humility. Angela Coventry refers to competing passions in Hume's philosophy whereby one may be dominated by another.[19] This fed into the influential aesthetic theories of Burke, who argued that whatever excited the idea of terror, danger or pain is also a source of the sublime. Delight arises not from immediate preservation from physical danger but from imitation which allows the reader to experience delight vicariously.[20] We can experience consecutive passions of fear and then joy as the heroine is rescued from the villain. These are two different events that cause us to go from one emotion to the next in quick succession.[21] The gothic novel, which was the heir to the debates about passions across the eighteenth century, displays conflicting emotions in the characters, promoting ambivalent emotions in the readers, and suggesting that emotions are not all black and white.

Hutcheson in his *Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections* (1728) addressed the issue of right and wrong by contending that the world's approval and disapproval were not pertinent to morality. He claimed that reason was the power for finding true judgment and reasonableness: "Our reason does often correct the report of our senses, about the natural tendency of the external action and correct rash conclusions about the affections of the agent."[22] An action can have many truths, but not all actions are virtuous and therefore reasonableness and virtue are not the same. Yet we develop ethical standards through the moral sense, and then we conform to those standards. Any distortions of moral or aesthetic perceptions are the result of unrealistic associations due to education and conditioning. All justifications are made using moral sense, but what Hutcheson refers to as the exciting reason or motivation, is driven by affection. Exciting reasons can be explained by

[19] Angela Coventry, 'Mixed Emotions in Life and Art: On Hume's Direct Passions', *Think: Philosophy for Everyone*, 19:55 (2020).75-83 (pp.77-79).
[20] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful*, (1757) ed. David Wormersley (London: Penguin Books, 1998) pp.86, 93.
[21] Coventry, 'Mixed Emotions in Life and Art', pp.77-79.
[22] Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature*, p.178.

reference to some goal or desired end, for example, the standards of the "proper lady" discussed by Mary Poovey.[23] Opposing these higher affections are the passions which he states can disrupt reasoning and behaviour resulting in non-rational actions. Anger in some tempers, such as ambition, avarice, the desire for sensual pleasure and even natural affection, can possess the mind and make it unable to attend to anything else.[24] To live our best life we must control some of our intense passions through reflection and mental discipline. In *The Italian* when the Marchesa discovers her son wants to marry Ellena she contemplates having her killed. Ambition, avarice and social position cloud her thinking to the point where her reasoning is unbalanced. Passion can oppose benevolence where revenge is sought and can overcome the desire to do good. We can control our passions by making calm desires habitual (today we would refer to this as exercising reason), and where two desires are equal, then the strength of the ties to the person is considered. Schedoni intends to kill Ellena as agreed with the Marchesa, but when he believes she is his daughter, his familial ties become stronger than breaking his promise, preventing his action.

To clarify his idea of morality and virtue and vice, Hutcheson used the concept of the moral sense, "by which we perceive Virtue, or Vice in ourselves, or others."[25] For Hutcheson, the foundation of the moral sense is natural benevolence: "That state, those dispositions and actions natural to which we are inclined by some part of our constitution antecedently to any volition of our own; or which flow from some principle in our nature, nor brought upon by our own art, or that of others; then it may appear from what was said above, that a state of goodwill, humanity, compassion, mutual aid, propagating and supporting offspring, love of a community or country, devotion or love and gratitude to some governing mind is our natural

[23] Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelly and Jane Austen,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).
[24] Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature,* p.47.
[25] Hutcheson, *An essay on the Nature,* p.17.

state."[26] The idea of morality being natural or innate went against previous thinkers such as Hobbes who said that inherent depravity in human nature meant people acted on self-interest unless there was societal restraint. Hutcheson disagreed, arguing that nothing can make us acquire the desire for another's happiness, as it cannot be brought about by an act of will. In *Zofloya*, Dacre engaged readers in the argument of whether Victoria is naturally selfish or has learned this behaviour through socialisation in a particular milieu. Therefore, Victoria, following Hutcheson, learns she cannot obtain Henriquez's affection through an act of will. In addition, an action that harms someone else cannot be approved. Desire is therefore the driving force in obtaining agreeable sensations and avoiding discomfiting ones. Hutcheson states that desire and aversion are the only true forms of affection. For Hutcheson, affections such as gratitude, compassion, sympathy, natural affection, friendship and the desire for universal good, are approved of by the moral sense as virtuous. A hero or heroine who displays sympathy or compassion for a fellow character is therefore seen as virtuous. The moral sense is not the product of socialisation, education or custom, as practice only promotes reasoning skills, as opposed to perceptions.[27] This distinguishes Hutcheson from Locke who suggests we learn by experience and Hobbes who believes only in self-interest. The gothic novels, including Dacre's, appear to revisit these debates, playing them out rather than necessarily resolving them, as with *Zofloya*, by applying them to particularised individuals in extreme situations.

Hume's idea of sympathy, unlike Hutcheson's (and later Adam Smith's), does not involve the individual putting themselves in the place of someone else; it involves making their passion the reader's own, operating in the same way as if it had come from their own

[26] Hutcheson, *An essay on the Nature,* p.130.
[27] Radcliffe, 'Francis Hutcheson,' *Blackwell Companion,* p.464.

temperament.[28] It is a direct, vicarious experience based on visualisation and the more vivid the experience, the deeper the impression. This idea feeds into Hume's theory of association, explained in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), which used the association of ideas as a way of explaining experience, belief, causation, the self, and the limits of reason. Hume's copy principle posits that the memory as we imagine it "may mimic or copy perceptions of the senses, but they never can entirely reach the force and vivacity of the original sentiment."[29] Ideas and impressions can be both simple and complex. Simple ideas are direct copies of simple impressions and complex ideas can be reinforced by the power of the imagination, simple impressions, and other ideas. For Hume, impressions are stand-alone, but ideas form associations based on resemblance, time and place, and cause and effect. As human beings, we resemble one another and so feel pain or sympathy for other people's distress. Literature can make us feel grief and terror through exciting sympathy, as we compare ourselves to someone else, either in real life or in literature; of course, later eighteenth-century literature was replete with depictions of sympathy and attempts to elicit readers' sympathies for fictional characters. Hume describes strong and weak sympathy: where something is painted in vivid colours, we feel strong sympathy as the image is more vivid and adds to our concern.[30] If the other person's passion is weak and our response is limited we do not feel a great deal of sympathy as we only look at an isolated incident and not the bigger picture, and then their present misery does not have a strong influence on us, and the uneasiness we feel produces hatred and contempt.[31] For Hume, benevolence is a spontaneous original concern for another human being. It is an appetite that attends upon love, a desire for a person's happiness and an aversion to their misery. Although gothic novels paint

[28] Elizabeth Radcliffe, 'Hume's Psychology of the Passions: The Literature and Future Directions' *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 53:4 (2015).565-606, (p.575).
[29] David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1739), ed. Peter Millican (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) p.12.
[30] Radcliffe, Hume's Psychology p.576.
[31] Radcliffe, 'Hume's Psychology', p.577.

virtue and vice in vivid colours, they relate to situations and concepts that are separated from everyday life. This creates a distance between the character and the reader. This allows the reader to form an objective or moral judgement based on the novel as they are not directly involved in the situation. They may empathise with the situation portrayed and it may provoke a reaction, but those feelings will be lessened due to the distance from the action. The gothic often has a hero or heroine orphaned or abandoned by their parents which immediately triggers the reader's sympathy, but this quickly dissolves if that childhood becomes an excuse for vice. Equally, gothic heroines are often imprisoned in a tower, or a convent and it is the suffering caused by the resulting loss of liberty which engages the reader's sympathy. A heroine may be treated unjustly by a figure in authority and experience righteous indignation which the reader would sympathise with as underserved. These concepts and situations are outside normal domestic situations and therefore put distance between the character and the reader.

To cultivate an environment where virtue and vice are managed there needs to be an element of control. Adam Smith in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) argued that, in a civilised society, the reconciliation of self-interest and the interests of others requires an internal balance among virtues.[32] Unlike previous theological theories, Smith created the Agent who is required to exercise self-command while the listener indulges in the virtues of humanity. To function effectively, we need to develop both sets of virtues. Self-command is characterised by prudence, respectability and benevolence, whereas sensitivity is not incompatible with restraint, but is the basis on which humanitarianism is founded. When we feel more for others than ourselves, we restrain selfish desires and indulge in benevolent affection. Smith refers to restraint as the individual's ability to maintain a sense of noble

[32] Henry Clark, 'Conversation and Moderate Virtue in Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments,' *The Review of Politics*, 54:2 (1992), 185-210 (p.202).

propriety, grace and dignity within every passion, which contrasts with dramatic displays of grief designed to elicit compassion with sighs and tears, which he regards as disgusting. Concerning anger, Smith goes even further, referring to the brutality and insolence of unrestrained violence as detestable. He differentiates virtue and propriety when he says that to act with propriety only requires an ordinary degree of sensibility and self-control; the implication is that virtue involves a higher standard.[33] For Smith, self-command was a masculine characteristic and humanity a feminine one. This idea, we will see, is challenged by the gothic novels, with Ellena in *The Italian*, for example, acting with great self-command and Vivaldi showing signs of uncontrolled spontaneity. Equally, they both show signs of humanity and compassion. Propriety is a cultural standard, defined by society and applied to the virtue, or chastity of women in novels with no evidence that this requires any less effort or vigilance.

All the philosophers discussed so far, feel that sentiment, to a greater or lesser extent, is fundamental to moral thought and practice compared to reason alone. Sympathy not only engages our concern but prompts us to do something to help which builds community in a way that is advantageous to all. Whether we view the emotions as proportionate depends on the situation: if they correspond with our feelings, then we believe they are proportionate; if not, we may see them as excessive. Those who have no fellow feeling for the misfortune of others, or no indignation at injustice, are deemed intolerable. This is because their judgment does not align with our own. Smith extends this approval and disapproval to a way of judging a person's actions, motives and character as either moral or not. Reflecting on the sentiment allows us to judge whether or not the action or feeling is proper. Therefore, if we do not sympathise with an action, we do not accept it as proper. In Smith's theory, the person who makes that moral judgment is the agent or impartial spectator. Approval comes when we

[33] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759: London: George Bell & Sons, 1802), p.20.

notice, observe or think about the sympathetic reaction in the spectator, oneself, and the person experiencing the emotions. For Smith, circumstances rather than passions are the most important influence. Gothic novels, we will see, do not operate on such a simple basis. The authors often seek to complicate emotional states by creating sympathy and condemnation for their characters through an inability to regulate their passions when subjected to challenging circumstances. From a moral point of view, the novel cannot condone vice, but equally, we sympathise with a character whose experience has not equipped them to cope with temptation.

Smith argues other people shape our sentiments, as we moderate our sympathy to align with others, enabling them to sympathise. This reinforces the idea of judgment as something praiseworthy or blameworthy.[34] Both Hume and Smith are conscious of the need to set an objective standard of approval and disapproval. Hume's General Point of View starts with an individual's moral judgment and assessment of other people, including sympathetic approval or disapproval, and he develops a general view based on the usual effects of the character in question. For Smith, people both desire to be praised but also to be worthy of that praise, a tension between social image and individual morality taken up by turn-of-the-century gothic novels. We can only secure such approval from an impartial spectator who knows both our actions and motives. Smith says it is by using this view that we can consider our conduct and decide whether or not we meet the standards for approval. The standard of approval and the resulting virtue must be subject to approval. Smith criticises Hutcheson because he does not critically evaluate the moral standard used to determine if the standard is valid or appropriate. He states that the standard must appear morally good, but he does not define moral goodness.[35] It can be argued that moral goodness depends on the values of the society in which we live and the period in time, as these elements determine the standard on

[34] Geoffrey Sayre-McCord, 'Hume and Smith on Sympathy, Approbation and Moral Judgement.' *Social Philosophy and Politics,* 30:1-2 (2013), 208-236 (p.225).
[35] McCord, 'Hume and Smith on Sympathy', p.231.

which goodness is measured. You cannot evaluate a standard until a benchmark has been set. The problem reflected by gothic novels is that society was divided in its views. Burke favoured the hierarchical status quo whereas Paine emphasised liberty and individualism. There were ongoing debates around women's education and whether traditional accomplishments should be supplemented by wider learning in history, geography and science. The culture of politeness very often masked good and bad intentions giving rise to deception and hypocrisy. Actions reflected social etiquette rather than virtue and gothic novels sought to expose this through the villain's actions.

Smith favoured a conservative deference towards rank which does not depend on any expectation of goodwill or the benefit of society, but on what he presupposes is a naturally submissive inclination. A young man supports the dignity of his rank through knowledge, industry, patience and self-denial, but superiority is characterised by manner and deportment.[36] Smith stated that the inclination to admire the rich and powerful and neglect the poor maintained the distinction of rank and the order of society but was the greatest cause of the corruption of moral sentiment. He stated that good morals, without virtue and merit, do not warrant respect.[37] In contrast, he points to the middle-class professionals who succeed through prudence and temperance, but even this depends on the good opinion of their peers. Ambition then leads them to believe that this new status will bring them the respect and admiration of mankind. Burke interpreted rank differently, suggesting it was a stabilising influence. He suggested society was determined by its historical past and enjoyed the benefits accrued over time.[38] Rank, checked by duty, with a King and the Anglican Church, was worthy of patriotic devotion. The hierarchy was not degrading, but inspired a generous

[36] Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments,* p.41.
[37] Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments,* pp.45-6.
[38] Morgan Rooney, *The French Revolution Debate and the British Novel 1790-1814: The Struggle for History's Authority* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2012), p.98.

loyalty, proud submission and dignified obedience.[39] Both Burke and Smith point to the problems within a changing structural organisation of society. The gothic novel highlights the corruption of dissolute aristocracy based on pride, vanity and selfish ambition compared to the restraint and self-control of middle-class protagonists who value benevolence, chastity, humility, obedience and respect.

The contrast between town and country reflects the contrast between simplicity and corruption. Rousseau unlike Hobbes did not believe that the state of nature was a source of violent conflict but a tranquil and peaceful environment. As Rousseau does not envisage a state of conflict he attributes peace to this communal life. This does not equate with virtue as Rousseau still maintained that this required some restraint, governed by reason which could only operate in a civilised society.[40] Thus Radcliffe's use of the convent in *The Italian* shows a community of equals living in harmony and cultivating the land as part of a Rousseauvian ideal. In common with Hutcheson Rousseau saw the innate goodness in mankind and argued individuals were characterised by pity. He defined pity as being a natural repugnance at the suffering of others.[41] This he sees as making man more sociable and morally worthy.[42] Thus, he saw Hobbes's view of man's violent self-preservation and self-interest as evil.

A major contrast in gothic novels is between the nobility and the middle classes concerning corruption and hypocrisy. Rousseau in his discussion on the Arts and Sciences saw virtue as being reduced to an arbitrary set of manners, an etiquette for fashionable society.[43] He claimed that custom had taught people to conceal things to comply with the rules of conduct laid down by polite society. His argument was that habit would then equate etiquette

---

[39] Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), p.26.
[40] Malcolm Jack, 'One State of Nature: Mandeville and Rousseau,' *Journal of the History of Ideas,* 39:1 (1978) 119-124 (p.120).
[41] James Delaney, *Starting with Rousseau*, (London Bloomsbury, 2009), p.47.
[42] Jack, 'One State of Nature: Mandeville and Rousseau', p.122.
[43] Delaney, *Starting with Rousseau,* p.10.

with virtue.[44] He argued that the sciences produced luxury which becomes a distraction as individuals are consumed by wealth and drawn away from virtue, with value being measured in money.[45] This can be seen in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century marriage contracts among the nobility founded on wealth. Isabella in *The Old Manor House* considers General Tracy eligible due to the comfortable life he can provide, despite the significant age gap. In sympathy with Rousseau, the reader is encouraged to look upon Ellena's virtue in *The Italian* and not to agree with the Marchesa who condemns her for her lack of fortune. Wealth was not only becoming less important but was increasingly being viewed as a corrupting influence.

Regarding education, Rousseau believed in man's perfectibility, or an individual's ability to change over time, as new situations arise.[46] This ability to develop is more noticeable in male characters in the gothic novels than in females. Female characters' educations are limited to accomplishments which would attract a husband, a view criticised by Wollstonecraft who objected that women's strength of mind is sacrificed to beauty and the desire to marry.[47] She stated "The education of the rich tends to render them vain and helpless, the mind not being strengthened by the duties which dignify a human character. They only live to amuse themselves."[48] This can be seen in the vain Lady Euphrasia in *The Children of the Abbey*. Equally, education taken to the extreme is personified by Miss Hollybourn in *The Old Manor House* who uses her knowledge to impress and subdue her companions. In contrast, a positive empowering example is Monimia who with the help of her aunt and Orlando learns to read and write and even finds a position, making her independent

[44] Delaney, *Starting with Rousseau,* pp.12-13.
[45] Delaney, *Starting with Rousseau,* p.17.
[46] Delaney, *Starting with Rousseau,* p.49.
[47] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, An Historical and Moral View of the French Revolution* (1792), ed. Janet Todd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.74.
[48] Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights,* p.73.

at the end of the book. These novels represent the differing views of female education discussed during the eighteenth century.

The gothic novel did not abandon Enlightenment reason by its lack of realism and use of the supernatural but used its flexibility to highlight some of the anxieties of a changing society. The French Revolution exposed the fact that change could bring instability, making the move from nobility to the middle-class values of industry and merit a cause for concern. Novelists like Radcliffe exposed the corruption of the nobility and violent subjugation of women as unjust but equally reform did not result in destabilisation and could still result in stable family values. She also showed that Catholicism and the abbey were not only repressive institutions stifling individual rights but had the potential to be a place of refuge as part of Rousseau's country ideal. In common with the sentimental novel they often tested the hero and heroine by placing them in a situation of distress where they needed to make a moral or ethical decision. This raised the question about man's inherent nature and whether our character is formed virtuous or vicious at birth or if learned experience and cultural norms play a more significant part. This is most clearly seen in Dacre's *Zofloya* where Victoria blames her upbringing and her brother accuses her of being inherently bad. Society's moral framework at this time took the form of politeness and the "proper lady" both of which were open to the criticism that they substituted etiquette for virtue leading to hypocrisy and a lack of benevolence when adhering to the rules. Again, this can be seen in Regina Maria Roche's *The Children of the Abbey* where the heroine Amanda is often out in an impossible situation. Yet there is a suggestion that the passions can be controlled without resorting to hypocrisy and violent emotions do not need to triumph and calm passions or benevolence can moderate behaviour.

Emotional Reactions to Gothic Novels

In the following chapters, I will show how the contemporary understanding of the passions and affections shaped the gothic novel. The discussion will consider the extent to which these novels might be said to be didactic, educating readers about proper emotional conduct and prompting them to reflect on how the emotions might best be controlled or regulated. It will also explore the role of sympathy in these texts, examining how the authors encourage readers to relate to the principal characters and the balance of judgement and sympathy that they promote. For example, the novels ask whether, as Wollstonecraft suggests, a better education might have made some of their vulnerable heroines more resilient and less prone to ignorance and superstition. It will also explore the novels' treatment of class, and the tension between class values and emotion in a time of change. The pride and arrogance of the aristocracy are condemned, but the class is capable of reform and the novels show individuals can be redeemed if they change their ways.

Barbara Rosenwein defines emotional communities as groups having their own values, modes of feeling and ways of expressing those feelings.[49] These emotions are associated with goals, motivations and intentions; they are socially constructed and cannot come from outside the relevant culture or period in time. Therefore, desire is limited to what the culture has taught people to want – although, as Rosenwein points out, an individual may belong to more than one emotional community, therefore, an individual may feel tension when one community encourages them to desire something that another community disparages.[50] Emotional communities are explored within the gothic novel, particularly in *The Monk* and *The Italian*, through the abbey and the convent, where a supreme leader often sets

[49] Barbara Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling*, p.29.
[50] William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p.47.

the value system for that community. An abbess who values a strict regime can appear unusually harsh towards the heroine which triggers a sympathetic response in the reader. I have used William Reddy's concept of emotional regimes in *The Navigation of Feeling* to explain how official rituals, practices and emotives are incorporated into a regime and how policies of punishment, torture, exclusion and imprisonment are used to sanction emotional deviance. These regimes achieve their stability through the suppression of goal conflict: the person who enters the institution must surrender their own desires to the will of the institution, and this may bring intense suffering to those who do not comply. Reddy defines suffering as the result of high-priority goals coming into conflict with the values of the emotional regime in which one finds oneself. This suffering may also be accompanied by grief, guilt or shame. Reddy also develops the concept of "emotional refuge": an environment that develops as a counterpart to or reaction against the prevailing emotional regime, in which those with deviant emotions may be able to find safety and comfort. A version of the emotional refuge can be seen, for example, in *The Italian*, with the benevolent convent of the Santa della Pieta providing the heroine Ellena with a place where she can escape the emotional violence inflicted on her both by Vivaldi's mother and the repressive emotional regime of her previous convent, San Stefano. Rosenwein's and Reddy's ideas of emotional communities and emotional regimes can also be seen as applied in these novels to communities that form along class lines: novels such as Charlotte Smith's *The Old Manor House*, for example, show how emotional communities may result from a group's adherence to particular collections of class-related values, such as a belief in the importance of blood and breeding.

Class and power can be seen as an inciting force highlighting various emotions within Smith's *The Old Manor House*. Deborah Russell's *Domestic Gothic*[51] focuses on the social

[51] Deborah Russell, 'Domestic Gothic: Genre and Nature in Charlotte Smith's *The Old Manor House*,' *Literature Compass,* 10 (2003).

changes that were taking place within this historical period, including the movement of power away from the traditions and the power of the landed classes to the new generation. Fletcher's biography of Smith[52] points to the way in which her writings may have been influenced by Burke's idea that traditional loyalties are a stabilising force in society while referencing women's vulnerability, education and character. I will build upon these arguments to show how power and position form pride in Mrs Rayland and a superficial focus on accomplishments designed to indicate high social class and form arrogance in Miss Hollybourn. The hero and heroine's lack of power leads to suffering and emotional conflict which induces sympathy in the reader and a more benevolent and generous attitude in the characters.

In a recent article, Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall argue that older views of the gothic, which cast it as the opposite of enlightenment reason because it does not conform to everyday bourgeois literary realism, are mistaken.[53] Ian Watt in *The Rise of the Novel* defined philosophical realism as the discovery of the external world through the individual senses, and he argued this was the dominant outlook of earlier eighteenth-century fiction.[54] Indeed, the gothic novel does not deal with real-life situations, and its protagonists are often subject to extreme circumstances. However, the suggestion that nothing can be learned from reading such books is refuted by Anna Laetitia Barbauld in *On the Origins and Progress of Novel Writing* (c.1810), in which she states that it is preferable to receive first impressions of "fraud, selfishness, profligacy and perfidy" in the pages of a novel rather than real life.[55] Radcliffe uses enlightenment reason to explain the supernatural, a trend followed by many other writers

[52] Lorraine Fletcher, *Charlotte Smith: A Critical Biography* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998).
[53] Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall, 'Gothic Criticism' in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, ed. David Punter (Oxford: Blackwell, 2012), p.273.
[54] Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (1957: Hamondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), p.12.
[55] Anna Laetitia Barbauld, *On the Origin and Progress of Novel Writing* (London: F C & J Rivington, 1820), pp.13,14.

including Charlotte Smith and Regina Maria Roche. In contrast, Matthew Lewis used German folklore to enhance the supernatural elements in his novel to create a sense of fear in his readers. In *The Literature of Terror,* David Punter states what unites both Radcliffe and Lewis is fear. He argues gothic novels create fear through ambiguity, which makes the reader question what is real. Do the characters actually see a ghost or is it part of their imagination?[56] This blurring of reality adds mystery and suspense. However, this is not a rejection of enlightenment values, as reason is still important to control passion within the gothic novel. Ambrosio in *The Monk* suffers as he cannot control his desires. The novels may explore the limitations of reason – how characters are often overwhelmed by their emotions in ways that make rationality at least temporarily impossible to muster – but they do not deny the importance of reason as a way of engaging with the world and at least attempting to control emotions that would otherwise be dangerously excessive. The dangers of excessive emotion can also be applied to *Zofloya*, which is not covered in Punter's study but which I explore in detail in the final chapter of this thesis. Therefore, enlightenment theories of emotion such as Locke's learned experience, and ideas of association together with the control of innate and primitive desires can be used to cast light on aspects of these novels.

These novels are also typically fascinated by the relationship between emotion and gender. The standards for female behaviour in the eighteenth century were shaped by the conduct books' definition of virtue. Mary Poovey in her 1985 book *The Proper Lady* points out that much energy was exerted on trying to control female sexuality, while it was believed that feminine virtues such as modesty, chastity, humility and self-control needed to be nurtured. Chastity, in particular, was seen as essential for peace of mind, esteem and future happiness. Eighteenth-century heroines typically conform to these social expectations,

[56] David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fiction from 1765 to the Present Day* (Harlow: Longman, 1996), p.68.

displaying a marked delicacy and lack of sexuality. Using Poovey's descriptions as a basis I will show how the gothic genre also provided a space for the exploration of forbidden desires, transgressive behaviours, and emotional complexities that traditional conduct books sought to repress, examples of this can be seen in characters such as *Zofloya*'s Victoria and *The Monk's* Matilda, both of whom demonstrate a passionate sexuality that would have been seen as deeply threatening to society. These characters disrupt the conventional narrative of female passivity and virtue, showing how the gothic novel can become a site of tension, where the boundaries of acceptable female emotion and behaviour are tested.

As well as exploring female desire and the need for the emotional control and regulation of that desire, lest it threaten social stability, these novels are also interested in the broader issue of female agency and the associated issue of female education. Despite the eighteenth century heralding a rise in individualism, women were encouraged to think of themselves as a collective and not individuals with rights. Stephanie Insley Hershinow in *Born Yesterday* describes how the heroines of romantic novels are usually innocent and inexperienced,[57] lacking the lived experience that Locke saw as vital for full human development. Moreover, they are often very selectively educated, in contrast to the ideal of female education that Wollstonecraft put forward in the *Rights of Woman*, in which she argued that it was damaging and dangerous to keep women in ignorance to preserve their innocence, as that would lead to their adopting an attitude of subservience and laying themselves open to being exploited and abused by men.[58] The innocence and inexperience of the heroines of many of these novels mean that they often appear as victims within the gothic landscape: they do not know who to trust or how to reconcile the teaching of the conduct books with the situations in which they find themselves. Hoeveler in *Gothic Feminism* argues that this is how

[57] See Stephanie Insley Hershinow, *Born Yesterday: Inexperience and the Early 'Realist Novel'*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019).
[58] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights*, p.110.

these women achieve their status as heroines: they earn their superior social and moral status by becoming victims of a tyrant in a corrupt patriarchal society.[59] However, one could also argue that this treatment of women is also a critique of contemporary notions of the "proper lady" it shows how vulnerable such a figure is within a corrupt and untrustworthy world. Hoeveler emphasises the vulnerability of women dependent on male protection, citing examples of Radcliffe's earlier works, but she does not refer to the righteous indignation felt by Ellena in *The Italian* or consider the possibility that the convent can be a place of refuge not simply oppression. Again, therefore, my work aims to both build on and complicate these earlier studies, showing that gothic novels offer a more nuanced portrayal of women's agency and emotional complexity than has been previously acknowledged.

Emotional control did not only apply to women: men were also expected to regulate their emotions. Reddy argues that, historically, emotion was seen as a "domain of effort": proper emotional expression required learning and self-control.[60] The novels I explore differ somewhat in their depiction of "ideal" male behaviour, yet fundamentally agree that the hero must not be subject to wild bursts of emotion but rather must learn to control his responses to conform to the equilibrium expected by society. Failure to conform would bring about what Hutcheson called a sense of dishonour or shame. Reputation rests on the record of past actions, mastery of emotion and conformity to emotional norms.[61] Yet male characters do not conform to every rule of society. Vivaldi goes against his aristocratic parents' wishes in his love for Ellena, rejecting the view that a title is an essential prerequisite. Radcliffe also allows his feelings for Ellena to conclude with a happy ending, signalling her approval of his passion. Gender differences became more fixed in the eighteenth century, according to Staford

[59] Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalisation of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontes*, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998).
[60] Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling,* p.55.
[61] Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling,* p.57.

in *Gentlemanly Masculinities.*[62] For men, this meant an enhanced focus on self-control, an avoidance of anger and violence, and a greater display of sensitivity and concern for others. There was an accusation of effeminacy, especially after the French Revolution, but masculine sensibility was defined as energetic, motivated by distress, sympathetic and taking action to relieve this. The novels also typically suggest that ideal masculine behaviour involves an awareness of one's moral obligations and responsibilities. Although several of the heroes of the novels I discuss have their moments of irresponsibility – impetuous action and speech, displays of intemperate emotion – all are fundamentally honourable and responsible, concerned to protect their reputations and those of others. In this, these are contrasted with the novels' villains: those like Ambrosio in *The Monk*, who is willing to sacrifice the honour of Antonia to satisfy his own lust, or like Orlando's libertine brother Philip in *The Old Manor House*, who devote themselves only to pleasure, gambling away the family fortune.

The emotional experiences of the heroes and heroines of these novels are, of course, also shaped by their class positions. As Amanda Goodrich points out in *Debating England's Aristocracy of the 1790s*, this was a period of class conflict, whose stakes can be seen in the debates between Burke and Paine regarding the importance of individual rights versus the importance of social continuity and stability rooted in ancient rights and property ownership. Gary Kelly in *English Fiction of the Romantic Period* refers to enlightenment values as involving reason, self-discipline, and social and religious tolerance compared to superstition, mysticism, prejudice, censorship, self-indulgence and a lack of reason which are associated with patronage, hierarchy and the *ancien regime*. In this period, he argues, there was an increasing emphasis on individual moral and intellectual worth or merit compared to rank and other unearned status. Kelly also argues that the *ancien regime*'s focus on patronage and

[62] William Stafford, Gentlemanly Masculinities as Represented by the Late Georgian *Gentleman's Magazine*', *History*, 9:309 (2008), 47-68.

dependence deformed and dehumanised relations between husband and wife, parents and children, and members of different social classes, races and nationalities.[63] These novels explore this class conflict, frequently pitting an old aristocratic order (typically characterised by emotional repression, superstition, blind faith in tradition and the desire to dominate and control others of a lesser social standing) against a new order characterised by what might be described as middle-class values, such as a faith in individual merit and the existence of universal rights that do not depend on birth. The heroes and heroines vary in terms of their actual class status, from middle class to aristocracy. However, in practice, they typically seem to stand as representatives of the middle classes, in terms of their values and emotional temperaments. By contrast, those members of the nobility who truly care about their status are typically portrayed as decadent, shallow and corrupt. The aristocracy's obsession with lineage, wealth, and power, demonstrates an erosion of their emotional authenticity and moral compass, presenting a critique of the existing social hierarchy. Through these contrasting depictions, these novels explore the tensions between personal virtue and societal status, illustrating how emotional integrity is positioned as a marker of true nobility in a class-conscious world.

This clash between an old world of feudal values and aristocratic privilege and a newer world based on meritocracy and a recognition of universal rights and dignity is also reflected in the novels' treatment of setting and location. The gothic novel reflects the fear and anxiety around oppression and confinement through its dark, foreboding background of secluded castles, secret passages and imprisonment. David Punter suggests the medieval and primitive had become invested with positive values: a harking back to a simpler time, with greater social order, structure and certainty.[64] However, in many of these novels, the historical

[63] Gary Kelly, *English Fiction in the Romantic Period 1789-1830* (London: Routledge, 2013), p.11.
[64] Punter, *The Literature of Terror*, p.5.

past is represented in the social order by an insistence on absolute power and servitude.[65] In *The Monk*, the abbey is an institution firmly rooted in ancient religious traditions and behaviours: a place of socialised repressed emotion for Ambrosio, which does not prepare him for the challenges of the outside world. *The Italian* envisages the convent of San Stefano as a place of confinement for the heroine, again due to its traditional, strictly legalistic approach to faith. In *The Old Manor House*, Mrs Rayland uses her wealth and power to control the younger generation, jealously seeking to protect the family name and inheritance against new ways of living. These institutions – the traditional Catholic church, and the ancient houses of the aristocracy – are rigid, oppressive structures that stifle individual freedom and emotional expression. They represent a traditional regime clinging to power by enforcing outdated norms and practices. The gothic novel critiques these institutions by exposing the corruption, hypocrisy, and emotional repression they perpetuate, thereby highlighting the conflict between the oppressive weight of the past and the emerging values of the present.

Contemporary Responses to the Texts

The gothic authors that I analyse take different approaches to the supernatural. Maggie Kilgour has described the gothic as a genre that seeks to resurrect the sacred and transcend a modern secular world that denies the supernatural and encourages the rebellion of the imagination over reason.[66] However, although within the novels of Matthew Lewis, the supernatural is presented as a real phenomenon, Radcliffe uses the supernatural only to dismiss its reality: in her works, supernatural phenomena can be explained away by rational means, and result only from human misunderstanding and superstition. Nevertheless, whether they treat ghosts, curses, and demonic possession as real or not, the novels frequently rely on the atmosphere of fear and suspense generated by these elements. The omnipresent threat of

[65] Punter, *The Literature of Terror,* p.47.
[66] Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*, p.3.

the supernatural, whether ultimately real or imagined, allows these novels to delve into themes of uncertainty, vulnerability, and the unknown.

This aspect of the gothic novel, however, often displeased contemporary critics. In a letter to *The Monthly Magazine* of 1797, the writer complained that the novels would frighten young people and that they aimed to "reviv[e] the age of ghosts, hobgoblins and spirits."[67] The letter writer comments on how these works are constructed to create fear, featuring an old gothic castle or a house in ruins, pictures whose likenesses disturb viewers, violent weather patterns such as howling wind, hostile personages such as banditti, and of course supernatural revenants such as ghosts. The writer continues his criticism by stating that "just at the time which we were threatened with a stagnation of fancy, arose Maximillian Robespierre, with his system of terror, and taught our novelists that fear is the only passion they ought to cultivate, that to frighten and to instruct were one and the same thing."[68] Such techniques, he implies, designed as they are to stir up terror and superstition, are out of keeping with modern values of rationality, emotional restraint and self-discipline; they inspire emotion but they do not do so to any positive end.

Fostered by the circulating libraries, reading popular fiction was seen as a female preoccupation but critics were predominantly male. Female critical voices in the magazine were limited to Wollstonecraft writing in the *Analytical Review* – which may be explained by the fact that the publication was edited by her husband William Godwin. Other women such as Anna Laetitia Barbauld and Hannah More wrote pamphlets such as *On The Origin and Progress of Novel Writing*[69] and *Essay on Various Subjects, Principally Designed for Young*

[67] *The Monthly Magazine*, 4:21 (1797-8), pp.102-4.
[68] *The Monthly Magazine*, , 4:21 (1797-8), p.103.
[69] Anna Laetitia Barbauld, *On The Origins and Progress of Novel Writing* (London: F C & J Rivington, 1820).

Ladies[70]: either they were not permitted to write for magazines or wanted to publish a more lengthy work in their own names.

The fact that the critics were almost all men may well have affected at least some of their responses to these gothic texts, as their commentaries reflect male anxieties about both women's growing influence in the literary marketplace and the possible effect of the emotionally provocative form of the gothic novel on susceptible readers – which, of course, particularly included women. Gamer in *Romanticism and the Gothic* argues that the gothic genre was especially seen as feminine reading, which was characterised as being vague, dreamy, literal-minded, causing the reader to be easily swayed by strong emotions, being unenlightened and influenced by extreme, unusual and supernatural events. Contemporary reviews suggest that both men and women who surrendered to this literature were in danger. As we shall see in individual chapters Lewis's *The Monk* was proclaimed as blasphemous and Dacre was charged with using voluptuous language unsuitable for a woman. Contemporary male critics worried that novels would have a corrupting influence on the public and that the growth of low-quality fiction fostered by the circulating libraries would encourage more authors to enter the field.

This thesis will show, however, that even the moralistic reactions of critical reviewers provide evidence for what was new and striking about gothic novels' depictions of emotional regimes. Following analyses of the representations of emotions within the novels, the chapters of this thesis turn to early responses by way of comparison. In so doing, I employ Alan Sinfield's cultural materialist understanding of "faultlines" – latent ruptures of internal inconsistencies in an apparently stable ideological viewpoint – as well as Hans Robert Jauss's

[70] Hannah More, *Essays on Various Subjects, Principally Designed for Young Ladies* (London: T Caldwell, 1785).

reception theory, which recognises how works that challenge prevailing generic or cultural norms provoke a reaction that absorbs them into the mainstream.

Chapter Summaries

I have chosen to focus on this particular collection of novels because together they represent a diverse yet thematically interconnected range of gothic novels from the late eighteenth-century. All of the texts share an interest in exploring both masculine and feminine emotions within a range of extreme situations, and all exploit the tension between social expectations and individual fulfilment for both men and women.

Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* is my starting point because of its radical exploration of emotion, excess and the darker aspects of human nature, as well as its overt challenge to social and religious norms. I then turn my attention to Radcliffe's *The Italian* as a response to Lewis' work which allows me to explore both how the treatment of the supernatural is different in the two novels, and also the parallels and differences between the novels' treatment of Catholicism. I then read Charlotte Smith's *The Old Manor House* as a novel which in turn builds on Radcliffe's work, with Smith developing a range of female characters who are typically more assertive than those in Lewis. *The Old Manor House* also provides an opportunity to shift my focus toward a more socially conscious and domestic form of the gothic, exploring how Smith incorporates elements of the gothic to address contemporary concerns about inheritance, class and the emotional impact of war, blending romance with social commentary. Smith's decision to set her story in Britain, rather than Catholic Spain, is then continued by *The Children of the Abbey* by Regina Maria Roche. By placing this text after *The Old Manor House*, I draw attention to how this work, like Smith's, engages with themes of female virtue and vulnerability. Finally, I end with a consideration of Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya* (1806): a text that returns to the darker, more subversive elements of the

gothic that characterise *The Monk. Zofloya* offers a complex explanation of desire, race and gender, pushing the boundaries of gothic further in ways that both echo and complicate earlier works. It returns to the more traditional Catholic setting but with a protagonist who is not only assertive in the Radcliffian sense but becomes almost masculine in the pursuit of her desires. Moreover, Dacre reflects Lewis in interesting ways in her decision to condemn her heroine Victoria to the ultimate punishment for deviant behaviour.

In terms of the more detailed arguments made by each chapter: In Chapter 2, focussing on Lewis's *The Monk*, I argue that Ambrosio is both the victim and product of the values of a flawed emotional community: the traditional Catholic abbey, which instils in him strict discipline without equipping him with the resilience to deal with temptation. The restrictive values of this emotional community are made clear as Ambrosio battles with shame at his loss of reputation, experiencing goal conflict when he deviates from the rules of his community. I argue that Ambrosio is not represented as innately evil but due to his restrictive experience in the abbey, and his lack of the kind of real-life experience that Locke advocates for, he is not prepared for normal life. Meanwhile, women are both innocent victims and demonic instigators in this novel, as they become the focus of Ambrosio's desire. This dual portrayal underscores the complex and often contradictory roles women play within the gothic novel. On one hand, characters like Matilda manipulate and seduce, embodying a dangerous and subversive sexuality that threatens male authority. On the other hand, characters such as Antonia represent purity and virtue, becoming tragic victims of male lust and corruption. Through these contrasting depictions, the novel explores the volatile intersections of gender, power, and emotion.

In Chapter 3 I look at Ann Radcliffe's response to Lewis's work in *The Italian*. Equally revered as a pioneer of the gothic genre, with numerous imitators, Radcliffe deals with the explained supernatural and refers to suspenseful terror, not horror. Radcliffe's heroine

is far more assertive than Lewis's, yet still displays the characteristic restraint and propriety associated, I contend, with middle-class English Protestant values. The noble Italian family of the hero Vivaldi, in contrast, demonstrates the pride and passion associated with aristocratic status. Radcliffe uses the wicked Schedoni and the convent of San Stefano to show the extreme repression of the Catholic church while also, in the depiction of Santa Della Pieta, suggesting that with the right values of benevolence and tolerance, a convent can be a place of emotional refuge.

In Chapter 4 the gothic has a British and domestic setting in Charlotte Smith's *The Old Manor House.* Control here is matriarchal and political as the crumbling house symbolises the state, which must control individual rights to ensure a smooth transition from one generation to the next. The novel explores the contrast between the emotional repressiveness of the older generation and the emotional self-indulgence of some representatives of the younger, such as Orlando's brother Philip, and shows the efforts of the protagonists – Monimia and Orlando - to navigate between these two extremes to build a new emotional community that better fulfils their own needs and desires. This navigation involved compromise, which some conservative male critics argued made them an unworthy hero and heroine, implying the masculine establishment's resistance to change away from male authority based on inheritance to that of individual character and worth which could be found in both male and female characters.

Chapter 5 deals with Regina Maria Roche's *The Children of the Abbey*. This novel follows the story of a brother and sister, Oscar and Amanda, both of whom are subjected to emotional manipulation and unwarranted suspicion whilst needing to retain what Hutcheson defined as a moral sense. For women this involved a sense of propriety; for men, this was emotional control and sensibility. Roche's use of setting is also interesting, as she subverts some of the conventions of the gothic genre, by using the convent, usually seen as a place of

confinement in the gothic genre, as a place of refuge and treating the closet – traditionally a place of safety and intimacy – as the location for a scene of terror. These subversions serve to underscore the precarious nature of security and the constant tension between public and private spheres in the gothic narrative, further complicating the emotional landscapes that her characters navigate.

Finally, Chapter 6 looks at Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*, which was written out of admiration for Matthew Lewis's *The Monk.* Set in decadent Venice, the protagonist Victoria is vain, proud and arrogant. This novel asks whether evil is innate or whether it is a learned response developed in childhood. Hutcheson and Rousseau believed in the natural goodness of man, whereas Hobbes stated due to man's competitive attitude to self-preservation he was antagonistic. Victoria, by blaming her mother for her own bad behaviour, highlights the significance of the maternal role in raising children, and the importance also of female education. As in *The Monk*, corruption takes the form of the devil in the guise of the Moorish servant Zofloya. Victoria is drawn deeper into corruption as the novel progresses, illustrating the destructive power of unchecked desire. Her descent is marked by increasingly immoral acts, reflecting the broader societal fears of women's potential for transgression when not properly guided. The novel uses Victoria's character to critique the lack of proper moral and intellectual education for women, suggesting that neglect in these areas can lead to disastrous consequences.

Overall, through its study of these five novels, this thesis seeks to show that emotion in gothic literature is not limited to explorations of lust, anger and fear, but in fact incorporates a far wider range of emotional experiences, including an interest in more socially positive emotions such as sympathy and benevolence. Women are not limited to the role of the persecuted heroine, found in novels of sensibility, but can show righteous indignation when subjected to unfair treatment. This emphasis on an individual's will in shaping their

destiny makes the characters responsible for their own decisions. I argue, therefore, that like the popular contemporary conduct books, the gothic novel also had a potential role to play in the instruction and education of young people, despite the fears voiced by (largely male) critics that such works would corrupt immature minds. Gothic novels of this period are intensely engaged with the relationship between the emotional and the moral. Typically, they suggest the need to condemn evil and punish those characters who succumb, in order to reinforce the accepted values of right and wrong. However, they also demonstrate the ways in which 'right and wrong' were not always clear categories in a society which was changing from a patriarchal aristocracy to one shaped by enhanced notions of individual responsibility. Whether these communities explored by the novels are Catholic institutions, Burke's nation as a whole or new communities based on individual values, I will show that the gothic novels of the eighteenth century are more emotionally diverse than may previously have been thought.

Chapter Two

Emotional Communities and Regimes in Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796)

Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* caused a scandal when it was first published. With its themes of lust, rape, incest, violence and the supernatural, it was undoubtedly designed to captivate and shock audiences with its sensational and transgressive subject matter. However, in this chapter I will argue that, beneath its thrilling surface, the novel also offers a serious critique of the dangers posed by repressive emotional communities, suggesting that when natural emotions and desires are suppressed rather than understood and managed, they can erupt in destructive and uncontrollable ways. Through the downfall of its protagonist Ambrosio, the narrative emphasises the importance of self-awareness and emotional understanding as a means of preventing moral and psychological ruin.

Barbara Rosenwein's concept of emotional communities provides a new and useful framework for understanding how emotion operates within Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796). The communities of the abbey and the convent in the novel have their own values, modes of feeling, and forms of expression, alongside the values of the wider society. One aim of this chapter is to explore the tensions between the affective ideals of the religious orders within the novel, which privilege and prescribe emotional restraint, and those of the society outside of their walls. It furthermore accounts for tensions between that society – Catholic Madrid – and the late Georgian Britain in which Lewis wrote the novel. Finally, turning to the early reception of *The Monk*, the chapter considers how the novel relates to emotional communities of readers at a time when the novel as a genre was gaining greater popularity, there was an emerging sense of the nation as an imagined community forged by reading, and

it was taken for granted that books in general, novels in particular, played a vital role in shaping readers' emotional lives and ethical values.

Rosenwein suggests that each community values, or gives prominence to, certain feelings above others.[1] They need to define which emotions are valuable, which are harmful, and which to ignore, to enable them to acknowledge emotional bonds between people, and to recognise modes of expression they expect, encourage, tolerate, or deplore.[2] She goes on to state that when historians look at emotional communities, they need to consider which emotions are fundamental to the way the group expresses its sense of self.[3] The association of emotions with goals, motivations or intentions makes them a social construct and anything relating to the individual cannot come from outside the culture.[4] Emotions are composed of a network of goals that give purpose and coherence to the self and unity to a community. To shape the emotional order there must be ideals to strive towards and strategies to guide the individual.[5] This means a person cannot want something outside what the culture has taught that person to want, and equally conflict is unimportant unless it is culturally sanctioned. Reddy would argue that culture replicates and reinforces itself and cannot lead to any meaningful change.

In the gothic novels I am considering, the primary emotions that are represented are fear, terror, desire, and disgust. In the early gothic novel, emotional responses are at various points portrayed both physically through outward signs performed by the body, vocally through direct and indirect speech, where characters express their inner feelings, and psychologically, often in terms of repression, sublimation, shame, and guilt, both consciously

---

[1] Barbara Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling: A History of Emotions, 600-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p.29.
[2] Barbara Rosenwein, 'Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions', *Passion in Context*, 1 (2010), 1-32, (p.12).
[3] Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling*, p.15.
[4] William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) p.47.
[5] Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, p.61.

and subconsciously. This chapter will analyse the representation of such emotions in *The Monk* by interpreting how they relate to individual and collective identities. Within the public readership, emotional communities are formed by professional critics, often concerned with public morals as the objective of aesthetic judgement, and the wider reading public is serviced by an expanding commercial print culture, exemplified by the circulating libraries. The chapter argues that Lewis's depiction of restrictive and hypocritical systems that police emotions and behaviours, though transplanted to Catholic Spain, was an incisive critique of emotional repression in 1790s Britain and that the controversial reception of *The Monk* constitutes a collective act of repression.

Alongside Rosenwein's framework, William Reddy's theory of the 'emotional regime' enables us to see how power operates in Lewis's novel, represented by the abbey and the convent and rules of conduct in the Spanish society of the novel's setting.[6] In Reddy's understanding, such regimes set the goals, rituals, practices, means of expression and emotional learning within a community and are responsible for any exclusions or sanctions associated with deviation from these standards. Reddy refers to situations of conflict between a regime's values and practices as "goal conflict", and the outcome of this disjunction is emotional suffering.[7] For Reddy the motivation for speech or action within social contexts is self-management or self-exploration, putting feelings into words; thus actions such as crying or blushing are involuntary acts.[8] Through action, emotions are agents for change, as Reddy states they can alter what they refer to or represent.[9] Reddy uses the term "emotive" as a type of speech that is different from both performance and utterance and describes and changes the

[6] William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
[7] Jan Plamper, 'The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Sterns', *History and Theory*, 49 (2010), 237-65 (p.241).
[8] Plamper, 'History of Emotions', p.242.
[9] Barbara Rosenwein and Cristiani Riccardo, *What is the History of Emotions?* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2018), p.34.

world due to an exploratory and self-altering effect on the activated thought material of the emotion.[10] For Reddy, emotives change those who speak and those who hear. In an article on sentimentalism, Reddy expands on the elements which make up emotives. He states that emotive words are initially descriptive as they apply to a personal state, for example "I am angry"; this is reinforced by gestures or reactions noticeable by the senses, for example anger may involve raising our voice. The social context for speech or action makes it relational, for example "I am afraid of you", and this links the emotion to a person and could lead to a change in behaviour. No matter how emotions are expressed they involve an element of reflection, appraisal, thought or judgment as a part of self-evaluation or management. We may do this on a conscious or subconscious level and this consideration may provoke a gesture, tone of voice, facial expression, and such like. Reddy qualifies emotives by limiting them to the first or second person and excluding the third person, as he states that the emotion must be about the speaker or the person who is spoken to: "It is not an attempt to manage or shape emotions through explicit claims about their character."[11] As Reddy states readers evaluate these emotions through reflection, appraisal, thought or judgement. Representations of goal conflict in *The Monk* could also lead readers to reassess how their own emotions are engaged and whether they approve of the outcomes which support the current regime, or whether the underlying values of society have been exposed.

The Emotion of Moving from Innocence to Experience

The eponymous monk of Lewis's novel, Ambrosio, is brought to the abbey as a baby and matures within its walls. The reader must therefore assume he knows little of the outside

[10] Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, p,128.
[11] William Reddy, 'Sentimentalism and its Erasure,' *The Journal of Modern History*, 72:1 (2000) 109-52, (pp.114-117).

world, because, as Locke suggests, reason and knowledge come from experience.[12] Locke also claims mastery of pleasure and pain is a habit which fosters moral behaviour and should be learnt from an early age.[13] Ambrosio's experience and moral behaviour have been shaped by the society of the monks, preaching in the church and hearing the confessions of the nuns: "He is now thirty years old, every hour of which period has been passed in study, total seclusion from the world and mortification of the flesh."[14] Ambrosio not only lacks experience but he has been socialised into the ways of the abbey, which promotes a severe form of religious devotion that denies worldliness and desire. Later eighteenth-century philosophers grappled with issues of nature and nurture and the competing impulses of the self and restrictions of society. Rousseau claimed that by embracing the cultural norms of society we mistake those customs for virtue.[15] When an incident occurs to challenge those customs and it is not resolved positively, then it can undermine the foundation on which virtue is based. In *The Monk*, Rosario has been careful to keep her face and figure covered up; when she reveals to Ambrosio that she is a woman in disguise he is shocked. This transgresses the rules of the abbey and undermines the idea of a closed, single-sex community. For Ambrosio, this is his first goal conflict and if he is unable to resolve the problem and return the abbey to the status quo, it will result in emotional suffering, as custom and virtue have become synonymous for him. Ambrosio's emotional reaction to his discovery is instinctive. Hume refers to these direct motivating actions as the result of pleasure or pain.[16] He categorises fear as a source of pain because it opposes social norms and a person's instinct is to flee. Running away from the problem will not help and Rosario/Matilda's pursuit

[12] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), ed. Pauline Phemister (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.55.
[13] John Locke, *On Education* (1693), ed. Peter Gay (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), p.38.
[14] Matthew Lewis, *The Monk* (1796), ed. Emma McEvoy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.17. Parenthetical references are made to this edition unless otherwise stated.
[15] James Delaney, *Starting with Rousseau* (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), p.13.
[16] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40), ed. Ernest Mossner (London, Penguin Classics, 1985), p.328.

suggests she will not make his decision easy: “Amazed, embarrassed and irresolute. He found himself incapable of pronouncing a syllable” (p.59). Ambrosio’s inability to speak suggests he is paralysed with shock, occasioned by anxiety and fear stemming from his position as Abbot. Lewis wants the reader to register the initial shock and surprise which causes both the body and the mind to be paralysed and unable to function. Lewis uses “amazed” to reinforce the idea of innocence and surprise at the revelation. He is “irresolute” as he lacks the experience to deal with the goal conflict resulting from a situation outside the abbey’s rules.

Lewis uses the word “embarrass” to denote guilt and shame, as Ambrosio is aware under the rules of the abbey a woman in his quarters is not socially acceptable. As Abbott, Ambrosio should control who has entered the monastery, and for him to admit a lack of control is embarrassing. Equally, his partiality towards her may have been subconsciously based on sexual attraction. Sexual purity is undoubtedly a rule in the single-sex Catholic community, but so is confession. Ambrosio is only human and if he confesses his desire, would he not be forgiven? Rosario/Matilda could be moved to the convent with which the abbey has close links. Indeed, Ambrosio is the confessor for the nuns, and he would still see her occasionally. There is nothing to suggest that the community’s rules are so strict that he would be banished for his mistake. The brothers show great compassion when Rosario is ill with a snake bite, with Father Pablos seeking to give her medicine (p.87). However, Ambrosio’s reaction is so strict, that he appears to set himself a higher standard than the community where he resides. Likening himself to St Anthony, who resisted the devil, he convinces himself he can resist a mere woman (p.83). The irony is that his victim is also Antonia (the female equivalent of Anthony) yet his lust makes him unable to resist her, with the devil’s assistance, creating an impossible goal and unrealistic expectations will ultimately lead to Ambrosio’s suffering. Brooks suggests Ambrosio’s loathing of impurity and his confidence in his own ability, whilst failing to recognise the repression needed to achieve this,

will be his downfall.[17] Ambrosio has not had to repress his sexual desire previously, but like all temptations, he believes this is something he can overcome. To be superior to his fellow man, he must not only comply with the strict rules of the abbey but exceed them. Previously we have seen Ambrosio boast: "Who but myself has passed the ordeal of youth, yet sees no single stain upon his conscience? Who else has subdued the violence of strong passion and an impetuous temperament and submitted even from the dawn of life to voluntary retirement?" (p.40). He prides himself on being above all sexual temptation, of being better than most men. Ambrosio is a pillar of the church, the guardian of the abbey, watching over the conduct of his brothers. He displays a vanity which makes him believe he is superior to his brothers and that he can prevail where they would fail. Yet he does acknowledge: "Am I not a man, whose nature is frail and prone to error?" (p.40). His error is his pride and vanity which makes him believe he can not only adhere to the strict rules of the community but he can exceed them. This is his internal psychological struggle, the emotional conflict which will lead to suffering, as he has underestimated the effort needed to achieve his goal.

When Ambrosio looks at the picture of the Madonna, he imagines what it would be like if she were real, created for him. Yet he says, "Never was mortal formed so perfect as this picture" (p.41). Punter suggests gothic characters, and specifically Ambrosio, lose their sense of reality, moving towards distortion, sublimation, and imaginary worlds.[18] In his mind, Ambrosio has created an idol and instilled it with a divinity when it is only the likeness of another human being, with no divine qualities. As Matilda will later inform him, she is the woman in the picture (p.81). If Ambrosio can elevate this image to the point of divinity and away from the mortal realm, then his feelings can be transformed from lust to adoration. By showing the reader Ambrosio's inner thoughts, Lewis asks us not to condemn his arrogance

[17] Peter Brooks, 'Virtue and Terror: *The Monk*', *ELH*, 40:2 (1973) 249-363 (p.257).
[18] David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fiction from 1765 to the Present Day* (Harlow: Longman, 1996), p.76.

and pride, but to recognise his humanity. The Catholic community would permit him to revere a picture of the Virgin Mary as the mother of Jesus, as part of their iconography, but not as an idol. This picture is the only maternal female image he has in a community of men. Ambrosio has stamped the character of divinity on absurdity and errors, and so he is a product of the cloistered circumstances of his upbringing. When he sees Matilda's face and realises his error, he has a problem, as his feelings cannot be transferred to a divine image; they are centred on a real woman. Suppressing his desire is now going to be difficult and as Reddy suggests he will experience emotional suffering due to goal conflict as his emotions will conflict with the piety and restraint required by the abbey.

After registering the initial shock of Rosario/Matilda's revelation, Lewis goes on to explain the reason for Ambrosio's anxiety. Lewis begins by quantifying his feelings as "a thousand opposing sentiments conflated in Ambrosio's bosom" (p.62). This not only underlines his conflicted nature, but the fact that there are so many different emotions he cannot verbalise or comprehend them all. The bosom, or heart, suggests an initial emotional and physical reaction. The emotions Lewis lists reinforce the range of conflicting feelings:

> Surprise at the singularity of this adventure, Confusion at the abrupt declaration, Resentment at her boldness in entering the Monastery, and Consciousness of the austerity with which it behoved him to reply, such were the sentiments of which He was aware, but there were others which did not obtain his notice. (p.62)

Although this passage does not refer to direct speech, due to its emotional content it is an example of Reddy's emotive language. There is a description of Ambrosio's surprise, confusion, and resentment, reinforced by Matilda's abrupt declaration and boldness, demonstrating the relational nature of her decision to enter the abbey. Ambrosio's thoughts

and reflective judgement are represented by his confusion, consciousness and resentment on a conscious level, with his subconscious being represented by those sentiments that he was not aware of and did not recognise. Previously his reaction had been instinctive – shock, awe, surprise. Ambrosio has not had to deal with his feelings for a member of the opposite sex before and he is still learning to process his emotional reactions. As the above quotation indicates, some emotions elude his understanding, which aligns with Reddy's definition of emotives. As the novel progresses, these emotional reactions become more prominent, and the consequences of his actions secondary to his desire. Ambrosio has spent his life cultivating a reputation which has elevated him above the other monks in the eyes of the public; if it were discovered that he was spending time alone with a woman, it would ruin his reputation and standing within the abbey and the wider community. Thus, his emotional response is driven by a desire to maintain his reputation within the norms and values of the emotional community. Matilda has entered an exclusively male domain. This requires Ambrosio to adopt a stern response. Only the Pope as head of the Catholic Church, could decide the punishment, or exclusion for transgression, but doing nothing puts Ambrosio at odds with the values of the emotional community. Previously, when he had retrieved Agnes's letter, planning her escape from the convent, he felt it was his duty to report the matter to the Prioress, even though he must have known there would be dire consequences (p.46). To take no action regarding Rosario/Matilda would be a dereliction of duty and hypocritical; as only he is aware of her gender, it is up to him. Ambrosio enjoys her company and his vanity is flattered by her admiration, by forcing her to leave he would lose both and he resents the fact that she has burdened him with this decision.

Locke suggests that we learn by experience and Ambrosio's emotional experience with women is limited. Lewis indicates the emotions listed were only those on the surface, of which Ambrosio was aware. He does not have the tools or the experience to recognise what

he is feeling, or how to deal with what is happening. There is also the implication that he is in denial. His vanity is flattered as Matilda speaks of his eloquence and virtue, that a lovely young woman had forsaken the world to be with him. However, the unintended consequence is that this incident awakens his inner desire. Elster argues desire can be created by opportunity,[19] something that had been repressed due to his vocation. Ambrosio is proud of his achievements and reputation as a man of God, something that will be lost if he gives in to his desire. This loss of reputation and status makes him resentful and causes goal conflict between society's expectations and his desires. The opening sections of *The Monk* therefore operate in dialogue with the broader investigation of late eighteenth-century British society, impelled by empiricist philosophies of consciousness and feeling (Locke and Hume) and newer interrogations of man as a social being (Rousseau), to work out how individual feelings are shaped by socially constructed contexts.

Agnes, like Ambrosio, suffers under the regime of another Catholic institution, but unlike Ambrosio, she is not in a position of power; she can only expose injustice through her suffering at the hands of the Prioress's cruel treatment. She is described as, "conspicuous from the nobleness of her air and elegance of her figure" (p.45). Gothic heroines are often idealised figures of beauty who arouse admiration in all men. Such idealism is often linked with repression, ensuring the heroine's continued purity. Conduct books referred to this ideal as the "proper lady", modest, restrained, and reserved. Poovey describes this notional Lady as a prominent figure in the culture, which made her "difficult for contemporaries to challenge, and at times it is difficult even for us to distinguish her from the real women who lived in her shadow. But by looking at the anxieties this image initially assuaged and the function it continued to serve, we can […] understand both why the ideal of female propriety had such

[19] Jon Elster, *Alchemies of the Mind: Rationality and the Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.30.

[…] power and how it affected […] women during these decades."[20] However, women in the last decade of the eighteenth century, following the French Revolution, harnessed its call for egalitarianism and questioned the subordination of women, criticising the contradiction between real needs and the idealised image of femininity.[21] Middle-class readers would have identified with this image of women as pure and, as Poovey suggests, morally superior, the upholder and protector of family values.[22] They would also recognise the contradiction: that this idealised image does not always correspond with real life. Repression in the Gothic often involves physical confinement and psychological pressure, warning of the consequences of being alone with a man, along with the loss of reputation. *The Polite Lady* advises "to receive favours from a stranger, indeed, which we can never return, is always disagreeable, and sometimes dangerous."[23] When Agnes drops a note, retrieved by Ambrosio, we see her physical reaction as one of terror and a realisation that there will be terrible consequences, as the letter not only advises that she intends to leave the convent with her lover, but that she is pregnant. This conflicts with the goals of the wider middle-class society that formed much of Lewis's readership, in addition to the convent rules. Fidelity was important to ensure legitimate heirs and the protection of property.[24] Agnes's response is described as a loss of bodily control: "All colour instantly faded from her face, she trembled with agitation and was obliged to fold her arms round a Pillar of the chapel to save herself from sinking on the floor" (p.45). Eighteenth-century novelists, predominantly, saw the mind as being expressed in the body's movements.[25] The blood draining from her face is an involuntary action reinforcing

[20] Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelly, and Jane Austen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p.4.
[21] Barbara Darby, 'The More Things Change … The *Rules* and Late Eighteenth Century Books for Women', *Women's Studies*, 29:3 (2000), 333-55 (p.339).
[22] Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer*, p.8.
[23] Charles Allen, *The Polite Lady or a Course in Female Education in a Series of Letters* (London: Thomas Canan, 1785), p.34.
[24] Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer*, p.5.
[25] Juliet McMaster, *Reading the Body in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.xi.

the idea that she is frightened, together with the weakness in her legs and the shaking; these bodily responses were familiar to readers in later eighteenth-century Britain.[26] Lewis wishes to emphasise that a strong emotional response is not just confined to the mind but is involuntary, and manifest in physical responses, seen by the observer. In terms of Reddy's emotives we have a description of her reaction, a performance element as seen in the body and an assessment of the consequences for the reader to consider. Agnes needs to hold on to the pillar to support herself, due to extreme anxiety. The irony is that Ambrosio believes himself to be a pillar of the church and sees himself as reinforcing the institution's, or the regime's, values by passing the note to the Prioress. This does nothing to mitigate Agnes's distress. Agnes and Ambrosio both suffer from temptation but the way their transgressions are dealt with depends on their positions of power and their gender. Agnes is subject to human punishment and Ambrosio, divine judgement.

Ambrosio's power is based not only on his position but on his presence and oratory to inspire awe and respect. To Agnes, "His words sounded like thunder in her ears" (p.46). When he preached his voice was "fraught with all the terrors of the Tempest, while He inveighed against the vices of humanity" (p.19). Yet to Antonia "when he spoke, his voice inspired me with such interest, such esteem" (p.20). Reddy's emotive here refers to the emotions of terror in terms of a physical storm and intellectual inspiration to bring about admiration. Ambrosio's voice has the potential both to terrify the guilty and inspire piety in the innocent. For Agnes: "She woke from her torpidity only to be sensible of the danger of her situation. She followed him hastily and detained him by his garment" (p.46). Torpor not only suggests shock, but an inability to act; such is her fear that it prevents her from taking immediate action. In a similar vein, Burke suggested fear robs the mind of the ability to act,

[26] On bodily responses represented in fiction and print more broadly, see G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

and his *Philosophical Enquiry* (1757), long recognised as an influence on Lewis's mode of gothic, appears to have shaped Lewis's depiction of psychological extremes.[27] If Agnes had been quicker, might she have been able to retrieve the letter before he read it? Her inaction allows the reader to know the content and take in the full horror and pain of the situation. When she does act, she is quick to adopt an attitude of submission and supplication, in contrast with Ambrosio who will seek to argue, excuse, and blame others for his transgressions. Agnes recognises she has no power to prevent him; she can only appeal for mercy. She refers to a woman's weakness and frailty, of a single fault, and how she will make reparation by dedicating herself to the church. Aristotle claimed a cathartic effect was brought out in the reader through a combination of pity and fear.[28] Poovey suggests that in late eighteenth-century culture, women's behaviour must be significantly different from that of men, who (at least at elite levels) could more readily express their wishes and choices.[29] Within these emotional communities, men have the power and authority. Even the Prioress wishes to appear worthy of respect in Ambrosio's eyes. Women need to be submissive, obedient, and compliant with the wishes of male overseers. Both Agnes's words and actions make her worthy of pity, but Ambrosio can only see the damage to his and the church's reputation. He states that she would make him an accomplice by not reporting the matter and the convent a retreat for prostitutes. Women's emotional responses, their compassion and patience, made them good mothers, but irrationality, inconsistency and lack of restraint threatened social stability if they were not controlled.[30] It could also be argued that if women conformed to the innocent ideal of the conduct books, they remained ignorant and vulnerable, as in the case of Antonia. In a culture which condemned novels for "a tendency to corrupt and

[27] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757), ed. David Womersley (London: Penguin, 1998), p.101.
[28] Eva Schaper, 'Aristotle's Catharsis and Aesthetic Pleasure,' *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 18:71 (1968), 131-43 (p.137).
[29] Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer*, p.4.
[30] Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer*, p.5.

debauch the heart,"[31] the genre was defended, by people like Anna Laetitia Barbauld, for providing vicarious and safe experiences, preparing readers for real-life challenges.[32] Ambrosio's approach to Agnes is rigid and unbending, thinking of his own reputation and pride, and how it will look to his colleagues. Although he reads the note, he does not consider the consequences, before he makes his decision. His decision is based on what is best for him and not the person standing before him. There is no compassion for someone who may be unhappy and wishes to leave somewhere she finds oppressive. There is a lack of empathy in both Ambrosio's and the Prioress's attitude through the strict implementation of the rules. Lewis portrays Ambrosio as vain, proud and imperious; the reader is not encouraged to accept him as a model leader for the Catholic community. There is a question of moral or social justice, as Agnes has gone against the rules of the convent and conventions of society. *The Polite Lady* speaks of the loss of chastity as "everything that is clear and valuable to woman, is lost along with it; the peace of their mind, the love of their friends, the esteem of the world, the enjoyment of present pleasure, and all hopes of future happiness."[33] However, the punishment which the Prioress will exert appears excessive and that is why the reader will be drawn towards sympathy rather than condemnation over loss of virtue.

The novel shows that the repression of sexual desire both inside and outside the emotional communities of the Catholic Church does not preserve virtue, instead giving rise to life-threatening consequences. Repression, as represented in the novel, not only means denying feelings of desire but believing one is in control of those desires, as an act of will, irrespective of the circumstances. Virtue became important as it formed part of the new middle-class values which stood in opposition to the commonly accepted decadence of the

[31] Allen, *The Polite Lady*, p.199.
[32] Anna Laetitia Barbauld, *On the Origins and Progress of Novel Writing* (London: F. C. & J. Rivington, 1820), p.1.
[33] Allen, *The Polite Lady*, p.196.

aristocracy.[34] In the novel ignorance makes it difficult for women to avoid compromising situations, putting these values in danger of being unintentionally undermined. Educating women to be more aware of their environment and how that environment can lead to, or prevent temptation, allows them to control the situation and protect their virtue more effectively. It is questionable whether the same could be said of Ambrosio. If Ambrosio had been better prepared to deal with Matilda's seduction, would he have had the emotional tools to resist? His education led him to repress and channel his emotions into pride and vanity, to fulfil a more authoritative male role and not a submissive, virtuous one.

The Emotional Significance of the Persecuted Heroine in *The Monk*

The innocent, persecuted heroine is the focus of attention for the antagonist in *The Monk*, as in many gothic novels. Antonia demonstrates the cultural imbalance between male and female characters along with the differences in class and power. She shows how the value of innocence reinforces vulnerability and is in greater need of protection from a male protector. Antonia is the personification of innocence and naivety in *The Monk*: "She thought the world was composed of only those who resembled her, and that vice existed was to her still a secret" (p.249). Sexual purity in *The Monk* is based on ignorance and lack of contact with the outside world.[35] This is equally true of Ambrosio and Antonia. Ambrosio is placed in an abbey from birth and Antonia is brought up in a castle in Murcia, with only her mother, Elvira, for company. This means she accepts everything at face value, as she knows no different, believing Ambrosio genuinely has her mother's best interests at heart and that she can trust both him and the institution he represents. One argument that we might see Lewis as putting

[34] Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) p.73.
[35] Carol Ann Howells, *Love, Mystery and Misery: Feeling in Gothic Fiction* (London, Athlone Press, 1978), p.68.

forward in *The Monk* is that if women were given a proper education, then they would not fall victim to their own mistakes, including being subjected to man's pride, greed, and lust.[36] Only experience allows us to assess peoples' motives: "Elvira's knowledge of the world would not be the Dupe of his sanctified demeanour, […] He resolved […] to try the extent of his influence over the innocent Antonia" (p.258). Ambrosio believes Elvira is too wise to be taken in by an outward show of spirituality and not realise his interest in her daughter, yet he also believes Antonia is too innocent to suspect or recognise his improper motives. Cloistering her has thus made her vulnerable.

Mistakes apply equally to Antonia and Elvira; she trusted Ambrosio to be alone with her daughter, based on his reputation. In the absence of a parent, the church, husband, or guardian could assume the role of protector.[37] Foresight in addition to experience is needed to make a judgement: "She had known enough of Mankind, not to be imposed upon by the Monk's reputed virtue. She reflected on several circumstances, which though trifling, on being put together seemed to authorise her fears" (p.263). Better forward thinking and planning would have prevented Ambrosio from gaining such influence to the point where Elvira feels unable to challenge him. Antonia's innocence allows Ambrosio to take advantage of being left alone with her, giving way to his unrestrained desire: "Wild with desire; He clasped the blushing Trembler in his arms […] Startled, alarmed and confused at his actions, surprise at first deprived her of her power of resistance. At length recovering herself, she strove to escape from his embrace" (p.262). When Ambrosio embraces Antonia and kisses her, her instinctive reaction is physical, blushing and trembling. She is "confused at his actions," seeing him as a friend and confidant looking after her mother's welfare. Alarmed at the physical assault Ambrosio inflicts on her, she is temporarily prevented from resisting his advances, as Lewis

[36] Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalisation of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontes* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), p.127.
[37] Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism*, p.33.

again uses the idea of torpidity in response to emotional shock. When reason returns, Antonia resists him, telling Ambrosio to release her, but he ignores her: “Antonia prayed, wept and struggled: Terrified to the extreme, though as to what She knew not” (p.262). Despite her innocence, she knows from the conduct books and what she has been taught that such intimate physical behaviour is inappropriate. Lewis describes her as praying, which is ironic considering Ambrosio is a monk. Weeping further emphasises her distress and should have been a physical sign that he should desist, along with her struggles. The fact that Ambrosio ignores the signs of her distress suggests he lacks empathy and is becoming even more self-absorbed and inward-looking, focusing only on his own needs and not the reactions of others. Previously he has shown concern for Matilda when she was ill after taking the poison, following the snake bite, but equally, this could be a sign of guilt, as she has taken his place. He feels no such compassion for Agnes when she drops her letter, and he would not have visited Elvira were she not Antonia’s mother. His training at the abbey has taught him judgement rather than empathy, to instil guilt and penance for absolution. This suggests he is governed more by the learned experience of Locke than the natural benevolence of Hutcheson. In contrast, Antonia’s innocent, naïve attitude would, by implication, make her more open to empathising with others.

Antonia, like Ambrosio, has led a sheltered life, but her experience has been based on a maternal relationship, fostering her innocence and virtue. She has been educated to be a wife and mother: not to exert authority or assert her own wishes, but to be compliant and obedient. Women may have feared marital relations, but they knew sex was their duty to their husbands. Pain, distress, and violence, in the heroine’s case, would accompany the loss of virtue, along with the loss of a good reputation. Howells argues that in gothic novels fear of sex, or in the heroine’s case, loss of virtue has overtones of Christian suffering. The heroine’s

glory is found in her suffering, as proof of her angelic nature.[38] Sexual passion is usually accompanied by violence and is outside the parameters of acceptable behaviour, in both the Catholic community of the novel's setting and the reading public which Lewis addressed. Antonia's escape comes when her mother enters the room, and to hide his actions Ambrosio releases Antonia. Elvira believes she sees shame and confusion on Ambrosio's face, although it is hard to believe this relates to his actions and not concern for his reputation. Elvira knows she cannot accuse him due to "the public being so much prejudiced in his favour" (p.263). As a woman without friends, she has no power or influence and dares not accuse without proof. This shows the power of the abbey and the vulnerability of women to the violence of unrestrained sexual desire. There is a lack of awareness by both sexes, the women for not taking precautions to be properly chaperoned and Ambrosio being consumed by his own desire, having no regard for other people's distress, or the consequences of his actions.

However, Ambrosio is not the only one blinded by his feelings. Baroness Donna Rodolpho shows that not all of Lewis's female characters are innocent and submissive. Raymond pays attention to the Baroness to gain her favour, hoping she will support his efforts to see Agnes, but laments, "I laboured incessantly to please her. Unluckily I succeeded but too well" (p.133). He describes his solicitude as a penance imposed on him. When he confesses that he is secretly in love with someone, she automatically assumes he means her:

> I can no longer hide my weakness either from myself or from you. I yield to the violence of my passion, and own that I adore you! For three long months I stifled my desires; But grown stronger by resistance, I submit to their impetuosity. Pride, fear and honour, respect for myself, and my engagement to the Baron, all are vanquished. I sacrifice them to my love for you. (p.135).

[38] Howells, *Love, Mystery and Misery*, p.12.

The Baroness is forty, but it is indicated that the years have taken their toll. Could she then reasonably expect a young man would wish to seek her hand? "Weakness," "stifled," and "resistance" emphasise her futile effort at the control and restraint that a society not permitting such feelings in a woman of her years demands. Yet "yield," "submit," and "sacrifice" undermine this by suggesting she cannot control her emotions, and like a pressure cooker which has grown stronger by keeping the lid closed, is now bursting forth. Nonetheless, necessity is presented as individual will, a failure to contain feelings, which is recognised by the Baroness as both liberating and reprehensible. Poovey suggests women's sexuality was seen as voracious and undermining self-control.[39] There are parallels here with Ambrosio's repressed sexual desire for Antonia which eventually erupts into violence and rape. "Pride," "fear," and "honour" also speak of vanity and her own self-worth, pride in her position, fear of losing her status and the respect of other people. Again, this has parallels with Ambrosio's standing as Abbott and his feelings of superiority. All the things she has listed as important have been discarded and given up as a sacrifice to profess her love for him. Yet these are the values society has instilled within her due to her gender and social position and her emotional outbursts are the resulting consequences.

When she discovers her mistake the Baroness is described as "glowing with jealousy, and almost choaked with rage" (p.142). Descartes states that jealousy comes not from the anxiety of losing something good, but from the esteem we hold it in.[40] The Baroness has previously suggested she has sacrificed pride, fear, and honour by admitting her feelings for Raymond, suggesting she holds him in very high esteem. "Glowing" along with "jealousy," "choaked" and "rage" suggests real violence, almost to the point of being life-threatening, and

[39] Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer*, p.5.
[40] René Descartes *The Passions of the Soul* (1649), ed. and trans. Michael Moriarty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), article 167, p.264.

a lack of control on her part. Hobbes argued that man's natural state was to be at war with one another, therefore, implying her aggressive jealous nature is not solely due to her status and learned behaviour. Poovey points out that there was a fear of female sexuality as it was linked to a lack of control and once awakened to a voracious appetite.[41] Submission has turned to pride, restraint to rage, and virtue to imperious self-importance. She informs Raymond that he is no longer welcome in the house and "darted upon [him] a look of pride, contempt, and malice" (p.143). The Baroness's anger is as unrestrained as were her feelings of love. Descartes suggests this type of anger is motivated by vengeance, whereby vanity increases self-esteem in relation to the value of what has been lost.[42] Pride now resurfaces and is linked with the negative emotions of contempt and malice; there is disgust that Raymond could deceive her in this way, or that she could be fooled by him. Fong suggests that as religion had become more plural it had also turned inward, lending more weight to feelings such as guilt and fear.[43] This is particularly appropriate concerning the abbey and the convent as both emotional regimes reinforce these feelings. Fong further states these internal fears and anxieties are thus projected outwards into the world through the imagination.[44] Industrialisation and movement from the authority of the aristocracy to the ideology of the middle classes, the Revolutionary Wars, and suspicion of Catholicism all contributed to public anxiety in Britain during the 1790s, which manifested in the imagination of gothic writers. They gave voice to the internal anxieties of their readers, using the supernatural. Raymond's plan is to rescue the Baroness's niece, Agnes, from the house where she is being held, but supernatural intervention complicates this rescue. Brooks suggests *The Monk* revives spiritualism after the secularisation inherent in the Enlightenment, but the sacred has lost its

[41] Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer,* p.5.
[42] Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, article 202, p.276.
[43] Benjamin Y. Fong, 'Monsters of the Brain, Images of the Deity: Psychology and Religion in the Eighteenth-Century', *The Journal of Religion*, 98.4 (2018), 519-40 (p.522).
[44] Fong, 'Monsters of the Brain, Images of the Deity', p.533.

unity and force. This had resulted, Brooks contends, in a revival of magic, taboo, superstition, and demons. Thus, virtue has been replaced by terror, and guilt is associated with fear of retribution due to transgression.[45] For Ambrosio, guilt and fear will become even more prevalent towards the end of the book when he fears retribution due to transgression.

Lewis describes Raymond escorting a real ghost away from the convent, instead of Agnes in disguise. The ghost never speaks and the journey away from the castle is frightening: "The drivers are hurled to the ground […] thick clouds obscured the sky. The winds howled around us, the lightening flashed, and the thunder roared tremendously" (p.156). Nature adds to the terrifying and sublime atmosphere created by the escape. Burke points to darkness and loud noises are characteristics of the sublime, as they shock and intimidate.[46] The sublime makes man feel small and threatened by nature's great expanse and power. Unlike Radcliffe, Lewis uses the violence of nature to reinforce the scene's horror and not to inspire reverence or awe for a power beyond man's control.

Equally Raymond's description of the Bleeding Nun reinforces the idea of supernatural horror; when he realises his mistake, it is thrilling for the reader because his description allows us to experience the horror through his eyes as it unfolds:

> She lifted up her veil slowly. What a sight presented itself to my startled eyes! I beheld before me an animated corpse. Her countenance was long and haggard. Her cheeks and lips were bloodless. The paleness of death was spread over her features, and her eyeballs fixed steadfastly upon me were lustreless and hollow.
>
> I gazed upon the spectre with horror too great to be described. My blood was frozen in my veins. I would have called out for aid, but the sound expired, ere it could

[45] Brooks, 'Virtue and Terror: *The Monk*', p.252.
[46] Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful*, p.123.

> pass my lips. My nerves were bound up in impotence, and I remained in the same attitude inanimate as a statue. (p.160)

He sets the scene by saying she lifted up the veil slowly. The sentences are short and declarative; the reader feels like they are watching this scene unfold in slow motion. Lewis wants the reader to contemplate the scene's horror and be repulsed by the decay. The ghost is gruesome, haggard, and deathly, with hollow eye-sockets and bloodless lips. In Catholicism, a restless spirit walks the earth to finish a task or resolve a problem. In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, for instance, a play that was popular on the Romantic-era stage, the hero's father's ghost manifests to challenge Hamlet to avenge his murder. Raymond's psychological response to the image of the Nun is fear. Physically this is described as his blood running cold, his inability to speak or move, and a feeling of total powerlessness waiting for the ghost to speak. Lewis has used this reaction before when Agnes waits for Ambrosio's verdict on her letter, and when Ambrosio assaults Antonia, she is similarly paralysed with fear. Here Lewis makes no distinction between fear of a person (punishment, assault) and fear of something supernatural. Descartes speaks of fear resulting from an element of surprise, a cold disturbance and astonishment of the soul that takes away the power to resist the evils that it thinks are nearby. He regards fear as harmful, as it diverts the soul from doing something useful.[47] Descartes's description of the soul and the power to resist evil speaks of a supernatural force. Yet Raymond experiences a physical presence and what Hutcheson refers to as the inclination of power to hurt.[48] Burke characterises his reaction as robbing the mind of the power to act and is the apprehension of pain or death which operates in a way to resemble physical pain.[49] The paralysing nature of fear and shock is a common device used by

[47] Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, articles 174-5, p.267.
[48] Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections* (1756), ed. Aaron Garrett (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2002), p.31.
[49] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, p.101

Lewis, which we see in Ambrosio's reaction to Matilda, and when Elvira catches him with the unconscious Antonia. Not allowing the characters to move forward due to fear, brings a pause in the action for the reader, and heightens the tension as we wait to see how the situation will be resolved.

Ghosts for Lewis are not only a source of tension but can equally be a cathartic form of comic relief when viewed by the right person. Although Lewis's novel depicts real supernaturalism, it has it both ways by catering to a rational readership that would dismiss such things as credulity. Servants, and the lower orders more generally, in *The Monk* are often portrayed as ignorant and superstitious. Even Jacintha who owns the house where Elvira and Antonia are staying will not reside in the house after Elvira's death, due to fear of her ghost. She describes her as:

> a great tall figure […] whose head touched the ceiling. The face was Donna Elvira's, I must confess; But out of its mouth came clouds of fire, its arms were loaded with heavy chains which it rattled piteously, and every hair on its head was a Serpent as big as my arm! At this I was frightened enough and began to say my Ave-Maria: But the Ghost interrupting me uttered three loud groans, and roared out in a terrible voice,
>
> "Oh! That chicken wing! My poor soul suffers for it."
>
> As soon as she had said this the ground opened, the spectre sank down, I heard a clap of thunder and the room was filled with the smell of brimstone. (p.324)

Lewis uses the senses – sight, sound, smell – to evoke and vivify the image of Elvira's ghost. Fire and brimstone speak of hell, the Catholic Ave-Maria, the tall figure, groans, chains and even the snakes of the Medusa are there to instil fear in the reader. However, Lewis undercuts the horror of the scene, by the inclusion of the chicken wing. It is hard to take Jacintha's

account of the ghost seriously. She seems to be suggesting Elvira has gone to hell for eating chicken rather than fish on a Friday. Even Ambrosio questions whether anyone else saw the ghost, the suggestion being from the description that this is a projection of her own anxieties and imagination. Compared to Raymond's description of a ghost, Jacintha is less credible, as Ambrosio's question appears to suggest, but he also sees this as an opportunity to draw near to Antonia.

Lewis uses conventional views of young women in *The Monk*, innocent, naïve and vulnerable both as a contrast to the predatory nature of the villain and heighten fear along with demonstrating the vulnerability of young women, especially those without a male protector. Their inexperience leaves them open to the seduction of more powerful and influential men. Even older women are deceived by their vanity or their own trusting nature and in death they become either grotesque or figures of fun. In comparison to Radcliffe, there is no overcoming of circumstances for women, only tragic victimhood.

Ambrosio's Demise

Critics have suggested gothic novels are full of unresolved conflicts with no repercussions, leading to no clear link between cause and effect.[50] If Ambrosio had not been confined to the abbey as a boy, he may have grown up as an ordinary member of society: The cause of his naivety is his sheltered life which has resulted in his vulnerability. "It was by no means his nature to be timid; but his education had impressed his mind with fear so strongly that apprehension was now become part of his character" (p.236). The education given to him by the abbey has shaped his mind and his personality, thus adding to the idea that this is the cause of his behaviour: "His instructors carefully repressed those virtues, whose grandeur and

[50] Howells, *Love, Mystery, and Misery*, p.13.

disinterestedness were ill-suited to the cloister. Instead of universal benevolence, he adopted a selfish partiality for his own particular establishment" (p.237). This characterisation is related to Locke's theory that we learn from experience and the environment to which we are exposed. Therefore, the lack of benevolent experience has made him selfish. When he becomes the Abbott, he must see this as the pinnacle of his career and the thought of losing it would engender extreme fear and emotional suffering.

If fear of transgression is a subconscious influence, then this may explain why applying the rules is vitally important. This will then transform an emotional refuge into a place of emotional suffering when temptation causes fear of being discovered. As part of the abbey's function is to give absolution from sin, Ambrosio would be confronted with mankind's transgressions as part of his duties. If Matilda had not entered the abbey disguised as a monk his desires would not have been awakened. However, after he consummates his relationship with Matilda, "Pleasure fled, and Shame usurped her seat in his bosom" (p.233). The rules and regulations that were there to protect him have been undermined and now if he wants to retain his position in the abbey, he must repress these feelings.

It is significant that Ambrosio blames Matilda for his actions. "'Dangerous woman!' said He; 'into what an abyss of misery have you plunged me! Should your sex be discovered, my honour, nay my life, must pay for the pleasure of a few moments. Fool that I was to trust myself to your seductions!'" (p.223). Hutcheson states that shame arises from the apprehension of the contempt of others, and honour requires the aversion of evil to be greater than the positive desire.[51] For Ambrosio, this involves the loss of reputation and honour if what he has done should be discovered. He speaks of an abyss of misery, a pit from which you cannot escape. This is the language of hell and it prefigures his eventual demise. The language is also spiritual, which speaks to the source of shame: religious doctrine. He has

[51] Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature*, p.31, 49.

succumbed to temptation and transgressed upon the rules of conduct prescribed by the abbey, as a representative of the Catholic church. These rituals and practices form part of the institutional governance with deviation eliciting what Reddy describes as emotional suffering, brought on by feelings of guilt due to goal conflict ensuing from breaking the rules. Equally these shared values and an emphasis on celibacy and discipline form the basis of an emotional community as defined by Rosenwein. The reader may feel he deserves sympathy; he admits he has made a mistake, been a fool and is sorry. However, Ambrosio shows no mercy concerning Agnes and tries to shift the blame onto Matilda by calling her a dangerous woman and a seducer. However, the balance of power has now shifted, and Matilda holds a secret that could ruin Ambrosio's reputation. The rules and values of the abbey as an emotional regime are in place to minimise transgression, protect its members from temptation and provide a spiritual example to the rest of society. By allowing a woman to remain permanently in their midst, they leave themselves open to temptation. Trying continually to repress feelings of affection and desire does not work; Lewis shows this with Ambrosio. If those values are not adhered to, then the abbey's spiritual and moral authority is undermined. Reddy states that "individual reputation rests on both a record of past action and an appreciation of the individual's mastery of emotion and conformity to emotional norms."[52] Breaching these norms causes Ambrosio to suffer and seek to blame others for his situation.

Matilda's seduction of Ambrosio is only the start of a progression downwards. Critics have suggested that gothic writers emphasize feeling and imagination in outward gestures, leaving readers to discern the inner psychological depths.[53] This is not entirely true in *The Monk*, though the novel shows an interest in how inner anxieties are manifested in the body. Ambrosio is fully aware of the guilt and shame he feels, due to his lust and his anxiety at the

[52] Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, p.57.
[53] Howells, *Love, Mystery, and Misery*, p.15.

prospect of discovery: “Guilt was new to him and he fancied that every eye could read the transactions of the night upon his countenance” (p.226). Elster defines shame as the fear of disgrace and of being the actual or anticipated target of the contempt of others.[54] Previously he had felt himself superior to the transgressions of ordinary men; now that he has fallen from grace, he feels the guilt of his actions. He becomes fearful that the public will know what he has done just by looking at him. The reader is left to interpret feelings Ambrosio is not aware of, such as paranoia, or just a guilty conscience, but Lewis does make us aware of Ambrosio’s conflicted emotions. We then begin to see the progression of these feelings: “Shame and remorse no longer tormented him. Familiar repetition made him familiar with sin” (p.235). The idea of being desensitised may be seen in his familiarity with Matilda, but Lewis goes on to explain that Ambrosio’s inner feelings are no longer troubled by his actions. The words “shame” and “remorse” are being used almost in an accusatory tone, as if Ambrosio should still feel something, but repetition has dulled his moral sense. Lewis may not give us the full spectrum of Ambrosio’s emotions but by putting him in the way of temptation, his sensitivity to sin deteriorates. Although Ambrosio is not as naïve as Antonia, he has been seduced or drawn into sin by Matilda, becoming deeply involved through witchcraft, and ultimately ending up with Satan.

The next stage in Ambrosio’s downward spiral is his pursuit of Antonia in both his thoughts and deeds, which is productive for him of emotional novelty: “The monk returned to his cell, whither he was pursued by Antonia’s image. He felt a thousand new emotions springing in his bosom” (p.242). Locke suggests we learn from our experiences and because Ambrosio’s experiences have been limited, his emotional responses will be limited, especially concerning the opposite sex. When he meets Antonia and she requests he recommend a confessor for her mother, who is gravely ill, he feels compassion and tenderness. It is

[54] Elster, *Alchemies of the Mind,* pp.71, 72.

interesting that Ambrosio feels new emotions when he meets Antonia. He previously felt compassion for Matilda when she was ill; he then felt desire and lust when he claimed Matilda seduced him. Therefore, Antonia must engender something new. She is innocent, unselfish in her requests, candid, and naïve; unlike Matilda, she has not pursued him, has not approached him sexually in any way. This is a woman he finds attractive and wants to pursue. Lewis wants to make the reader aware of the change, that there is something different about Antonia, even if the narrator does not say it explicitly: "He could not refuse himself the pleasure of passing a few moments in her society" (p.248). There is the breaking down of inner restraint. He has moved from simple compassion for her relative to his own desires and needs. He has broken his vow not to leave the abbey by going to Elvira's house. The narrator shows that slight transgressions develop into outright depravity: Ambrosio had "grown used to her modesty, it no longer commanded the same respect and awe: he still admired it, but it only made him more anxious to deprive her of that quality" (p.256). Yeazell argues that modesty in the courtship novel is not a narrow set of rules (as it might be in didactic literature) but a changing set of responses: that a modest woman arouses desire by her propriety, making modesty a problematic double bind that heroines must navigate.[55] Ambrosio has stopped valuing her good qualities; he does not regard them with contempt, but familiarity has made him take her goodness for granted, to the point where he sees it as something for him to triumph over. Mandeville defines selfishness as an act motivated by emotion and desire compared to self-denial which suppresses those emotions.[56] Lewis does not make it clear if Ambrosio resents her virtue or whether depriving her of it brings her down to his level. It would be consistent with his pride and vanity not to want to consider her

[55] Ruth Bernard Yeazell, *Fictions of Modesty: Women and Courtship in the English Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p.xi, 34.
[56] George Bragues, 'Business is One Thing, Ethics is Another: Revisiting Bernard Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees*', *Business Ethics Quarterly,* 15:2, (2005), 179-203, (p.181).

superior to himself. Lewis is reinforcing the fact that psychologically Ambrosio is allowing his own selfish needs and desires to take precedence.

Ambrosio is also cunning and astute when assessing any situation to engineer circumstances to his greatest advantage. As with a number of gothic antagonists discussed in this thesis, he shows discernment of more ingenuous people's feelings and an awareness of how to manipulate them accordingly: "He easily distinguished the emotions which were favourable to his designs and seized every means with avidity of infusing corruption into Antonia's bosom" (p.257). Ambrosio is well-versed in reading people and playing with their emotions to further his own designs. This skill would have been developed in the abbey as he sought to elevate himself above his peers. Blinded by pride and vanity, he lacks the control to resist the attention of a beautiful woman and by the time Ambrosio meets Antonia, he cannot prevent himself from attempting to corrupt an innocent woman. Lewis has already shown us a picture of Genesis, with Ambrosio being bitten by the snake in the garden. He draws a parallel between Ambrosio and the Fall of Man, based on pride and vanity. Here even the godly are susceptible to corruption and by implication so is the reader. Lewis offers hope in the person of Antonia, whose mind cannot be corrupted like St Antony, suggesting that despite the corruption of Ambrosio and the Prioress she has kept her virtue, out of love and respect for a higher power.

Ambrosio feels he no longer has a friend in God and when he seeks Matilda's help to obtain his desires, she offers him supernatural or demonic power. He rejects this at first and Matilda's response is: "It is not virtue which makes you reject my offer, you would accept it, but you dare not. Tis not the crime which holds your hand, but the punishment; 'tis not respect for God which restrains you, but the terms of his vengeance" (p.269). She is suggesting he has finally abandoned God but does not want to admit he needs the help of someone else, as he fears the consequences. Matilda is deliberately emphasising punishment

rather than mercy, ignoring the thief on the cross who entered heaven with his dying breath. For Peter Brooks, the gothic stood in opposition to Enlightenment secularisation by reasserting the sacred but in a more primitive form based on taboo and terror, not virtue.[57] Thus spirituality becomes a negative enforcement rather than a positive affirmation. Brooks goes on to say, that with nothing sacred to ground morality in, guilt and innocence become polarised into purity and pollution where everything becomes permissible.[58] Lewis demonstrates this polarisation with Ambrosio, the Prioress and Matilda on one side, and Antonia and Lorenzo on the other. Under Ambrosio, the Catholic church is corrupt and Antonia, in contrast, represents the purity of the faith under the Protestant ethos of the priesthood of all believers which would have been shared at this time by the majority of the readership.

Terror and punishment are not confined to Ambrosio. When Agnes fails to escape from the convent, the Prioress seeks to punish her, to ensure her reputation is not diminished in Ambrosio's eyes: "After disgracing me in the presence of Madrid's Idol, of the very Man on whom I most wished to impress an idea of the strictness of my discipline?" (p.230). By raising Ambrosio to such an exalted status, she adds to his pride and vanity but equally intimates that any transgression will look more serious. The Prioress suggests he will be impressed by her strictness as if punishment is the epitome of virtue. Agnes has disobeyed her parents' wishes by seeking to leave the convent. Burke saw the conflict between individual desire and social duty as an illusion created by individualism, arguing that freedom came with some internal or external restraints, and subservience and hierarchy brought proud submission, dignified obedience, and exalted freedom.[59] Burke emphasises duty and restraint: if we do our duty and conform to society's values, our desires will align with submission,

[57] Brooks, 'Virtue and Terror: *The Monk*', p.249.
[58] Brooks, 'Virtue and Terror: *The Monk*', p.263.
[59] Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), p.26.

obedience, and freedom, and there will be no conflict. This is the argument of the emotional regime: that keeping within the rules benefits society. The problem occurs, as the novel suggests when the emotional regime is corrupted due to individuals prioritising their own desires over the values of the community. This brings about distortions and extreme outcomes. One of the nuns pleads on Agnes's behalf, "would you be persuaded to mitigate the severity of your sentence, would you deign to overlook this first transgression" (p.230). This is the idea of a first offence which will not be repeated. However, the Prioress has taken Agnes's behaviour as a personal insult and seeks to enforce the rules "by punishing Agnes with all the rigour of which our severe laws admit" (p.230). Even the Prioress realises that the values of the emotional regime which she seeks to implement are extreme and its laws severe. She chooses to justify her behaviour by saying: "I wish not for your death but your repentance […] I will purify you with wholesome chastisement" (p.407). The reader could be forgiven for thinking she was only concerned for Agnes's immortal soul were she not trying to drug her and prolong her suffering. Agnes, in turn, is not concerned for herself but for her unborn baby and pleads for mercy only to receive the Prioress's scorn: "Dare you plead for the produce of your shame? Shall a creature be permitted to live, conceived in guilt so monstrous?" (p.410). The Prioress takes the view that the baby was conceived in sin and is therefore condemned before it is born. This strict interpretation of the rules makes the emotional regime of the convent oppressive and legalistic leading to emotional suffering. Any suggestion of mercy is brutally quashed.

When Lorenzo finds Agnes in the crypt, he does not recognise her; she is described as "a Creature spread on a bed of straw, so wretched, so emaciated, so pale, that He doubted to think her Woman […] One wasted Arm hung listlessly upon a tattered rug, which covered her convulsed and shivering limbs. The Other was wrapped round a small bundle and held it closely to her bosom" (p.369). This is the physical manifestation of the brutality of the

emotional regime under the Prioress, its imagery comparable to images of imprisonment produced in the wake of the French Revolution.[60] The physical description – pale, emaciated, wasted and wretched – reinforces not only the neglect but the torture she has endured. She is listless, compared to the gay nature Raymond had described when he first met her. "Convulsed and shivering" indicates she is not only starving to death but is physically sick and in need of medical attention. The painful sensation arising from this scene of misery is softened by the sympathy we feel; which enables the reader to see these scenes without "flying from them with disgust and horror".[61] There is a need for compassion, not judgment, on the part of the reader. Rita Felski defines empathy as an awareness of other people's feelings, in addition to responding in a compassionate manner. She also suggests empathy in the eighteenth century was a way of binding readers into a community by opposing egoism and self-interest.[62] For the Prioress, her pride and gratification come from applying the rules rigidly, ensuring those who transgress suffer. Therefore, an emotional community which values empathy would be united to support the heroine against a strict catholic regime.

It is significant that for the convent Lewis provides a redeeming voice in Mother St Ursula who carries the heart in the procession. She is the main witness against the Prioress, stating: "She has abused the power intrusted to her hands, and has been a Tyrant, a Barbarian and a Hypocrite." (p.355). When the people want to enact their own justice, Ramirez informs them that the Prioress has not received a trial and the rule of law must prevail. This is the voice of reason attempting to counteract the impetuous nature of an angry mob. Ambrosio faces a different kind of justice at the hands of the Inquisition, as his offences have a more demonic element: "Near an hour passed away, and with every second of it Ambrosio's fears

---

[60] See for example *The Bastille: A History of a Symbol of Despotism and Freedom*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink and Rolf Reichardt (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).
[61] Anna Laetitia Barbauld, 'On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror, *Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose* (London: J. Johnson. 1773), p.77.
[62] Rita Felski, 'Identifying with Characters,' in *Character*, ed. Amanda Anderson, Rita Felski and Torill Moi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), p.106.

grew more poignant" (p.422). This is the idea that time increases fear because the imagination creates a more horrific image than reality. Ambrosio is required to admit to rape, murder, and sorcery, as the Inquisitors are "determined to make him confess not only the crimes he had committed but those also of which he was innocent" (p.424). The Inquisition is part of the wider emotional regime of the Catholic Church, which seeks to apply strict rules of confession and absolution, to the point where a person would confess to transgressions they did not commit, to minimise torture. Angela Wright argues the Inquisition located in Spain represented a harsh form of Catholic tyranny in the British imagination, but not even this could overshadow the novel's earlier moral message.[63] Ambrosio fears death because it implies judgment, but instead of acknowledging his guilt, he is involved in a "desperate rage" (p.426), claiming deception, ignorance, and excuses. When he sleeps, his dreams take him to "sulphurous realms and burning caverns, surrounded by fiends appointed his tormentors" (p.426). This is a very dark and frightening view of hell. He sees Antonia and Elvira as ghosts for the prosecution testifying against him to his tormentors. When he summons the demon "a loud burst of thunder was heard; The prison shook to its very foundations; A blaze of lightning flashed through the cell; […] borne on sulphurous whirl-winds, Lucifer stood before him a second time" (p.432-33). Burke's image of sublime terror is shown in the thunder, the shaking, the bright light, and the noxious sulphur smell. Ambrosio clings to the possibility of forgiveness, but when the devil appears, he mocks such a belief: "Hope you that your offence shall be bought off by prayers of superstitious dotards and droning Monks?" (p.434). Catholic penance consisted of contrition for sins, confession to a priest and atonement, then absolution could be given which meant eternal suffering in hell could be avoided.[64] The devil mocks him for thinking it will be that easy to escape punishment for what he has done. Ambrosio and the

[63] Angela Wright, 'Spain in Gothic Fiction', in *Spain in British Romanticism*, ed. Diego Saglia and Ian Haywood (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p.178.
[64] Elwin Hofman, 'A Wholesome Cure for the Wounded Soul: Confession, Emotions, and Self in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Catholicism,' *Journal of Religious History*, 42:2 (2018), 222-241, (p.225).

Prioress have caused emotional suffering due to their extreme implementation of the rules of the community and their punishment must reflect this. For Agnes and Raymond, the reader may feel they have suffered enough at the hands of authority and be more sympathetic towards their transgression.

Ambrosio has been socialised into a repressive, legalistic regime and when circumstances arise to challenge this, he does not know how to react. His isolation within the abbey has not prepared him for the temptations of ordinary life, and his lack of experience prevents him from engaging sympathetically with his fellow man. Agnes gives into temptation breaking the rules of the convent and wider society by becoming pregnant. She is punished by society's institutions for breaking the norms and values prescribed for single women. Ambrosio as part of the establishment and in a position of authority is outside the normal hierarchy and therefore Lewis uses a higher spiritual authority to enact punishment for not only a lack of self-control but defiance. Agnes may have made a mistake, but Ambrosio uses violence to impose his will and by crossing this line he steps outside the bounds of community values.

Responses to *The Monk*

This chapter has argued that *The Monk*'s representation of emotions aims to expose the inhibiting effects of emotional regimes that are repressive and doctrinaire. The novel was of course provocative, stirring a range of responses, creative and critical, and I will now look at how early readers reacted to Lewis's novel on those precise terms. The society into which *The Monk* landed in 1796 held views – some residual, some inchoate, some emergent – about various issues that the novel touched upon. These include the impressionability of youth; the desirable exemplary but also artistic quality of fiction; suitable behaviours for men and

women based on gender and class ideals; the appropriate conduct of those with institutional authority; national and religious identity; and the relationship of the natural world which can be empirically rendered to a supernatural or spiritual plane of existence. As Willaim St Clair points out, there is scant information in terms of the letters and diaries of real readers, and even if specific information could be obtained, there is no guarantee that the sample would be representative. However, we can use the concepts of the implied and critical reader, based on the information found in the text, the genre conventions and the political and historical background, to judge what the author intended to communicate to the reader.[65] This section posits that *The Monk* served as a lightning rod, stimulating censure in an emotional community in the 1790s that was suspicious of social, political, and religious change.

The views of the critics and readers upon reading a new work are referred to as its reception and can be both good and bad. Hans Robert Jauss, in his work on reception, refers to works not being experienced in a vacuum. He refers to previous works pre-disposing readers to expect certain characteristics, most obviously genre conventions but also sociocultural positions, based on what has come before. These are the horizons of expectation readers bring to a work. In the case of *The Monk*, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* introduced the supernatural, aristocratic tyrants, and sinister castles, alongside sensibility, virtue in distress, and the exercise of the reader's sympathy in gothicised foreign locations. Jauss states that these expectations can be changed, reorientated, continued, or ironically fulfilled.[66] *Otranto* then formed the primary horizon of expectations from which subsequent gothic novels in the later eighteenth century were judged. The aesthetic distance then becomes the difference between the old and the new horizons of expectation and the reaction of the

[65] William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp.4-5.
[66] Hans Robert Jauss 'Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory', *New Literary History*, 2:1 (1970), 7-37 (p.12).

readers and critics.[67] It is by pushing the boundaries and challenging expectations that Lewis exposed what the cultural materialist critic Alan Sinfield referred to as faultlines. These are latent conflicts or contradictions within dominant ideologies which works of literature sometimes lay bare, even inadvertently. Sinfield argues that hegemonies establish plausible concepts and systems to explain who we are, how we relate to others, and how society functions. Social institutions, be they political or religious, propound the prevailing ideology, producing stories that are difficult for subordinate groups to challenge.[68] Reddy refers to these ceremonies, fashions, rituals, moral standards, codes of honour and decorum as contributing to styles of management which shape emotional life. To look at the significance of these works we need to look at the strength or failure of emotional management.[69] Where they are successful, they establish their own interactive plausibility. The gothic novels published at the turn of the nineteenth century look at class, race, religion, gender, and sexuality; in some respects, they cleave to the dominant ideologies (such as female subordination or Protestant dominance), but they challenge readers' expectations too. As Sinfield suggests, literature can alert us to unresolved plausibility issues for the dominant ideology.[70] Therefore dominant ideologies are always under pressure to justify their claim to plausibility in the face of diverse opposition.[71] The negative views of critics reacting to *The Monk* can be seen as the establishment trying to undermine the plausibility of gothic authors to reinforce the dominant ideology.

Between 1796 and 1798, six editions of *The Monk* were published. The first was published anonymously, only with subsequent editions acknowledging Lewis as a sitting MP.

---

[67] Jauss, 'Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory', p.14.
[68] Alan Sinfield, *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and Political Dissent in Reading* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p.33.
[69] William Reddy, 'Sentimentalism and its Erasure,' *The Journal of Modern History*, 72:1 (2000), 109-52, (p.119).
[70] Sinfield, *Faultlines*, p.47.
[71] Sinfield, *Faultlines*, p.41.

Critics focussed on what they saw as the immoral nature of the book. Lewis extended the concept of the supernatural from ghosts to demonic influence. The early reception of the book exposed a faultline in the dominant concept that literature had an exemplary function, that it existed to promote virtue and denounce vice. *The European Review* in passing judgment on the book states: "Neither morals nor religion will acknowledge themselves benefitted by a work whose great scope and purport it is to show, that the fairest face and resemblance of virtue is commonly a cloak to the most horrible crimes."[72] Yet it does appear to be Lewis's intention to show that evil does not have to be portrayed as a tyrant, sinister and ugly. 2 Corinthians 11:14 states "Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light"[73] as a warning not to be deceived. *The Analytical Review* refers to Ambrosio's seduction by Matilda as "artfully conceived" saying "who could resist even devilish spells, conducted with such address and assuming such a heavenly form."[74] It is significant that the reviewer considers readers in the position of the seduced, as the implication is that Ambrosio is deserving of sympathy, being deceived by "more than mortal weapons." Parts of *The Monk* are focalised through Ambrosio, which promotes this identification between the villain and the reader, but this sympathy is not maintained, as the narrative takes steps, using more third-person commentary in its later stages, to censure Ambrosio by identifying pride as a flaw in his character which brings about his downfall. Sinfield's theory of hegemony would suggest that absolutist institutions, like the abbey, cannot be seen to suffer from any flaw and the corrupting influence therefore enters the abbey from the outside in the form of the devil.[75] However, by making Ambrosio initially a victim, Lewis undermines the idea that the Catholic Church was not complicit in his downfall through the "unnatural" vows of chastity.[76] This exposes the hypocrisy of the Catholic Church

[72] *The European Review*, 31:2 (1797) 111-115, (p.112).
[73] NIV, 2 Corinthians 11:14.
[74] *The Analytical Review*, 24:10 (1796) 403-4 (p.403).
[75] Sinfield, *Faultlines*, p.40.
[76] Steven Blakemore, 'Matthew Lewis's Black Mass: Sexual, Religious Inversion in *The Monk*', *Studies in the Novel*, 30:4 (1998) 521-39 (p.521).

and reinforces the Protestant position that celibacy is a corrupting influence. *The European Review* takes a different view when speculating why Lewis has resorted to the revival of sorcery and the spirits of darkness.

> If it was our Author's intention, which we would not willingly suppose, to attack religious orders, and, of course, religion itself, by exhibiting the extreme depravity of its most eminent disciples, he will, in the opinion of all sound judges, be considered not only as having failed of his intention, but as having paid an honourable tribute, the more valuable for being undesigned, to ecclesiastical establishments.[77]

The reviewer's positive support for religious institutions appears to rest on the improbability of demonic influence and mankind's frailty in the face of temptation. *The Critical Review* refers to Ambrosio's pride in his "undeviating rectitude, and severe to the faults of others."[78] Ambrosio is not only sure of his own correct viewpoint and personal achievements but is excessively critical and judgemental of others, demonstrating a lack of empathy. He delivers Agnes into the cruel hands of the abbess, yet he breaks his vow of chastity without suffering any immediate consequence. Although Lewis introduces a demonic agent to initiate Ambrosio's downfall, he also exposes his human faults reinforced by the governing institution. Thinking about Jauss's and Sinfield's theories, we see that *The Monk* upset prevailing views of religion, and the backlash it provoked indicates a cultural effort to shore up dominant positions.

In *The Pursuit of Literature* (1797) Thomas Matthias referred to *The Monk* as lurid and blasphemous.[79] He censures the novel for the fact that it has been written by a member of the House of Commons responsible for upholding the law, faith, and good manners of the

---

[77] *The European Review*, 31:2 (1797) 111-15, (p.112).
[78] *The Critical Review*, 19:2 (1797), 194-200 (p.194).
[79] *Gothic Readings; the First Wave 1764-1840*, ed. Rictor Norton (Leicester: Leicester University Press.2000) p.292.

country.[80] Labelling the work blasphemous gave the establishment greater power to censure the work. The legal definition of blasphemy was profane scoffing at the Holy Scriptures or exposing them to contempt and ridicule. It was punishable by common law with a fine, imprisonment, or corporal punishment.[81] Such was the fear that the book would contaminate public morals, twelve months after publication the Attorney General was instructed by the Society for the Suppression of Vice to produce an injunction preventing its sale. Although the ruling was obtained, it was not made absolute and never enforced.[82] Lewis in a letter to his father on 23 February 1798 states that despite the negative reception of the novel, he must not doubt his "intentions or the purity of his principles."[83] He goes on to claim that, it is the explicit language – presumably referring to lewd and blasphemous references – and not the story which has offended the critics. He argues that the book is based on an article published in *The Guardian* on 31 August 1713 by Joseph Addison, whom he considers one of the country's great moralists.[84] Concerning the criticism of being irreligious, he felt his critics had been unfair in singling out one passage.[85] Lewis appears to be suggesting that Elvira is right to censor Antonia's reading of the bible and that young minds would not appreciate and understand certain passages. In practice, bible reading for young women was selective and therefore Lewis was only making public the workings of middle-class ideology.[86] The public's taste for the wild and extravagant had continued to grow following the publication of *Otranto* and by the time Lewis wrote *The Monk* they delighted in a book they would be ashamed to own.[87] The novel extended the extravagance found in *Otranto* by referring to the supernatural,

---

[80] Andre Parreaux, *The Publication of the Monk: A Literary Event 1796-1798* (Paris: Libraine Didier, 1960) p.107.
[81] Parreaux, *The Publication of the Monk,* p.94.
[82] Kenneth Matheson Taylor, *The Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis*, (London: Henry Colburn, 1889) p.153.
[83] Taylor, *The Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis*, p.155.
[84] Taylor, *The Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis*, p.156.
[85] Taylor, *The Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis*, p.157.
[86] Jacqueline Howard, *Reading Gothic Fiction: A Bakhtinian Approach* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994), p.234.
[87] Taylor, *The Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis*, p.160.

including German tales such as The Bleeding Nun and Wandering Jew. Although these incidents would have been viewed as superstitious or unrealistic it is the charge of blasphemy that made the book controversial and brought Lewis into conflict with the establishment.

Jauss argues a literary work is not received in a vacuum but pre-disposes its readers into forming a definite type of reception based on familiar characteristics, textual strategies, and intertextual relations. These expectations form a potent frame of reference for any new work.[88] It is significant, therefore, that in a review of *The Monk* in *The Analytical Review* the critic suggests that "the language and manners of the personages are not sufficiently gothic in their colouring, to agree with the superstitious scenery, borrowed from those times."[89] Linking language, manners, gothic, and superstition suggests the reviewer already has certain expectations of the genre and Lewis has deviated from them. Manfred (*Otranto*) and Montoni (*Udolpho*) are both tyrannical aristocrats. Ambrosio although in a position of authority is also a victim of repressed desires, making him both a victim and a villain. Lewis's treatment of Catholicism is also irreverent: Antonia and Leonella attend church to be seen, not out of any spiritual conviction; Ambrosio's picture of the Madonna turns out to be a demon in disguise; and Elvira's ghost is the source of levity over a chicken wing. Thus, if the expectation of gothic imagery is dark, sombre, and suspenseful, then Lewis undermines this with his irreverent attitude. The reviewer goes on to say: "They want the sombre cast of ignorance, which renders credulity probable; still the author deserves praise for not attempting to account for supernatural appearance in a natural way."[90] In the episode of the Bleeding Nun, Agnes states she does not believe in superstition, but the Baroness does. When Don Raymond collects the ghost, he believes it is Agnes and is ignorant of her real form until she appears in his chamber. There is ignorance on the part of some of the characters, but the reader may

[88] Jauss, 'Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory', pp.11-12.
[89] *The Analytical Review*, 24:10 (1796), 403-4 (p.404).
[90] *The Analytical Review*, 24:10 (1796), 403-4 (p.404).

question the credibility of a ghost being mistaken for a real person. By not explaining the supernatural and making it appear a natural occurrence, Lewis is leaving the question of belief to the reader.

Jaqueline Howard argues Lewis's style as an author is based on the unconventional, eccentric, and extreme, being prepared to shock to gain a reputation for genius.[91] The idea of setting himself apart from other authors was important to Lewis. The author of the *Critical Review*'s response to *The Monk* begins by bemoaning the vast number of books published that lack variety and are constantly imitated. There is an acknowledgement by the critic that in Matilda the author has created a masterpiece along with supernatural elements copied from Schiller. However, the reviewer goes on to argue that although *The Monk* has much to recommend it, its biggest flaw is that "All events are levelled into one common mass, and become almost equally probable, where the order of nature may be changed whenever the author's purposes demand it."[92] The reviewer claims there is no structural design and no obstacles for the characters to overcome. Female characters were often cast as victims in gothic novels, and Antonia and Agnes seem to fulfil that role. However, after succumbing to Matilda's seduction Ambrosio would have to overcome the shame and loss of reputation upon breaking his vows. The reviewer goes on to complain that despite the characters having nothing to overcome "the sufferings which he describes are so frightful and intolerable, that we break with abruptness from the delusion, and indignantly suspect the man of a species of brutality, who could find a pleasure in wantonly imagining them; […] no observation of character can justify, because no good man would willingly suffer them to pass, however transiently, through his mind."[93] Although Radcliffe's characters do suffer, she distinguished

[91] Jacqueline Howard, *Reading Gothic Fiction*, p.184.
[92] *The Critical Review*, 19:2 (1797), 194-200 (p.194).
[93] *The Critical Review*, 19:2 (1797), 194-200 (p.195).

her work from Lewis's by labelling her work gothic terror, based on suspense, and his gothic horror, a more visceral graphic depiction, a view this critic appears to agree with.

Matilda's corruption is referred to by the *Critical Review* as "lewd and voluptuous" suggesting such sexual imagery fosters corruption of the reader:

> We believe it not absolutely impossible that a mind may be so deeply depraved by the habit of reading lewd and voluptuous tales, as to use even the Bible in conjuring up the spirit of uncleanness. The most innocent expressions might become the first link in the chain of association, when a man's soul had been so poisoned; and we believe it not absolutely impossible that he might extract pollution from the word of purity, and, in a literal sense, turn the grace of God into wantonness.[94]

The reviewer here does not appear to be just singling out Lewis's book but novels in general as the mind is depraved due to reading corrupting works. The reviewer goes on to suggest that although *The Monk* has some merit in terms of style, "all the faults and immoralities ascribed to novels will be found realised in the Monk; murders, incest, and all the horrid and aggravated crimes which it is possible to conceive, appear in every chapter, and are dwelt on with seeming complacency, without any apparent intention of advantage to the reader from such a recital."[95] Yet as the publication, in English, of Karl Grosse's *Horrid Mysteries* (1796) shows, despite the complaints of contemporary moralists, it was not alone in including erotic elements.[96] Lewis is not unique in including sexual content in his novel, neither is his use of the devil unusual as Marlowe had used Satan in *Dr Faustus* and Milton in *Paradise Lost*. However, as Blakemore suggests, by feminising Ambrosio, making him chaste and vulnerable to seduction and concerned for his reputation, female readers could relate to him.[97] Felski

---

[94] *The Critical Review*, 19:2 (1797), 194-200 (p.198).
[95] *The Scots Magazine*, 64:7 (1802), 545-48 (p.547).
[96] Parreaux, *The Publication of the Monk*, p.28.
[97] Blakemore, 'Matthew Lewis's Black Mass', p.523.

describes the process of identifying with a character as alignment, allegiance, recognition and empathy. The reader's view is formally lined up with those of the character, their ethical and political values, recognising their feelings and either sympathising or empathising with them.[98] Thus the reviewer cites an association between the ideas of the author and those of real life. Hume discusses how simple ideas are united by association in the imagination, through resemblance, continuity and cause and effect.[99] Women would recognise the loss of reputation caused by the loss of chastity associated with a specific event in time. Where Lewis departs from previous novels is in his corruption of biblical images. As part of her seduction, Matilda has her features included in a picture of the virgin Mary. Ambrosio projects his repressed lust onto the picture corrupting something that should be revered as holy. Lewis would consider this as another example of the hypocrisy of the Catholic church but in the reviewer's eyes, Lewis has overstepped the boundaries. To undermine the plausibility of this story the dominant ideology needs to undermine or discredit these ideas, hence the extension of Biblical corruption to a charge of blasphemy.

Objections were not only confined to the novel's depiction of demonic influence but included the graphic depiction of the corruption of the innocent by human agents. *The Critical Review* denounced the "shameless harlotry of Matilda and the trembling innocence of Antonia"; it calls *The Monk* "a poison for youth and a provocative for the debauchee."[100] The idea articulated by this reader of femininity polarised between the ideal virgin and the unideal whore feeds into the eighteenth century's view of women and readers' expectations that female characters are either one or the other. Gilbert and Gubar refer to this as the damning otherness of the flesh or inspiring otherness of the spirit. They argue the assertive aggression of masculinity is monstrous in a woman who should adhere to a selfless life of gentle purity in

[98] Felski, 'Identifying with Character', pp.93-95.
[99] Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, p.58.
[100] *The Critical Review*, 19:2 (1797), 194-200 (p.197).

line with the conduct books.[101] The fracture or faultline in this patriarchal ideology is revealed by the reviewer's impatience with the clichéd "trembling innocence," an unconvincing caricature of proper womanhood that shows a taste for plausible fiction cutting against a societal demand that female characters behave a certain way. A challenge to this binary reading is Agnes, who becomes pregnant before eventually marrying Don Raymond and then promises to be a good wife (p.417). If the heroine is traditionally rewarded with marriage for preserving her chastity and conforming to society's expectations, then Agnes should have perished not Antonia. The detail of Ambrosio as a feminised character being seduced by Matilda exposes the danger young women face, but equally, when he becomes the male aggressor, the reader is exposed to his licentious desire. The danger is that some readers may delight in Ambrosio's behaviour which society condemns. If young people were not encouraged to read Song of Songs, then a work of fiction considered licentious and blasphemous would be seen as undermining moral values.

Lord Jeffrey, a columnist for the *Edinburgh Review* labelled novels found in the circulating library as trash and rubbish. His main objection was, that they were likely to produce a disgust for more serious reading.[102] However, there was a growing awareness that novels depicting vice in its true colours could have a moral function: as Anna Laetitia Barbauld points out in *On the Origin and Progress of Novel-Writing* it is better to meet "selfishness, profligacy and perfidy" for the first time in the pages of a novel than in real life.[103] If Locke is correct and learning comes through experience then reading allows the reader to vicariously experience vice without indulging in it. As Barbauld states vice may be "presented in its naked deformity"[104] and as such exaggerated beyond the subtleties of real

[101] Sandra M Gilbert and Susan Gubar, The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination (1979, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020), p.28.
[102] W. F. Gallaway, 'The Conservative Attitude towards Fiction, 1770-1830', *PMLA*, 55:4 (1940), 1041-59 (p.1041).
[103] Barbauld, *On the Origin and Progress of Novel-Writing*, pp.13-14.
[104] Barbauld, *On the Origin and Progress of Novel-Writing*, p.14.

life, but it is still useful for provoking discussion, not mere instruction. The didactic imperative of fiction was becoming eroded, and the reception of *The Monk* reveals something of that direction in the reception of fiction. *The Ladies Monthly Museum* prompted a discussion in 1798 with the publication of E.A.'s "On the good effects of bad novels" where it was pointed out that bad novels are universally read, despite the contempt in which they are held the writer maintains they encourage people to read who would not normally read.[105] The large number of books published led to criticism that they were of inferior quality, however, the reviewer still feels enlightened and splendid individuals serve to illuminate the positive whilst the rest disappear into the night.[106] The review indirectly suggests that readers are aware of "good" and "bad" novels and can distinguish between the two. M's reply in December blames imitators who take the more controversial passages of Richardson's *Clarissa* and *Pamela*, which were deemed a high standard of novelistic rectitude, creating bad novels and rendering their books inappropriate for the eyes of innocent female readers.[107] The writer maintains innocent females are those who do not read widely and do not have the experience to discern between "good" and "bad" literature. For those not ashamed to read a good novel as relief from the more serious study such reading does no harm.[108] A distinction is made between the well-educated female reader and those with a limited education. If E.A. is to be believed novel reading can encourage wider reading in more serious subjects.

Lewis had read Radcliffe's work, as demonstrated in his letter to his mother of 18 May 1794, where he recommended *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) with the qualification that it was dull at first but when Emily returned home after her father's death it became one of the most interesting books he had read.[109] Through his knowledge of German literature, he sought

[105] *The Lady's Monthly Museum*, 1;10 (1798), 258-63 (pp.258-9).
[106] *The Lady's Monthly Museum*, 1;10 (1798), p.259.
[107] *The Lady's Monthly Museum*, 1:10 (1798), 434-37 (p.435).
[108] *The Lady's Monthly Museum*, 1:10 (1798), p.435.
[109] Taylor, *The Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis,* pp.123-24.

to expand the boundaries of the gothic novel to include more radical elements, ones challenging the sensibilities of his readers and pushing at the dominant view that literature should present morally wholesome events. Extending this live debate, in *The Crimes of Love* (1800), the Marquis de Sade argued that "it is not always by showing the triumph of virtue that a writer wins over the reader;" When virtue is tested by severe trials and crushed by vice then our souls will be torn and moved creating the kind of interest which guarantees success.[110] The destructive nature of vice for which Ambrosio is ultimately punished according to Sade's argument makes the novel memorable. This suggestion echoes Lewis's comment on Radcliffe that the novel is only interesting when Emily undergoes suffering. In comparing the two authors Sade refers to the reliance on "witchcraft and phantasmagoria" and expresses his evaluation that *The Monk* is superior in every respect to the "strange outpourings of the brilliant imagination of Mrs Radcliffe."[111] Sade argues the difficulty of explaining the supernatural and risking the reader's credulity or explaining nothing and being implausible, a problem not solved by Radcliffe or Lewis.[112] The necessity of superstition and demonic influence Sade claimed needed to be introduced to compete with the adversity of current events. This suggests novel reading may provide an emotional refuge from the domestic and foreign upheavals at the time.

In conclusion, *The Monk* is not just a tale of terror as it has previously been categorised but gives powerful examples of corruption and emotional suffering under a strict emotional regime. Abbott Ambrosio has the authority to enforce the rules, but his education and experience in the abbey have made him proud and vain. By using Rosenwein's theory of emotional regimes I have shown how the rigid and oppressive emotional expectations within

[110] Sade, *The Crimes of Love: Heroic and Tragic Tales, Preceded by An Essay on Novels* (1800) ed. and trans. David Coward, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p.11.
[111] Sade, *The Crimes of Love*, p.13.
[112] Sade, *The Crimes of Love*, p.14.

the abbey create an environment where hypocrisy and repression thrive. This emotional regime, which demands a façade of piety and self-control, fails to equip Ambrosio with the tools to deal with his feelings and forces him to repress his desires. The result is guilt and suffering explained by Reddy in terms of goal conflict and emotional suffering.

However, Lewis' treatment of his female characters is less innovative and thus less interesting. Despite his desire to be seen as an original voice among his peers, his female characters typically conform to the literary stereotypes of the time, being either naive and vulnerable (Antonia) or sexually voracious and dangerous (Matilda). There were ways in which Lewis could potentially have developed his female characters more fully, by exploring how women struggle to achieve society's expectations of the "proper lady", requiring them to be obedient, restrained and submissive: an emotional regime that operates in parallel to and is reinforced by the prescriptions of the Catholic Church. However, Lewis failed to explore and develop this parallel fully. Nevertheless, overall Lewis's novel is noteworthy for its exploration of the religious and social institutions of a Spanish community whose strictures on emotions and conduct are hostile to the values of the English Enlightenment. Furthermore, the early reception of Lewis's novel attests to incipient changes on the part of the reading public: as the novel was controversial, it reveals tensions between demands from readers that fiction upholds the exemplary function of literature and an emergent standard that indicated believability was necessary as part of a readerly education in seduction and adversity.

Chapter Three

Managing the Emotions in Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797)

Ann Radcliffe was one of the most celebrated authors of gothic fiction in the late eighteenth century, and set the standard for many gothic novelists to follow with her use of the explained supernatural and female-centred narrative. Unlike in the work of Lewis, her heroines do not passively accept their situations, yet neither do they totally defy convention by stepping outside the bounds of a "proper lady". In this chapter, I explore how Ellena, Radcliffe's heroine in *The Italian* navigates the tension between personal agency and societal expectations, using her intellect, courage, and moral strength to overcome the challenges she faces. I consider, for example, the moment when she uses righteous indignation to assert her individuality against the oppression of the abbess and the aristocratic Marchesa. Radcliffe also departs from Lewis in her treatment of Catholic institutions: in *The Monk*, these institutions seem to be uniformly oppressive, but in *The Italian*, Radcliffe introduces a greater sense of nuance by making a distinction between the two convents based on the attitudes of their leaders. The first religious community that Ellena enters is oppressive and legalistic and linked with the traditional aristocratic status quo and the second is shaped by the leader's liberal benevolent individualism associated with Protestant values. This separation of the two convents demonstrates how emotional communities are shaped by the values of the community and how those values are changing in the move from one generation to the next.

The emergence of the gothic novel in Britain at the end of the eighteenth century has been read as part of the broader cultural need to resurrect the sacred and transcendent, in a modern secular world that increasingly denied the existence of supernatural forces, and as the

rebellion of imagination against reason.[1] This thesis considers how gothic novels relate to the larger cultural project of containing and controlling emotions and depicting affective extremities to guide readers towards a more balanced, ethically responsible, and socially normative state of mind. *The Italian* provides a pertinent case study of emotional regulation when compared to *The Monk*, rather than the more commonly used *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Radcliffe seeks to convey an atmosphere of suspense and terror, compared to the shock and horror cultivated by Lewis's *The Monk*. Radcliffe creates fear and anxiety through suspense, the experience of not knowing what will happen to characters undergoing intense duress. In contrast to Lewis, Radcliffe seeks to give a rational explanation for events which may be interpreted as supernatural. It does this through its emotive effects and the resolutions offered by explained supernaturalism, through its modelling of emotions in characters, and its treatment of emotional regimes and communities, *The Italian* encourages emotional management in line with developing models of bourgeois subjectivity and affective individualism.

Unlike many other eighteenth-century gothic novels, from *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) onwards, which have a medieval setting, *The Italian* begins in 1758. It is centred on Naples, and by setting the novel in Catholic Italy Radcliffe can incorporate elements that would have resonated with early readers as threateningly outlandish, such as monasteries, convents, and prisons of the Inquisition. In the novel, these are, to adopt Barbara Rosenwein's term, emotional communities that in various ways police and inhibit acceptable mental and affective states in the service of church and state, the interests of these institutions come into conflict with individual rights and desires.[2] All the characters are Italian, but Schedoni is

[1] Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), p.3.
[2] Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

labelled as the ultimate Italian, embodying that which is foreign, Catholic, and other.[3] By contrast, Radcliffe gives Ellena the characteristics of a "proper lady" whose values are coded as English, putting her in conflict with the foreign context she must navigate.

This chapter argues that Radcliffe compares the old aristocracy, who emphasize family, duty, and the settlement of property, and is associated with the degenerate Italians, to the Protestant values of self-reliance, personal achievement, and dignity. At the heart of the differentiation is a call for emotional self-control while surrounded by terrors associated with powerful institutions that license while ostensibly curbing intemperate passions. The religious communities of the convent and the Inquisition are institutions that support the Italian hierarchy and aristocratic values, but they are closed institutions, ones that operate tyrannically, resisting reform and individualism. Radcliffe centres the desirable restraint of emotions on the feminine subject. Ellena's self-reflection and mistrust of others are aligned with the bourgeois principle of self-discipline,[4] and these qualities set her apart from the more impassioned and self-assured Italians. In this chapter, I will look at how Vivaldi's headstrong and impetuous Italian temperament needs to be tempered by self-reflection to align with the more English Protestant values of his fiancée. I will also show how Radcliffe uses the explained supernatural and suspense to challenge certainty and promote reflection in both Vivaldi and Ellena, and in turn readers. Both Vivaldi and Ellena reject the old order of the Marchesa and Schedoni and wish to establish their own refuge away from the corruption of the old order. Emotional turmoil yields to bourgeois heteronormativity, just as supernatural terror yields to a rational understanding of the corrupt machinations of invidious institutions.

[3] Cannon Schmitt, 'Techniques of Terror, Technologies of Nationality: Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian*', *ELH*, 61:4 (1994), 853-76 (p.861).
[4] Schmitt, 'Techniques of Terror', p.856.

The Aristocracy and the Transformation to a New Order

Robert Miles describes Naples, as depicted in *The Italian*, as populated by a petty nobility excessively fond of splendour and show, together with an emerging middle class struggling to assert itself.[5] The Marchese and Marchesa represent this old nobility and their son Vincento Vivaldi, along with Ellena, represent the emergence of a new middle class, as social change is produced within the narrative in terms of parental-filial strife. In Britain, in the wake of the French Revolution and its violent aftermath, Radcliffe's readership would have associated nobility with patriarchal power, and any deviation from this would be seen as an assault on parental authority, as Jeffrey Cox's work on the reception of anti-revolutionary drama suggests.[6] Radcliffe establishes the intergenerational conflict and foreign other through the characterisation of Vivaldi's parents. The description of Vivaldi's father emphasises his pride in his position at court: "The Marchese di Vivaldi, a nobleman of one of the most ancient families of the kingdom of Naples, a favourite possessing an uncommon share of influence at court, and a man still higher in power than in rank […] his pride was at once his vice and his virtue."[7] The Marchese is the product and proponent of an old system of patronage and nobility, but it is deemed a virtue because "it was mingled with the justifiable pride of a principled mind; it governed his conduct in morals as well as in the jealousy of his ceremonial distinctions and elevated his practice as well as his claims" (p.7). His status is not predicated on his worth, only his birth, but his status influences his actions, such that there is no status inconsistency concerning honourable conduct and noble rank. Although the reader is not told what these principles are, we must infer they are positive, especially compared to his wife.

[5] Robert Miles, 'Introduction', in Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian* (1797), ed. Miles (London: Penguin Classics, 2000), p.xiii.
[6] Jeffrey N. Cox, 'Ideology and Genre in the British Anti-revolutionary Drama of the 1790s', *ELH*, 58:3 (1991), 579-610 (p.593).
[7] Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian* (1797), ed. E. J. Clery (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.7. Parenthetical references are made to this edition unless otherwise stated.

The Marchese's pride is governed by a principled mind which suggests an element of rationality and restraint not attributed to the Marchesa. The Marchesa, "descended from a family as ancient as that of his father, was equally jealous of her importance; but her pride was that of birth and distinction, without extending to her morals. She was of violent passions, haughty, vindictive, yet crafty and deceitful; patient in stratagem, and indefatigable in pursuit of vengeance on the unhappy objects who provoked her resentment" (p.7). Whereas there is the notion of a public-spirited rectitude that warrants and channels her husband's pride, there is no virtue in the conceit of the Marchesa, as Radcliffe emphasises her rank does not extend to her morals. Wollstonecraft of course had pointed out that men have a civic role that gives them a channel to practice virtue, but this is far less available to women, so in the popular imagination they cling to status for its own sake rather than the good it can do. The Marchesa's character is bordering on the excesses and corruption of the old regime: violent, haughty, vindictive, crafty, deceitful, and vengeful. Radcliffe draws a distinction between husband and wife based on reason and emotion. This distinction implies a reasoned approach but a dedication to duty when it comes to marriage, as the Marchesa is especially jealous of distinctions of rank. Goodrich points to the fact that titles were considered important in marriage, due to an artificial distinction between birth and blood but did not signify any great merit in character.[8] This can be seen in the Marchese's response to Vivaldi's courtship of Ellena, as he is told: "you belong to your family, not your family to you; that you are only a guardian of its honour, and not at liberty to dispose of yourself" (p.30). The irony is that Ellena is Olivia Countess di Bruno's daughter, part of the nobility and therefore a suitable match. However, this is not revealed until the end of the novel when Ellena's character and merit are established, affirming that her marriage is not based on this hidden status. Vivaldi,

[8] Amanda Goodrich, *Debating England's Aristocracy in the 1790s: Pamphlets, Polemics and Political Ideas* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2011), p.70.

for his part, is not aware of her status and rejects the values of the noble community into which he has been born. The conflict relates to Kilgour's observation that the gothic sets up a tension where individual desire is seen as natural and social duty as artificial and hypocritical.[9] In *The Italian* Vivaldi's position is to oppose the artificial distinction between the nobility and the middle class; this is in contrast to Burke's view that society is a partnership between those who are living, dead and yet to be born. In Burke's understanding the individual is grounded in tradition, but Radcliffe advocates a greater degree of self-determination.[10] For Burke, the continuity of the generations brought stability compared to the Revolution in France. He speaks of enlightened men having no respect for the wisdom of others but only for their own reason.[11] Vivaldi as part of the new enlightened generation moving away from the old order is represented as a man relying on his own reason rather than the wisdom or prejudices of the previous generation. The Marchesa's elevated status depends on this tradition and produces her feelings of superiority. However, despite Durrant pointing to Radcliffe's conservative views, Radcliffe does not support the Marchesa's values concerning the nobility, as she gives her no redeeming characteristics.[12] Equally, the Marchese is portrayed as unreasonable when demanding Vivaldi give up Ellena due to her lack of status.

There is therefore an ideological rift at the novel's outset between the new middle class and the old aristocracy which centres on the merit of industry and personal virtue. The reader is told that "Ellena could have endured poverty, but not contempt; and it was to protect herself from this effect of the narrow prejudices of the world around her, that she had so cautiously concealed from it a knowledge of the industry, which did honour to her character" (p.9). Nancy Armstrong argues that novelists had to create a subject dissatisfied with their

[9] Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*, p.12.
[10] Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel,* p.26.
[11] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), (ed) Conor Cruise O'Brien, (London: Penguin Books, 1986), p.184.
[12] David Durrant, 'Ann Radcliffe and the Conservative Gothic', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 22:3 (1982), 519-30 (p.520).

position to create an environment where they were desperate to grow. This sets the person in conflict with the old society where there are limits, but the subject is not subject to the social world into which they were born, allowing them to move to a position of new possibilities.[13] These new possibilities are represented by the rising English middle class and their alternative values. This tendency in the period's fiction corresponds with the views of reformers and dissenters, like Radcliffe, who believed in virtue, merit, and industry, and which increasingly demonised idleness not as a trait of the undeserving poor but rather of the decadent and effeminate aristocracy, with stereotypes of Catholic foreigners serving this critique.[14] Ellena is not afraid of poverty; unlike the Marchesa, she has not been raised in a wealthy family and therefore has not been indoctrinated to view wealth and status as valuable for their own sake. For the Marchesa, her position as a member of the nobility meant that the family owned a large, landed estate and she did not have to work, and she looked down on Ellena with contempt for having to earn a living. Mary Poovey speaks of contemporary fears that a middle-class woman would be a financial drain on her husband's resources, as she was a consumer and not a contributor.[15] Ellena defies the aristocratic view by her concealment and allays middle-class fears with hard work and industry. This resourcefulness allows her to be self-sufficient, which, the narrator states, brings honour to her character because she is not dependent on or a burden to someone else. Ellena is coded as the "English" heroine, defined against the Italian other, who is selfish, corrupt and backwards-looking.

Ellena possesses pride in her dignity and restraint, which are seen as positive attributes. For Radcliffe, passions become value-laden depending on whether they are good or

---

[13] Nancy Armstrong, *How Novels Think: The Limits of Individualism 1719-1900* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), pp.4-5.
[14] Goodrich, *Debating England's Aristocracy in the 1790s*, p.74; Sarah Jordan, 'Idleness, Class and Gender in the Long Eighteenth-Century', in *Idleness, Indolence and Leisure in English Literature*, ed. Monika Fludernik and Miriam Nandi (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp.107-28.
[15] Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley and Jane Austen* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1985), p.5.

bad for people's well-being.[16] When pride is attached to aristocratic values of position and power, it seeks to elevate itself above all others. It becomes haughty and is deemed a negative quality, due to a lack of restraint, the negative effect it has on other people, and its breach of sociable ideals of humility and equitable exchange. Hume had referred to pride as being the object of the self but not the cause: it requires something to excite it.[17] In *The Italian*, Vivaldi's affection for Ellena is the trigger that stimulates the Marchesa's passion and pride. Like Schedoni she seeks to hide her emotional displays in what Andnova-Kalapsazova calls a safety mechanism.[18] But Radcliffe exposes the illusory nature of the Marchesa's control over anger, malice, and fear in the face of shock. When Schedoni informs the Marchesa of the possible marriage, her reaction is anger: "'The woman who obtrudes herself upon a family, to dishonour it,' continued the Marchesa, 'deserves a punishment nearly equal to that of a state criminal, since she injures those who best support the state. She ought to suffer.'" (p.168). She invokes her status as among those who "best support the state" to justify her behaviour with words like "punishment," "criminal" and "injury" along with the malice implied in "suffer." By aligning the Marchesa's family pride with the machinery of state punishment, Radcliffe draws parallels between the domestic politics of this novel and those of the aristocracy of France and the despotic *ancien regime.* It also aligns with Reddy's idea of an emotional regime which can cause emotional suffering where goal differences exist. Radcliffe can, therefore, label the Italian aristocracy as the foreign other, with which Ellen's progressive values, which we might see as proto-bourgeois are compared.[19] Excessive emotion is not only condemned by Radcliffe but is labelled foreign, against which the self-discipline and virtue of the English heroine are contrasted.

---

[16] Andnova-Kalapsazova, 'Emotional Vocabulary and the Reconceptualisation of Emotions in Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian, or the Confessional of the Black Penitents*', *English Studies at NBU*, 5:1 (2009), 40-58 (p.53).
[17] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1740), ed. Earnest C Mossner (London: Penguin Classics, 1985), p.329.
[18] Andnova-Kalapsazova, 'Emotional Vocabulary', p.54.
[19] Schmitt, 'Techniques of Terror', p.858.

Ellena's well-balanced, rational, thoughtful restraint is reflected in the evaluation of her own behaviour after leaving the Abbess. Ellena "sat down pensively, and reviewed her conduct. Her judgement approved of the frankness, with which she had asserted her rights, and of the firmness, with which she had reproved a woman, who had dared to demand respect from the very victim of her cruelty and oppression" (p.85). In regulating their own conduct, women were encouraged (by the burgeoning conduct book literature) to recognise their capacity for good and evil.[20] For Ellena, her conduct and self-respect are important and she is concerned that she acts appropriately, in keeping with the "proper lady" ideal described in conduct books. The reward for women for such self-regulation and good conduct was the respect of their communities and families.[21] However, the idea of rights, assertion, firmness, and reproval of oppression, which are latent political sentiments embedded in Ellena's self-evaluation of her conduct with the Abbess, are not contained in the conduct books. Poovey contends that the French Revolution opened the door to the idea of women's rights, challenging anterior ideas of feminine propriety and subordination.[22] She also goes on to suggest women had to think of themselves in two incompatible ways or express themselves in a code which could be taken two ways.[23] Ellena has to take a dual stand, by controlling her emotions to be respectful to her superiors, yet opposing injustice. She asserts her rights but as a victim; public respectability is subordinated to private rectitude. The narrator states "she was the more satisfied with herself, because she had never, for an instant, forgotten her own dignity so far, as to degenerate into the vehemence of passion, or to falter with the weakness of fear" (p.85). Dignity is central to Ellena's emotional self-control and not letting a representative of the Catholic Church anger, corrupt and undermine her thinking, or be so

[20] B Darby, 'The More Things Change … *The Rules* and Late Eighteenth-Century Conduct Books for Women', *Women's Studies,* 29 (2000), 333-355 (p.336).
[21] B Darby, 'The More Things Change', p.338.
[22] Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady*, p.30.
[23] Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady*, p.41.

weak that she is overcome by debilitatingly feminine fear. Again, Poovey suggests that women were perceived to have a more susceptible nature and when exposed to external or internal temptation would experience an overwhelming passion which would consume their feminine nature. In contrast, men's passion and reason were deemed to be subject to their individual consciousness and control.[24] Radcliffe, through Ellena, shows this is not true, that women can control their emotions, that they can process and analyse situations rationally without fear. Hoeveler argues that female gothic writers sought to justify their complaints concerning the treatment of women not with extreme emotion but in a more rational form.[25] Ellena can be seen as reconciling feminine ideals that are ostensibly incompatible: as the "proper lady", dignified and submissive; and as assertive, rational and capable of governing her own emotions.

The idea of the "proper lady" also manifests in Ellena's judgement of her fellow sisters in the convent of San Stefano: "She was less surprised than embarrassed to observe, in the manners of young people residing in a convent, an absence of that decorum, which includes beneath its modest shade every grace that ought to adorn the female character" (p.94). Her reaction reflects her embarrassment at their lack of modesty and reserve, attributes on which she prides herself. They made her "the subject of conversation, not otherwise than censorious" (p.94). Ironically, given their habitation, these women not only lack dignity but restraint. The convent is a closed emotional community focussing more on physical discipline and arbitrary rules than on social propriety, at least as Ellena understands it. The nuns seem to take pleasure in gossiping about a stranger, even when she is in the room. This alienates Ellena from the other nuns as she does not share their values and behaviours. The only person Ellena finds companionable is Olivia, whom she believes is one of the few people in the

[24] Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady*, p.18.
[25] Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalisation of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontes* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press,1998), p.126.

convent capable of feeling pity. She describes her as "frank, noble, full of sensibility" (p.87). This description reinforces the idea that Olivia is worthy of admiration due to her character, especially when maligned by one of the other nuns. In relation to the convent as a whole, the abbess has created an inhibiting emotional community in her own image. Ellena describes one nun as having a "callous heart [that] rendered her insensible to the influence of any countenance, except, perhaps, the commanding one of the lady abbess" (p.87). "Callous" suggests that the nun is devoid of sympathy and hardened of heart, being unable to recognise, let alone cultivate such finer feelings. Influence implies that this callous nature was learned (Locke) rather than some innate quality. It also reinforces the idea that corruption at the top infects and makes the whole organisation rotten. It is the Neapolitan state in a microcosm. It becomes an emotional community based on negative values and reinforces the novel's condemnation of Catholicism as an emotional regime.

In the convent, Ellena is alone, unable to fight the Marchesa's schemes, with no male protector. Vivaldi then comes to rescue her, but she is taken away to her cell by the nuns. She is described as being "agitated by a variety of considerations and contrary emotions, of which, however, those of joy and tenderness were long predominant. Then came anxiety, apprehension, pride, and doubt to divide and torture her heart" (p.122). "Considerations" not only suggests rules laid down by society but also a rational thought process, and it is telling that Ellena is anguished and experiences emotional conflict. Conservative society dictates she should not marry Vivaldi without his parent's consent, but her heart tells her she loves him. It is this conflict of judgment and emotion that needs to be mastered. Radcliffe combines the traditional calm view, defined by Hutcheson as the emotional rational understanding between good and evil, with the moral acknowledgement of the potential of passion together with the potential for hypocrisy in the affections where they fail in sensitivity to other human beings.[26]

[26] Andnova-Kalapsazova, 'Emotional Vocabulary', p.46.

By contrast, the Marchesa is not driven by consideration for other people's feelings and in this sense her emotions are not conflicted, only frustrated when she cannot attain her desires. For Ellena, managing conflicting emotions is more complicated. She is aware of the behaviour expected by society and conforming to these rules causes her agitation, possibly because she feels she may have to break those norms and values. Paula Backscheider when reviewing Armstong's work defines the novelistic conflict of self and society playing out as the novelistic individual's both defying collective values with a need to repair the social rupture they have caused.[27] The reader is told she feels "contrary emotions," that of joy and tenderness from seeing Vivaldi and the hope of escape, the anxiety and fear of remaining a captive and the difficulty of contravening propriety by leaving with a man who is not her husband. Up to this point, she appears to have lived a life beyond reproach and future actions could taint her reputation. There is also the problem of pride, as Ellena does not want to marry into a family which believes she is not worthy. Equally, she is proud of her independence and the industry that has allowed her to support herself. By identifying the conflict of emotions in her heroine, Radcliffe shows her latent desire to be free and independent of a patriarchal system which controls every part of her life, including how she should behave and who she should marry. The reader experiences the heroine as a nuanced character who must wrestle with competing imperatives and proprieties.

Managing their marriage situation and the emotions surrounding it is central to the story of both Vivaldi and Ellena. Vivaldi asks Ellena to "bestow on him the right to protect her" (p.180): that is, to become his wife. He already feels a moral obligation, but now he seeks a legal right. This would also legitimise his emotions in the form of a duty to care for and protect a spouse. Ellena "objected to a confirmation of it, till his family should seem

[27] Paula Backscheider, 'Review of Armstrong, *How 'Novels Think,*' *The Scriblerian and the Kit Cats*, 41:1, (2008), 49-51, (p.50).

willing to receive her for their daughter; when forgetting the injuries she had received from them, she would no longer refuse their alliance" (p.180). Wollstonecraft argued that hereditary property and titles were the tools the aristocracy used to halt the natural progress of mankind.[28] In this vein, Ellena prides herself on her virtuous conduct, which she believes makes her worthy to marry Vivaldi, but this also requires her to respect his parents' wishes. The demand for his parents' approval is both appropriately respectful *and* a demand for recognition of Ellena's individual right to happiness. Vivaldi takes up the issue of obedience and Ellena's virtue and innocence with his father: "But unfortunately the Marchese and Vivaldi differed in opinion concerning the limits of these duties; the first extending them to passive obedience, and the latter conceiving them to conclude at a point, wherein the happiness of an individual is so deeply concerned in marriage" (p.31). This shows a clear difference between an emotional community based on aristocratic values ("passive obedience" was inexorably associated with the exploded notion of monarchs' divine rights)[29] and a modern reforming community based on virtue, merit, industry, and (echoing the phrasing of the Declaration of Independence) the pursuit of happiness. Vivaldi not only knows how his parents feel but feels overcoming those objections is hopeless: "He perceived that strong improbability, that they would ever make a voluntary sacrifice of their pride to his love; or yield mistakes, nurtured by prejudice and by willing indulgence, to truth and a sense of justice" (p.180). The language of this passage condemns Vivaldi's parents and their selfish and self-directed emotional investment in the status quo: their emotions are not managed, or subjected to the scrutiny of reason and justice, but are indulged. The language of "sacrifice" is noteworthy because it recurs in Ellena's internal conflict over their marriage.

[28] Goodrich, *Debating England's Aristocracy in the 1790s,* p.47.
[29] For the political contexts of non-resistance, and for application of that context to novels about seduction in the wake of rebellions against the Stuart monarchs, see Toni Bowers, *Force Or Fraud: British Seduction Stories and the Problem of Resistance, 1660-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Because Ellena watches Vivaldi deliberate over their marriage, Robert Miles argues anxiety is occasioned by a misplaced loyalty to an old order rather than her desire.[30] "While these considerations occupied him, the emotion they occasioned did not escape Ellena's observation; […] his unaffected distress awakened all her tenderness and gratitude; she asked herself whether she ought any longer to assert her own rights when by doing so, she sacrificed the peace of him, who had incurred so much danger for her sake" (p.181). Mary Poovey argues that women had to think or express themselves in two incompatible ways, acquiescing to the norm or departing from it. She goes on to explain that women were not always aware of the restrictions placed upon them, or how to reconcile them with their own desires.[31] Reconciliation appears to be a problem for Ellena as her selfless compassion leads her to condemn her own behaviour:

> [S]he appeared to herself an unjust and selfish being, unwilling to make any sacrifice for the tranquillity of him who had given her liberty, even at the risk of his own life. Her very virtues now that they were carried to excess, seemed to her to border on vices, her sense of dignity, appeared to be narrow pride, her delicacy weakness; her moderated affection cold ingratitude; and her circumspection, little less than prudence degenerated into meanness. (p.181)

The idea of excessive emotions was a much debated idea at the time with conservatives like Hannah More suggesting excessive feelings were dangerous.[32] The excess of emotion, felt by Ellena, relates to the anxiety around conforming to society's values. Armstrong argues it is the bourgeois code that opposes self-expression which, in contemporaneous understandings of feeling, comes straight from the heart, distinguishing passions that benefit the majority and

[30] Miles, 'Introduction', p.xxv.
[31] Poovey, *The Proper Lady*, p.41.
[32] Adela Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p.2.

those which disrupt the social order. An individual becomes a good subject when they have both their own and the general interest at heart.[33] Ellena demonstrates through her anxiety that she is a good subject and considers her own needs along with others. The excessive dangerous feelings to which Hannah More referred relate more to the Marchesa, whose pride in status will drive her to any lengths to preserve her noble position. Adela Pinch highlights that "the Radcliffe gothic's double-edged attitude towards extravagant feeling – both indulgent and disciplined – reminds us that the politics of feelings in the gothic decade of the 1790s often turned on precisely such claims to distinguish excess from "natural" feelings."[34] Radcliffe included both within the narrative to show the consequences of different emotional states for the characters and society as a whole. In *The Italian*, Radcliffe allows the Marchesa's excessive pride but disciplines Ellena's emotions. Ellena's more reasonable emotional responses are linked to the values of the rising middle class which elevates virtue and honesty over status and rank.

Radcliffe uses the Marchesa's collaboration with other characters to expose her motives and lack of compassion. The abbess, upholding traditional patriarchal values, draws attention to Vivaldi's duty while praising his parents. She "proceeded to lament that the son of a friend, whom she so highly esteemed, should have forgotten his duty to his parents, and the observance due to the dignity of his house, so far as to seek connection with a person of Ellena di Rosalba's inferior station" (p.120). This represents the old aristocratic code of esteem, duty and dignity which labels Ellena inferior and requires Vivaldi to rebel. Ironically it is during a party when Vivaldi and Ellena are away in San Stefano that the reader is told the reason for the objection to the marriage:

[33] Armstrong, *How Novels Think*, p.33.
[34] Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion*, p.111.

> that overtures of alliance had been lately made to the Marchese, by the father of a lady, who was held suitable, in every consideration, to become his daughter; and whose wealth rendered the union particularly desirable at a time, when the expenses of such an establishment as was necessary to the vanity of the Marchesa, considerably exceeded his income, large as it was. (p.165)

Poovey states that by the end of the century negotiated marriage settlements on purely financial grounds would have been viewed as scandalous, a relic of the past.[35] The Marchesa is equally affected by concern for the family fortune, but her reaction to the possibility that he is already married is more extreme: "She was in a disposition which heightened disappointment into fury; and she forfeited, by the transports in which she yielded, the degree of pity that otherwise was due to a mother, who believed her only son to have sacrificed his family and himself to an unworthy passion" (p.165). The narrator states that the Marchesa has "forfeited" her right to pity, as she is disappointed at the loss of a fortune, rather than the fact her son may have made an unwise decision. Equally, the prevention of this marriage had been planned with the help of the abbess at San Stefano. Therefore, the Marchesa experiences not only a loss of fortune but the disappointment that her scheme to intervene has failed. Further evidence of her lack of compassion is expressed by the narrator commenting on her plan: "it was not to be hoped that the Marchesa would be prevailed upon to relinquish it by the tears, the anguish, or all the varied sufferings of her son" (p.106). Rousseau in *Emile* speaks of mothers spoiling their children because they want them to be happy.[36] There is no such maternal inclination apparent in the Marchesa's attitude. Her only concern is for the family's name and position. It is ironic that through her own anxiety and impatience, she subjects that name to gossip. On receiving a letter from the abbess notifying her of Ellena's escape she

[35] Poovey, *The Proper Lady*, p.14.
[36] Jean Jaques Rousseau, *Emile* (1762), trans. and ed. Barbara Foxley (London: J. M. Dent & Son, 1957), p.6.

mistakenly contacts the convent twice in the space of half an hour. This draws a comment from the servants: “Well! the rich have this comfort, however, that, let them be ever so guilty, they can buy themselves innocent again, in the twinkling of a ducat” (p.166). This not only implies guilt but corruption within the Catholic church which is part of the wider ruling hierarchy. The selfish, dispassionate attitude of the Marchese and Marchesa demonstrates why reform of the aristocracy was necessary to promote a more considerate society. Emotional regulation of selfish passions takes on a societal, as well as individual significance.

Just as the Marchesa uses the abbess at San Stefano to do her bidding, knowing the nature of her disposition, Schedoni uses the Marchesa’s excess of emotion to manipulate her actions: “Schedoni observed, with dark and silent pleasure, the turbulent excess of her feelings; and perceived that the moment was now arrived, when he might command them to his purpose, so as to render his assistance indispensable to her repose; and probably so as to accomplish the revenge he had long meditated against Vivaldi, without hazarding the favour of the Marchesa” (p.106). The Marchesa believes Schedoni is acting as her spiritual advisor and does not suspect his ulterior motives. “Dark and silent pleasure” suggests his manipulation is clandestine and calculated, compared to the more turbulent nature of the Marchesa which is more visible. This leads Punter to argue that the conversations between the Marchesa and Schedoni are ones of guilt and hypocrisy, yet possessing a certainty that is borne out of a clear and brutal purpose.[37] The Hardwicke Act (1753) sought to prevent young heiresses from being abducted by young men who wanted to marry them for their fortune, but there was nothing to prevent young men from marrying outside of the nobility. As Schedoni points out, the only way out of such a marriage was the death of the offending party. The reader is not told whether the Marchesa feels guilty about depriving Vivaldi of Ellena but

[37] David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fiction from 1765 to the Present Day* (Harlow: Longman Group, 1996), p.63.

Schedoni is hypocritical in supporting the Marchesa when it is advantageous to him. When Schedoni discovers Ellena is his daughter, his attitude changes: "The approbation of the Marchesa was, at least, desirable, for she had much at her disposal, and without it, though his daughter might be the wife of Vivaldi, he himself would be no otherwise benefitted at present than by the honour of the connection" (p.243). In common with the Marchesa, Schedoni values the status that wealth or resources will give him, allying himself with the patriarchal values of the aristocracy, rather than the emerging middle classes. Whereas Ellena is associated with a perseverant and diligent middling sort which exhibits desirable emotional restraint in contrast to aristocratic passion, Schedoni is an invidious manipulator of the emotions of these social superiors, his skills honed in his vocation and applied to his social advantage.

Schmitt argues that Schedoni is labelled as "the Italian" in the title of the book to single him out as the personification of what is foreign, Catholic, mysterious and macabre.[38] Schedoni's family origins are related as being unknown, and the narrator states "that he wished to throw an impenetrable veil over his origin" (p.34). Normally members of the nobility wish to have their origins and status acknowledged; the fact that he wants to keep his lineage a secret suggests something sinister and helps Radcliffe prolong the mystery. The narrator relates that when he first arrived at Spirito Santro he was "ever ambitious" and had "adapted his manners to the views and prejudices of the society […] and [being] almost a prodigy for self-denial and severe discipline" (p.227). This is not suitable emotional restraint but rather an unnatural abstemiousness which proves self-destructive. When he learns he is not to be promoted, his ambition prompts him to look for other avenues, making himself indispensable to the Marchesa. She offers him an "office of high dignity within the church" on the condition that he protects her family's honour (p.228). Eighteenth-century moral

[38] Schmitt, 'Techniques of Terror', p.861.

philosophers debated the nature of ambition as a human impulsion. Hume defines it as an indirect passion which is the product of a direct passion. All passions are motivated by good or evil resulting in pleasure or pain.[39] The importance of these passions for human well-being results from a social rather than a solitary self when considering motivation.[40] Schedoni is motivated by a desire to succeed within the Catholic Church and adopts a social approach in attempting to conform to its strict regulations. However, he appears to adopt too strict an approach with "severe discipline". This alienates him socially, causing him pain and motivating him to look for other avenues of assistance. By "making himself indispensable to the Marchesa" he is driven by pain to evil intent due to envy of those who restrict his ambition.

When Schedoni returns to the beach house he finds himself unable to reconcile his conflicting emotions: he is "in a state of perturbation, that defied the control of even his own stern will" (p.225). He locks himself in his room even though he is the only person in the house and the narrator refers to him shutting out "all consciousness." Even when his body is still, "the emotions of his mind were violent and contradictory" (p.225). Like Ellena his emotions are conflicted between the desires of the individual and those of the wider society, the difference being for Schedoni his personal desires are paramount. For him to achieve his desires and satisfy the Marchesa, Ellena must die:

> At the very instant when his heart reproached him with the crime he had meditated, he regretted the ambitious views he must relinquish if he failed to perpetrate it, and regarded himself with some degree of contempt for having hitherto hesitated on the

[39] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, p.328.
[40] Elizabeth Radcliffe, 'Hume's Psychology of the Passions: The Literature and Future Directions', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 53:4 (2015), 565-606, (p.567).

> subject. He considered the character of his own mind with astonishment, for circumstances had drawn forth traits, of which, till now, he had no suspicion. (p.225)

Rousseau argued that human beings possess two principles, self-preservation and pity.[41] This self-condemnation comes from the pain of loss and the shame of being unable to complete the task upon which his ambition rests. In this vein, the narrator states of Schedoni: "He knew not by what doctrine to explain the inconsistencies, the contradictions, he experienced" (p.225). Pity is the feeling that appears so alien to him and the emotion that he is not aware of. Rousseau states this is a basic reaction to suffering and is unreflective.[42] It is instinctive, bypassing his reason and causing him confusion because it has hitherto been so repressed. Despite admitting his confusion and feelings he had no suspicion of, he believes he can still look dispassionately at his own nature, yet "did not detect that pride was even at this instance of self-examination, and of critical import, the master-spring of his mind" (p.225). His self-reflection does not allow him to recognise emotions which are alien to him and motivations he has had to repress to assume a subservient role. Schedoni as the foreign Other personifies Catholic corruption, unbridled ambition, mysterious origins and complex feelings which allow him to feel pity despite his evil intentions.

If Schedoni is corrupted by ambitious evil desires then the Marchesa is corrupted by luxury and status, though the narrator intimates that a better nature would have revelled in the advantages that impair her: "The Marchesa was wretched amidst all these luxuries of nature and art, which would have perfected the happiness of an innocent mind. Her heart was possessed by evil passions and all her perceptions were distorted and discoloured by them" (p.291). The Marchesa is motivated by greed in her distorted view that luxuries are not something to be valued but something that can be lost. Goodrich argues that anti-aristocratic

[41] James Delaney, *Starting with Rousseau* (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), p.47.
[42] Delany, *Starting with Rousseau*, p.53.

polemics of this period alleged that only greed and ambition motivated the rich and, steeped in luxury, they became pathetic, unmanly creatures.[43] Such is the Marchesa's disorientation and paranoia that she believes Schedoni may have been bribed by her own son, to work against her, and she only discounts the idea when she applies the principle of self-interest: "Sometimes it occurred to her, that Vivaldi had bribed him with rich promises, […] but when she considered the high expectations she had herself encouraged him to cherish, the improbability of the conjecture was apparent" (p.298). Despite dismissing this idea, she still withdraws her confidence: "while she should silently pursue her own plans, she determined to conduct herself towards Schedoni in every other respect, as usual, not suffering him to suspect that she had withdrawn her confidence" (p.298). The ideas of self-preservation of status and lifestyle have corrupted the Marchesa and the aristocracy as a whole, driving them to retain power at any cost. This reflects Hobbes's idea of the state of nature which sets men against each other in an effort of self-preservation. This allows Ellena to define herself as representing English values against the Italian other.

This section has examined *The Italian*'s challenges to aristocratic power, which operate at the level of emotions, law and politics. By privileging emotional communities, which valorise more progressive values, the narrative gives preferment to merit, emotional restraint and discipline. In this respect, Ellena is developed as an autonomous individual while retaining the behaviour, comportment, and emotional values of a "proper lady". The following section turns to the novel's representation of individualism.

The Role of Individualism in Undermining the Control of the Emotions

The previous section outlined the emphasis in *The Italian* on regulating emotions, showing how this imperative is connected to the novel's interest in social change. The novel also

[43] Goodrich, *Debating England's Aristocracy in the 1790s*, p.47.

contributes to the broader cultural project of reconciling individual desires and emotions with social cohesion. This section examines how negative emotions such as fear, impetuosity and ambition in the individual can both entrench society's values or lead to change. Even though ordinary surroundings may take on a sinister appearance, Radcliffe sought to exclude the "grotesque," which readers found so offensive in Lewis's work and instead create a sense of normality in her heroine.[44] Howells refers to the external world breaking down in gothic fiction, an ordinary room looking different in the moonlight, walls no longer solid with secret passages and doors, and the introduction or suggestion of ghosts.[45] Expectations of supernaturalism in Radcliffe are reduced to realistic fears, showing the role of the imagination in exacerbating terror: "More than once she fancied she saw something glide along towards the place where the mattress was laid and almost congealed with terror […] but the illusion, if such it was, disappeared when the moonlight faded" (p.214). Radcliffe suggests her heroine is so alone, fearful and isolated that she believes she is seeing things which are not real. Burke uses the night, because darkness, solitude, and mystery, form ideas in the mind and can give credence to ghosts.[46] By removing this faulty perception Radcliffe is taking away the heroine's limited experience and only her inexperience remains.[47] It is ironic that Radcliffe uses reason to dismiss Ellena's unfounded fears but keeps her ignorant of the real physical threat. "Happily for Ellena's peace, she knew not that her chamber had a door, so contrived as to open without sound" (p.214). Ellena's inexperience makes her unaware of the very real threat in the form of an adjoining door which can be opened silently, a door which could be used by a real assassin sent to harm her. When Spalatro brings her breakfast in the morning

[44] V. P. Messier, 'The Conservative, The Transgressive and The Reactionary: Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* as a Response to Matthew Lewis' *The Monk*', *Athena,* 25:2 (2005), 37-48, (p.38).
[45] Carol Ann Howells, *Love, Mystery and Misery: Feeling in Gothic Fiction* (London: Athlon Press, 1978), p.26.
[46] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757), ed. David Womersley (London: Penguin Books, 1998), p.102.
[47] See Stephanie Insley Hershinow, *Born Yesterday: Inexperience and the Early 'Realist Novel'*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019), p.90.

she does not eat it, as she suspects it is poisoned (p.216). This appears to be confirmed when "he started back as if a sudden spectre had crossed him" when she raises herself from the mattress (p.218). Radcliffe does not want the reader to equate inexperience with stupidity or lack of caution. The Rev. James Fordyce called it cultivating naïve good sense.[48] Although Ellena may have nothing to fear from the supernatural, she is still vulnerable as a woman with no male protector.

If Ellena continually wants to keep her emotions in check for the sake of propriety, then Vivaldi is "initially" almost the opposite, reacting to situations without proper thought. For example, in the early parts of the novel, Radcliffe draws attention to the way Vivaldi attempts to pursue a relationship with Ellena before he has considered whether a match with her will be possible: "He now began to ask himself some questions, which he ought to have urged before, and to enquire whether he sought the dangerous pleasure of seeing Ellena, since her family was of such a condition as rendered the consent of his parents to a marriage with her unattainable" (p.12). The narrator points out the dangers of Vivaldi's impetuous nature suggesting he "ought to have urged [such questions] before" and characterising his assignation as a "dangerous pleasure". An unsanctioned relationship that did not end in marriage would both destroy Ellena's reputation and tarnish that of Vivaldi: is Radcliffe here warning her female readers that impetuous young men cannot be trusted? Immediately after this scene, the reader is given another example of Vivaldi's heedlessness, when he encounters the mysterious monk: "'Signor your steps are watched; beware how you revisit Altieri!' Having uttered this, he disappeared before Vivaldi could return the sword he had half drawn into the scabbard, or demand an explanation of the words he had heard" (p.12). The monk's speech could have been intended as a friendly warning not to visit the villa in the evening, but Vivaldi's reaction is violent and unthinking: he has drawn his sword before he knows what he

[48] Hershinow, *Born Yesterday*, p.15.

has done. His actions are those of instinct rather than reason, as Radcliffe suggests he only asks questions after the fact. When Vivaldi returns home, he "shut himself in the apartment to deliberate, if that may deserve the name of deliberation, in which a conflict of passions, rather than an exertion of judgement, prevailed" (p.13). Again, we can see the narrator's judgement that Vivaldi, at this stage of the narrative, is incapable of controlling his emotions and that his feelings are more controlled by passion than reason.

In contrast, when Vivaldi goes to Ellena's house to begin his courtship, he decides it is more prudent to listen than to declare his feelings lest he alarm her (p.36). Like Ellena after confronting the abbess at San Stefano, he demonstrates that he can reflect on his own behaviour and can exercise restraint. Equally, when called before his father Vivaldi has to subdue his passion to argue in favour of Ellena. Armstrong argues that in the eighteenth century, novelists had to oppose the old system of rank and privilege to create a new subjectivity.[49] When Ellena is kidnapped Vivaldi travels to the convent where she is held to rescue her. After their escape, they stop at a cabin to rest and Vivaldi reflects on his mother's part in the incident: "Vivaldi's features became slightly convulsed, while he spoke: he rose paced the room with quick steps, and then quitted it, and walked under the shade of the trees in front of the cabin. In a few moments, however, he commanded his emotions and returned" (p.151). Vivaldi's frustration is demonstrated by his body language, pacing, and quick steps eventually quitting the room to find relief in nature. The natural world provides a pause, a neutral space outside the obligations of society and family. Ellena explains that pride and self-respect should prompt her to renounce him, but she fears she cannot, saying: "I can never renounce you, while you are unchanged" (p.151). Hoeveler suggests that men could only marry the heroine if they reformed.[50] Vivaldi is, as yet part of the old aristocracy and without

[49] Armstrong, *How Novels Think*, p.4.
[50] Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism*, p.30.

reform, he and Ellena can not go on to form a new middle-class household. Vivaldi has challenged the old order by defying his parents, rescuing Ellena and proving his worth; therefore, she is now prepared to overcome her objections and marry him. However, Vivaldi's trials have not ended.

Vivaldi believes Schedoni to be the monk who has been warning him to stay away from Ellena. Unfortunately, he only has suspicion based on belief, allowing Schedoni to undermine him. When Vivaldi accuses Schedoni, "a dark malignity overspread the features of the monk, and at that moment Vivaldi thought he beheld a man, whose passions might impel him to the perpetration of any crime" (p.51). When Schedoni denies the act, Vivaldi assumes he has made a mistake. He "thought it nearly impossible that a man conscious of guilt could assume, under the very charge of it, the tranquil and dignified air, which the confessor now displayed […] he was now as eager to apologise for the error, as he had been in committing it" (p.52). Vivaldi displays a naive trust when he refers to "a man conscious of guilt" and "dignified air" to suggest that Schedoni's features would betray him. Yet Fielding argues we cannot trust a person's countenance. He likens the "glavering, sneering smile" to embracing poison, a combination of malice and fraud which indicates a bad heart, designed to disarm a person's caution through deceit.[51] His countenance reinforces his deceit and manipulation and although Schedoni was not the monk who approached Vivaldi, he is not innocent. Radcliffe shows Schedoni's immense power to manage his emotions and manipulate other people, enabling him to appear innocent and even make Vivaldi feel guilty for suspecting him. Davidson points to the fact an authentic self is not the sum of a set of words and deeds and "the hypocrite puts on such a good at that her [his] life cannot be distinguished in the smallest

[51] Henry Fielding, 'Essay on the Character of Man', *The Works of Henry Fielding,* ed. Leslie Stephen, (London: Smith, Elder and Co, 1882), pp.332-33.

particular from that of the perfectly virtuous person."[52] Thus, the novel teaches the desirability of emotional restraint but also cautions that such restraint can mask hypocrisy and evil. Vivaldi, unlike Ellena, is prone to suspicion which makes him jump to conclusions, assuming Schedoni is the monk behind the warnings. However, Radcliffe gives him the generosity of being quick to forgive and admit his mistake, unlike Schedoni.

Schedoni concentrates on turning every situation to his own advantage; he works hard to disguise his emotions which are often betrayed by a change in countenance which he quickly disguises. When Vivaldi apologises, Radcliffe attributes positive emotions to him, "eager", "frank," and "lamented" all suggest his sincerity and humility. In contrast, Schedoni views him as "a rash boy, who was swayed only by his passions" (p.52). Schedoni's dark nature does not allow him to see the ingenuous candour Vivaldi possesses: "he felt neither respect nor kindness for the good, for the sincerity, the love of justice, the generosity, which threw a brilliancy over his foibles. Schedoni, indeed saw only evil in human nature" (p.52). Like the selfish Marchesa who calculates that Schedoni's selfishness will ensure he is not bribed, Schedoni judges Vivaldi by his own malevolent standards. This results in a pessimistic view of humanity and he can no longer see the good even when it is brilliantly portrayed. Kilgour characterises Schedoni as the embodiment of modern individualism taken to the extreme, with an ego that is a wilful threat to social unity and order.[53] Armstrong similarly argues that the period's novels depict individuals whose desire exceeds their social position, meaning they do not fit into the social norms of society.[54] A person outside social norms, self-centred and incapable of sympathy undermines the unity in society, as defined by Rousseau's Social Contract, as they become a law unto themselves. When Schedoni is speaking to the

[52] Jenny Davidson, *Hypocrisy and the Politics of Politeness: Manners and Morals from Locke to Austen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) p.1,
[53] Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*, p.12.
[54] Armstrong, *How Novels Think*, p.61.

Marchesa about Vivaldi's behaviour "he represented [it] as much more insulting than it really was; and, while he aggravated the offensive part of it, he repressed all the candour and self-reproach" (p.53). By appearing as the victim, he can manipulate the Marchesa's emotions against her son and retain his influence over her. Therefore, when she needs to remove Ellena from Vivaldi's life it is to Schedoni she turns: "When the Marchesa had been Informed of his approaching marriage, she had, as usual, consulted with her confessor on the means of preventing it, who had advised the scheme she had adopted" (p.106). The abbess is equally complicit in this scheme when she talks of Vivaldi coming from a noble family and how she is proud to serve. This reinforces the Marchesa's position as a member of the nobility and the hierarchical values adopted by this community, with values reinforced by the concepts of loyalty, order, duty and correct behaviour. As Vivaldi manages his transition from the aristocratic life he was born into, to the values of the new middle class, he seeks to continue to benefit and not destroy society as a whole. Schedoni as an outsider seeking to assert his individualism has no such commitment to the social contract and is both a disruptive and destructive influence on the existing hierarchy, manipulating situations for his own individual gain.

The Role of Religious Communities: The Convents and the Inquisition

Robert Miles states that *The Italian* was the first novel to feature the Roman Inquisition, which politically had previously been used as anti-Catholic propaganda.[55] Radcliffe not only uses this closed community as a contrast to the gaiety and luxury of Naples, showing that its severity is a veneer for dissipation, but also as a form of mystery, confinement, and terror. In her preface, Radcliffe introduces the concept of sanctuary: "'He has sought sanctuary here,'

[55] Robert Miles, 'Introduction', p.xvi.

replied the friar; 'within these walls he may not be hurt'" (p.2). The assassin is safe provided he does not leave the church. Later Radcliffe introduces Ellena to a convent which is not a form of sanctuary but has more in common with the confinement of the Inquisition. Diego Saglia states that the English tourists who witness this act of sanctuary represent another world, more evolved and less medieval. He maintains this is Radcliffe's technique of endowing certain characters with superior points of view allowing them to analyse the world and draw conclusions.[56] Because, as I argued earlier, Ellena comes to embody the values of the Protestant middle class, she adopts the superior view of justice and fairness concerning her own treatment by the abbess and the Marchesa.

The abbess as leader of the convent sets the tone of the emotional community and is the example that the other nuns follow. This suggests a relational model which opposes the liberal idea that an individual can govern their own passions without outside help.[57] Radcliffe establishes the two convents as mirror images with the abbess at San Stefano cultivating a strict legalistic attitude which when imposed on the rest of the convent becomes a corrupting influence. When Ellena first meets the abbess, she is described as having an air of austerity, as she gives Ellena "an exordium on the heinousness of her offence, and the necessity there was for taking measures to protect the peace and dignity of a noble family, which her late conduct had nearly destroyed" (p.83). This stern judgmental attitude sets the tone for the rest of Ellena's time in the convent. The abbess's views – like the established Church as a whole – supported the aristocratic status quo. She speaks of the dignity of a noble family, protecting their position and ensuring their peace. This prompts her to accuse Ellena of committing so severe an offence that it could have destroyed the family. Modern readers would see this as an overreaction, but for eighteenth-century readers like Laetitia Hawkins, author of *Letters on*

[56] Diego Saglia, 'Looking at the Other: Cultural Difference in *The Italian*', *Studies in the Novel*, 28:1 (1996) 13-37 (p.14).
[57] Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*, p.11.

the Female Mind (1793), who wished to preserve rank and character, such democratic ideas would have been unthinkable.[58] The abbess primarily values social status, reserving her praise only for those of high rank: "You can never be sufficiently grateful', added the abbess, 'for the generosity the Marchesa displays, in allowing you a choice on the subject. After the injury, you have endeavoured to inflict upon her and her family, you could not expect that any indulgence would be shown you.'" (p.83). She speaks of generosity and gratitude which are normally associated with a valuable gift given to someone. Yet this precious gift is a limited choice concerning Ellena's future. The abbess asserts an unquestionable right to the Marchesa, to determine Ellena's future. Although the Marchesa is of a higher rank she has no direct authority over her. Ellena's reaction is one of offence but not surprise: "Thus to give to injustice the colouring of mercy and to acts most absolutely tyrannical the suffering tints of generosity, excited her honest indignation" (pp.83-84). It is because the abbess's views and those of Catholicism are unjust and unbending that Ellena is allowed to challenge her. She is described as feeling "honest indignation" that there is a truth and transparency about her anger compared to the cloaking of evil with the appearance of benevolence. This is the right of human beings to challenge an unjust system, which *The Italian* as a whole sanctions. Ellena suggests mercy and generosity are misrepresented and manipulated by a tyrannical authority compared to her honesty and righteous anger at being imprisoned unjustly. Tooley states the novel uses the language of rights to signal passive suffering in opposition to the corruption of feudal machinations and the corruption of the Catholic church.[59] Therefore, because the abbess allows her values to be corrupted and manipulated, this is reflected in the values of the emotional community, of which she is head.

[58] Poovey, *The Proper Lady*, p.31.
[59] Brenda Tooley, 'Gothic Utopia: Heretical Sanctuary in Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian', Utopian Studies*, 11:2 (2000), 42-56, (p.43).

While Ellena is confined in the convent of San Stefano, Radcliffe sets up a series of delays to draw out the tension and make the reader concerned for Ellena's safety. Vivaldi puts a note regarding their escape in the grate for Ellena to collect, but before she can get there another nun comes and "the garment of the Recluse wafted it from its place […] she with difficulty disguised her apprehension" (p.131). Ellena constantly fears discovery, as she does not know who to trust. She sees a friar communicating with a nun, and "the fears of Ellena suggested that he had observed the actions of Vivaldi, and he was making known his suspicions" (p.131). She gains some respite when the friar moves into the crowd but when she sees the nun speaking to the superior, her fears are revived, and Radcliffe's language emphasises her emotionality, as Ellena is "trembling, dismayed and almost sinking with apprehension" (p.131). Janet Todd demonstrates that women were believed to express emotions through the body more sincerely and spontaneously than men.[60] This lack of control now extends to spontaneous physical manifestations, underscoring the anxiety and fear Ellena experiences. Radcliffe extends the tension by having Ellena return to her room with the paper, "when in her eagerness of turning over the paper, the lamp dropped from her trembling hand and expired" (p.132). Trembling is again used to show her anxiety, and the incident provides a means to delay her escape. Radcliffe does not just rely on the abbess's strict malevolence; she uses circumstances to prompt the reader's sympathy for the heroine.

The community at Santa Della Pieta where Schedoni takes Ellena after her rescue is viewed as a model community as it is well-governed, stable and self-sufficient. The rest of the novel examines the connection between violence and authority, institutional coercion and inward silenced dissent.[61] The convent is in complete contrast to San Stefano: "To the wisdom and virtue of the Superior, the sisterhood was principally indebted for the harmony and

[60] Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction* (London: Methuen, 1986), p.19.
[61] Tooley, *Gothic Utopia*, p.45.

happiness which distinguished them. This lady was a shining example to governesses of religious houses and a striking instance of the influence, which a virtuous mind may acquire over others" (p.299). This convent is characterised by happiness and harmony compared to the other convent where the nuns indulged in gossip, were suspicious of newcomers, and became jealously critical of Olivia. Just as the abbess of the previous convent fostered a negative influence, the second abbess is characterised as a benign influence over others. This is demonstrated in the compassion shown towards Ellena by the other nuns in the second convent, who "were not acquainted with the cause of her sorrow, but […] perceived that she was unhappy, and wished her to be otherwise" (p.50). The sisters have compassion for a stranger, in contrast to the unbending application of rules and punishment for transgression in the other convent. The character of the second abbess is shown through a series of contrasts: "dignified without haughtiness, religious without bigotry, and mild, though decisive and firm" (p.300). Dignity is one of Ellena's characteristics, but for this abbess her dignity is not based on superiority. Her faith is expressed as one involving love and acceptance rather than strict legalism and a focus on punishment of transgressors: "her religion was neither gloomy, nor bigoted; it was the sentiment of a grateful heart offering itself up to a Deity, who delighted in the happiness of the creatures, and she conformed to the customs of the Roman church, without supposing a faith in all of them to be necessary to salvation" (p.300). Radcliffe does not specify which customs of the Catholic church can be disregarded, but it must be assumed it is the ones that diverge from the more liberal customs and practices of Protestantism. The abbess abides by the spirit of the Christian faith and not the letter of the Catholic faith. Unlike the previous abbess, she does not keep Ellena confined to her cell, nor does she require her to conform to a set plan for her life. In Santa Della Pieta Radcliffe is redeeming the Catholic institution by suggesting it is the leadership, not the actual institution that is corrupt, in

contrast to Lewis's unwavering anti-Catholic stand in *The Monk*.[62] Radcliffe does acknowledge that the abbess's view is not held by all the nuns and she has to keep her personal beliefs a secret from some of the more zealous believers. Rosenwein suggests that emotional communities may contain more than one group,[63] and this convent appears to have a subgroup whose members are more zealous than the majority of the sisterhood. Just as the abbess at Santa Della Pieta is highlighted as a role model for Catholic institutions, Ellena can be seen as an example for female middle-class readers. The Rev James Fordyce recommended young women retain their inexperience by cultivating "naïve good sense." To avoid the dangers of real experience they were advised to read that they may learn model conduct and what to avoid.[64] As Hershinow's work shows, the novel throughout the eighteenth century was an important model for young people as they worked out their ethical and practical expectations of them. *The Italian*'s treatment of emotional regimes and communities, and its negotiation of competing demands of volition and duty, mean it fits into that tradition.

Female gothic has been referred to as having a circular structure;[65] thus after losing the protection of a parental figure in the beginning, Ellena is reconciled with her mother and gains a husband. They settle in a villa just outside of Naples which overlooks the bay and has beautiful gardens with trees and flowers (p.412). This paradise mirrors the convent of Santa Della Pieta and provides a refuge from society. Durrant suggests the heroine retains her innocence and returns to the safety of the hierarchical family. He argues this is Radcliffe turning her back on modern life and longing for a simpler age.[66] For Ellena, Villa Altieri would have been a time when she was secure, happy and protected, and, in this sense, Radcliffe is returning her to this type of security. Pinch suggests nostalgia was used by

[62] Messier, 'The Conservative, The Transgressive and the Reactionary', p.43.
[63] Barbara Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling: A History of Emotions, 600-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p.29.
[64] Hershinow, *Born Yesterday*, pp.14-15.
[65] Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*, p.37.
[66] Durrant, 'Ann Radcliffe and the Conservative Gothic', pp.525, 530.

eighteenth-century gothic to give it context linking it to a lost object or event which generates feelings as evidence for the importance of the loss.[67] Again Ellena has lost Biachi but gained a mother in Olivia. For Vivaldi, there is not the same loss as he has rebelled against the patriarchal order to create something new.

Radcliffe's portrayal of the Inquisition, the threat that makes the eventual retreat from society desirable, is intended to present a more institutional, subterranean, fearful setting, paralleling Ellena's time at San Stefano. Like Ellena, Vivaldi is no longer in control of his destiny or his emotions. Robert Miles points to the fact that Radcliffe researched the Inquisition, its customs, protocols and hierarchy, before writing *The Italian*.[68] When Vivaldi first enters the halls of the Inquisition, he describes the blackness and the gloom:

> No person appeared, and a deathlike silence prevailed; for neither the officials nor the guard yet spoke; nor did any distant sound contradict the notion, that they were traversing the chambers of the dead. To Vivaldi it occurred, that this was one of the burial vaults of the victims, who suffered in the inquisition, and his whole frame thrilled with horror. (p.196)

The silence, the gloom, and the idea of death are all designed to reinforce fear both in Vivaldi and the reader. The phrase "burial vaults of the victims of the Inquisition" suggests that no one ever leaves and, by implication, this will be Vivaldi's final resting place. Radcliffe goes further, to suggest both the instruments of the Inquisition and those they condemn are consigned to the same fate. This becomes a closed community in every sense of the word. The descriptions of the halls operate by stimulating associated ideas from immediate impressions. Hume argued that perceptions are generated from our senses, which form our ideas. By letting Vivaldi only hear the sounds, both the character's and the reader's imagination must fill in the

[67] Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion*, p.119.
[68] Robert Miles, 'Introduction', p.xix.

gaps: “While they waited, Vivaldi thought he heard from within, low intermitting sounds, as of persons in their last extremity, but, though within, they appeared to come from a distance. His whole heart was chilled, not with fear, for at that moment he did not remember himself, but with horror” (pp.309-10). Vivaldi had previously gained control of his emotions; now Radcliffe puts him in a situation where he is not in control and fear invades his mind. Punter suggests Radcliffe creates this atmosphere of fear by portraying them as mysterious voices in the gloom. He argues that the idea of the half-seen, half-explained mystery of the Inquisition depends less on the narrator’s voice than the reader’s imagination.[69] Burke suggested that in the darkness the reader does not know what will happen and will therefore imagine the worst. Low confused sounds leave us in a state of concern as to the cause, especially when there is a lack of light.[70] Radcliffe does not tell us what these mysterious voices are saying, or what actions happen behind closed doors; this is left up to the reader’s imagination. She puts both Vivaldi and the reader in a state of suspense and terror, at the hands of a foreign power and unable to control or rectify the situation.

The Inquisition is not just a name that people fear, or a place of death and destruction. It is a body of monks who live as part of a physical and emotional community with shared values and beliefs. Vivaldi reflects on the idea that the Inquisition is an organisation people choose to join knowing they will have to resort to torture as part of their duties. It is notable that Vivaldi asks one of the monks to remove his cowl, as removing his sight reinforces his fear and disorientation, and by extension that of the reader: “He was sternly rebuked for so presumptuous a requisition, and reminded of the inviolable law and faith, which the tribunal had pledged, that persons appointed to their awful office should never be exposed to the revenge of the criminal, who it might be their duty to punish” (p.308). Therefore, despite

[69] David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fiction from 1765 to the Present Day.* (Harlow: Longman Group Ltd, 1996), p.63.
[70] Edmund Burke, A Philosophical Enquiry, p.124.

feeling justified in their methods, they fear those who may want to harm them. This undercuts the validity of their actions, suggests they are not invulnerable as an organisation, and indicates that secrecy is necessary to maintain the illusion of control and supremacy. Vivaldi also suggests that they had "not only voluntarily undertaken the cruel office they fulfilled but had probably long regarded it as the summit of their ambition" (p.312). Vivaldi is indignant at the idea that "the cruel office" is the height of the monk's ambition implying it is not an appropriate goal. Yet the leadership seem to view their role as uncovering the truth. In response, Radcliffe states: "the sympathy and energy of truth failed to impress conviction on minds, which, no longer possessing the virtue themselves, were not competent to understand the symptoms of it in others" (p.305). The passage suggests that they may have started out believing they were performing a sacred duty to uncover the truth, but now the vaults of the Inquisition have become a place of fear and torture. Vivaldi states that the innocent suffer more than the guilty, as to get a confession they are tortured until they tell a lie (p.200). In a way that recalls Ellena's accusation against the abbess of San Stefano, Vivaldi accuses the Inquisition of being both the prosecutor, witness and judge (p.206). This suggests they are not objective, in a way that goes against the idea of natural justice. Natural justice gives the right to a fair hearing and not to be subjected to bias or prejudice in the judicial system. Vivaldi "felt less apprehension for himself, than indignation of the general injustice and cruelty, which the tribunal was permitted to exercise on others; and this virtuous indignation gave a loftiness, a calm heroic grandeur to his mind" (p.305). Radcliffe describes Vivaldi as not being afraid for himself but indignant and "virtuous indignation" which not only suggests annoyance at an injustice being committed but a feeling that he is right to feel aggrieved. "Heroic grandeur" also elevates this emotion above the ordinary giving Vivaldi a sense of superiority. The idea of liberty and justice is in keeping with the Revolution against Catholic totalitarianism in France and opposition to corrupt institutions. Radcliffe instils within her main characters the idea of

justice, dignity, calm and virtue as an example of proper behaviour and her antagonists display unwarranted pride, haughtiness, cunning and cruelty. The emotional maturation of Vivaldi in the novel coincides with a reaction to emotional regimes that disable suitable affective responses.

Radcliffe uses Vivaldi's impulsive passion to demonstrate his sincerity, in contrast, his servant's panic and lack of control provide a comic element. Paulo insists on following Vivaldi into the Inquisition but when they are separated, he is distraught. When he is finally united with his master his emotional response is extreme and Vivaldi cannot calm him: "'Remember your situation, Paulo', said Vivaldi, 'consider mine also, and be governed by prudence.'" (p.357). Prudence suggests restraint, self-control and reason, as Vivaldi suggests he should be aware of his surroundings and the fact that he is also vulnerable. Paulo is described as being in a passion of tears. Vivaldi tries to mediate between Paulo and the inquisitors by suggesting, "I will promise that he shall not even speak to me," but Paulo is defiant: "I will stay by you and speak to you as long as I like" (p.357). Radcliffe is setting up a contrast between the reasoned self-control of Vivaldi and the unrestrained passion of Paulo. For Radcliffe, there is an appropriate standard of emotional response.[71] Like Walpole and Shakespeare before her, Radcliffe uses servants as comic figures.[72] For Radcliffe reform and change were aimed at the aristocracy and not the lower classes. Despite his commendable loyalty, Paulo demonstrates the dangers of directly challenging powerful institutions of the state.

In the convent of San Stefano and the Inquisition Radcliffe portrays institutions of control that support the state and aristocratic hierarchy. Their values are based on duty, stability and continuity leaving little room for personal choice or individualism. The more

[71] Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion,* p.111.
[72] Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel,* p.19.

progressive community at Santa Della Pieta looks to the greater good and allows for individual expression based on self-control, sympathy and benevolence. These values are then taken forward, as part of a new emotional community based on middle-class values, by Ellena and Vivaldi in establishing their own home.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that *The Italian* promotes a regulation of the emotions that mediates between cultural change (from aristocratic to bourgeois, communal and individualistic values). It is of course a historical argument which relates the novel to attitudes about emotion, as well as ones about class and gender, from the period. This final section will turn to early readers' responses to see how these issues played out in its initial reception. As Hans Robert Jauss's theories of reception, referred to in Chapter 2, permit us to see, literary works reach readers freighted with expectations about the kind of work they are consuming. Those works might blandly conform to extant expectations, radically subvert them, or more modestly shift them.[73] The gothic genre in the 1790s is influenced by both fellow writers (precedents in the genre) and the prevailing culture (social change in the wake of the French Revolution). Therefore, here Radcliffe's work is read in comparison with Lewis's *The Monk* and her desire to distinguish herself from what she saw as gothic horror, whilst retaining her characteristic treatment of nature and emphasis on the experience of a female protagonist. Jauss refers to how writers push against or subvert established conventions as varying the horizon of expectation.[74] Radcliffe in *The Italian* continues the style of her earlier work that accommodated a picturesque depiction of nature and the explained supernatural, and she

[73] Hans Robert Jauss, 'Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory,' *New Literary History*, 2:1 (1970), 7-37, (p.12).
[74] Jauss, 'Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory', p.13.

challenges Lewis's portrayal of the gothic as graphic horror rather than terror based on suspense.

As Jerrold Hogle points out, *The Italian* is a response to Lewis's *The Monk*, as there are parallels between various elements of the two stories – Vivaldi sees Ellena in the Church in Naples, Lorenzo sees Antonia in Madrid's cathedral; Vivaldi rescues Ellena from the convent with a borrowed veil and Raymond thinks he takes Agnes from Lindenberg Castle disguised as the Bleeding Nun. Both Ambrosio and Schedoni can disguise their passions to suit their circumstances. However, whereas Schedoni has left his murderous sexuality in the past, Ambrosio's repressed desires have been awakened by demonic influence.[75] This demonstrates that Radcliffe not only read other works but chose to distinguish herself from the superstitious male-centred gothic of Lewis and Walpole. *The Analytical Review* refers to her accounting for the supernatural in a "natural manner" as guarding the reader "against the delusions of the imagination,"[76] indicating that the rational treatment of the supernatural was recognised at the time as a way to regulate potentially wayward emotions, even in a context where gothic fiction was deprecated as a problematic stimulant. *The Universal Magazine*'s review of *The Italian* suggests her works have no "fallacious refinements of moral doctrine to mislead the judgement while they occupy the imagination; and present no intriguing machinations that can possibly debase the purity of the most inexperienced reader."[77] The corruption of young readers was a real concern in this era, especially after Lewis was accused of blasphemy; the suggestion was that impressionable readers might not be able to distinguish between fiction and reality and that this might lead to poor judgment. Yet according to *The Monthly Review*'s definition of romance, *The Italian* contains high descriptions, extravagant

[75] Jerrold E. Hogle 'Recovering the Walpole Gothic: *The Italian: Or, the Confessional of the Black Penitents*', in *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic*, ed. Dale Townshend and Angela Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 151-67, (p.152).
[76] *The Analytical Review*, 25:5 (1797), 516-20, (p.516).
[77] 'On the Literary Pretensions of Mrs Bennett, Ann Radcliffe and Charlotte Smith', *The Universal Magazine*, 11:66 (1809), 394-97 (p.396).

characters and scarcely possible occurrences,[78] suggesting realism is not the aim of the work but rather an appeal to emotions.

Some critics praised Radcliffe's originality and her characters in *The Italian* (as well as other works). *The British Critic* referred to her as an author whose writing put her in the respectable rank of the higher order not usually associated with romance, arguing that her characters were well-drawn and therefore not limited to the usual motifs associated with the gothic.[79] The anticipated moral and emotional response to the eponymous villain occupied early reviewers. *The European Magazine* states that humanity would revolt at the idea of the character of Schedoni.[80] *The Monthly Mirror* agrees that Schedoni is one of the best portraits of a villain they have seen, as he is imbued with great energy, passion, and pride. The reviewer there also states he shows moments of humanity, firmness of mind and ferocity in the face of punishment and death.[81] They refer to Schedoni displaying the passions of fear, anger, pride and ambition, but with love, grief and (to a lesser extent) despair too. By emphasising Schedoni's selfish qualities and his lack of sympathy and empathy the critics reaffirm the negative evaluation of his character to which the narrative also leads readers. There is evidence to suggest that Radcliffe read the reviews and made adjustments.[82] By emphasising the emotional aspects of figures in Radcliffe's fiction, the critic highlights the depth of the character, undermining the criticism often made of gothic fiction that they are stock representations. Rather than merely condemning villains, *The Monthly Mirror* also praises the Marchese, Marchesa, and Vivaldi as having "qualities which may co-exist in the same person." Thus, the Marchesa possesses pride but none of the virtues of the Marchese,

---

[78] *The Monthly Review*, 22 (1797), 282-84 (p.282).
[79] *British Critic,* 10:9 (1797), 266-270 (p.266).
[80] *The European Magazine and London Review,* 31:1 (1797), p.35.
[81] *The Monthly Mirror* (1797), quoted in *The Critical Response to Ann Radcliffe,* ed. Deborah D. Rogers (London: Greenwood Press, 1994), p.53-54.
[82] Dale Townshend and Angela Wright, 'Gothic and Romantic Engagement: The Critical Reception of Ann Radcliffe, 1789-1850', in *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic*, ed. Dale Townshend and Angela Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014)p.7.

whereas Vivaldi is attributed the good qualities of both parents without their vices. Ellena is described in terms of the female virtues of delicacy and innocence but is also credited with "a manly dignity and firmness," which challenges gender stereotypes.[83] The suggestion is that they are not improbable as characters and they have depth with good and bad characteristics. This distinguishes Radcliffe from some authors who would follow her, such as Eliza Parsons and Eleanor Sleath. *The Critical Review* spoke of a passion for terror produced by situations rather than character.[84] I have argued this distinction relies on the conflict between the aristocracy and the emerging Protestant middle classes, as represented by Ellena and the enforcement of justice by the Inquisition. By dismissing her as a weak character, the critic fails to recognise the independence of Ellena and her determination to stand up for her rights, which frustrates the Marchesa's plans for her future. *The Universal Magazine* (1809) referred to Radcliffe's characters as commonplace and only rendered important by their situation.[85] Compared to the submissive victims of Walpole's and Lewis's fiction, Radcliffe's heroines are independent and courageous and therefore far from commonplace, but that is increasingly how they were construed in the nineteenth century.

In Walter Scott's compilation of Radcliffe's work for *Ballantyne's Novelists Library* (1824), he states she was one of the distinguished few who could lay claim to the founding of a class or school.[86] Scott's response is sympathetic, especially in terms of Radcliffe's powers in stimulating heightened feelings (awe) and her pioneering a new "line" of gothic, but he finds deficiencies, not only in the social realism (the rising imperative that the novel represents "life and manners") but also in the *control* of affect:

[83] *The Monthly Mirror* (1797), quoted in The Critical Response, ed. Deborah D Rogers, p.53.
[84] *The Critical Review*, 23:6 (1798), 166-69 (p.166).
[85] *The Universal Magazine*, p.396.
[86] Sir Walter Scott, "Preface" in *The Novels of Mrs Ann Radcliffe* (London: Hunt, Robinson & Co, Printed by James Ballantyne and Company, 1824), p.xvii.

> She has neither displayed the command of the human passions, nor the insight into the human heart, nor the observations of life and manners, which recommend other authors in the same line. But she has taken the lead in a line of composition appealing to […] a latent sense of supernatural awe […] and it is at least certain, that she has never been excelled, or even equalled.[87]

Like other writers of the time, Scott indicates, she uses the machinery of the popish religion – monks, priests, dungeons, and the terrors of the Inquisition – as the means and motives for bringing access to horror.[88] Scott agrees with the earlier critics that the setting and circumstances form the basis for horror, but he extends this by suggesting she creates a mystery which is only solved at the end. Therefore, reader engagement is based on wonder, curiosity and fear,[89] and this is tied to the representation of institutions, which this chapter has argued gain their significance from functioning as emotional regimes in addition to apparatuses of state power. Like earlier critics, Scott sees no uncommon merit in the story, referring to the incidents as improbable, and he points to Schedoni as a well-drawn character, describing him as formidable, hypocritical, profligate, unfeeling, unrelenting and detestable in the crimes he has committed along with those he intends to commit.[90] As Scott's analysis indicates, earlier romance novels were not bound by the rules of the realist tradition, therefore, boundaries are stretched to demonstrate how characters would react in extreme situations. A character's believability is also tied to their exhibition of motives, shaped by their feelings, with their capacity for gaining the reader's sympathy connected to their ability to extend that feeling to others, an aspect where Schedoni fails. Nathan Drake, in 1798, described Radcliffe as the Shakespeare of Romantic writers, as she created terrific scenes softened by the

[87] Scott, "Preface", p.xxxviii-xxxix.
[88] Scott, "Preface", p.ix.
[89] Scott, "Preface", p.xii.
[90] Scott, "Preface", p.xii.

intermixing of beautiful descriptions.[91] Radcliffe's descriptions of picturesque landscapes are less of a feature in *The Italian* compared to her early work. Scott suggests the description is a contrast rather than a relief from the melancholy narrative.[92] Although this may be true of *Udolpho* and her earlier work, nature provides some respite to Ellena when she is trapped in the convent tower and is a source of relief for Vivaldi's frustration when contemplating his mother's role in Ellena's abduction. Nature also plays an important part in defining the idyllic nature of the convent Santa Della Pieta. Whereas description reinforces terror and suspense in Radcliffe's description of the tunnels and vaults of the Inquisition, it alleviates this with the convent.

Despite Robert Miles's claim that Radcliffe meticulously researched the Inquisition, in 1814 John Dunlop regretted that the passages relating to the Inquisition were not handled with more skill, referring to them as improbable and exaggerated. His praise is reserved for Schedoni who he says excites the reader's curiosity and interest.[93] In particular, he singles out the scene at the cottage on the beach, which is filled with guilt, horror and remorse, between Spalatro and Schedoni, before and after the latter tries to murder Ellena.[94] In common with earlier critics, such as Nathan Drake, Dunlop values scenes of high tension and mystery when the emotional stakes are at their highest. For that reader, there was a suggestion that the gothic novel could serve a moral purpose, allowing readers to exercise their emotions safely. However, as Kilgour points out the gothic was increasingly viewed by posterity as having created worlds detached from reality and the social order which posed a threat to family values.[95]

---

[91] Nathan Drake, *Literary Hours or Sketches Critical and Narrative* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1798), p.249.
[92] Scott, "Preface", p.xxiii.
[93] John Dunlop, *The History of Fiction, Volume III* (Edinburgh: James Ballantyne and Co., 1814), pp.395-96.
[94] Dunlop, *The History of Fiction Volume III*, p.396.
[95] Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel,* p.7.

In conclusion *The Italian* challenges traditional ideas of patriarchy and aristocracy by presenting an alternative emotional community based on a value system of both male and female restraint, benevolence and individualism. In so doing, it critiques the eighteenth-century trend towards excessive male sensibility and instead insists on the importance of tempering men's impetuous reactions with restraint. The novel also allows female characters to display righteous indignation in support of their own rights, without transgressing the bounds of society's view of a proper lady. In this sense, Radcliffe expanded the boundaries of gothic novels to include a more balanced portrayal of gender roles and emotional expression, thus creating a more sophisticated framework for addressing contemporary societal issues through a gothic literary lens.

Chapter Four

Ethical Values and Emotions in Charlotte Smith's *The Old Manor House* (1793)

Gothic literature in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries frequently depicts the subjugation of the heroine by a male figure who represents certain patriarchal values of society: Ambrosio in *The Monk* and Schedoni in *The Italian*, for example. Fear is maintained in the heroine, and through her in the reader, through the threat of physical violence and superstition, and although the reader may feel empathy for certain characters, those characters generally do not empathise with each other. By contrast, *The Old Manor House* differs from these other gothic novels due to the complex way sympathy is portrayed. Charlotte Smith emphasises the emotional connections between characters, exploring how mutual sympathy can act as a counterbalance to the isolating forces of fear and oppression. Unlike in traditional gothic works, where characters are often locked in adversarial or hierarchical relationships, *The Old Manor House* presents moments where genuine emotional understanding and shared vulnerability create bonds that transcend societal constraints. This approach not only enriches the emotional depth of the narrative but also critiques the rigid social structure of the time by demonstrating the transformative potential of empathy and human connection.

The Old Manor House is a novel that has affinities to sentimental fiction and romance, but in key ways is also gothic. By portraying control and oppression emanating from an elderly matriarch, Mrs Rayland, Smith extends the idea that fear and control are not gender specific. The novel's hero, Orlando, is just as trapped and oppressed as any female character. However, I will also argue that Smith complicates this idea of control by making the old lady physically vulnerable to the exploitation of her servants, clinging to a pride in the past without an heir for the future. This tempers the reader's judgement and elicits sympathy for her

situation. Mrs Rayland also advocates for and represents Burke's conservative hierarchical structure of society and it is her pride in her heritage and her decision not to name an heir that prevents both the novel's hero, Orlando, and his father, Mr Somerive, from making decisions without her approval: that is, from fulfilling the ideal of self-determination promoted by revolutionaries. This concept of regaining inheritance links back to Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*, making this novel both a bridge and an extension of the gothic novel. Gary Kelly sees the *ancien regime* of patronage and dependence as deforming relations between husband and wife, parents and children, along with members of different social classes.[1] In *The Old Manor House*, Smith shows that the emotional community cultivated by Mrs Rayland's values is backwards looking, inhibiting, and encourages emotional as well as material manipulation, even by characters who are otherwise sympathetic and principled. Ironically, this is also a community open to exploitation and corruption from those who seek to undermine privilege from below. I highlight the role of the servants Pattenson and Snelcraft not as figures of fun or superstition (as is the traditional treatment of servant characters in earlier gothic novels) but as conspirators who operate a smuggling business from Mrs Rayland's home, the Old Hall. *The Old Manor House* thus works as a critique both of the power held by the old aristocracy and of that aristocracy's over-confidence in their own continuing invulnerability and prestige within a rapidly changing economic and social world.

Meanwhile, the more enlightened members of the younger generation in the novel form a separate emotional community that stresses individual moral and intellectual worth over hereditary rank. This difference can be seen most clearly where these values clash and compromise is necessary. For example, Orlando has a naturally honest and affectionate nature, yet his family's precarious financial and social position repeatedly forces him to act in ways that are contrary to his inclinations, such as when he persuades himself not to interfere

[1] Gary Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period 1789 – 1830* (London: Routledge, 2013), p.11.

in the planned marriage between his sister and the wealthy but elderly General Tracy: "But on these occasions he reflected that nothing in this world is without its alloy; and that so many advantages would accrue to his family by the marriage of Isabella, that as she did not seem herself averse to it, it was folly in him to think of it with concern" (p.319). Orlando is portrayed as a man of feeling, empathising with his fellow man, regardless of rank or circumstances. However, such feelings can lead to impetuosity and jealousy at what he sees as injustice towards Mrs Rayland and her housekeeper's ward, his true love Monimia. When Orlando travels to America, which he does in an extended episode in the middle of the novel, he signs up to fight in the American Revolutionary War, but does not see Burke's guarantee of freedom and stability through a medieval constitution; rather, he sees Britain's imperialist ambition, its stifling of rebellion and its desire for bloody revenge.

Monimia, too, is forced to compromise her beliefs and principles to satisfy Mrs Rayland and the expectations of wider society: she has to meet Orlando clandestinely to protect his standing with Mrs Rayland. Writing on the Romantic-period novel, Kelly describes the contrast between the authentic individual and the inauthentic social and political order.[2] This may be applied to *The Old Manor House* as a clash between the wishes and desires of Monimia and the impractical norms, values and expectations of innocence and purity demanded of the heroine. Smith also gives Monimia a measure of self-determination in having her learn to read and write, against the wishes of Mrs Rayland who sees such acquisitions as a transgression of the boundaries of class. Orlando, as a progressive character, wishes to encourage Monimia's learning by providing her with books, as she may need more knowledge than she has currently obtained (p.65). As I will explore more fully later in this chapter, Smith is interested in the issue of female education, and how this relates both to

[2] Gary Kelly, 'Romantic Novel' *Encyclopaedia of the Novel (2 volumes)* (London: Fitzroy Dearbon Publishers 1998), p.2.

women's empowerment and the issue of social mobility. *The Old Manor House* reflects changing ideas and values, from those of a traditional hereditary feudal past to modern individual mercantile ambition. Yet Smith does not sanction a complete revolution or abandonment of traditional values as the novel's happy ending involves reinstating Orlando's title and land in a new era of ownership at Rayland Hall. The new emotional community is a transformation of the old to incorporate elements of the new.

The Emotional Community of the Aristocratic Elite

One of the central themes of *The Old Manor House* is how people may seek to take control over other people by manipulating their emotions, and Mrs Rayland is the most prominent example of this. Her values are based in the past, but as Jung points out, it is not even her past. It is the past of her forefathers.[3] Her pride in her heritage becomes part of her identity and self-esteem. Deborah Russell points to the gothic genre's interest in ensuring that images of the remote past remain current in readers' minds. She states that in gothic novels a sense of national identity is created through the appeal both to a common past and to a present community.[4] Within *The Old Manor House*, the past identity is rooted in a Norman and Saxon heritage associated with chivalry, paternal feudalism and monarchy which many of the novel's characters still value in the present. Early in the novel Mrs Rayland is represented as walking along the long gallery of her ancestral home, looking at the paintings of her ancestors while accompanied by her housekeeper and companion, Mrs Lennard. As Russell suggests, Smith is using images of the past to form a patriotic identity linked to the present. When she refers to the paintings: "Mrs Rayland had peculiar satisfaction in relating the history of the heroes and

[3] Sandro Von Jung, 'Conflicting Values in Charlotte Smith's *The Old Manor House*' in *British Romanticism,* ed. Jacqueline Labbe (Pickering & Chatto, 2008), p.106.
[4] Deborah Russell, 'Domestic Gothic: Genre and Nature in Charlotte Smith's *The Old Manor House*,' *Literature Compass,* 10 (2003) 771-82, (p.772).

dames of her family."[5] However, although she exhibits pride in her heritage and family name, the irony is that she has no male heir to continue that name. Her decision not to marry, to retain control over her inheritance, means she has no children to continue the direct family line. The alternative, which she considers later in the novel, is to make Orlando, who is the great-grandson of her aunt, her heir, draw him into her aristocratic emotional community and instil her values within him, requiring him to change his name to Rayland and purchase a baronetcy as a condition of the inheritance.

As Russell points out, Mrs Rayland's father, Sir Hildebrand, was a baronet, a title granted by James I, implying the family heritage is not actually as ancient as Mrs Rayland believes.[6] Moreover, the baronetages awarded by James I were given on condition that their recipients agreed to pay a large amount for the maintenance of soldiers, which makes it clear that Mrs Rayland's claim to the chivalry of her ancestors is unfounded and the inherited title is as much about money as heritage. Concerning that heritage, Smith also draws attention to Mrs Rayland's advanced age and physical frailty: "This little withered figure, bent down with age and infirmity, and the last of a race which she was thus arrogantly boasting – a race which in a few years, perhaps a few months, might be no more remembered – was a ridiculous instance of human folly and human vanity" (p.49). *The Old Manor House* thus presents Mrs Rayland in an ironic light, as a woman with unjustified, excessive pride in her heritage, who refuses to accept that times have changed and that her rank is no longer as significant to the world as it once was. Rooney argues that "Characters consumed by the past isolate themselves, and often those around them, from present-day experience. These reform novels subvert the logic of inheritance and in turn, argue that a commitment to the past such as

[5] Charlotte Smith, *The Old Manor House*, (1793) ed. Jaqueline M Labbe (Peterborough: Broadview, 2002) p.49. Parenthetical references are made to this edition unless otherwise stated.
[6] Russell, *Domestic Gothic*, p.777.

Burke's threatens both present and future."[7] By living in the past Mrs Rayland views change as a threat to her control and by extension conservatives like Burke view the past as a stabilising influence on the country. Smith also shows that inheritance has detrimental effects preventing the next generation from moving forward.

To maintain her superior position Mrs Rayland and the aristocratic community had to distinguish themselves from those they regarded as inferior. In the eighteenth century, their main threat to status and power came from the rising middle class who gained prestige and wealth through commerce. Her status and self-worth rest on the family name being "uninterrupted by any of those little blemishes in the history of her progenitors, […] for she boasted that not one of the Rayland family had ever condescended to degrade himself by trade" (p.49). This is obviously a slight against Mrs Lennard, whose background is in trade: Mrs Rayland feels her aristocratic heritage is morally superior. Bragues's commentary on Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* (1714 & 1723) outlines two classes of people: those who show self-restraint and are regarded as superior and those who give into their animal lusts and are deemed of a lower class.[8] Referring to Mandeville's work, Dew indicates that the rising mercantile class of the eighteenth century operated with a growing sense that individuals were self-interested, socially ambitious, and avaricious.[9] The economic imperative and profit motive seemed to cultural conservatives to be eroding traditional forms of authority and affective bonds. Therefore, if, as Mandeville argues, virtue is a social construct, where praise and blame are attached to society's values,[10] then the ambitious, avaricious less restrained merchants or tradesmen are part of a lower class, and Mrs Rayland is justified in her feelings

[7] Rooney, Morgan. *The French Revolution Debate and the British Novel 1790-1814: The Struggle for History's Authority* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2012) p.98.
[8] George Bragues, 'Business is One Thing, Ethics is Another: Revisiting Bernard Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees*,' *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 15:2 (2005) 179-203, (p.186).
[9] Ben Dew, 'Spurs to Industry in Bernard Mandeville's Fable of the Bees,' *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies,* 38 (2005) 151-65 (p.152).
[10] Bragues, 'Business is One Thing,' p.181.

of superiority. Equally, Mrs Rayland's elderly neighbour Lord Carloraine is described in the following terms: "Filled with high ideas of the consequence of ancient blood, he suffered no consideration to interfere with his respect for all who had that advantage to boast, while for the upstart rich men of the present day, he felt the most ineffable contempt" (p.67) Within the novel, Mrs Rayland and Lord Carloraine, as representatives of the aristocracy, are concerned that the aristocratic values of family and inherited wealth may be undermined by modern wealth creation and the status this confers.

However, when Lord Carloraine dies at the age of ninety-six, there is the suggestion that his pride in heritage and family name are not shared by those who follow after. He is succeeded by the twenty-three-year-old grandson of his sister, who Smith describes as being: "as completely the nobleman of the present day as his uncle had been the representative of those who lived in the reign of George the First" (p.68). His grandnephew will inherit wealth and therefore will still be part of a class that does not have to earn its living, nevertheless, Smith distinguishes this young man as a nobleman of the present: in common with Orlando's elder brother, Philip Somerive, who will liquidate the family assets immediately on inheritance to fund his dissolute lifestyle. Smith is showing that a modern economy is driven by money and that heritage and a family name are becoming increasingly irrelevant in a society that is primarily interested in wealth, regardless of its origins. This makes a mockery of Burke's idea of the nation as an inheritance, as the estate is passed down to a generation who does not esteem the heritage only its economic value.[11]

Mrs Rayland and Philip Somerive are two extremes: one uses the past to retain control over the present and the other uses it to fund a dissipated lifestyle. The only thing they have in common is a selfish attitude, a position which Smith condemns. Despite valuing different things, they both have an underlying destructive attitude with Smith's treatment of them

[11] Rooney, *The French Revolution Debate and the British Novel 1790-1814,* p.104.

working to undermine Burke's theory that the past is a unifying and stabilising force. Only Orlando, as a more progressive and enlightened character, will stand in the middle ground, drawing values from both emotional communities to bring about a positive change.

Katherine Rogers highlights Mrs Rayland's horror at the idea that money can buy everything when the neighbouring estate is sold to a rich merchant's son. Yet her power over Orlando and the Somerives is equally based on money. As the estate is not entailed, Mrs Rayland decides who inherits, yet the novel makes clear how unjust this system is, given the power that it puts into the hands of just one, self-interested individual. Rogers points out the contradictions in Mrs Rayland's character: her self-confidence and ignorance, haughty satisfaction and lack of empathy which make her unfit to wield her power.[12] Smith thus appears to reject Burke's model of stability in favour of Paine's idea that one generation should not determine the fate of all future generations. Mrs Rayland appears ignorant of the adverse effect such oppressive behaviour has on the next generation,[13] with her hold over Orlando preventing him from being able to plan his future or develop an independent life away from the Hall. Her inconsistency and double standards undermine the worth of her status as a generous and benevolent landowner; her austere moral virtue, propriety, loyalty and justice, are values she seeks to instil in Orlando. Thus, if Orlando wishes to gain her favour, he must appear to support her values whether he subscribes to them or not. This will be seen later when Mr Stockton, a rich merchant's son, moves into the neighbourhood. Mrs Rayland cautions Orlando: "If you should ever think proper to know that person, that Stockton, your visits here will from that time be dispensed with" (p.70). Jung points out that Mrs Rayland's isolation has allowed her to maintain a feeling of proud superiority and

[12] Katherine Rogers, 'Inhibitions on Eighteenth-Century Women Novelists, Elizabeth Inchbald and Charlotte Smith' *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 11:1 (1977), 63-79, (p.76).
[13] Rooney, *The French Revolution Debate and the British Novel 1790-1814,* p.103.

control, but with her new neighbour, this is threatened.[14] As the major landowner in the area, she commanded the respect of the local population. The tradesmen and servants had previously viewed her as a main source of income, but Stockton can afford to be more generous, undermining her position. She has not promised Orlando anything, only that he will lose her favour if he goes against her wishes. This demonstrates Mrs Rayland's insecurity and fear of losing influence over Orlando: she is aware on some level that her position of authority is unstable and must be maintained through threats and promises. Moreover, she wants Orlando to share her own values and beliefs, which is psychologically an essential component for her retaining control: she wants to pass down her inheritance only to someone who shares her pride in heritage and dislike of the *nouveau riche*.

For Orlando, everything he wants is centred in the Hall, but his primary interest is in Monimia, not the inheritance. He is not completely indifferent to money, aware that he needs to be able to support both his current and his future family, but he is not enslaved to it: he shows no interest in wealth or power for their own sake. Instead, in common with Hutcheson's moral sense, he values people and relationships and displays compassion and loyalty to others. Therefore, although he may display a sense of duty towards Mrs Rayland, which she approves of, it is not out of deference to her ancient name, but rather because he cares about her as a vulnerable human being who has been kind to him. Thus, for instance, Orlando will challenge people who encroach on her land because, as an old lady, she has no one to defend her property. Although Orlando's actions often align with Mrs Rayland's views, his values and motivations are differentiated from hers. Mrs Rayland and Lord Carloraine belong to an aristocratic emotional community which values the past, continuity and structure,

[14] Sandro Von Jung, 'Conflicting Values in Charlotte Smith's The Old Manor House,' *Sprachkunst*, 33:1, (2003) 105-14, p.107.

compared to Orlando as a new man of feeling who is rights-orientated and empathetic towards the ordinary man.

Mrs Rayland's adherence to a rigid class structure is not limited to her abhorrence of the *nouveau riche* but also to the enrichment of servants and other lower-class figures through their own efforts. When Lennard names her niece Monimia she says it is because she believed the word meant orphan, but for Mrs Rayland it: "was an incessant occasion of reproach" (p.46). For Mrs Rayland it is an extravagant, overly romantic name and she refuses to use it, instead referring to the girl as Mary. Smith describes it as a constant cause for "reproach" or disapproval, or a disruption to the social order. The reason Mrs Rayland gives for disliking the name is that it may: "prevent her getting her bread honestly" (p.46). A romantic name, Mrs Rayland feels, will give the girl romantic notions. Mrs Rayland's belief that reminding the lower classes of their place will help them to live "honestly" is ironic, however, as, unknown to her, her own house is being used for smuggling. Mrs Rayland's strictures on Monimia are about maintaining the social hierarchy and preventing working-class women from aspiring to become the mistress of a wealthy man, undermining stabilising family values. This attitude reveals more about Mrs Rayland's fear and insecurities and the position of wealthy spinsters in society than it does about Monimia.

Mrs Rayland's prescription of standards of modesty for others is not only limited to their names but also relates to their appearance. Although Monimia is not a servant, Mrs Rayland does not consider her an equal and seeks to make this visually apparent through the dress she chooses for Monimia: "Her dress, the expense of which Mrs Rayland very graciously took upon herself, was such as indicated to all who saw her, at once the character and prudence of her patroness, who repeatedly told her visitors that she had not taken the orphaned niece of her old servant Lennard, not with any view of making her a gentlewoman, but to bring her up to get her bread honestly" (p.47). By controlling Monimia's dress and her

aspirations through ostentatious acts of benevolent charity, Mrs Rayland seeks to enhance her own reputation with visitors and neighbours by producing a valuable working member of society. However, pride leads her to emphasise that she does not want to undermine the social order by promoting a member of the lower classes but merely to prepare her for a life of service. Equally, Mrs Rayland believes it is her duty to discourage vanity in young people. She suggests Monimia's plain attire is necessary so that: "she might never be encouraged to vanity by any kind of finery that did not become her situation" (p.47). These opinions are not confined to Monimia. When the old coachman sends his daughter to church in all her finery Mrs Rayland asks him if: "the tawdry thing she had seen with his wife was his daughter?" (p.85). Wetenhall Wilkes in his 1740 letter of advice to a young lady refers to the vanity of dress as turning "the necessary use of clothes into extravagance, pride and folly. […N]or is it possible for a gawdy outfit to have anything wise or sedate within."[15] Mrs Rayland echoes Wilkes's view when she refers to her disapproval of a girl wearing "any kind of finery that did not become her situation" (p.47)**, i**mplying that extravagant dress encourages vanity and a lack of wisdom. She ends with a rebuke to the old coachman, saying she thought he and his wife had more sense: "What! is that a dress for a sober girl, who ought to be a help to her mother" (p.85). Mrs Rayland is expounding a series of conservative values which require young women to be modest, chaste and not prone to vanity and extravagance, and she believes it is her right due to her position to dispense advice despite having no children of her own.

Thus, Mrs Rayland's attitude toward both her family and staff shows that Orlando is not the only one who suffers under her control. Orlando's father, Mr Somerive, resents the fact that she has the power to exclude him from inheriting the Rayland estate, remarking: "It is true, that I am heir at law to all the estates of Sir Orlando Rayland my grandfather, in

[15] Wetenhall Wilkes, *A Letter of Genteel and Moral Advice to a Young Lady,* (Dublin, E Jones, 1740) p.78.

default of Sir Hildebrand's daughters having no issue, but not if the survivor of them disposes it by will, for the whole is hers without any restrictions" (p.191). This financial stranglehold seems to colour his view of the old lady and he feels resentment towards her. Mr Somerive, in common with Mrs Rayland, values his heritage and believes in the laws of inheritance which aligns him with the aristocratic emotional community. This translates into fear for his family's financial well-being leading him to take action that would otherwise be unacceptable to him, such as his attempt to marry his daughter Isabella to the wealthy but much older General Tracy. For him: "The painful idea of sacrificing his daughter to mercenary considerations was not more supportable than that of leaving her destitute, together with the rest of his family" (p.310). Wealth, security and status are more highly valued within an aristocratic emotional community than individual choice and happiness. The subsequent generations are held hostage to the will and, in the case of Mr Somerive, the folly, of the previous generations, due to financial insecurity.

Smith uses Mr Somerive and his eldest son Philip to discredit Burke's idea of primogeniture bringing about a stable society.[16] Mr Somerive has followed tradition in the raising of his firstborn: "The eldest son, who would, as the father fondly hoped, succeed to Rayland Hall estate, he had sent to Oxford, where he had been indulged in his natural turn to expense, and his father had suffered him to live rather suitably to what he expected than what he was sure of" (p.41). Mr Somerive's actions were based on a false expectation that Mrs Rayland would follow tradition and not her own preferences. However, Philip would make a bad heir for the Hall, as his reckless and selfish behaviour suggests that he would simply fritter away his inheritance, just as other young men such as Lord Carloraine's grandnephew are seen to do. In addition, his father's indulgence of Philip's profligate spending has made the latter feel entitled and left him bereft of resilience when circumstances change. When Mrs

[16] Jacqueline Labbe. *Charlotte Smith in British Romanticism* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008) p.125.

Rayland dies, it further exposes Philip's selfish attitude as he will not champion Orlando's claim in his absence. Only when he believes Orlando is dead and he may inherit as next of kin does he take legal action. Bragues, in his reference to Mandeville's work, argues that by providing individuals prone to avarice with privilege and finance, the low status normally attached to selfish people is undermined, as they feel no shame due to no loss of status.[17] Smith does not indicate that Philip feels any shame or guilt concerning his behaviour towards his family. Labbe points to Philip's drinking and gambling and suggests his death towards the end of the novel is attributable to such bad behaviour. This moral judgment is reflected in the putative "polite lady" who warns "once the love of money grafted upon that of gaming has taken deep root in the soul and is become the ruling passion, it bears down upon all before it: health, beauty, fame, fortune, happiness, everything is sacrificed to it."[18] This supports a didactic reading of the novel, as Smith demonstrates the sad fate that awaits those who refuse to consider others and act only for their own pleasure and benefit. Labbe maintains that Smith substitutes Burke's culture of inheritance, aloof aristocratic pride and avarice for a culture of merit and emotional reciprocity.[19] Philip may not have cared about his own inheritance, other than for its pure financial value, but he shows little in the way of merit either, whereas Orlando, by contrast, is presented as a worthier heir. By seeking a commission, he does not rely on the expectation of inheritance to provide for his future, therefore avoiding the corruption and sense of entitlement which inherited wealth fosters, and his compassion for other people, including those like Mrs Rayland who seek to control and oppress him, makes him conspicuous as a man of feeling. Therefore, the older generation belongs to an emotional community based on traditional values, but the younger generation is equally divided between values of self-indulgence and compassion.

---

[17] Bragues, 'Business is One Thing,' p.191.
[18] Charles Allen, *The Polite Lady or a Course in Female Education in a Series of Letters* (London: Thomas Canan, 1785), p.119.
[19] Labbe, *Charlotte Smith in British Romanticism,* p.126.

Smith shows that Mrs Rayland's attitude towards the inheritance of property is not the only one and she offers an alternative in General Tracy. Mrs Rayland uses the promise of an inheritance to manipulate and control Orlando, but the General's provision for his own heir, his nephew Warwick, is voluntary. He does not seek to maintain control by withholding his decision; instead: "He determined to end this disagreeable state at once by telling Warwick what he intended for himself, and for him" (p.307). The General wants to ensure he does the right thing for his nephew and give him certainty and security for his future.

However, although this might suggest that Tracy is generally a more compassionate figure than Mrs Rayland, he does at other times demonstrate his capacity for using his own wealth and status to manipulate people into fulfilling his desires. When he intervenes to save Orlando from a duel with Belgrave, he "now saw that an opportunity offered by which he might confer an obligation on the family, which must secure their endless gratitude" (p.148). The General's attempts at controlling others are more subtle than those of Mrs Rayland, as he appears to be offering to be of service, first to Belgrave and then in offering Orlando a commission. However, his self-interestedness is revealed, as the novel's narrator explains the thinking behind his offer of help: "the fiery and impetuous Orlando would, he thought, be much better out of the way" (p.150) during his own courting of Isabella. The novel thus repeatedly shows how the older, wealthier generation has power over the younger. The only way for Orlando to escape from Mrs Rayland's control is through work and an independent commission, but he still needs inter-generational help to procure this, and thus Smith shows the difficulties of a system dependent on the generosity of inter-generational co-operation.

There are other ways, too, in which General Tracy fails to live up to the novel's standard of good behaviour. Despite the General's generous treatment of Warwick, he, like Mrs Rayland, is a victim of his own excessive pride and self-regard, and emotional restraint is not implemented. When he breaks off with his mistress to marry Isabella, she sends him a

note ridiculing their relationship and telling him where to send her allowance. The General is thoroughly taken aback by this: "As the excessive vanity of the general had blinded him so far as to make him believe he was extremely beloved by this young woman, […] he was thunderstruck by an incident so unexpected, and cruelly mortified to find, that while he was meditating how to soften to her the pain of parting, she was thinking only of flying from him with a younger lover" (p.312). Where Mrs Rayland is blinded by her sense of her own status, General Tracy is blinded by the vain belief that young women still find him attractive. Smith seems to be suggesting that the older generation cannot adapt to a changing world or to their own changing status within that world: they are so used to having power and influence that they are shocked when a younger generation fails to see and respect them as they see and respect themselves.

In *The Old Manor House*, the titular house comes to have a significance and resonance that goes beyond its literal role in the plot. Rooney argues that in Romantic-era Gothic fiction, castles, manor houses, and country estates become metaphors for the nation. They are often crumbling and mismanaged, with customs and traditions only serving to perpetuate inequalities.[20] Rayland Hall represents just such a metaphor. It is ruled over by Mrs Rayland, the representative of the old aristocracy, but the non-aristocratic classes deal with the daily running and maintenance of the Hall. As we have seen, she desires these middle- and lower-class individuals to know their place and avoid aspiring to anything beyond their station, she complacently assumes that they are happy with their lot and content to live within the old hierarchies. However, Smith shows how misguided she is in that assumption, as Mrs Rayland's old-fashioned view of the loyal and faithful servant blinds her to the corruption occurring under her own roof. As Orlando discovers, the butler Pattenson and the coachman Snelcraft are running a smuggling ring from the Hall's cellars. Rooney argues Smith uses

[20] Rooney, *The French Revolution Debate and the British Novel 1790-1814*, p.98.

these clandestine operations to attack Burke's view of a glorious past based on stability, paternal landowners and a hierarchical class structure.[21] Neither Burke nor Mrs Rayland can live in the past; capitalism and industrialisation have brought new opportunities for risk-takers like Pattenson and Snelcraft who are willing to indulge in illegal activity for profit. Meanwhile, another threat to the stability of the house is represented by the housekeeper, Mrs Lennard who, more than any other character, seeks to ingratiate herself with Mrs Rayland. As the old lady gets older and more infirm, Lennard takes on more responsibilities to increase her own power and authority within the household. She keeps her mistress:

> as much as possible at a distance from the rest of the world, above all, from that part of it who might interfere with her present and future views, which certainly were to make herself amends for the former injustice of fortune, by securing to her own use a considerable portion of the great wealth possessed by Mrs Rayland. (p.44).

Lennard's motive is to restore the fortune and status lost by her own family. The narrator's tone suggests her disapproval of this mercenary attitude, and, as with Philip, we might see Mrs Lennard's eventual fate within the novel as evidence of Smith's desire to punish a wicked character: Mrs Lennard marries the abusive Mr Roker and soon discovers that, "Mr Roker is by no means so grateful to me as I had reason to expect from the good fortune I brought him, and indeed from the assurances when I married him of his great regard and affection for me. I cannot but say that I am cruelly treated at present" (p.511). There is poetic justice in the fact that the deception she practised against Mrs Rayland, in pretending to be her friend and confidante to enrich herself, has now been used against her by her own husband, and the confinement she used against Monimia, is now being used by her husband to imprison her.

[21] Rooney, *The French Revolution Debate and the British Novel 1790-1814,* p.105.

Pattenson, Snelcraft and Lennard by their actions, all undermine the state, represented by the Hall, through their illegal or unscrupulous behaviour, which is enabled by their mistress' self-satisfaction and confidence that her rank protects her. The Hall is thus presented as a place of both stagnation and corruption and is only reformed at the end of the novel when Orlando and Monimia take possession. In *The Old Manor House*, Smith shows the reader the moral and ethical conflict of a society caught between one value system and another. Mrs Rayland, General Tracy and Lord Carloraine have all inherited wealth and belong to an aristocratic emotional community which prides itself on its heritage, benevolent patronage, stable hierarchy and leisure. Due to their position, they hold power over those around them, but they have failed to recognise the changes in society forced by increased industrialisation and a rising middle class and their subsequent dwindling of status and power. Orlando and Monimia represent a bridge between the old aristocracy and new ideas based on industry, self-discipline, prudence and the changing nature of the family and the individual. Yet by taking the Rayland name and purchasing a baronetcy Orlando is perpetuating Mrs Rayland's idea of privilege and family as part of a new generation.

The New Generation and the Development of Alternative Emotional Communities

In contrast to the authority and control exerted by Mrs Rayland, Smith establishes her hero and heroine, Orlando and Monimia, as young and vulnerable, with the impetuousness of youth and the confinement of poverty. This establishes a sympathy in the reader's mind for the powerless challenging the powerful, as the novel shows how circumstances shape their behaviour and suggests how some deviation from propriety may be necessary to challenge the oppressiveness of the social and economic system they have been born into. From his earliest

appearances in the novel, Orlando is established as a character who is impulsive and animated by a deep sympathy for the suffering of others. When Monimia is punished for his own thoughtless action of throwing a cricket ball through the open window of the gallery, the narrator describes how "Orlando whose temper was naturally warm and whose generous spirit revolted from every kind of injustice, felt at once his indignation excited by this act of oppression" (p.52). He is ready to go to Mrs Rayland to denounce Lennard's cruel punishment of her niece, but Monimia stops him. It is her rational restraint which prevents him from making the situation worse. Unlike Orlando, Monimia lives at the Hall and is under the direct control of her aunt and cannot escape any retribution due to his actions. In this sense, she is the typical gothic heroine, persecuted and imprisoned by an authority figure. However, her plea for restraint on Orlando's part suggests that she does not intend to be seen as simply a victim, looking to a man for protection and guidance, but rather an independent thinker, who understands the precarity of her own situation and is sensible enough to know how to look after herself. Hoeveler points out that it is common for women in gothic novels to be portrayed as wanting to reform the excessive masculinity which results in impulsive, violent aggression and replace it with the more considered compassionate approach of the ideal man.[22] The reader may admire Orlando's desire to want to defend the innocent against injustice, but Smith emphasises that it is imprudent.

It is interesting to see Monimia, who is younger than Orlando, sounding a note of caution and asking him to consider the consequences before acting. Orlando, particularly at this stage of the novel, is a creature of sensibility, which Fletcher describes as "a word that implied sympathy with suffering, a tendency to impulse and rashness, a contempt for traditional forms, love of nature and a taste for literature, painting and music."[23] Smith

[22] Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalisation of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontes* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), p.32.
[23] Lorraine Fletcher, *Charlotte Smith: A Critical Biography* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), p.2.

portrays Orlando as a man of feeling who can sympathise and empathise with other people, however, she does not characterise his emotionality as an unalloyed good. For example, his impulsive nature sometimes gets him into trouble, as when he discovers a local baronet, Sir John Belgrave, walking with Monimia: "thrown totally off guard by an appearance so sudden and so extraordinary, he cried, 'Pray, who is this gentleman? – Pray, what does this mean?'" (p.113). His tone shows his anger at what he sees. His reaction is impetuous and instinctive; he has not thought about the consequences of his questions, leading to Sir John feeling insulted and challenging Orlando to a duel. His father expects him to apologise, but this puts him in a difficult situation: he cannot tell his father the real reason for the outburst, as his relationship with Monimia must be kept secret, but pride and a sense of justice will not let him apologise. As the narrator explains: "It gave him infinite pain to disobey [his father], and was the first time in his life that he had been tempted to act for himself, in opposition to his father; and the apprehension of what his mother would feel were still more distressing to him; yet his high spirit could not stoop to apologise for what he knew was not wrong"(p.135). The novel is full of such moments, where Orlando's desire to be true to his own emotions comes into conflict with his desire not to hurt other people, which is a demonstration of Hutcheson's idea of innate benevolence. Fletcher points out that both Orlando and Monimia particularly suffer from the conflict between obeying family and rebelling to create an independent life.[24]

Sentimental fiction like *The Old Manor House* celebrated feeling and suggested that emotions had an inner moral and intellectual worth.[25] Repeatedly throughout the novel, Smith explores the tension between social obligation, self-interest, and individual emotional fulfilment, as can be seen through the contrasting attitudes of Orlando's two sisters to the proposal that General Tracy should marry Isabella. When Orlando asks Selina what she thinks

[24] Fletcher, *Charlotte Smith: A Critical Biography,* p.168.
[25] Kelly, English Fiction p.11.

about General Tracy's proposal, her reply centres around family ties: "'he made the proposal appear so advantageous to my father, that the disparity of age seemed by no means a sufficient objection against accepting it'" (p.285). Poovey points out that marriage settlements based purely on financial considerations by the end of the eighteenth century were viewed as scandalous,[26] but Selina represents the typical passive submissive daughter in her assumption that paternal judgement must be correct. Selina's innocence is betrayed in the later comment:

> 'So the poor general not being able to succeed in carrying away Isabella on his own terms –'
>
> 'Curse on his insolent presumption!' cried Orlando passionately. (p.286).

Orlando sees what Selina cannot, that General Tracy would have taken Isabella as a mistress if he could and treats marriage to her as a last resort. When Orlando travels to London with the General, the reader learns that he will not let Orlando stay in his house because his mistress lives there. This justifies Orlando's moral indignation in defence of his sister's honour and creates sympathy for the family's situation. General Tracy seeks to deprive Isabella of her honour, or chastity, which in the eighteenth century, was seen as a woman's most valuable possession. When Orlando asks Selina what she would do in Isabella's position, she responds: "Were father to say to me, as he has said to my sister Belle, that to see me so opulently married would make his later days easy, and save him from those hours of anguish that now torment him about the future fate of us all, I should certainly marry this old man" (p.287). This demonstrates Selina's emotional sensitivity, care for family, and respect for parental authority. From a moral view, Smith portrays Selina as a dutiful daughter who complies with her father's wishes. The implication is that the dutiful daughter becomes the

[26] Poovey, *The Proper Lady,* p.14.

dutiful wife. Poovey argues women's emotional responsiveness, within the bounds of propriety, was their most prominent characteristic. It was believed that they would be rewarded for its proper exercise by receiving love, gratitude and the satisfaction of being necessary to someone else's happiness.[27] However, as Poovey points out, this does not allow for self-determination, and although it may apply to Selina, Isabella seeks to determine her own happiness by eloping with Warwick. Unlike Selina, she does not accept that her father's judgement must be correct, or that her duty to her family outweighs her right to find individual happiness. Strikingly, Smith neither rewards Selina for her dutifulness nor overtly condemns Isabella for her actions. The novel encourages the reader to have sympathy for these characters who must go outside the normal parameters of duty and obedience to escape oppressive controlling influences. Nevertheless, Orlando and Selina are distressed by the suffering that Isabella's actions cause their father – "it grieved him severely to reflect that Isabella was capable of deception" (p.428) – and her behaviour is clearly not supposed to be seen as praiseworthy. By contrast, Monimia's actions throughout the novel appear more obviously exemplary, as although she defies both her aunt and social convention by meeting Orlando in secret, she takes pains that her actions should not hurt anyone else, thus combining the concern for others of Selina with the self-determination of Isabella.

As a gothic hero, Orlando is both impulsive and sensitive to the needs of those around him, yet he still retains an element of chivalry by seeking to relieve the heroine's suffering. Thus, Rogers refers to Orlando as "gentle, considerate, even mindful of his obligations to his family, willing to sacrifice his own interests or put aside his own concerns to help others – these virtues are more moving in him because they are the effect of conscious choice."[28] By emphasising choice, Rogers is balancing involuntary impetuous passion with reason and

[27] Poovey, *The Proper Lady*, pp.48-49.
[28] Katharine Rogers, 'inhibitions on Eighteenth Century Women Novelists Elizabeth Inchbald and Charlotte Smith,' *Eighteenth-Century Studies,* 11:1, (1977), 63-78, (p.76).

reflection. After the incident with Sir John, Mr Somerive accuses Orlando of believing himself independent as he has Mrs Rayland's favour. Orlando replies stating that if he did inherit the estate, he would not consider it his while his father was alive (p.130). Janet Todd argues that it is common for sentimental novels to suggest that characters are morally improved by having a heightened sense of their own virtue through their displays of pity or compassion for others.[29] Rogers also points to Orlando bringing new values to the novel by treating women with sensitivity and tact, and questioning worldly definitions of success and military heroism.[30] Orlando is aware of Monimia's precarious circumstances and the discretion needed to guard her reputation. When his father asks if she is innocent, Orlando is offended that he should question his honour (p.174). Despite bending the rules of propriety to see Monimia, his motives are pure and he knows she would be dismissed and abandoned by Mrs Lennard if she ever discovered their meeting.

Orlando's capacity for empathy and consideration of the feelings of others is also explored at length in the episode involving his time in America. With Mrs Rayland's blessing and General Tracy's patronage, Orlando gains a commission to fight against the American colonists. When he takes up his commission, he immediately gains first-hand experience of the reality and the problems of war: "he saw himself in a little crowded vessel, where nothing could equal the inconvenience to which his soldiers were subjected, but that which the miserable negroes endure in their passage to slavery. Indifferent to this as far as it merely related to himself, he could not see the sufferings to which the men were likely to be exposed without concern" (p.351). Orlando's concern is for his fellow soldiers and not his own comfort. Smith contrasts this directly with the captain: "the captain was too attentive to his own delicacy […] and on the second day of the voyage, he found his own situation so

[29] Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction,* (London: Methuen, 1986), p.8
[30] Rogers, *Men by Women*, p.12

unpleasant, that he went in a boat on board one of the frigates, […] and obtained of him for the rest of the voyage a birth more suitable to a man of fashion – " (p.351). They are both officers and, presumably, both could claim they were entitled to better treatment, but Orlando chooses to stay with his men. Fletcher points to the fact that Burke saw class as a source of strength, with stability formed by a strong monarchy, government and an orderly rank and file.[31] However, Orlando's capacity for empathy breaks through class divisions, enabling him to feel a kinship with all his fellow soldiers. After witnessing such suffering Orlando begins to wonder about the justice of the war, which the narrator describes as "going to another hemisphere to avenge on a branch of their own nation a quarrel, of the justice of which they knew little" (p.353). Interestingly, Smith refers to the American rebels as another branch of the British soldiers' own nation. As Rooney points out, Mrs Rayland does not share this view: she sees the rebels as the descendants of those who killed the King and whom her ancestors fought against.[32] Mrs Rayland frames the war in terms of British identity, but Orlando questions the justice of going to war against a colony that is trying to assert its independence: "he tried to believe that what these English kings had so gloriously done, was in their descendants equally glorious, because it went to support the honour of the British name" (p.353). Orlando looks to the past to justify what is now being done but, ultimately, he does not believe it can be justified. Nordius argues that Smith uses Orlando's experience to dismiss the idea that the war was a moment of national glory as a myth and replace it with a narrative of bloody ambition, desire for revenge and a false sense of honour.

Nordius suggests that Orlando's empathy only extends to his fellow soldiers, that he views the Iroquois as bloodthirsty savages (the opposite of Rousseau's noble savage) and fails to recognise the humanity in the colonial other.[33] Contemporary readers would not have

[31] Fletcher, *Charlotte Smith: A Critical Biography,* pp.134-5.
[32] Rooney, *The French Revolution Debate and the British Novel 1790-1814*, p.102.
[33] Janina Nordius, "A Kind of Living Death": Gothicizing the Colonial Encounter in Charlotte Smiths *The Old Manor House*.' *English Studies* 88:1 (2005) 40-50, pp.45, 47.

acknowledged this racist viewpoint and Smith is probably reflecting the limitations of her own time, rather than inviting the reader to think negatively of Orlando for his failure to connect emotionally with those of a different culture. Nevertheless, the novel does make a strong anti-war statement, in its insistence that there is nothing glorious in hiring men to fight for your cause and then betraying them. Smith has Orlando expose the true reason for fighting the colonists as a misplaced nationalism, which involves the exploitation of native mercenaries. The constitution that Burke proclaimed as the foundation of British law and freedom was effectively what the colonists were fighting for and Britain aimed to repress.

However, despite Orlando's essential virtuousness and emotional openness, he is not for the most part naïve in terms of how he engages with his world. Although not manipulative like General Tracy or as controlling as Mrs Rayland, he can use situations to his advantage. As a middle son, Orlando needs to earn an independent living if he wants to support a wife, but outside of the military and the clergy, his only other option is trade. If he follows his uncle into trade, he will lose Mrs Rayland's favour and the opportunity to join the leisured aristocracy. He knows Mrs Rayland will not approve of him joining his uncle in trade and she would disapprove of him marrying the wealthy doctor's daughter Miss Hollybourn, however, a military commission will appeal to her sense of chivalry. Thus, by playing on Mrs Rayland's prejudices, assuring her that the life of a soldier is ''honourable, Madam, to any name" (p238), Orlando can achieve the outcome he wants – the chance to earn an independent income - without appearing to influence the decision.

Orlando is also at least somewhat manipulative in his treatment of Monimia. When he goes to see her in her turret for the first time his language is that of an emotional appeal: "I am deceived, cruelly deceived. I did believe that you had some regard for me, and I protest to heaven that I mean nothing but the purest friendship towards you. I want you to read" (p.65). There is a hint of exasperation in his words as Monimia raises valid objections concerning her

safety due to their meeting in secret. She knows if she is discovered Mrs Lennard will punish her, and although Orlando feels secrecy is the only option, he does not acknowledge that she is taking the bigger risk. Hume states that human beings are motivated by either pleasure or pain, and here desire and fear are the direct passions.[34] Orlando's words are driven by a desire to be with Monimia, while hers are driven by the pain caused by fear of discovery. Hume argues that good breeding condemns that which gives pain to the people we interact with. However, "there are many particulars in the point of honour both of men and women, whose violations, when open and avow'd, the world never excuses, but which it is more apt to overlook, when the appearances are sav'd, and the transgression is secret and concealed."[35] Based on Hume's reasoning, Orlando is right to keep their meetings a secret to protect both their honours, however, good breeding is contravened due to his dismissal of her obvious – and rational - fear of discovery. He again questions her loyalty and commitment when he returns from London for Isabella's wedding. Monimia tells him: "'how often have I repented of those dangerous, those improper meetings!', to which Orlando replies 'is that a question Monimia would have made after so long an absence, if Monimia was not changed! [...] I must not – I will not be trifled with'" (p.315). Again, he is asserting his authority over her and using emotional manipulation to make her feel guilty for questioning him, by suggesting her feelings have changed. Even before they are married, he is asserting his dominance and control over her, and Bartolmeo refers to this as reinforcing the conservative, patriarchal ideology of domesticity and courtship.[36]

Orlando's desire to control others even extends to his sister Selina, when he requires her to meet with Monimia before he goes away to London. The women are anxious about being away from their respective homes, but: "He then, though both urged him to put an end

[34] Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, pp.167, 328.
[35] Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, p.202.
[36] Bartolmeo, 'Subversion of Romance in *The Old Manor House*', p.646.

to this interview, […] insisted upon their sitting down by him" (p.291). He not only imposes his will on Monimia but Selina, making them agree to be friends and support one another. Both women are terrified their meeting together might be discovered, due to their thinking being conditioned by the opinions of society, but Orlando does not appreciate the danger. He views his clandestine meetings with Monimia as innocent and necessary, but Selina views it as a meeting without the permission or knowledge of her parents, while Monimia is torn between her love for Orlando and the terror of being found out by her aunt.[37] Orlando uses the affection of both Monimia and Selina to manipulate them into doing his will, but his dismissal of their genuine fear could be regarded as reckless, rather than considered reason. As a man, he has far less to lose, regarding his reputation and physical security. It is ironic that Orlando objects to General Tracy's treatment of Isabella when he contemplates making her his mistress, but he does not seem to exercise the same propriety when meeting clandestinely with Monimia. The only precaution he is concerned with is that they are not discovered. As a result – and as we shall see in this chapter's final section - although Smith makes their relationship innocent, contemporary critics of the novel would still label their relationship immoral.

As well as often being manipulative in his relationships with others, Orlando is also portrayed as being worldly and even cynical in other ways. Although he often chafes against the need to keep Mrs Rayland's favour to inherit the Hall, he does see the value of such an inheritance and spends much of the novel working to achieve it. He knows that if Mrs Rayland discovers his affection for Monimia he will lose her favour, as she will see the girl as an unsuitable match, so he works to keep their relationship secret. Jung argues Orlando goes beyond the unwritten sentiments of a man of feeling by seeing Monimia without his parent's

[37] Fletcher, *Charlotte Smith: A Critical Biography*, p.182.

knowledge.[38] By meeting her clandestinely, he protects both of their reputations but is powerless to relieve Monimia's suffering. As the narrator puts it: "Her imprisonment, the harshness of her aunt towards her, and her desolate situation contributed to raise in his heart all that the most tender pity could add to the ardency of a first passion" (p.56). If Orlando was able or willing to sacrifice his potential inheritance, he could alleviate her desolation. It is because he wants to fulfil his father's ambition to reclaim the family inheritance that he cannot rescue Monimia. Again, therefore, we see Orlando wrestling between the desires of his heart and the rational awareness that a large inheritance will allow him to protect and support his family. At times, the narrator does introduce a note of irony into her accounts of Orlando's emotional struggles, playfully suggesting that even the physical structure of the Hall is constructed to keep them apart, as: "no knight of romance ever had so many real difficulties to encounter as achieving the deliverance of his princess" (p.61). Smith seems to be making fun of the idea that Orlando must overcome many obstacles to be with the woman he loves, yet these obstacles are largely of his own making. If he gave up the inheritance, he would be free to choose his profession. When assessing his abilities he is "Sanguine and romantic in the extreme, and feeling within himself talents which he was denied the power of exercising, his mind expatiated on visionary prospects, which he believed might easily be realised" (p.161). The words "romantic" and "visionary" suggest that Orlando is deluding himself as they imply something hoped for and not yet achieved.

It is not entirely Orlando's fault that he seems unable to support himself without outside help. When he tells his father that he is fit and healthy and able to find a job, his father's reply is "'Wild and ridiculous! […] you who have been brought up to nothing, who knows nothing'" (p.175). As Orlando points out, this was not his own choice, but his awareness of this fact does not solve his problem. He is conscious that there is something

[38] Jung, Conflicting Values, p.122.

contemptible in his reliance on Mrs Rayland's favour: General Tracy has already suggested "that there was meanness in his attending on Mrs Rayland like a legacy hunter – of all characters the most despicable. The blood that rushed into his cheeks, spoke the painful sensations this impression brought with it" (p.162). Blushing was deemed to be an involuntary act and a manifestation in the body of what is in the mind.[39] Orlando is deeply offended by the General's comments but "He could not, however, express them [the painful sensations] with propriety to a man whose only purpose seemed to be that of befriending him," (p.162). This demonstrates restraint on Orlando's part as he controls his feelings and shows he is maturing as a hero. There are, therefore, real obstacles in his quest to marry Monimia, as well as imaginary ones. He has not been trained in a profession, and there is also the question of his age, as he is under twenty-one and so would need parental consent unless he eloped like Isabella and Warwick. He knows if he did this his father and Mrs Rayland would abandon him. This reinforces his opinion that he is a victim of circumstances. He is also concerned about his reputation in Monimia's eyes: when trying to persuade her that he should become a soldier, he asks, "would you not despise a man of my age, who would not so purchase independence?" (p.195). Orlando's concern is not just for his public reputation outlined by General Tracy but his duty to provide for Monimia as a husband. However, Orlando is trapped by circumstances with limited choices; his desire to please his father and his absence of professional skills means that attempting to win his inheritance is perhaps his best option. Ultimately, Orlando is portrayed as a complex hero: naturally virtuous, sensitive, and sympathetic to others, yet very aware that he lives in a world where virtue is not automatically rewarded, and suffering is likely unless one works skilfully to advance one's own best interests. Meanwhile, at the novel's conclusion, Smith does not embrace Burke's

[39] Juliet McMaster, *Reading the Body in the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) p.xi, p.107.

conservative view of the social hierarchy but, by establishing Orlando as part of a reformed nobility, she shows she does not favour revolutionary reform either: the novel's conclusion appears to endorse a revised version of the existing social system, rather than a complete reformation. Orlando inherits the Hall because he has proved himself worthy: he will, it is implied, be a good landowner who will take care of his property and dependents.

Smith is not only interested in telling the story of Orlando, however; *The Old Manor House* also focuses a good deal on the experiences of Monimia, and the question of how a woman might make her way through the complexities of the world of the novel. As discussed previously, when Orlando and Monimia meet in secret, it is Monimia who voices concern regarding the consequences of their actions and the implications should they be discovered. Women in this period were often assumed to act on impulse and not reason and were expected not to consider the consequences of their actions due to their lack of education. However, Monimia's education is in line with Locke's theory that children learn through experience and her experience has been the tyranny of Mrs Lennard which has instilled in her a fear of disobedience, making her fundamentally compliant with the rules laid down for her by those who run the Hall. Meanwhile, her isolation has not equipped her to resist the emotional manipulation of Orlando. Hoeveler refers to Wollstonecraft's assertion that women who are not given a proper education become victims of their own mistakes,[40] and Poovey agrees with Wollstonecraft, pointing to the fact that women's limited experience means they are often unable to "draw any conclusions" from their observations.[41] The only future for her niece that Mrs Lennard seems to support is marriage to the wealthy but unpleasant and coarse Sir John Belgrave. This is why Wollstonecraft suggests education could be a way for women to break out of a cycle of ignorance. Orlando views Monimia as: "condemned to perpetual servitude,

[40] Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism,* p.127.
[41] Poovey, *The Proper Lady,* p.73.

and he feared to perpetual ignorance; for he knew that Mrs Rayland had, with the absurd prejudice of narrow minds, declared against her being taught anything but the plainest domestic duties, and the plainest work. She had, however, taught herself, with very little aid from her aunt, to read" (p.59). Wollstonecraft saw the way women were taught about their worth as coming directly from the needs of those who ruled.[42] Patriarchy needed women to fulfil their roles as wives and mothers, and so socialised them into believing this is where their value to society lay. By teaching Monimia the plainest domestic duties, Mrs Rayland aims to ensure that she can never aspire to a higher station and that the social hierarchy will remain the same, as it is not in Mrs Rayland's interests to foster change. Fletcher points to Mrs Rayland's absurd insistence on strict class labels and the futility of this in a mobile society.[43] The fact is, things are changing at the Hall and in the wider society, even though she is not aware of it.

However, despite the barriers put in Monimia's way, Kilgour points to the fact that she is proactive in learning to read and write and thus has the potential to achieve freedom and self-determination.[44] As Fletcher argues, Smith creates in Monimia a nobody who becomes "a somebody" by education rather than marriage or high birth[45]: although she does ultimately marry Orlando, she has already freed herself from the Hall by that point and has kept in touch with Orlando once he returns from America through letters that would, of course, have been impossible if she had not been literate. Mrs Rayland seeks to preserve the status quo through adherence to strict class values, but the irony is that she is unaware and unable to prevent the changes going on under her roof. In the early days of their relationship, Orlando wishes to direct Monimia's education by controlling what she reads, but when he goes to war, she must forge a new life for herself when Rayland Hall can no longer support her. Smith contrasts

[42] Poovey, *The Proper Lady.* p.63.
[43] Fletcher, *Charlotte Smith: A Critical Biography,* p.170.
[44] Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), p.80.
[45] Fletcher, *Charlotte Smith: A Critical Biography,* p.300.

Monimia's education with that of Miss Hollybourn who has had the best education money can buy and takes pride in demonstrating those accomplishments: the narrator ironically refers to "Miss Hollybourn, having sufficiently shewn her knowledge both in painting and history, and imagining her auditors were amazed and edified by both" (p.209). Miss Hollybourn's knowledge is vain and superficial: it is like elaborate clothing, in that it is meant to draw attention to the subject. However, it clearly fails to please in practice: the narrator describes both General Tracy and Orlando being subjected to Miss Hollybourn's attempts to show off her erudition, and comments that the men soon became "equally weary of her, and who would both have given the world for her absence" (208). This is reflected in *The Polite Lady* which states "a person of knowledge and learning, without humility and modesty, is generally a vain, conceited and prattling pedant."[46] In addition, this reinforces the idea that the gentlemen are far from impressed with her knowledge and her accomplishments do not work in attracting a husband. By contrast, Monimia's education has led to genuine self-improvement. Fletcher argues that Smith does not object to female education, only to the view of education that sees it as collecting frivolous accomplishments, rather than genuine skill or wisdom.[47] Smith, through her heroine, shows that education is a powerful source of change by empowering women to be independent and better wives and mothers as Wollstonecraft suggests.

Smith does, however, suggest ways in which Monimia has been limited by her lack of formal education. Although she has taught herself to read and write, her limited experience and her aunt's instruction have made her fearful and superstitious: she comments that her aunt has told her "hundred and an hundred times […] that all the galleries and passage about this house are haunted" (p.72). This is the belief system instilled in Monimia as a child and as Locke advises care should be taken when forming a child's mind as it will influence their lives

[46] Allen, *The Polite Lady*, p.160.
[47] Fletcher, *Charlotte Smith: A Critical Biography*, p.180.

as an adult.[48] Therefore, when she experiences something she cannot explain, she immediately attributes it to the supernatural, rather than trying to think of a rational explanation. Yet she demonstrates more bravery than the servant Betty, when the pair are sent to the cellar by Mrs Lennard, it is Betty who collapses in fear and Monimia who advocates they return to her aunt: "reasoning with [Betty] as soon as she seemed able to hear it" (p.78). Smith suggests early in the novel that Monimia has the potential to rise above superstition and apply practical reasoning to a situation. However, this does not mean that her fear is not real. When Orlando tries to dispel her anxiety, arguing "'could you not face a ghost with me for your protector?'" (p.72), to which Monimia replies that she trusts him to protect her from a human physical threat, but not a ghost. She explains that: "my aunt has often told me, that ghosts always appeared to people who were doing wrong, to reproach them"(p.73). This suggests that her aunt has taught her superstition as a way of controlling her, showing how education can be misused and abused by those who wish to keep women afraid and docile.

However, it is true that many readers of the time would have frowned on Monimia's secret meetings with Orlando and felt that Monimia *should* feel a sense of guilt for them. Ellis argues that by having Monimia locked in a gothic tower the rules of the drawing room do not apply, but the heroine's purity is still required in a gothic novel.[49] For Monimia to be a true heroine, she must – like Orlando – tread a careful path between following her desires, and maintaining the innocence and virtue demanded by society and religious principles. As Rogers points out, in the late eighteenth century, chastity, propriety, and a sense of duty and delicacy were requisite in real life and were just as important in a fictional heroine who was considered a role model.[50] Rogers discusses how the customs and behaviours involved in the novel's portrayal of courtship would demonstrate the sentimental distress of the heroine

[48] John Locke, *On Education* (1712) ed. Peter Gay (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), p.26.
[49] Kate Ellis, 'Charlotte Smith's Subversive Gothic', *Feminist Studies* 3.4 (1976), 51-55 (p.52).
[50] Rogers, *Inhibitions on Eighteenth-Century Women Novelists,* p.65.

without suggesting flaws in her character. If the novel were to be an example to the reader, "the emphasis tends to fall on the errors she avoids rather than the good qualities she has."[51] It was assumed that the reader knew how to be virtuous but would be ignorant of the full dangers of vice. Anna Letitia Barbauld suggests it is morally improving for readers to encounter and learn about bad characters and compromising situations through fiction rather than real life.[52]

However, despite the moral uncertainty occasioned by her secret, the largely unchaperoned meetings with Orlando, Monimia does have many other features that make her an attractive and sympathetic heroine. For example, in common with Orlando, she is characterised by her awareness of and empathy towards, other people's situations. When Orlando warns her not to tell Betty their secret lest she betray them to the butler, Monimia's concern is for Betty and not her own personal circumstances and reputation. She puts herself in Betty's shoes: "Betty is, like myself, a friendless orphan, a poor girl that my aunt has taken from the parish; […] it would entirely ruin her and occasion the loss of her place and her character, if Betty were supposed to know anything about it" (p.74). This suggests that Betty would be forced to tell her employer out of duty and concealment would make her complicit. Monimia understands that for a woman the loss of her reputation could not only mean losing a job, but the opportunity to get married. Smith wants the reader to understand that Monimia acts out of necessity to protect both her reputation and Orlando's and not out of a desire for material gain or advancement. This empathy and consideration for others lift her motives out of the selfish and immoral.

Betty is a contrast to Monimia because she does not fear the consequences of her actions. She uses her relationship with Pattenson and later Philip, as a route out of poverty.

---

[51] Rogers, *Inhibitions on Eighteenth-Century Women Novelists,* p.65.
[52] Anna Letitia Barbauld, On *the Origins and Progress of Novel Writing* (London: FC &VJ Rivington, 1820), p.14.

When rumours start to spread that Orlando lets women into his rooms at night, Pattenson's suspicions are driven by his jealousy over Betty. As she tells Monimia: "some hussy or other he does let in, I tell you, for I know they as has seen her. There's Pattenson has been mad as fury with me, saying as how it was me; and all I can say won't persuade him to the contrary" (p.132). Pattenson's suspicions appear justified because Betty has a reputation for speaking to young gentlemen. If Monimia is mainly regarded as a virtuous role model then Betty represents a more careless attitude, with Smith choosing not to punish Betty as she does some other characters who depart from the path of virtue. On her final appearance in the novel, Betty appears to not only be Philip's mistress but also kept in relative comfort and respectability. Her loss of virtue does not culminate in the disastrous consequences the conduct books would advocate, although it should be remembered that we have no long-term evidence about how financially secure Betty's position is and there is a presumption that she will not get married. Given the economic realities of the world that the characters inhabit, perhaps Smith did not feel the need to condemn Betty too harshly for making the most of the opportunities open to her. Nevertheless, Betty is clearly not supposed to be sympathetic to a reader in the way that Monimia is, and Monimia's fundamental observance of propriety leads her to achieve the ultimate reward by marrying Orlando and sharing in his inheritance.

Despite the novel's apparent advocacy for female education, it appears essentially conservative in its attitudes towards female virtue. Monimia may display some independence and self-reliance, yet she remains a heroine out of the conduct books, in terms of her basic modesty and chastity. However, Smith's work is more unconventional in relation to the political position that it adopts. If Orlando had completely embraced Mrs Rayland's values, he would have been obliged to marry someone with a title, of the same class and fortune, which would have excluded Monimia. Rooney argues that his decision to marry Monimia shows his desire for self-determination and a future he can shape, rather than his willingness to live by

the rules of a past that have been continually shaped for him.[53] It is notable, for example, that he does not ask his mother's permission when he finally proposes to Monimia: the implication is that the two lovers have proved themselves through their long commitment to each other, and so no longer need the approval of an older generation to enter into a permanent union. The obstacles for reform have been removed with the death of Mrs Rayland; the values of a new generation based on merit rather than inheritance will now take precedence, yet still retaining the conservative values of modesty, generosity and loyalty. They also demonstrate a greater emotional literacy implementing Hutcheson's moral sense. The deception practiced undermining a corrupt and controlling system has now been dispensed with and with the restoration of fortune everyone who deserves it is both rewarded and provided for.

Reception of *The Old Manor House*

Overall, the early reception of *The Old Manor House* shows the critics favoured it. Smith was praised for choosing to set *The Old Manor House* within a domestic environment and giving voice to characters from a range of class backgrounds. However, some critics felt the behaviour of the hero and heroine was less than exemplary, and complained about the lack of consistent punishment for those who transgress.

The reviewers generally praised Smith's characterisation of the hero and heroine, whom they felt displayed the attributes appropriate for sentimental fiction. *The Analytical Review* suggests the novel leaves the reader "agreeably interested rather than powerfully agitated."[54] The suggestion is that there is no extreme horror, or shocking or controversial content, compared to a novel like *The Monk,* and that this produces the capacity for a more balanced ethical consideration of a novel's action. The critic intertwined their response to the

[53] Rooney, *The French Revolution Debate and the British Novel 1790-1814*, p.106.
[54] *The Analytical Review*, 16:5, (1793), 60-63, (p.61).

novel's representation of emotions with a concern for ethical propriety, approvingly noting how the novel reinforces traditional gendered expectations. Orlando is described as having "ardent and unalterable affection, courage, generosity and gratitude", while Monimia is referred to as having "simplicity, modesty and tenderness."[55]

The Critical Review, however, was not as complimentary about the two young lovers, feeling the reader's expectations had been disappointed due to a lack of virtue and moral rectitude.[56] The reviewer judged the clandestine relationship between Orlando and Monimia improper, as they suggest he is an example to young men of family, to marry any pretty servant they choose.[57] Such straightforwardly censorious judgements, unresponsive as they would seem to how the novel guides readers emotionally away from the prohibitive values of Mrs Rayland, were not universal. *The Monthly Review* acknowledges that the couple, out of necessity, must meet secretly, deeming their attachment innocent and tender.[58] Tenderness is linked to the sentimental novel and is associated by Todd with instinctive benevolence.[59] This corresponds with *The Analytical Review*'s view that the main characters display the humane characteristics readers would expect in a sentimental novel, and that their emotions are natural, instinctive and not contrived. There was recognition among early critics, that the novel was a suitable genre for contrasting forces of social repression with the emotional integrity of individuals who had a right to pursue happiness. Although the couple are breaching propriety by meeting in secret and without their parents' or guardians' consent, it is necessary to circumvent the control of Mrs Rayland who wields an unreasonable amount of influence in both of their lives. The bending of the rules of propriety found in a domestic or

[55] *The Analytical Review*, 16:5, (1793), 60-63, (p.61).
[56] *The Critical Review*, 8:5, (1793), 44-54, (p.46).
[57] *The Critical Review*, p.52.
[58] *Monthly Review*,, 11;6, (1793), 150-53, (p.150),
[59] Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction*, (London: Methuen, 1986), p.94.

sentimental novel is characteristic of the gothic novel due to the hero's need to rescue the heroine from captivity.

The other characters are described as coming from a range of classes and being depicted with appropriate sentiments and language. Mrs Rayland is characterised as an embodiment of misplaced family pride by *The Analytical Review* due to her obsession with heritage.[60] This reflects the conservative view of the nation outlined by Edmund Burke and was understood in counterrevolutionary ideology as providing stability for the nation. Sir Walter Scott likened Mrs Rayland to Queen Elizabeth, jealous and possessive of her immediate entourage.[61] As an unmarried matriarch with money, she is relatively unusual (foreshadowing Lady Catherine in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*), and although she wields the power of a gothic villain she does not imprison or persecute her relatives. This is left to Mrs Lennard, the insinuating servant, who imprisons her niece in a turret and is described by *The Analytical Review* as "a starch prude, severe and suspicious of others."[62] Although Mrs Lennard is not typical of a gothic villain, she does share their property ambitions: her suspiciousness of others stems from the fact that she needs to stay close to Mrs Rayland to gain a share of the inheritance. Smith is changing the reader's horizons of expectation to show that gothic villains are not limited to a particular class or gender.

Even though Orlando and Monimia keep their relationship a secret, they do not deliberately set out to deceive, a quality *The Analytical Review* attributes to General Tracy, as the antiquated rake familiar in certain courtship novels, but with the latent machinations characteristic of gothic persecution.[63] Yet Smith does give the General qualities of justice, fairness and forgiveness, as he leaves his fortune to Warwick even after he elopes with Isabella. Smith's novel is unusual as she gives power over people's lives to a female

[60] *The Analytical Review,* p.61.
[61] Sir Walter Scott, *Miscellaneous Prose Works 4* (Edinburgh, Cadell, 1834) p.63.
[62] *The Analytical Review,* p.61.
[63] *The Analytical Review,* p.61.

character, Mrs Rayland, but she does not make her cruel, deceptive or ambitious; she leaves that to some of the supporting characters. The early reviews help the reader to see that, Smith creates a considerable measure of sympathy for Mrs Rayland, as a wrongheaded and vulnerable old woman, which is modelled by Orlando who largely reveres his aunt. The usurping minor characters, who leech on the hall (and by implication the state), or who use their ancestral wealth and power for personal not civic-minded aims, frustrate and undermine both the hero and heroine's future.

Gothic novels are usually characterised by the triumph of good over evil with a reward for virtuous behaviour and punishment of the transgressor, even if that does not wholly dispel or denounce the appeal of transgression. *The Critical Review*, in its approach to *The Old Manor House*, expects some moral justice but complains that youthful thoughtlessness and intemperance are frequently rewarded with success and ingratitude and villainy going unpunished. Citing the fact that Mrs Lennard is ultimately taken back to the Hall, after helping to uncover the original will, and is given her old station by those she sought to ruin. The Rokers and the Bishop are made to refund the money they obtained by fraud, and Warwick receives an inheritance despite his elopement.[64] In the examples the review lists, the characters make some reparation before their behaviour is rewarded. It can be argued that Mrs Lennard suffers at the hands of the Rokers, and this is a suitable punishment for her severe treatment of Monimia and helping Orlando gain his rightful inheritance, so she is accepted back at the Hall. This in turn exposes the fraud committed by the Rokers who are punished by losing what they sought to gain by deception. Therefore, thoughtlessness and intemperance need to be tempered before they can be rewarded and ingratitude and villainy do not gain any material advantage; however, there is no physical punishment like many gothic novels, equally no one suffers death or serious injury as a result of the wrongdoing. The review

[64] *The Critical Review*, p.52.

indicates that Smith, through the diversity of her characters, shows that gothic novels do not have to be black and white, and even the most virtuous of characters may need to suspend propriety to achieve the desired result. This meant moving away from the stereotypical passive heroine in distress and the chivalrous hero to provide more complex characters who have to adapt to different situations.

Overall, this chapter has argued that Smith's treatment of emotions in *The Old Manor House* produces ethical ambivalence, reflected in the mixed reviews. In political terms, she uses the Hall to provide a balanced critique of the state of the nation at a time of debate between a conservative trust in tradition and a potentially destructive revolutionary outlook. Producing indignation and distaste for both the blinkered proprietor of the Hall and the usurping or insinuating types who would undermine it, Smith takes a middle position. Villainy in this novel is more concerned with corruption and usurping authority, but unlike most gothic novels these characteristics are not confined to one person, suggesting corruption goes beyond a single, individual, family estate. There is no binary opposition of good and evil in this novel, and values are governed not solely by principle but also by circumstance. Monimia cannot be a purely virtuous heroine as she must hide her relationship with Orlando. Orlando refuses to oblige his father and give up Monimia as he wants to marry her. These circumstances are brought about by Mrs Rayland's control and pride in heritage, not necessarily because the characters do not act on their principles. Orlando demonstrates a commitment to justice in wanting to defend Monimia against Lennard's abuse and defend Mrs Rayland's land against trespassers. However, his youthful impetuosity and pride nearly force him into a duel from which he needs help to extricate himself. Orlando's empathy and care for his family will not let him follow Warwick's example and elope with Monimia to America, preferring to establish a way of providing for their future outside of an inheritance, although Smith does undermine this by not settling the estate until after the marriage.

In sum, Smith uses the gothic idea of a lost or undermined title to show how an emotional community based on inheritance and control warps the decisions of the next generation and breeds corruption amongst those who would seek to benefit from an inheritance. Unlike Walpole, she goes on to portray an alternative: the image of modern emotional communities which fosters values of self-determination, independence and education, but not to the exclusion of the traditional virtues of modesty and virtue. Her complex characters challenge the gothic idea of a passive victim and overbearing antagonist to instead highlight the role of society in influencing behaviour. This use of external oppression allows Smith to create sympathy and empathy between the characters, making right and wrong less black and white. The hero and heroine overcome the fear of rejection, subdue impulsive emotions and become empowered through learning. Thus, Smith's vision of a more equitable and compassionate emotional community challenges the gothic tradition's focus on fear and subjugation, offering instead a more hopeful model where personal growth and social reform go hand in hand.

Chapter Five

The Emotional Characteristics of Virtue and Vice in *The Children of the Abbey* (1796).

Regina Maria Roche's *The Children of the Abbey* (1796) occupies an intriguing space within the gothic tradition, blending its familiar tropes with the sentimental novel to create a narrative rich in both suspense and emotional depth. Like many gothic novels, including *The Monk* and *The Italian*, it features a persecuted heroine and the looming threat of a malevolent male oppressor, but it departs from the genre's darker extremes by also emphasising themes of virtue, familial loyalty and emotional resilience. The heroine Amanda is not an orphan, despite lacking the protection of her father for most of the novel and this allows Roche to show filial duty as a virtue, as well as exploring the vulnerability of the heroine at the hands of a vicious member of the nobility. Meanwhile, like *The Old Manor House*, Roche's novel is set in Britain rather than Catholic Europe, and Catholicism itself is represented in a surprisingly positive light, with the convent providing a refuge. While gothic novels often use extreme emotions like terror and despair to evoke reader engagement. *The Children of the Abbey* balance these with moments of tenderness, community and moral reflection. In so doing, Roche not only softens the more shocking elements of gothic fiction but also creates a narrative that examines the interplay between emotion, social expectations and personal agency, offering a nuanced critique of eighteenth-century gender and class dynamics.

At first, it is easy to see *The Children of the Abbey* as a sentimental novel because of the appeal of virtue in distress in a malevolent world.[1] In late eighteenth-century novels that exploited this theme, suffering innocence elicits sympathy from the reader as the heroine

[1] Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction* (London: Methuen, 1986), p.3.

battles not only her delicate sensibilities but a world of moral anxiety and despair.[2] Todd argues that, historically, sentimentality was a moral reflection on right and wrong in human conduct that had previously been based on head and heart, leading to an opinion or principle concerning that conduct: doing or witnessing moral action produced pleasurable sensations, and the inverse is true too.[3] Schroeder argues that Roche's characters acknowledge feelings and abide by Hutcheson's connection of innate feelings with the moral sense.[4] This chapter aims to apply to Roche's novel the debates about moral sense and self-interest that the Gothic novel inherited from eighteenth-century ethical philosophy and sensibility. To this end, it examines the emotional responses depicted in moments reflecting both masculine and feminine conduct, where previously masculine conduct has been under-represented. It demonstrates that *The Children of the Abbey* exploits gothic conventions, not just those of sentimentality, to guide the reader's judgement of conduct, both to promote and challenge the domestic ideal promoted in contemporaneous conduct books. In the novel proper feminine behaviour subjects the heroine to emotional manipulation or unwarranted suspicion regarding her conduct. The novel's advocacy of emotional refuges, associated with rural locations and egalitarian marriage, is offset by its criticisms of aristocratic decadence and its invocations of spaces of gothic fear and terror.

Hutcheson defines the moral sense as the virtue or vice we see both in ourselves and other people, and the intuitive understanding of the valence of each action based on whether it produces pleasure or pain.[5] Moral qualities of course exist within social frameworks which include gender. For women, virtue was authoritatively defined by contemporaneous conduct

---

[2] R. F. Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress: Studies in the Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1974), p.155.
[3] Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction,* p.7.
[4] Natalie Ellen Schroeder, 'Regina Maria Roche: Popular Novelist 1789-1834' (Northwestern University, Ph.D. 1979), p.17.
[5] Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections*, ed. Aaron Garrett (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2002), p.17.

books, and for a heroine to be deemed virtuous, and not to attract censure, she needed to conform to principles of modesty, chastity, honesty, obedience, duty, and deference. Ellen Pollak has accordingly argued that conduct books advocated the cultivation of passivity in women.[6] The eighteenth century saw this as a positive feminine attribute, manifesting in the obedience of wives and daughters to their husbands and parents. From a theological perspective, however, Gordon argues that writers who portrayed characters who are naturally passive thereby deny the individual's ability to calculate self-interest, as they were not represented as making a conscious decision.[7] Only by the time of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776), Scott contends, could self-interest be firmly accepted as an actuating principle of humanity. The front-facing *lack* of self-interest Hobbes termed disinterestedness meant that an individual could not act selflessly as a person always benefitted from the good works they did ("the object is some Good to himselfe"), and therefore unalloyed benevolence could not exist.[8] Hutcheson disagreed, stating that mankind desired universal good which the moral sense approves of as the perfection of virtue.[9] Under Hobbes's restricted definition, only the romantic hero could inspire readers to behave selflessly; equally, under eighteenth-century discussions of sensibility, only the few could cultivate finer sensations to produce disinterested sentiments.[10] This allows the literary hero to display anxiety and distress, whereas previously he may have been expected to be a man of decisive action. Todd defines literary sensibility as a susceptibility to refined emotions and a quickness to display compassion for suffering, usually displayed by the heroine.[11] If the heroine's behaviour is governed by the cultivation of passivity and propriety, as prescribed by the conduct books,

---

[6] Scott Paul Gordon, *The Power of the Passive Self in English Literature 1640-1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.9.
[7] Gordon, *The Power of the Passive Self*, p.4.
[8] Gordon, *The Power of the Passive Self*, p.2 (quoting Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651)).
[9] Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions*, p.19.
[10] Gordon, *The Power of the Passive Self*, p.6.
[11] Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction*, p.7.

then she remains ignorant and innocent, with distress coming from external forces beyond her control. Whereas the hero displays sympathy and compassion, the villain is manipulative and antagonistic.

Schroeder points out that Roche felt black and white characters were more interesting, therefore the villain, Belgrave, is a man devoid of sensibility, dominated by violent passions, with a false surface disguising an ugly core.[12] This stark characterisation is also accompanied by a sense of justice, where the good are rewarded with marriage and the unrepentant punished. The villain provides distress and danger for the heroine, but his pursuit also provides instability, which Coral Ann Howells refers to as an integral element of gothic fiction.[13] This threat of violence and fear forces the heroine to travel all over the country, including to the gothic remains of Dunreath Abbey where she encounters what she first believed to be a ghost, and to the Catholic convent of St Catherine's where she finds benevolent refuge. Although *The Children of the Abbey* portrays the vicious and virtuous in the heroine and villain it also incorporates gothic supernatural elements and a fictional rendering of Rousseau's simple rural haven. The values of propriety, chastity, innocence and benevolence – along with the condemnation of manipulation, violence and authoritarianism – form the basis of an emotional community of both authors and readers based on a shared experience.

Masculinity, Femininity and Virtue in Distress

This section deals with the susceptibility to emotional excess and emotional manipulation experienced by Roche's male and female characters, and how the novel promotes a benevolent emotional and ethical equilibrium throughout the narrative. Criticism of *The*

[12] Schroeder, 'Regina Maria Roche: Popular Novelist', p.39.
[13] Coral Ann Howells, *Love, Mystery and Misery: Feeling in Gothic Fiction* (London: Athlone Press, 1978), p.25.

Children of the Abbey is relatively scarce and, although popular in its day, the novel is less well-known now, so a brief summary of the plot is helpful. *The Children of the Abbey* is the story of Amanda and Oscar Fitzalan, grandchildren of the Earl of Dunreath. They are deprived of their inheritance because their mother, Malvina, married their father, Fitzalan, against her own father's wishes. The Earl's second wife, Malvina's stepmother, ensures through a forged will that her own daughter, Malvina's half-sister, is the sole inheritor of the land and title, making her husband the Marquis the beneficiary. Like many gothic novels, *The Children of the Abbey* explores problematic property inheritance and systems of dependence and exploitation that ensue from them.[14] Dashwood and Lipsedge refer to the dependence of women under primogeniture, coverture and joint inheritance of women where there is no male heir, which is a common motif of Romantic-period gothic fiction.[15] Fitzalan becomes indebted to Colonel Belgrave after an unsuccessful venture and goes into hiding to avoid his debtors, sending Amanda away to Wales under a false name. Here she meets Lord Mortimer, son of Lord Cherbury. As Fitzalan cannot purchase a commission for Oscar in the army, Lord Cherbury does this for him, something the plausible but dastardly Colonel Belgrave is happy to take credit for. Oscar wishes to marry General Honeywood's daughter, Adela, and the General is agreeable to the match until Belgrave interferes by suggesting Oscar cares for another. Belgrave then deceives Oscar into giving up Adela, enabling him to marry the wealthy heiress. Despite being married, Belgrave pursues Amanda, offering to raise her fortunes by making her his mistress. In a significant scene, while staying with the Marquis of Roslin, Colonel Belgrave forces his attention on Amanda by entering Lady Euphrasia's closet while she is alone. He refuses to let her leave and when there is a knock at the door, he points

[14] See Ruth Bienstock Anolik, *Property and Power in English Gothic Literature* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2016). Anolik argues that the convention of gothic novel's starting with a moment of dispossession, and the arrest of an idyll of possession, serves to destabilise certainties about secure possession in the English legal system.
[15] Rita J. Dashwood and Karen Lipsedge, 'Women and Property in the Long Eighteenth-Century', *Journal of Eighteenth-Century Studies,* 44 (2021), 335-341 (p.335).

out that no one will believe she is innocent. After the family leave the house, Amanda is compelled to leave a protective space only to be abducted on the road by Belgrave and taken to his home. In Belgrave's absence, Amanda is forced out of the house by a jealous housekeeper. With no money and a tarnished reputation, she finds it difficult to find accommodation. Sir Charles Bingley rescues her and arranges shelter with Mrs Rushbrook who now believes Amanda's warning about Belgrave. Belgrave dies abroad in grief and guilt about what he has done, with a priest being unable to absolve him before he dies. Amanda ultimately marries Lord Mortimer after he inherits his father's title of Lord Cherbury, and Oscar marries Adela, after her observation of a period of mourning for her first husband.

This brief plot summary indicates that *The Children of the Abbey* is interested in presenting a series of events that stir an emotional and moral reaction, and the success of an appropriate resolution in each case depends on the motives and preparedness of the characters. Amanda and Oscar are raised in rural isolation and have developed a trusting, naïve nature which looks for and trusts in the good in people. The novel thereby follows Rousseau's association of rusticity with benevolent simplicity. Rousseau said that upright and simple men are difficult to deceive: a band of peasants regulating their own affairs always act more wisely than those who adopt art and mystery.[16] In a similar vein, Locke suggested that when such individuals enter the public sphere, they learn the cost of a sheltered upbringing by observing – and being subjected to – the violence and deception of other people. *The Children of the Abbey* thus deals with the recurring motif of eighteenth-century fiction, especially later-century sentimental fiction, that subjects cloistered, ingenuous characters to a cynical and exploitative world, which frequently manifests as sexual predation. In the novel, Amanda is pursued all over the country by Colonel Belgrave, who wants to make her his mistress. She is

[16] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Of The Social Contract and Other Political Writings,* (1762), ed. Christopher Bertram, trans. Quinten Hoare (London: Penguin, 2012), p.99.

subjected to and opposes his unwanted advances, violent conduct and physical abduction, but in a society where women rely on male protection, she can do little to stop him. Due to her father's circumstances, Amanda's immediate family are largely absent, leaving Amanda to rely on her aunt, the Marchioness, and family friend Lady Greystock, who prove scheming, deceptive and unreliable. When her father as male protector is present, Amanda is a dutiful daughter, obeying her father and renouncing Lord Mortimer at the request of his father, but there are occasions when she does assert herself against injustice. Although Roche will use Rousseau's rural ideal as a safe space later in the novel, she exposes his trust in the goodness of human nature in a competitive environment, as naïve and dangerous to both the reputation and safety of the heroine.

Male virtue in Roche's novel manifests in compassion, upholding justice, a search for the truth, and a tendency to weep at loss. In common with female virtue, it is also tested through hardship and distress. Oscar suffers the deception of Colonel Belgrave, who makes him believe General Honeywood would not permit Oscar to marry Adela. Innocence assumes people will not lie and this becomes the cause of his suffering. To satisfy a need for justice, Oscar is rewarded with marriage to Adela at the end of the novel. In a similar vein, Lord Mortimer searches for the truth as he wrestles with conflicting emotions concerning Amanda and her behaviour towards him. He is concerned about whether she is worthy of his affection, suggesting people like Lady Euphrasia, who use artifice, are not. Lady Euphrasia colludes with the Marquis and Marchioness to ensure Amanda is left in a compromising position and that her reputation is damaged. They display the proud, jealous, self-important attitude associated with their rank, inviting the reader to condemn their actions. In contrast, Lady Dunreath repents and tries to make reparations by giving Amanda the will to secure the future of both her and Oscar. Before she can receive her birthright, Amanda has to overcome her fear of ghosts within the ruined abbey, trusting in Providence for protection. In *The Children of the*

Abbey, Roche shows how both the virtuous and vicious conflict in selfless acts of benevolence and self-centred egotism.

The Children of the Abbey explores the predicament of Amanda as a young single woman vulnerable to the attention of male suitors. The resulting charged situation is the main source of the emotions represented within and provoked by Roche's novel. When Amanda is a child, Colonel Belgrave does not notice her, but when she becomes a young woman, "He instantly marked her for his prey."[17] This predatory attitude exposes his true motives and the nature of his character. This reflects Hobbes's view that humans are driven by self-interest, which results from the pressures of society.[18] To raise his status in society Belgrave needs to marry for money, and as Amanda has no fortune, he will only ever see her as a mistress. Amanda when she is introduced to him is described as having "the softest smile of compliance" and her "blue eyes beamed with modesty and gratitude" (p.32). Compliance, modesty and gratitude echo the attributes of a "proper lady" both in mind and physical form. Roche immediately follows this with Belgrave's cynical, self-interested, and unfeeling reaction. By directly juxtaposing innocence with malicious intent, the novel promotes a polarised understanding of morality, which could be construed as ethically simplistic and designed to stimulate basic emotions in readers, though I also contend it is through this binary that the novel interacts with constructions of virtue and vice stemming from eighteenth-century moral philosophy.

Belgrave is a plausible villain because he can superficially ape the qualities of religiosity and generosity that should be attached to his social standing, military rank, and age. Belgrave thanks Providence for inspiring Fitzalan to choose him as his benefactor, as this

[17] Regina Maria Roche, *The Children of the Abbey* (1796), ed. William D. Brewer (Richmond: Valancourt Books, 2016), p.32. Parenthetical references are made to this edition unless otherwise stated.
[18] Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, pp.86, 88.

will allow him ready access to the house. This not only exposes the innocence of Amanda to the rake's rapacity but reveals the naivety of her father in making such alliances. The depiction of unremittingly wicked characters in the period's fiction raises the question of how novelists are engaging in the debates about human nature as fundamentally benevolent or malevolent. *The Children of the Abbey* does not undermine Hutcheson's idea that people are naturally benevolent, but it points out that there are exceptions due to misdirected or non-reflective, selfish passions, as the indulgence of sensuality has come to predominate social virtue in the Colonel. Dixon points to Hutcheson's distinction between higher and lower appetites, where the lower passions are movements of the senses and tend to be more violent than benevolent.[19] Radcliffe goes further than Hutcheson by suggesting that selfish passions can preoccupy and obstruct the reasoning and evaluation of behaviour to the point where we do not recognise the consequences of pleasure and pain.[20] The novel promotes the idea that readers need to exercise a degree of wisdom in their choices, adhering to virtue while recognising that it may have been compromised in others.

By making Amanda's father beholden to Belgrave financially, the narrative adds to the problems of gender dependence with attention to disparities of wealth and class. This connection emboldens Belgrave to make improper suggestions to Amanda: "At first she did not perfectly understand him; but when, with increased audacity, he explained himself more fully, horror, indignation, and surprise took possession of her breast; and, yielding to their feelings, she turned and fled to the house, as if from a monster" (p.33). Belgrave's actions not only cause her emotional but physical distress – an instinctual response stems from the socially learned prescriptions about correct behaviour. Hutcheson speaks of desires divided into five classes, one of which is "desires of honour and aversion to shame."[21] Yeazell refers

[19] Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions,* p.83.
[20] Radcliffe, 'Love and Benevolence in Hutcheson's and Hume's Theories of the Passions', p.634.
[21] Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions,* p.19.

to modesty as a point of honour, rooted in public appearance and comes with "an agreeable fear."[22] Amanda feels an aversion to his words as he has insulted her honour by suggesting something she sees as shameful and her instinctive action is to flee from a fear of the consequences. Belgrave appears to have no thought concerning the consequences of his actions other than the self-interest Hutcheson deemed a barrier to virtuous conduct, and his attitude is more in line with Hobbes's natural interest where people only perform acts of goodness when it benefits them.[23] *The Children of the Abbey* seeks to distinguish between characters with the self-sacrificing goodness of Hutcheson's moral sense and the selfish desires of Hobbes's self-interest.

The most dramatic and prolonged scenes of Belgrave's oppression of Amanda occur in Lady Euphrasia's dressing room. Tita Chico describes the dressing room as a private feminine space for dressing and reading, but privacy also suggests secrecy and potential scandal.[24] Satirists such as Pope in the early eighteenth century emphasised the adorning of a woman's body in dressing rooms, making them a locus of sexual matters, however, in his novels, Richardson claimed the space as a place of virtue and education. By having Amanda use the closet as a private space for reading, Roche appears to be following Richardson's example rather than the misogynistic satirical tradition. Karen Lipsedge argues that by the mid-century, dressing rooms were depicted in fiction as a "private female space in which the heart, rather than the body, is unveiled and displayed," however, this ideal is inevitably tested by scenes in which parental oppression or unwanted seduction is inflicted on women.[25] Roche also emphasises the innocent occupation of the space and that Belgrave's intrusion amounts to a

---

[22] Ruth Bernard Yeazell, *Fictions of Modesty: Women and Courtship in the English Novel* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991), p.10 (the phrase "agreeable fear" in this context is quoted from *The Tatler* (1709).
[23] Gordon, *The Power of the Passive Self*, p.15.
[24] Tita Chico, *Designing Women: The Dressing Room in Eighteenth-Century English Literature and Culture* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2005), p.29.
[25] Karen Lipsedge, *Domestic Space in Eighteenth-Century British Novels* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p.120.

violation of Amanda's privacy. Bobker points out that an invitation into a closet was a privilege, but the meetings were not always pleasant if the relative status of the parties was unclear.[26] The dressing room door becomes the boundary line and entering without permission becomes an infringement.[27] Therefore, Belgrave not only offends Amanda's private sensibilities when he intrudes on her but exposes her reputation to public scrutiny and disgrace. When he enters, she is alone: "She started up, and was springing to the door, when, rushing between her and it, he caught her in his arm, and forcing her back to the sofa, rudely stopped her mouth" (p.291). Amanda's reaction is one of instinctive action, "started", "springing" and of fear, moving towards the door as an escape. These are not words of welcome but intrusion and anxiety. The quick succession of verbs in short sentences emphasises the urgency of her feelings. Equally Belgrave's responses – "rushing", "caught", "forcing", and "stopped" – capture the violence and speed of his reaction as he prevents her escape. As a man, he can impose his will and desire upon her. This also exposes Amanda's physical vulnerability and women in general, to male aggression. There is also the suggestion that he has had inside help to achieve his aims: "Amanda shuddered at the idea of treachery, and being convinced from what he said, she could not expect assistance, endeavoured to recover her fainting spirits and exert all her resolution" (p.292). Amanda's immediate reaction is one of weakness and the fainting spirits which are the expected response of virtue in distress, however, she then draws on some inner strength of character to challenge Belgrave's physical dominance with courage. She is not a passive victim like some women in gothic novels but stands up for her rights and justice.

Amanda cannot physically overpower Belgrave; therefore, she resorts to an appeal to chivalry and propriety: "though treachery may have brought you hither, you must be

[26] Danielle Bobker, *The Closet: The Eighteenth-Century Architecture of Intimacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), p.6, 7.
[27] Chico, *Designing Women,* p.26.

convinced under the Marquis of Roslin's roof, who by relationship, as well as hospitality, is bound to protect me, you dare not, with impunity offer me any insult" (p.292). Unfortunately, Belgrave is not swayed by such reasoning and almost dismisses it out of hand, due to long concealment, as if her actions have forced him to resort to desperate measures and he intends to make the most of the opportunity to communicate his desires. There does not appear to be any acknowledgement or awareness on Belgrave's part of the distress he is causing her, and the dissonance between his lack of feeling and her heightened feelings that guide the moral response of the target reader. Amanda is described as "beholding him with horror," and "her eyes flashed with indignation" (p.292). Abiding by an economic calculus of human motivation, Belgrave believes he is making her a generous offer of wealth and status, that society's objections to concubinage are merely trifling, and that she is being stubbornly wilful, not principled in her resistance. At its most basic level, it is a failure to see another's point of view, an empathetic limitation. When Amanda tries to escape again, he prevents her, "his face inflamed with passion, and darting the most malignant glances at her" (p.293). The narrative voice shows that despite his words, his intentions are not socially acceptable, and the idea of wealth and status that may appeal to lower-class women is simply a façade to manipulate and control her.

Amanda may not be part of the aristocracy, but she views herself as the daughter of a gentleman. It may be said that her defiance aligns her with middle-class values of individual merit rather than aristocratic ones of unchallenged privileges. Her vulnerability and isolation are further emphasised when she screams for help and no one answers. In desperation, she tries to appeal to his better nature: "'Oh, Belgrave!' cried she, trembling, 'if you have one principle of honour, one feeling of humanity remaining, retire'" (p.293). Roche has Amanda adopt a pleading tone, "trembling" with anxiety and exposing her vulnerability. Eighteenth-

century writers predominantly believed the anxiety of the mind manifested on the body.[28] Davidson develops Wollstonecraft's argument concerning the vulnerability of women and the need for protection by defining gallantry as "a word for the system of manners that men use to dominate women from the outside in, and modesty dominates the way that women are disciplined from the inside out."[29] Thus, to elicit men's honour and protection women must assume an attitude of subservient modesty and politeness which reinforces male dominance. Amanda is also questioning his humanity and compassion for a fellow human being, but he turns her words against her in his reply: "'I distress you Amanda,' said he, assuming a softened accent, 'and it wounds me to the soul to do so, though you, cruel and inexorable, care not what pain you occasion me'" (p.293). By reversing her accusation of insensitivity to causing suffering, Belgrave demonstrates how compassion can be used to manipulate others. The irony is that his concern for her distress does not appear genuine, as the narrator states he assumes a "softened" tone. Politeness in this period was understood as a socially accepted behaviour that made insincerity and hypocrisy a habit.[30] Roche is therefore taking the idea of unrequited love associated with tales of chivalry and rendering it worthless through Belgrave's habitual insincerity and hypocrisy. Fielding in his *Essay on the Character of Men* argued that the hypocrite seeks to destroy the reputation of the virtuous to disarm them of weapons which may hurt him.[31] In this vein, Belgrave suggests that Lord Mortimer and Sir Charles are insincere in their attentions, and he is the only one being honest. As Davidson points out, equating truth with sincerity can place it in opposition to politeness, where a certain amount of tact is needed for the benefit of society.[32] Considering Belgrave's character,

[28] Juliet McMaster, *Reading the Body in the Eighteenth Century Novel* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.xi.
[29] Jenny Davidson, Hypocrisy *and the Politics of Politeness: Manners and Morals from Locke to Austen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.77.
[30] Davidson, *Hypocrisy and the Politics of Politeness,* p.5.
[31] Henry Fielding, 'An Essay on the Character of Men' (1740), in *The Works of Henry Fielding*, 10 vols, ed. Leslie Stephen (London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1882), vol. 6, p.343.
[32] Davidson, *Hypocrisy and the Politics of Politeness,* pp.1, 2.

it is unlikely Roche intends him to claim the moral high ground in terms of honesty and it is more in keeping with his character that he is being malicious. His aggressive, physical bullying and isolation cause Amanda deep distress; he will not listen to reason or abide by the conventions of propriety and is deluded into thinking that she should be grateful for his attention. Whereas Amanda has acted honestly Belgrave has resorted to violence and duplicity. Vera Nunning suggests a bi-active reading of a text which involves interaction between clues within the text and the reader's interpretation of their meaning.[33] She suggests spending time with characters offers a safe opportunity to learn without harm to themselves or others. Stories can present extreme characters that can broaden the knowledge of readers' about how the human mind works.[34] By exposing Belgrave's attempted manipulation of Amanda, Roche is educating her readers to be aware that compassion can be used to self-interested ends and to guard against a naive interpretation owing to inexperience.

Amanda is not the only character who suffers at the hands of Belgrave. In the terms set out by contemporaneous philosophers of emotions, he is incapable of subordinating his base emotions, or passions, to reason, a societal imperative that Geoffrey Sill argues was intrinsic to the development of the novel during the eighteenth century.[35] Belgrave is described as "a slave, however, to the most violent passions, he was often unable to control them, and, forgetful of all prudential motives, delighted at those times in mortifying Adela, by sly sarcasms on her attachment for Oscar" (p.147). Pinch interprets Hume as arguing that individuals were subject to external feelings which were felt through communication rather than their own internal disposition or temper.[36] Hume termed these external feelings passions

[33] Vera Nunning 'The Affective Value of Fiction: Presenting and Evoking Emotions', in *Writing Emotions: Theoretical Concepts and Selected Case Studies in Literature*, ed. Ingeborg Jandl et al. (Bielefeld: Verlag, 2018), p.30.
[34] Nunning, 'The Affective Value of Fiction', pp.46, 48.
[35] Geoffrey Sill, *The Cure of the Passions and the Origins of the English Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.11.
[36] Adela Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen* (Stanford: Stanford University Press 1996), p.1.

and stated they could not be overcome by reason. In comparison, Hutcheson stated passions were movements of the lower sense appetite and were more violent, concentrated in the moment and to the exclusion of reason, thus being less benevolent than the higher rational appetites.[37] Applying these theories to explain Belgrave's emotional motivation we can see he is subject to jealousy, one of Hutcheson's lower appetites, which stems from his envy of Oscar (the external factor) who will gain both Adela and her fortune through marriage, something Belgrave covets for himself. He marries Adela to deprive Oscar of her fortune and takes delight in afflicting her, disregarding "prudential motives" associated with the higher rational appetites, which manifest in social propriety. Adella also reacts to the external circumstances of Oscar's rejection with resentment, and an all-consuming lower appetite, which allows Belgrave to manipulate her feelings: "but pride urged her to a step which would prove to Fitzalan his conduct had not affected her" (p.125). There is a suggestion that she has not only been manipulated but has made an impetuous decision, and on further reflection "an involuntary repugnance rose in her mind against the connection she was about forming, and honour alone kept her from declining it forever" (p.125). Belgrave is using her pride, resentment and ill-founded decision-making, along with the social pressure that comes with "honour" and not wishing to appear foolish. Yet when they are married, Belgrave cannot control his passions by exercising reason, which manifests in a malicious nature. Hobbes suggests that friction results in an excess of passion, where power comes at someone else's expense resulting in a deviation from the psychological norm.[38] In Belgrave, this deviation results in malicious cruelty, as he takes advantage of his power over Adela as his wife. With this change in nature Adela soon realises her mistake: "thou' deeply wounded, she never

[37] Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.83.
[38] Daniel M. Gross, *The Secret History of Emotions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp.80, 83.

complained, she had partly forged her chains, and resolved to bear them without repining" (p.147).

In this way, *The Children of the Abbey* depicts both an abusive marriage *and* a wife who submits to it in a martyr-like manner, joining the 1790s critique of matrimony but on equivocal terms. Mary Astell in *Some Reflections on Marriage* (1700) states that "though a husband can't deprive a wife of life without being responsible to the law, he may, however, do what is much more grievous to a generous mind, render life miserable, for which she has no redress, scarce pity, which is afforded to every other complainant, it being thought a wife's duty to suffer everything without complaint."[39] Based upon Astell's comments Adela's situation would receive little sympathy from the reading public as a miserable marriage is not unusual and a wife must endure the hardship. Thompson contends the domestic novel does not portray the aggressive resistance of wives to the power that subjugates them, but tactically depicts the misery of endurance.[40] She suggests that with clever manipulation a wife may be able to temper the show of force exercised by a husband and reduce the appearance of servitude, but this does not happen in Adela's situation. Adela passively accepts her husband's authority along with a fatalism that suggests she is partly to blame for the choices she has made. The narrator states her father could not see her misery, and she may have chosen not to complain out of compassion for his feelings, as we have previously been told that he wanted to see his daughter married to a man of her choosing. Thompson gives the example of Haywood's *Betsy Thoughtless* (1751) as a novel in which the heroine loses her morally superior suitor to another and marries a man who pays her flattering attention but turns into a brutal husband. This parallels Adela's situation, where the reader pities her marriage to Belgrave after she is deceived into rejecting Oscar's affection. Adela, like Betsy, endures the

[39] Mary Astell, *Some Reflections upon Marriage*, 4th ed. (London: William Parker, 1730) p.150.
[40] Helen Thompson, *Ingenuous Subjection: Compliance and Power in the Eighteenth-Century Domestic Novel* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), p.5.

abuse of her husband, proving she has command over her own emotions or, in Lockean terms, self-mastery; and when she and Oscar are free, she is seen as worthy of marrying him.[41] Gross argues that Hume characterises humility as a passive, subservient negative condition and therefore feminine, whereas pride is active, authoritative and masculine. Thus, in the eighteenth century, humility is an important value for creating distinctions between masculine and feminine constructions of the self.[42] Roche uses Adela to highlight some of the main emotional characteristics endured by women – obedience, subjugation, humility and self-command – all of which are reinforced by the conduct books which were designed as prescriptive guides for virtuous behaviour. These values help establish the basis for an emotional community on which characters are judged and this impacts whether the reader views their actions sympathetically or not.

Not all male displays of emotion in *The Children of the Abbey* are aggressive and threatening. Kathleen Oliver points out that "effeminate" and "feminine" were interchangeable terms in the eighteenth century and were associated with excessive emotion. These emotions could be portrayed by tears, extreme passion, hysteria, a passive rather than active response, helpless victimisation, silence, and foppish attention to dress. The emotions associated with effeminism could be demonstrated by either sex. A slight degree of "feminine" emotion was acceptable in men as a sign of male sensibility, but overindulgence was not condoned.[43] When Oscar is deceived into giving up Adela by Belgrave, he states: "He filled my soul with unutterable anguish and persuaded me to a falsehood which has plunged me into despair!" (p.119). Belgrave has used Oscar's love for Adela against him, persuading him to lie to her to spare her feelings. He knows that he can use Oscar's benevolent nature to

[41] Thompson, *Ingenuous Subjection,* p.142.
[42] Gross, *The Secret History of Emotions,* p.142.
[43] Kathleen M. Oliver, 'Frances Sheridan's Faulkland, The Silenced, Emasculated, Ideal Man', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 43:3 (2003), pp.673-700 (p.684).

manipulate him into doing his will, making him not only selfish but dangerous, as he will go on to inflict pain on other people. Oscar's rejection will make Adela more emotionally vulnerable and open to accepting Belgrave's proposal, thus satisfying his malevolent pride and jealousy of Oscar. When Oscar discovers Adela is married to Belgrave, he "staggered back a few paces, uttered a deep groan, and fell senseless at her feet" (p.119). Oscar has raised his agitated feelings to such a degree that he is overcome by emotion. He becomes the victim of his passions at this moment, as they deprive him of action. When he recovers, Mrs Marlowe admonishes him not to be plagued by self-regret due to his own folly and imprudence but patiently to submit to life's trials. The idea of passive submission causes Oscar to rise with impatience and take up his sword, only to be restrained by the reason of Mrs Marlowe. He acknowledges being blinded by his passion for revenge; but unlike Belgrave, he considers the consequences of his actions for the General and Adela. This acknowledgement of feeling prompts Mrs Marlowe to action: "Mrs Marlowe seized this moment of yielding softness to advise and reason with him; her tears mingled with his" (p.121). The softness, tears and reason suggest a male sensibility within the bounds of accepted norms. Despite his impetuous outburst, Oscar can control his emotions, subject them to reason, and accommodate them to socially sanctioned behaviours, whilst retaining male sensitivity.

Roche distinguishes between Oscar, who has a genuine benevolent affection for Adela, and Belgrave, who is motivated by a desire for wealth and power at the expense of other people. Belgrave seeks to achieve this by destroying Oscar's hopes of a union with Adela: "To blast his promised joys, even if it did not lead to the accomplishment of his own wishes, he felt would give him some comfort, and he resolved to leave no means untried for doing so" (p.110). Benedict argues that Radcliffe's literary villains portray passions unrestrained by

social values,[44] a view that can equally be applied to Roche's villains. Belgrave's motivations are driven by jealousy and the desire to destroy someone else's happiness; these are emotions which would normally be restrained by social conventions and self-discipline but are left unchecked by Belgrave. Therefore, the reader's interpretation of his later declaration of affection is coloured by this viewpoint. Dixon furthermore characterises sentimental fiction as using broken language as an outward expression of an inability to articulate emotions in words.[45] Therefore, Belgrave's language is fractured to give this impression: " 'I have no right, no attraction, indeed, to detain you; yet be assured,' and he summoned a tear to his aid, while he pressed her hand to his bosom, "a heart more truly devoted to you than mine you can never meet" (p.124). "Summon[ing] a tear" indicates that this is decidedly *not* a spontaneous reaction brought on by genuine feeling but a ploy to help deceive her. Dixon argues the gothic uses framing, together with fragmentation, to reinforce the effect in the reader's mind.[46] In this instance, the effect is to highlight the calculated nature of Belgrave's deception. Before the speech, Belgrave interrupts Adela in the garden, where he deliberately receives a bundle of letters, one of which is purportedly from Oscar. The reader then sees Adela's reaction before Belgrave's impassioned speech and the scene concludes with Adela's reflections on her decision which she now considers impetuous. The garden scene's dramatic impact is heightened by the fact that the reader is aware of Belgrave's deception and Adela's subsequent regret. Belgrave's reaction can be contrasted with Oscar's response to Adela's concern for his health, which appears more spontaneous: "'oh, heavens!' then starting up, he hurried to the window, as if to hide and to indulge his melancholy" (p.126). By placing these scenes within the same chapter, Roche shows the reader that there is a difference between genuine sensibility demonstrated by distress with the potential for a tearful response and tears just

[44] Barbara Benedict, *Framing Feeling: Sentiment and Style in English Prose Fiction 1754-1800* (New York, AMS Press, 1994), p.174.
[45] Benedict, *Framing Feeling*, p.12.
[46] Benedict, *Framing Feeling*, p.176.

produced for effect. Rousseau argued that modesty, blushing, and crying, were instinctive bodily reactions. Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771) made tears a physical sign of virtue, tenderness, and humanity.[47] Wollstonecraft argued conduct books favoured appearance over substance in action and emotion; this led to false modesty, causing women to deceive others as well as themselves.[48] This deception can equally apply to Belgrave's false tears and virtue to Oscar's genuine response. Belgrave's behaviour is not limited to deception: "he looked as if he would pierce into the recess of her heart: she shuddered, and for the first time, felt the tyranny she had imposed upon herself" (p.125). There are malicious undertones associated with the idea of "piercing her heart" and her reaction is a physical shudder, again suggesting fear of violence beginning in the mind and manifesting in a physical reaction in the body. As Thompson argues, unhappy marriages in the period's fiction force a wife into a double standard: externally she must display obedience, qualifying this with a repression of disgust.[49] This leaves Adela deceived and forced to practise deception to conform to society's expectations. This is ironic in a society concerned with eradicating deception in women.

An alternative model of manliness in *The Children of the Abbey* is that offered by Mortimer. Katherine Rogers describes the feminised hero as displaying virtues increasingly valued by women in the later eighteenth century.[50] "There was, indeed, in the disposition and manners of Lord Mortimer that happy mixture of animation and softness which at once amuses the fancy and attracts the heart," the narrator states (p.57). *The Gentleman's Magazine* reinforces this idea of softness in masculinity as polite, "uprightness, modesty, independence of spirit, and manly candour."[51] Rogers also states that men in female-authored novels display

---

[47] Thomas Dixon, *Weeping Britannia: Portrait of a Nation in Tears*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p.98.
[48] Davidson, *Hypocrisy and the Politics of Politeness*, p.77.
[49] Thompson, *Ingenuous Subjection*, p.7.
[50] Katherine Rogers, 'Dreams and Nightmares: Male Characters in the Female Novel of the Eighteenth-Century', in *Men by Women*, ed. Janet Todd (London: Holmes & Meer, 1981), p.10.
[51] William Stafford, 'Gentlemanly Masculinities as represented by the Late Georgian *Gentleman's Magazine,' History*, 9:309 (2008), 47-68 (p.65).

the virtues valued by women, as they fulfil women's dreams by marrying for love, appreciating women both morally and intellectually rather than just as sexual objects or means to acquire a fortune, considering their feelings, offering gentle correction and building self-esteem through the acknowledgement of their superior self-control and high-mindedness.[52] The narrator summarises Amanda's worth to Lord Mortimer: "her mental perfections; the strength of her understanding, the justness of her remarks, the liveliness of her fancy, above all, the purity which mingled in every sentiment and the modesty which accompanied every word, filled him with delight and amazement" (p.64). Mortimer finds delight in Amanda's virtues and in contrast, Belgrave only seeks to make her his mistress. The qualities of reason and propriety make her worthy to be a heroine and a suitable companion for Lord Mortimer. Roche also endows Mortimer with the heroic trait of chivalry, as when Amanda goes to Castle Carberry she sees a picture of him as a boy: "Mortimer was portrayed, as [Lady Cherbury] is represented in the beautiful allegory, sheltering a trembling dove in his bosom from a ferocious hawk. Oh! Mortimer! Thought Amanda, thy feeling nature is here ably delineated. The distressed, or the helpless, to the utmost of your power, you would save from the gripe of cruelty and oppression" (p.152). Amanda sees his feeling nature as a source of his compassion and benevolence. She sees in him the role of protector of the weak and defenceless, and this is what she needs to protect her from the inappropriate advances of Colonel Belgrave. Women writers in the period shaped their heroes around the qualities they needed or admired in a man, chivalry and protection, compassion and benevolence, but they did not feminise them completely by making them totally passive victims. *The Children of the Abbey* fits this model, challenging what Hutcheson would deem insensitivity and self-interest through problematic modes of masculinity, and promoting social virtue and benevolence through suitably assertive but compassionate men.

[52] Katherine Rogers, 'Dreams and Nightmares', p.9.

In common with Oscar, Lord Mortimer is not immune from suffering, but his distress is partly due to suspicion and jealousy. When he first enquires about Amanda in the country, her old nurse states she is not what she appears to be, which sows the seeds of suspicion in Lord Mortimer's mind. At the ball, he is standing next to Lady Euphrasia and cannot express the tenderness of his feelings, but upon recollecting her conduct, suspicion resurfaces and those feelings change:

> how cruelly, how ungratefully she had used him. Fled in the very moment of hope and expectation, leaving him a prey to distrust, anxiety, and regret, he dreaded some fatal mystery – some improper attachment (experience had rendered him suspicious), which neither she nor her father could avow; for never did he imagine that the scrupulous delicacy of Fitzalan alone had effected their separation. (p.183)

Mortimer's feelings are constantly in flux, oscillating between distrust, anxiety and regret, as he tries to deal with changing circumstances that he does not understand. When he sees Amanda in the carriage with Belgrave his emotional distress reaches its peak as he tries to explain his despair to his aunt. He is described as "distracted" with a "wild and pallid look," and his responses are paratactic, punctuated with exclamation marks. The narrator hereby signals a breakdown of emotional control: "The shame of acknowledging he was so deceived, the agony he suffered […] the excessive agitation and fatigue […] his senses suddenly gave way, and he actually fainted on the floor" (p.311). Like Oscar, Lord Mortimer experiences overwhelming emotions, but his feelings are based on misunderstanding and incorrect information, as Amanda has been kidnapped by Belgrave. Roche is taking the misunderstandings which would lead to comedy in a sentimental novel and showing the pain and suffering when malicious intent is applied. This creates sympathy for the characters who suffer and condemnation of those who seek to inflict pain.

Virtue and vice are portrayed through the interaction of characters. Vice is driven by selfish desire and manifests in manipulation and deception. When applied to the heroine it demonstrates how physically and emotionally vulnerable women are while generating a sympathetic response. Benevolence is reinforced by reference to Rousseau's rural ideal, sheltered in childhood away from the violence and deception of the city. Robert Miles suggests that sensibility highlights inner conflicts between "desire and conformity, rebelliousness and convention, self-expression and self-sacrifice."[53] Therefore, the heroine's distress is often caused by difficulties complying with the conventions of a "proper lady" and asserting individual rights. Male virtue manifests in genuine compassion and sensibility, chivalry and self-sacrifice.

The Portrayal of Emotional Regimes Through Female Virtue

From the previous discussion, it is clear that *The Children of the Abbey* explores male and female identities, and acceptable levels and expressions of feelings according to gender prescriptions, along with sincere and manipulative performances. Mary Poovey suggests that eighteenth-century writers regarded femininity as innate, but feminine virtues needed constant cultivation. This role was taken up by the conduct books, which reinforced hierarchical values and helped support bourgeois society. They provided a frame of reference for women to interpret and understand their own desires.[54] "The foolish and the ignorant are generally proud, positive and conceited; whereas the sensible and the learned are, for the most part, modest, humble and diffident."[55] They also advocated a view of modesty centred more on

[53] Robert Miles, *Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p.32.
[54] Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley and Jane Austen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p.16.
[55] Charles Allen, *The Polite Lady or a Course of Female Education in a Series of Letters* (London: Thomas Carnan, 1785), p.235.

appearance than substance which could result in deception and compromise. *The Children of the Abbey* demonstrates the difficulties associated with maintaining virtue and the value of genuine substance over mere appearance.

Roche's portrayal of Amanda as a dutiful daughter as defined by the conduct books is undercut by the price she must pay to achieve that obedience. When her father hears of her attachment to Lord Mortimer he comes to take Amanda away: "it made her suffer agony, to be torn from Lord Mortimer in the hour of reconciliation and explanation" (p.85). She assumes her father has not received Lord Mortimer's letter and does not know the full situation. Therefore, she believes he is acting out of ignorance and not more prudential motives. However, when Lord Mortimer arrives, Amanda realises: "that he not only knew [of] Lord Mortimer's being in the house but wished her to avoid him; for he instantly led her from the window, and [shut] it down" (p.88). Her father is hiding her from public view and her reaction is one of fear: "a cold horror ran through her veins, and she was oppressed by as many fears as if she had been conscious of offending him" (p.88). Seclusion, oppression and horror result from a daughter's duty to her father's wishes and "for the first time in her life, [Amanda] wished to be relieved from his presence" (p.88). Novels placed a significant emphasis on a woman's transition from daughter to wife, suggesting it was not only the most important but the only decision she may ever make. The success or failure of this decision was closely aligned with her relationship with her father.[56] Therefore any breakdown in the relationship with her father would be seen as significant to eighteenth-century readers. Fitzalan considers the match from the standards of a hierarchical society and deems that the inequality of class makes the relationship inappropriate. When he tells her, "Your attachment, when repelled by reason and fortitude will soon vanish," her emotional reaction "deprived her of speech or

[56] Caroline Gonda, *Reading Daughters' Fictions 1709–1834: Novels and Society from Manley to Edgeworth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.37.

acting" (p.92). This is the familiar novelistic situation of parentally proscribed love, with the father voicing the abstract prescriptions that could come from a conduct book; but here we can see the daughter's devastated emotional response, indicating *The Children of the Abbey*'s partial resistance to conduct book ideology.

In the scene, Amanda is deprived of her freedom, and her voice is silenced in the name of reason. Clark states the ability to sympathise increases in a civilised society as reason and passion become more social and dependent on the art of persuasion.[57] Fitzalan uses an emotional appeal in response to Amanda's silence, which engages her sympathy and reconciles her to the situation: "Fitzalan burst into tears – the enthusiasm of virtue warmed them both – hallowed are her raptures, and amply do they recompense the pain attended on her sacrifices" (p.93). Here, the narrative voice adopts a religious tone and diction, and more straightforwardly aligns "virtue" with daughterly duty, this time based on an affective not rational basis, which again is susceptible to a contrarian reading that would allow that obedience has been coerced. Father and daughter are reconciled through Amanda's virtue and "sacrifice" as a dutiful daughter. When she meets Miss Rushbrook, Amanda "pointed out the claims a parent had upon a child and dwelt upon the delight a child experienced when conscious of fulfilling those claims. She spoke of the rapture attending the triumph of reason and humanity over self and passion" (p.537). The word "claim" suggests a duty or moral obligation without question or reason, not an act of kindness or benevolence from which a person would take delight. Hobbes, we will recall, argues an act of kindness can never be truly disinterested as the giver gains from giving the gift. The gift here is obedience and the satisfaction of mastering your own emotions. Eighteenth-century society created what William Reddy would call an "emotional regime" wherein pleasure is derived from female

[57] Henry Clark, 'Conversation and Moderate Virtue in Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*', *The Review of Politics,* 54:2 (1992), 185-210 (p.195).

duty, and deviation ascribed to commonly accepted "selfish" passions is disobedience. Roche highlights the difficulties women face through circumstances when trying to comply with the often unobtainable standards of duty and obedience. Society may benefit from control through the family unit, but for women, it can be seen as coercive control.

Fitzalan sets a standard of virtue for his daughter based on duty and the prevailing hierarchy, but Lord Mortimer uses a different standard. He states his reason for not marrying Lady Euphrasia: "I have long been convinced that wealth alone was insufficient to bestow felicity" (p.255). He explains self-interest and ambition are degrading to humanity, implying selfish ambition promotes deception, excess and lack of self-control. *The Children of the Abbey* thus reinforces the standards of virtue (honesty, chastity and self-control) found in the conduct books, and Amanda needs to demonstrate that she is worthy of that trust. Lord Mortimer's suspicion is based on a breakdown in communication between him and Amanda: "Since his return from Ireland, he had been distracted by incertitude and anxiety about her. The innocence, the purity, and the tenderness she had displayed were perpetually recurring in his memory. It was impossible, he thought, they could be feigned" (p.235). This is the standard for purity and honesty Lord Mortimer has set, but circumstances have left him troubled by doubt. There is also a naivete on his part in believing his father can be persuaded by her virtue: "if assured her precipitate journey from Wales was occasioned by no motive she need blush to avow, he felt he should be better enabled to combat the difficulties he was convinced his father would throw in the way of their union" (p.235). Mandeville among others had argued that the blush was associated with shame caused by the judgement of others, suggesting it is a physiological manifestation of a socially constructed standard of "modesty."[58] This appears to be how Lord Mortimer interprets it, as a reaction of the mind

[58] Ruth Bernard Yeazell, *Fictions of Modesty: Women and Courtship in the English Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p.71.

manifests in the body.[59] This is a symptom of his fear of being deceived based on his learned experience with other members of the nobility. The irony is that it is due to his father that she has been forced to leave. When Sir Charles Bingley declares his affection, "She had not the ridiculous and unfeeling vanity to be delighted with an attachment she could not return; besides his attentions were easing, as she believed they gave uneasiness to Lord Mortimer" (p.242). This proves her lack of vanity and consideration both for Sir Charles and Lord Mortimer. In terms of unaffected conduct and empathetic capacity, Amanda is an ideal heroine.

Amanda is contrasted with the frivolous and superficial Lady Euphrasia at the ball: "Art and fashion were exhausted in adorning her, and she entered the room with all the insolence of conscious rank and affectation of beauty" (pp.182-83). Lady Euphrasia displays the falseness attributed to vanity and the pride associated with her rank. Unlike Amanda she seeks the attention of the young men in the room: "she soon felt her spirits uncommonly exhilarated by the attention of two of the most elegant men in the room; […] enjoying the compliments she extorted from them" (p.183). "Exhilarated" suggests an excess of emotion which inflates opinion beyond what is reasonable. In addition, she is described as "extorting" this attention and compliments from them suggesting manipulation of the situation for her own ends. This unnatural and self-centred approach leads to disapproval and condemnation in the reader. The dissipation of this illusion is immediate as the narrator informs the reader: "the door opened, and Amanda, like an angel of light, appeared to dissolve the mists of vanity and self-importance" (p.183). Amanda demonstrates her lack of vanity and virtue in contrast to Lady Euphrasia with her honest treatment of Sir Charles. This makes her worthy of marrying Lord Mortimer despite her lack of fortune.

[59] Juliet McMaster, *Reading the Body in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.xi.

When Amanda goes to stay with the Marquis of Roslin, both the Marchioness and Lady Euphrasia treat her with not only politeness but affection: "Notwithstanding their former cool, even contemptuous conduct, Amanda, the child of innocence and simplicity, could not believe the alteration in their manners [were] feigned." Amanda is naïve and believes "her own patience and humility had at length conciliated their regard" (p.264). She thinks that her good example, humility, and virtuous behaviour have convinced them that she is worthy of respect. Hershinow argues that the youthful protagonist of early "realist" fiction has a different worldview compared to more mature characters and it is this difference which forms a gap between what is happening and what they understand. This gives innocence a more idealistic outlook.[60] In common with Hutcheson, Amanda believes people are naturally benevolent and that people have an innate desire to do good. When Lady Euphrasia calls Amanda by her Christian name, instead of the more formal Miss Fitzalan, this changes the dynamic between them. The use of Christian names in the upper classes was confined to family members or servants, and where there were differences of age or social status a formal address was used in private as well as public.[61] This adds some weight to Amanda's view that they have become more friendly and accepting of her as an equal, which makes their ensuing scheming and betrayal more dramatic: "A confused idea started into her mind that a deep-laid plot had been concerted to ruin her" (p.296). Whereas previously she may have considered only Belgrave to be a threat to her reputation, she now must consider that they may all be culpable. Adam Smith suggests our concept of proper conduct arises from our sympathy with the feelings and motives of the person who acts.[62] This brings out in gothic novels the educational function of feelings, or emotional intelligence, for women readers who may not be exposed to the same logic and reason as men. We sympathise with Amanda as she has

[60] Stephanie I. Hershinow, *Born Yesterday: Inexperience and the Early Realist Novel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019), p.7.
[61] Oliver, 'Frances Sheridan's Faulkland', p.688.
[62] Adam Smith *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759: London: George Bell & Sons, 1802), p.54.

acted innocently and properly but has been subjected to deception. Equally, Smith points out that our sense of demerit or injustice arises from indirect sympathy with the resentment of the sufferer.[63] Amanda may not display resentment following the way she has been treated, but she does feel the injustice of her treatment.

Women were not only required to be pure and virtuous but to be seen as such by guarding their reputations. Clara Reeve claimed vice, or the appearance of it, in a woman is more disgusting than in a man, following the assumption that women were intended to be more perfect creatures than men.[64] This makes the incident in Lady Euphrasia's closet all the more distressing for Amanda, as this is a situation she has not created but has been imposed upon her: "with horror she saw that appearances, even in the eye of candour, would be against her. She had positively, and unexpectedly, refused to go to the ball. She had expressed delight at the idea of staying home" (p.294). The irony is that she has remained at home to avoid Colonel Belgrave and in her innocence thought the solitude would protect her from any unwanted attention. Amanda is exposed to unwanted attention whether she goes to the ball or stays at home, thus demonstrating the difficulties women experience in protecting their reputation from predatory men. She previously claimed that under the Marquis's roof, she could expect physical protection and Belgrave could not insult her honour. The fact that he has circumvented these expectations of propriety shows not only his contempt for those rules but his lack of care in terms of Amanda's reputation: "The malicious devils you live with would never believe our united asseverations of your innocence," he taunts (p.295). This statement proves that he is aware of the consequences of his actions concerning Amanda's reputation and that he leverages that to coerce her. Indeed, he is shifting the blame from himself and onto those "malicious devils" who would think badly of her. In common with

[63] Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, p.55.
[64] Poovey, *The Proper Lady*, p.8.

many gothic villains, he may not personify the devil but represents what is evil in mankind. He appears reasoned and calculating compared to Amanda: “Half wild at the idea, she clasped her hands together and exclaimed, in a voice trembling with anguish, ‘Merciful heaven, I am ruined forever!’” (p.294). Amanda beseeches heaven to protect her from the devil and the evil personified in Belgrave. Then her thoughts turn to her earthly reputation and her reaction is of desperation and loss. Physical signs such as the clasping of hands and trembling outwardly reinforce the emotional distress she feels. This incident demonstrates that reputation is not completely within the control of the individual and outside forces can become a corrupting influence. Conduct books can therefore only be a guide to self-discipline and not a guarantee of societal change.

Belgrave’s solution to being caught alone with Amanda is to deceive, proposing that she hide him until the family has left the room. “Amanda hesitated between the confidence her innocence inspired, and the dread of the unpleasant construction malice might put on her situation […] Fear conquered her reluctance to concealment” (p.295). Arguably, Belgrave is just proposing a practical solution to a problem he has created, but Amanda feels guilty at having to conceal his presence even though she knows she has done nothing wrong. She knows innocence is no defence against malicious interpretations and it is fear for her reputation, which makes her go against her better judgement. This incident exposes how the rigid nature of propriety puts young, unmarried women in an impossible situation where preserving her reputation makes deception the best option. The narrator describes her physical reactions to show how deeply this has affected Amanda. She nearly faints when she gets to the door and finds it locked, and Lady Greystock comments: “you look pale as if you had seen a ghost” (p.295). This establishes the characters’ belief in visible ghostly figures. It also prepares the reader for the encounter later in the novel where Amanda thinks she sees a ghost. When Lady Greystock asks her what she has been doing all that time her voice falters and she

blushes deeply. McMaster points out that the paleness of fear and the blush of shame were understood in the period as involuntary actions of the body.[65] Dressing rooms were used as private spaces for reading, but they were also isolated and secretive. Lady Greystock is aware due to Amanda's involuntary response that something significant has happened. Amanda's reaction incorporates guilt overcoming fear as she is forced to conceal the truth, or face being accused of secretly entertaining a man alone in a private space. When Lady Euphrasia mentions the closet, "the blood ran cold through the veins of Amanda; but when she saw Lady Euphrasia rise to enter it, had death, in its most frightful form, stared her in the face, she could not have betrayed more horror" (p.296). This involuntary non-verbal response and psychological reaction described in terms of death, betrayal and horror demonstrate her vulnerability. Betrayal is something done to her, and over which she has no control. Death speaks of physical danger and without the protection of Lady Greystock and the Marquis her reputation will be questioned and she will be left isolated and alone.

The progression of the scene from Belgrave's entrance to discovery by Lady Greystock and Lady Euphrasia's entrance into the closet also points to a movement towards suspense in the gothic novel. It is the anticipation of knowing what is to come, that makes her blood run cold. The words "cold," "fear," and "horror" convey the intensity of Amanda's emotions at the anticipation of the loss of her reputation, the language is comparable to that used in moments of physical peril in contemporaneous gothic fiction. Through the transparency of her emotions, she cannot disguise the distress and horror she feels and it manifests in the expression of horror on her face. Someone more devious and corrupt would be able to hide their emotions from other people. When the Colonel is asked how he came to be there he refuses to explain. The implication is that it was for Amanda's benefit and not one

[65] McMaster, *Reading the Body*, p.107.

of the servants who would be discharged were the Marquis to find out. He stands near the closet with "undiminished assurance" giving the impression that he has done nothing wrong, compared to Amanda's emotional distress. When he later abducts her and transports her to his home he states: "'You must be sensible, my dear Amanda,' said he, with coolness, 'that your reputation is as much gone as if you had complied with my wishes'" (p.313). This demonstrates that society's rules around domesticity and courtship only apply if all parties adhere to the conventions. Belgrave by abducting Amanda has proved that he is prepared to flout conventions of politeness and male virtue. Amanda's response is to reassert her dignity in the face of oppression: "'your arts may have destroyed my fame, but my innocence bids defiance to your power'" (p.313). Mary Poovey argues that by the end of the century, this double standard was increasingly viewed by women as a sign of their own moral superiority.[66] Amanda is taking the moral high ground, stating her innocence is more valuable than his corrupting power, with good ultimately triumphing over evil intentions.

Roche thus demonstrates the double standard embedded in the differences between male and female virtue by contrasting the treatment of Colonel Belgrave with Amanda. Colonel Belgrave is free to continue as normal after this incident, but Amanda does not appreciate the full consequences of this loss of reputation until she needs to find alternative accommodation in London. Landladies mainly came from trade, such as shopkeeping, and their reputation depended on keeping up appearances and maintaining respectability and credit worthiness.[67] Mrs Hansard claims to have heard it from Lady Greystock herself, reinforcing the idea that this is not just gossip but that Lady Greystock is actively maligning her character amongst her acquaintances. Mrs Hansard confirms she will not give her a room: "terrified and distressed […] Amanda listened to this speech, would have stopped Mrs

[66] Poovey, *The Proper Lady*, p.8.
[67] Williamson, 'The Georgian Landlady', p.384.

Hansard in the middle of it, had she possessed a spark of humanity, […] lost to the noble, the gentle feelings of humanity, she exulted in the triumph of malice" (p.543). The landlady is portrayed as malicious, caring only about her reputation, and unwilling to show any sympathy for Amanda's difficult situation. The irony is that Lady Greystock was instrumental in facilitating Amanda's compromising position with Belgrave, but her own reputation and status are not compromised. Equally, Belgrave is free to prey on another young impressionable woman without anyone questioning his character.

In contrast, Lord Mortimer does not take such a black-and-white view of Amanda's character. He is conflicted in his feelings based on her behaviour, wondering why she is staying with people who are socially beneath her: "Lord Mortimer saw Amanda wore (at least) the semblance of innocence: but this could not remove his suspicions, so often had he seen it assumed to hide the artful stratagems of a depraved heart" (p.64). Innocent here suggests honesty, without deception or ulterior motives. Mortimer has witnessed artful deception within his own aristocratic social circle and is now having difficulty accepting that Amanda is as innocent as she appears. This is because Amanda has been forced by necessity to disguise her identity. Mortimer's suspicions are based on a lack of communication driven by the older generation. His father, Lord Cherbury, needs Mortimer to marry for financial reasons and he prevails on both Amanda and her father to leave his son free to marry Lady Euphrasia. This allows Amanda to retain her virtuous reputation in the eyes of the reader and to elicit sympathy because she is a victim of circumstances and the plans of an older generation. Mortimer is absolved of the machinations of his father by demonstrating an innate benevolence, believing in the goodness of mankind, and the thought that he could be wrong brings pain and disappointment.

Mortimer has come to his country home where life is simpler, more open, less ambitious and calculating. The implication is he is contrasting town society with Rousseau's rustic country ideal. Despite Mortimer's conflicting emotions and misunderstandings, Amanda is worthy of his esteem and her virtuous qualities stand out compared to other people he is acquainted with. Unlike Mrs Hansard he does not judge her based on the views of a third party but makes a judgement on what he knows of her character. He sees her as an obedient daughter who seeks to protect her father and honour his wishes despite the difficulties it causes. Mrs Marlowe summarises the views of society when she speaks to Oscar about her own tragic past: "without a strict adherence to propriety, there can be no permanent pleasure; and that it is the actions of early life must give to old age either happiness and comfort or sorrow and remorse" (p.144). There is an irony here as Oscar believes he is conforming to what society would deem appropriate since he believes Adela's father does not consider him a suitable suitor, and it is only the deception of Belgrave that has deprived him of his heart's desire. Mrs Marlowe summarises her moral advice by stating: "virtue they say is willing, she is often too weak to resist the wishes they excite. Mistaken idea! And blessed is that virtue which, opposing, ends them" (p.144). Both Oscar and Amanda endure hardship and resist temptation, asserting virtue in the pursuit of doing what is noble. As Mrs Marlowe suggests following propriety and virtuous conduct leads to a happy marriage and both Amanda and Oscar are married by the end of the novel. This reinforces in the reader's mind the idea that virtue in the form of chastity, honesty, obedience and self-restraint are rewarded with a restored inheritance and happy relationships.

Spaces of Emotional Refuge and Terror in *The Children of the Abbey*

As Amanda seeks to escape Belgrave's unwanted attention, the novel provides places of refuge and benevolent care. These are often places of simplicity at odds with the ostentation

of urban life. *The Children of the Abbey*'s idealisation of spaces of emotional refuge demonstrates the influence of Rousseau, who argued that the development of a civil society brought inequality, alienating men from one another, diminishing mutual respect, and imposing competition between people. Social conditioning had shaped mankind's ideas making them compete jealously with their fellow man.[68] Rousseau's country ideal is reflected in Amanda's childhood abode, described as "a little romantic solitude, quite adapted to his [Fitzalan's] taste and finances" (p.30). This is contrasted with Lady Dunreath's apartments, which are "furnished with the most luxurious elegance, yet could she not rest within it" (p.27). Lady Dunreath is plagued by a guilty conscience for turning away Malvina when she is ill, and she fears that if Malvina dies her death will be on her conscience. All her wealth cannot buy the comfort and peace she seeks, compared to the romantic solitude afforded Fitzalan.

This simplicity and family care also extends to Amanda and Oscar's education: "two excellent schools in the neighbourhood gave them the usual advantages of genteel education; […] the improvement, or rather forming of their morals, was the pleasing task of their father" (p.30). Being raised in a rural environment they do not experience the decadence of the urban aristocracy. If, as Locke advocates, we learn by experience, then the naïve sensitive outlook, lack of deceit, benevolent compassion and sympathy are attributable to a sheltered upbringing and their father's education. Amanda begins the book with: "Hail, sweet asylum of my infancy! Content and innocence reside beneath your humble roof, and charity unboastful of the good it renders" (p.5). For Amanda, this is seen as a place of refuge. She refers to it as innocent, humble and good for the people who live there, tranquil and protected from duplicity. Privileged people, the Marchioness, Lady Euphrasia, and Lady Greystock, and the

[68] Angela Wright, *Gothic Fiction – A Readers Guide to Essential Criticism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p.99.

towns they live in, are portrayed as places of corruption and duplicity. The novel aims to restore the marital innocence enjoyed by Oscar and Amanda's parents, along with their rightful inheritance.

Upon Amanda's return, life in the country is not as idyllic as she remembers. Coral Ann Howells refers to this as experience destroying innocence.[69] Hoeveler states the gothic looks backwards and forwards at the same time, with a tendency to look back with nostalgia.[70] Roche does not celebrate a feudal past but the country idyll of Rousseau whilst looking forward to a system based on reason, merit and virtue.[71] Thus Roche is suggesting that neither the past nor a rural ideal is possible but there is a need for an emotional equilibrium where "virtue lies in the golden mean;"[72] The ideal and reality do not coincide, as staying in the cottage causes problems: "she found her presence in the morning was a restraint on her humble friends, who did not deem it good manners to work before her" (p.38). Unlike Amanda, these people work for a living, thus distinguishing the two classes. Lord Mortimer also raises the question: "so elegant a creature an inmate of a sequestered cottage, associating with people (in manners at least) so infinitely beneath her; […] he was tempted to think some deviation from prudence had, by depriving her of the favor of her friends, made her retire to obscurity" (p.63). He suggests her status requires her to stay with a gentleman's family, not tenant farmers. Yet these people are her friends and it appears unreasonable to consider them unworthy in manners based only on their social status. The difference in status does cause some difficulties, as Amanda does not need to work for a living, but as her mother has been

[69] Coral Ann Howells, *Love, Mystery and Misery*, p.87.
[70] Diane Long Hoeveler, 'Regina Maria Roche's "Children of the Abbey": Contesting the Catholic Presence in Female Gothic Fiction', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 31:1-2 (2012),.137-58 (pp.139, 141).
[71] See Catriona Kennedy, "'What Can Women Give But Tears': Gender, Politics and Irish National Identity in the 1790s" (PhD. University of York, 2004), which refers to Roche's Irish roots, setting the gothic sublime in a Celtic environment along with historical and political references to absentee landlords and the need for reform. She claims Roche casts Amanda as the embodiment of Irish national identity without being explicitly political.
[72] Allen, *The Polite Lady*, p.219.

deprived of her inheritance, she does not have a title either. This limbo creates a mystery and makes Mortimer suspicious. This country haven not only brings problems but causes suspicion and brings her reputation into question. When Amanda and her father go to Castle Carberry, they are invited by one of the farmers to tea: "the invitation was given with such humility, yet pressed with such warmth, that they could not avoid accepting it" (p.160). This idea of humility and deference reinforces Fitzalan's position as administrator of the estate and the warmth and hospitality demonstrate the benevolence of the local people. Thus, *The Children of the Abbey* again distinguishes between those in the country who accept Amanda with wealth and deference and those in the town who treat her with suspicion and contempt.

Refuge is also given to Amanda when her father dies and she is at her most vulnerable without a male protector. The nuns offer her shelter at the convent, but Amanda states she needs to mourn her father first, following proper daughterly duty. Sister Mary is described as a "truly sympathetic friend" and insists Amanda stay at the convent after her period of mourning and "supported by Sister Mary, was conveyed to that peaceful asylum" (p.348). Like the cottage in Wales, this country convent is referred to as a peaceful asylum. In contrast to many gothic novels, this convent is benevolent and caring. Hoeveler suggests this convent relates to a pre-capitalist community, a withdrawal from the insensitive cash nexus.[73] Therefore like Rousseau's rural ideal, it has not been corrupted by competition and is not typical of the (Catholic) convents portrayed in other novels such as *The Monk* and *The Italian*. The new prioress is described in terms of her compassion: "Had a painter wanted to personify benevolence, he might have chosen her for a model" (p.167). The convent is also remarkable for its freedoms: "the nuns were allowed to go out, but few availed themselves of the liberty, and that, except in fasting, they were strangers to the austerities practised in foreign convents"

[73] Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalisation of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontes* (State Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998) p.140.

(p.164). The reference to foreign convents conjures the idea of strict discipline characteristic of the Italian, French, and Spanish nunneries depicted in other gothic novels, in which the convent is a place of imprisonment not a refuge. With the arrival of Lord Mortimer, it also becomes a place of justice, as he acknowledges and exposes the conspiracy to blacken her name: “She saw his conduct in the most generous, the most exalted light. Notwithstanding appearances were so much against her, he was willing to rely solely on her own asseverations of innocence” (p.351). Amanda attributes generosity and nobility to Lord Mortimer for accepting she is innocent. This reaffirms Amanda’s status as a worthy heroine and Mortimer as a suitable hero and husband. The only stumbling block now is her lack of fortune which Roche rectifies with the repentance of Lady Dunreath and the restoration of Oscar and Amanda’s birthright.

In *The Children of the Abbey* places of refuge are provided but there are equally places of terror. References to death and ghosts are mentioned less frequently than in other gothic novels, and superstition is linked to Irish folk law such as the Banshee. Where ghosts do appear they follow the Radcliffean mode of the explained supernatural. Superstition and ghosts, along with revelation of their true nature, are centred around Dunreath Abbey. Mrs Duncan describes the abbey as “gothic and gloomy in the extreme and [it] recalls to one’s mind all the stories they ever heard of haunted houses and apparitions” (p.457). By labelling them “stories” she is undermining the idea that ghosts are real, and “gothic and gloomy” relates to the understanding of how these physical spaces would have been viewed in the 1790s, a culture steeped in gothic conventions. She also goes on to attribute such stories to the servants: “But of those domestics, I caution you in time, or they will be apt to fill your head with frightful stories of the abbey, which sometimes, if one’s spirits are weak, despite reason, will make an impression on the mind” (p.459). The suggestion is that fear is psychological and a product of the imagination in contrast to rational thought. It is suggested that Amanda

should not be deceived like the servants into thinking that the abbey is haunted. When she walks into the chapel and enters the long gallery in almost total darkness she is "ashamed, even to herself, to give way to superstitious fears" (p.469). Roche is not claiming that Amanda is not afraid, only that she has the strength and reason to overcome those fears.

In this already heightened state of emotion she enters the room at the end of the corridor and believes she sees another picture, but it is a real woman "with a death-like countenance!" The lack of light, the search for a dead relative and the unexpected stranger all contribute to Amanda's fear: "She screamed wildly at the terrifying spectre, for such she believed it to be" (p.470). Amanda has been told by Mrs Bruce that no one is allowed at the Abbey; therefore, she reasons this person is either a ghost or also should not be there. She hears footsteps: "wild with terror, […] 'Protect me, Heaven!' she exclaimed, and at the moment felt an icy hand upon hers!" (p.470). Amanda's fear is a primal response that comes from the panic of discovery, the darkness of the room and being unable to escape, as the door will not open. The icy hand symbolises death, yet a woman alone in the abbey without the comfort of a fire would probably be very cold to touch. Howells argues this fear comes more from morbid anxiety and repressed hysteria than ghosts and is displayed in the language Roche uses.[74] When she gains consciousness and sees the door open she is relieved and rushes downstairs only to be confronted by the same woman: "lose your superstitious fears, and in me behold not an airy inhabitant of the other world, but a sinful, sorrowing and repentant woman." (p.471). This is the first time we hear her address Amanda and it is not with words of encouragement and reassurance, or that she means her no harm, but a word of rebuke, to lose her superstitious fears as something irrational. She instructs her to look at and trust in what her eyes see and rational mind understands. Lady Dunreath wishes to convince Amanda that she is not a ghost and has some important information to communicate to her. This is

[74] Coral Ann Howells, *Love, Mystery and Misery,* p. 83.

important for restoring Oscar and Amanda's rightful inheritance. Hoeveler suggests the ghosts of the past in gothic fiction were linked to the transfer of property and the transformation of the present.[75] Therefore meeting Lady Dunreath has important consequences for Amanda and Oscar beyond the explained supernatural.

From Lady Dunreath's perspective, it is Amanda's physical likeness to her mother that guarantees her inheritance: "I beheld the very form and face of Lady Malvina. In form and face may you alone resemble her" (p.489). Greenfield states that the importance of this resemblance is to give legitimacy to her claim to inheritance.[76] The illustration on the frontispiece of the first edition shows a mirror rather than a portrait, as described in the text, which underlines the idea that Amanda is a mirror image of her mother. However, as Greenfield points out, to have peace of mind, she needs confirmation of her mother's death to move forward.[77] Amanda "went through the whole story of her mother's sufferings, and suddenly dreamt she beheld her expiring under the greatest torture" (p.42). She believes her mother died giving birth to her, but Lady Dunreath can dispel this idea. It is a testament to the importance of her mother and the fear of childbirth in general that Amanda relives that suffering in her dreams. This is the mother's suffering manifesting in her daughter's life which is only rectified by the restoration of her inheritance.

Howells argues the true refuge for Amanda is in marriage.[78] The only way to achieve this is through the restoration of her inheritance, which is accomplished through Lady Dunreath. Unlike the other aristocratic characters, she refers to herself as the "contrite widow of the Earl of Dunreath" (p.471). Eighteenth-century conduct books encouraged women to

[75] Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism*, p.147.
[76] Susan C. Greenfield, *Mothering Daughters: Novels and the Politics of Family Romance, Francis Burney to Jane Austen* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), p.55.
[77] Greenfield, *Mothering Daughters*, p.54.
[78] Howells, *Love, Mystery and Misery*, p.87.

regulate their own conduct and recognise their capacity for good and evil.[79] Her contrition sets her apart from the other female characters, such as Lady Greystock who repeats the incident in Lady Euphrasia's closet which causes Amanda so much distress. When Amanda looks at Lady Dunreath's "pale and woe-worn countenance – her emaciated form – her solitary situation – [these] all inspired Amanda with tender compassion" (p.473). A conventionally gothic situation has produced a response more befitting a novel of sensibility. Adam Smith argued that pity was natural and spontaneous,[80] and accordingly, Amanda does not judge Lady Dunreath on her past actions or her reputation but only looks at her present circumstances and the physical hardship she endures. Conversation brings out sympathy in the listener as it moderates both passions and virtues and teaches us to reconcile the interests of others with our own.[81] The reader is invited sympathetically to consider Lady Dunreath's past actions, current suffering, and the impact her deeds have had on Amanda's life. It is a sign of compassion that Amanda wants to help: "'let me not neglect this opportunity,' she continued, 'of inquiring if there is any way in which I can possibly serve you'" (p.474). Amanda asks her for the name of a friend whom she can contact for help, but she replies, "When I had the power to do so, I never conciliated friendship; and if I am still remembered in the world, it is only with contempt and abhorrence" (p.474). A parallel is drawn here between doing good and reaping the rewards in times of need. If she had shown more compassion to those in need when she had the power to do so then she would have had someone to support her in her hour of need; instead, she has been badly behaved and this is how she will be remembered. It is due to the strength of Amanda's compassion, that she sees

[79] Barbara Darby, 'The More Things Change … *The Rules* and Late Eighteenth-Century Conduct Books for Women', *Women's Studies*, 29 (2000), pp.333-355 (p.336).
[80] Henry C. Clark, 'Conversation and Moderate Virtue in Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*', *The Review of Politics*, 54:2 (1992), 185-210 (p.188).
[81] Clark, 'Conversation and Moderate Virtue', p.187.

beyond her previous actions. There is the idea that because she has repented and tried to make reparations with the will then she deserves the compassion of both Amanda and the reader.

In sum, unlike other gothic novels of this period, *The Children of the Abbey* uses the convent as a place of refuge and benevolence due to its independence and rural nature. It lacks the hierarchical structure of other convents which fosters community and sympathetic support. The novel also blurs the boundaries between places of refuge and those of danger by turning the closet from a private space of solitude into a place of confinement and danger due to the aggression of Belgrave. The more obvious places of fear, the ruined abbey, are not places of the supernatural but opportunities for restoration and reconciliation due to Roche adopting Radcliffe's convention of the explained supernatural. Again, in common with Radcliffe's novels Roche allows the heroine to find her final refuge and security in marriage with a man of feeling who supports national identity by being a responsible not absentee landlord.

Conclusion

Concerning its reception, Regina Maria Roche's *The Children of the Abbey* was one of the more enduring of the popular novels of the late eighteenth century, reaching its tenth edition in 1825, and was still in print in 1882. It was translated into French, Dutch, German and Spanish, in addition to being published in the United States. When it was first published it was passed over by the critics as just another gothic novel in the style of Ann Radcliffe. Yet as Christina Morin points out she was one of the most popular and prolific novelists of her day, rivalling Ann Radcliffe.[82] Roche was published by the Minerva Press, which as Hudson demonstrates, was associated with fictional excess, and the gothic was seen as its most

[82] Christina Morin, 'Regina Maria Roche's *Children of the Abbey* (1796): Its Literary Life and Afterlife' in *Women's Authorship and The Early Gothic*, ed. Kathleen Hudson (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2020), p.197.

representative output. Gothic novels were therefore perceived in this culture as numerous, unoriginal, and prone to excessive emotion, which was at best a breach of naturalism and at worst, a bad influence on readers. Although this may have been the male critic's view, Minerva Press supplied a dedicated readership for its gothic novelists allowing them to bypass the critics.[83] It is therefore hard to know the extent to which the novel engaged its earliest readers emotions beyond the supposition that, because it sold so well, it must have had a considerable appeal in this respect.

The Children of the Abbey became something of a watchword for the trivial and trite gothic fiction of its period, indicated by Harriet Smith's giddy surprise in Austen's *Emma* (1816) that Robert Martin has read "the Vicar of Wakefield" but not "the Romance of the Forest, nor The Children of the Abbey."[84] The enduringly popular and moral sentimental novel by Goldsmith sits in contrast to the popular gothic, though the equation of the two proponents of 1790s "explained supernaturalism" indicates that Harriet is not a lost cause. Nevertheless, the assumption is that the novel is of the ilk which would be parodied by Austen in *Northanger Abbey* (1818), a novel that invokes Roche's *Clermont* (1798) in a retinue of trash which Isabella Thorpe records in her pocketbook: "Castle of Wolfenbach, Clermont, Mysterious Warnings, Necromancer of the Black Forest, Midnight Bell, Orphan of the Rhine, and Horrid Mysteries." Unfortunately, the precise thoughts readers like Miss Thorpe had about Roche's novels have not survived, meaning reception has been skewed by a censorious disregard for the class of fiction *The Children of the Abbey* seems to represent, however reductive that treatment is.

[83] Hannah Doherty Hudson, *Romantic Fiction and Literary Excess in the Minerva Press Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), pp.19-20.
[84] Jane Austen, *Emma* (1816), ed. Fiona Stafford (London: Penguin, 1996), p.26.

Internationally Roche's work appears to have been more widely appreciated, with James Hook putting the sonnet "Ah Gentle Hope" to music in 1799. This was followed by the publication of "Adieu Sweet Girl" in Philadelphia in 1804, based on a piece written by Oscar in the novel.[85] As previously stated, the novel was translated into French and a play was produced in 1803 by the French playwright E. N. E. Desanteul called *Amanda*. Morin argues this is evidence of France's fascination with the British gothic novel.[86] As the name suggests the adaptation focuses on Amanda as a heroine in distress, and it limits her geographical location to England, thus removing the Irish connection which makes her work different from other authors. As Morin points out, in translation an interpretative community is formed which emphasises and obscures some of the values which would be present among eighteenth-century British readers.[87] Therefore, though it is useful to note Roche's work was far more original and popular than critics may give her credit for, reception by foreign audiences and twentieth-century critics would have produced different interpretations.

Willam Brewer in his introduction terms the book a generic hybrid of sensibility, gothic romance, didactic tale, social satire, and Irish national tale.[88] Unlike most gothic novels set in Catholic Spain or France, the heroine traverses the British Isles to recover the property originally taken from her family and avoid the predatory attentions of the villain who seeks to ruin her reputation and prevent her marriage. This suffering brings forth the heroine's benevolence and compassion showing her to be a worthy example for her female readers with a warning to be wise in social situations. Values, of compassion and benevolence, along with propriety and justice forge a communal bond between characters, authors and readers as part of an emotional community. Ultimately, *The Children of the Abbey*'s dismissal since its

[85] Morin, 'Regina Maria Roche's *Children of the Abbey*', pp.199-200.
[86] Morin, 'Regina Maria Roche's *Children of the Abbey*', p.202.
[87] Morin, 'Regina Maria Roche's *Children of the Abbey*', p.206.
[88] William D. Brewer, Introduction to *The Children of the Abbey*, p.xi.

publication is unwarranted, as the novel engaged with questions of morality, self-interest, and compassion, as set out in eighteenth-century ethical philosophy. It depicts scenes of heightened emotion not merely to titillate but to reflect on masculine and feminine conduct in contemporary British society. The fact that it is set in Britain and does not demonise the foreign other gives it a uniqueness not found in other books. Though not straightforwardly a gothic novel, *The Children of the Abbey* exploits gothic conventions to shape readers' judgements of conduct, challenging aspects of the domestic ideal promoted in contemporaneous conduct books.

Overall, in this novel, by presenting characters who grapple with moral dilemmas and emotional extremes, Roche invites readers to question rigid social roles, particularly those assigned to women and to reconsider the values of family loyalty, duty and personal integrity. She thus offers a critique of the idealised passivity of the female figure in traditional gothic fiction, suggesting that virtue is not defined by submission but by moral strength and emotional intelligence. Moreover, by presenting the reader with both a male and female protagonist, Roche can demonstrate what virtue looks like for both sexes and then contrast this with the behaviour of the male and female antagonists. For the hero Oscar, virtue consists of the honour and self-sacrifice associated with a military career. The heroine Amanda, meanwhile, is bound by filial duty and propriety, displaying empathy and compassion for other victims of the villain, while her emotional intelligence and resilience allow her to navigate the societal pressures placed upon her. In contrast, the antagonist, driven by selfishness, vanity and cruelty, highlights the consequences of ignoring these virtues, offering a stark juxtaposition that underscores Roche's message. By developing complex characters of both genders, the novel not only challenges gendered expectations of virtue but also proposes a more inclusive and dynamic understanding of moral conduct that transcends traditional gender roles.

Chapter Six

The Effects of Unchecked Female Emotions in *Zofloya* (1806)

Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya* (1806) not only raises fears around female sexuality but broader questions regarding how individuals are affected by nature or nurture. Set against a backdrop of dark secrets, supernatural forces and tragic passion, the novel focuses on the character of Victoria, a woman whose moral descent challenges contemporary understanding of femininity and virtue. Dacre interrogates the traditional gothic archetype of the passive victimised heroine, presenting instead a protagonist who actively embraces her darker impulses, while also exploring the question of how much Victoria's behaviour is shaped by a natural wickedness and how much it should be attributed to the flaws of her upbringing and to oppressively gendered societal expectations. Victoria is neither passive nor orphaned and the narrative raises the question of whether, if more discipline had been exercised by her parents when she was a child, she would have learned more restraint. This aligns with Locke's idea that we develop habits based on experience. In this, Victoria's brother Leonardo acts as a figure of both comparison and contrast: although not virtuous, he is portrayed as showing a greater capacity for compassion and forgiveness, again raising the question of whether it is nature or nurture that leads people to commit evil acts. As Victoria struggles with both external social pressures and her inner desires, Dacre presents a complex portrait of female behaviour, suggesting a sophisticated understanding of the interplay between personal choice, societal conditioning and inherent nature. The novel critiques the subordination of women and their role as daughters, wives and mothers, together with the expectations imposed by the culture in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century society as seen in the historical setting of fifteenth-century Italy. The novel's depiction of a corrupt, aristocratic, Catholic regime exposes the need for Protestant self-discipline and maternal influence on women's moral

education and development. The destructive nature of female sexual desire is highlighted but it goes unrestrained due to the lack of strong, male moral authority. This moral vacuum is filled by Satan's demonic presence in the form of a Black Moor who invades Victoria's unconscious mind, feeding her selfish desires and gaining ever more control over her body and soul. Dacre's narrative feeds into society's fears, not only of the unconscious mind but the nature of the Black other and interracial sexuality.

Scholarly debates around *Zofloya,* discussed throughout this chapter, have pointed to the central role of Victoria's mother Laurina and how her actions influence her daughter's conduct. I will look at the theme of education and parental influence, relating Dacre's discussion to the ideas of Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Wollstonecraft. Alan Richardson shows that the gothic fiction of this era picks up and extends the domestic novel's "concern with questions of women's education and moral development."[1] Like several novels of its time, ranging from *Frankenstein* to *Mansfield Park* and *Emma*, *Zofloya* questions whether a person is born evil or corrupted by society, how far education and experience can control and mitigate negative or destructive instincts, and therefore the desirable extent and modes of emotional regulation. In this thesis, I will examine the novel's ambiguous contribution to moral philosophical enquiry in the late eighteenth century and in particular the portrayal of female desire and its harmful effects on self and society. More explicitly than contemporaneous gothic or domestic fiction, *Zofloya* depicts sexual desire driving Victoria to commit murder and her lack of self-control makes her appear aggressive and therefore masculine. Minor characters, such as Signora Zappi and Megalena, we shall see, reinforce the idea of the destructive nature of female desire. This leads to the ultimate taboo of interracial sexual desire, which becomes more significant as Victoria grows increasingly dependent on

[1] Alan Richardson, *Literature, Education and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1780-1812* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) p.203.

Zofloya's assistance. Dacre stops short of labelling Black men as evil by separating Zofloya the slave from Zofloya the devil, but his initially subservient attitude and eventual dominance raise a question about the nature of power between master and slave. Finally, I will look at the critical reception of *Zofloya*, its influence on other writers and its place within the emotional community of gothic writers and readers.

The Significance of Female Education

Zofloya traces the life of Venetian aristocrat Victoria de Lorendini from a spoilt childhood punctuated by the tragedies of her mother's elopement, her brother's disappearance, and her father's killing by her mother's lover. Under the custody of her tainted mother and unscrupulous father-in-law, Victoria experiences confinement as a form of correction for attraction to an unapproved man, followed by escape, return to Venice, unmarried cohabitation with her lover and eventual marriage. Throughout the narrative, Victoria acts wilfully, unconstrained by social convention or moral scruples; her sexual desire drives her to murder her husband, Berenza, in the hope of obtaining the affection of his brother Henriquez. These desires are facilitated by the devil, in the form of a Black Moor, Zofloya, whose role is to tempt Victoria into ever more shocking sins before ultimately enforcing the final judgment of damnation.

To establish a basis for understanding why Victoria alleges Laurina is a corrupting influence, the narrator invites the reader to understand the personalities of her parents, Laurina and the Marchese di Lorendini, particularly her mother. Julie Kipp describes a Romantic-era culture in which maternity was pathologized, either "naturally bad" or "dangerously good", as mothers were faulted for either an absence or excess of affection and were imbued with

heritable weaknesses.[2] This belief in transmission intersects with the Lockean understanding of the infant as a blank slate, because *Zofloya* explores how upbringing, rather than innate constitution, produces depravity. Victoria's parents were fifteen and twenty respectively when their marriage was "contracted without the concurrence, without even the knowledge of respective friends, resolved in a delirium of passion, concluded in the madness of youth!"[3] These are two people who act independently and make decisions based on their own judgment, impelled by passion, not reason or convention. "Delirium" suggests that those decisions are emotionally based and along with "madness", the narrator presents a negative judgment of this marriage. This is underscored, in a curious manner, by the narrator's further comments. "Yet, unlike the too frequent result, disgust and repentance did not follow this impetuous union; for chance and circumstances happily combined to render it propitious" (pp.3-4). The statement is ironic not just because the narrator's own moralism appears to be undermined by the "propitious" conjugal outcome but also because adultery, elopement, and murder are on the horizon for these youthful lovers. The narrator emphasizes that Laurina is very young when she marries and does not acquire wisdom in her marital state: "Time had not perfected the character" of Victoria's mother (p.4). Dacre here engages with questions about moral development made current by philosophers including Rousseau. He termed the ability to learn new habits, adapt to new situations and change over time as perfectibility. For permanent changes and adaptations to be made he stated they needed to be linked to consciousness.[4] The narrator's comment that Laurina has not learned by experience suggests a failure of conscious reflection due to her impetuous nature, linked to conventional feminine and aristocratic faults including "vanity" and "confidence in herself" (p 3). Victoria

[2] Julie Kipp, *Romanticism, Maternity and the Body Politic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.11.
[3] Charlotte Dacre, *Zofloya* (1806), ed. Kim Ian Michasiw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.3. Parenthetical references are made to this edition unless otherwise stated.
[4] James Delaney, *Starting with Rousseau* (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), p.49.

demonstrates an ability to learn, but to learn bad habits. For instance, she understands intuitively how to manipulate others, such as when she corrupts a servant girl, Catou, to help her gain her freedom. *Zofloya* is therefore interested in the causes of wickedness, and motivation is offered as a key factor. The reason given for no change in Laurina's behaviour as she matures from a teenage bride to an overindulgent mother is that, as "no temptation crossed her path – it required, then, no effort to be virtuous" (p.4). Virtue in this understanding lies in the ability to resist temptation through self-control. This implies Laurina has never had to learn the virtue of self-control; her aristocratic status and wealth have allowed her to have everything she desires, and this has made her a "lavish and impudent" parent, exemplifying Kipp's over-indulgent mother who corrupts her infant by failing to instil self-discipline when confronted by desire. In *Emile* (1762) Rousseau states: "The mother wants her child to be happy now. She is right, and if her method is wrong, she must be taught a better." Rousseau like many contemporaries, both demanded and feared the "blind affection" of the mother, a desirable unconditional love combined with an irrational passion.[5] *Zofloya* perpetuates and challenges these larger demands on mothers by showing Laurina's weakness, vulnerability and lack of experience in a society which is morally deficient and fails adequately to educate women for the roles they are expected to fulfil.

The idea of women being taught better, to enable them to be better wives and mothers, was picked up by Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). Both Victoria's parents want her to be happy, as Rousseau suggests, but by indulging her desires and not teaching her self-control, they have not been wise and their influence has made her haughty and entitled. "The youthful parents little comprehended the extent of the mischief they were doing: to see their wayward children happy, their infantine and lovely faces undisfigured by tears of vexation, was a pleasure too great to be resigned, from the distant

[5] Jean Jaques Rousseau *Emile* [1762] (trans) Barbara Foxley (London: J M Dent & Son, 1957), p.5.

reflection of future evil possible to accrue from the indulgence." (p.4). The narrator clearly blames the parents, with the unusual double negative "undisfigured" suggesting their cowardly avoidance of anguish is responsible for their indulgence. Wollstonecraft had fretted that women's education did not give them the moral fibre or emotional resources to guide their children's maturation, something more prominent at the elite level of society.[6] Victoria's parents, of course, have the wealth and status to indulge their children and therefore their position in society is significant as Victoria is born into an aristocratic culture which Dacre characterises as "proud, strict and fastidious", its citizens and ruler tainted by a love of secrecy, subterfuge, manipulation, jealousy (of political and romantic rivals), vengeance and the pursuit of power (p.5), and her home the scene of "gay revelling" (p.6). Therefore, although Victoria's character has been shaped by her parents, it has also been influenced by her birthright and the broader political situation – in this world, "nature, climate, habit and education" appear to work together to form character and temperament (p.6).

After the narrator's suggestion that Laurina's character had not been perfected over time and she had learned nothing due to a lack of temptation (remaining "susceptible […] to admiration" (p.9), we see an example of conflicting emotions. This is the first time we see Laurina make a decision, regarding her own life and her reaction is, to want to conform to society's expectations of upstanding femininity: "Earnestly did Laurina desire to be virtuous, earnestly did she pray for fortitude to preserve her from the power of temptation; but she had not the strength to fly from it" (p.11). Victoria is not aware of her mother's conflicting feelings; she only sees her leaving her husband and children and interprets this as independence and freedom. Laurina knows that to abandon her husband for another man is not virtuous, and indeed "the secret and powerful ties of early habit, taught her to adore her

[6] On Wollstonecraft's relationship to bourgeois forms of femininity centred on motherhood, see Thomas H. Ford, "Mary Wollstonecraft and the Motherhood of Feminism", *Women's Studies Quarterly* 37:3/4 (2009), 189-205.

husband" (p.11). *Zofloya* demonstrates how deficiencies in women's education render them unprepared for the conflict between rational propriety and passionate desire. Even the ties of early habit do not help Laurina to resist. Rousseau argued that habit is not enough to keep a person virtuous and any change can be problematic: "while the conditions remain the same, habits, […] hold good; but change the conditions habits vanish, nature reasserts herself."[7] Dacre's novel operates with a similar understanding. When Ardolph entered Laurina's life, conditions changed and "too great a thirst of admiration" (p.3) reasserted itself as part of her natural disposition (notably, Ardolph is impelled by "inclinations naturally vicious", compounded by "the contamination of bad example" (p.7). Vanity leaves Laurina open to flattery and the attention of Ardolph. In her discussion of Adam Smith, Mary Poovey points to his assertion that susceptibility is the opposite of feminine virtue. He argued that because women do not practice self-denial, they will then respond to any stimuli. This reinforces the idea that a woman's beauty once praised will cause her to want more and this creates a voracious appetite.[8] *Zofloya* adheres to Smith's misogynistic assumptions. Therefore, vanity becomes a corrupting influence that can lead women into compromising situations.

Just as Laurina is complacent regarding her virtue, the Marchese does not see the danger in other men admiring his wife; rather, he "gloried in the attractions of his wife – to see her followed and admired yielded to his heart a pleasure exquisite and refined" (p.5). There is a pride in ownership that other men would covet his wife, but equally a naivety that assumes Laurina would not leave him for another man. Berenza also takes pride in the fact that other men admire Victoria. Both women are objectified by becoming the prize of a successful seduction. Both men, by putting women's bodies on display, elevate corrupt aristocratic values which objectify women rather than valuing them for their virtues. *Zofloya*

[7] Rousseau, *Emile*, pp.6-7.
[8] Mary Poovey, *A Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelly and Jane Austen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p.20.

thus appears to extend the protofeminist arguments of the 1790s, such as Wollstonecraft's, which insisted on a more rational education for girls focused on promoting virtue and reducing the emphasis on "accomplishments" designed to increase their attractiveness to men. Catherine Macaulay Graham in *Letters on Education* (1790) argues that boys and girls should be educated together. The benefit for sons, she states, will be to encourage them to look beyond outward appearance and not be deceived by the more disreputable members of the opposite sex. Concerning daughters, they should be shown that chastity is a sexual virtue and its loss is a vice. Those who find no merit in this argument will put their confidence in someone who will flatter their vanity, falling victim to the first plausible being who formed a design on her person.[9] This is demonstrated by Laurina yielding to Ardolph's flattery, due to her own weakness and lack of credibility. Nancy Armstrong offers an alternative moral example, pointing to radical protestants who state authority should be confined to the male sphere and be based on moral superiority.[10] Unfortunately, Dacre also undermines this argument by making her male characters morally corrupt or ineffectual. Victoria has been failed by both parents in their lack of moral instruction and virtuous example.

The initial description of Victoria's character at fifteen proceeds through a succession of absolute characteristics which imply her character and inner morality are not only fixed but at odds with physical and social performance: "beautiful and accomplished as an angel, [she] was proud, haughty and self-sufficient – of a wild, ardent, and irrepressible spirit, indifferent to reproof, careless of censure – of an implacable, revengeful, and cruel nature, and bent upon gaining the ascendancy in whatever she engaged" (p.4). Hoeveler argues that part of the protofeminist critique of society in the gothic is that women who are taught only to value their

[9] Catherine Macaulay Graham 'Letters on Education' (1790), in *Women in the Eighteenth-Century; Constructions in Femininity*, ed. Vivien Jones (London: Routledge, 1990), pp.113-15.
[10] Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p.18.

appearance will live only for compliments.[11] Although this can be applied to any era it feels particularly relevant to this period as women had a very limited public role and were encouraged to rely on beauty and accomplishments, which Dacre uses to define Victoria. Comparing Victoria to an "angel" is ironic as she displays none of the humility associated with this heavenly being. Her indulgent aristocratic upbringing has made her proud and selfish. Her "wild and irrepressible spirit" suggests an excess of emotion which cannot be tamed. The fact that she will not listen to criticism and is stubborn and unbending indicates that she is not open to Rousseau's idea of perfectibility. Nancy Armstrong states that under the terms of middle-class values, that were rising to cultural dominance, aristocratic women represented surface rather than depth, material and not moral value, and idle sensuality instead of vigilance and concern for others.[12] This reflects the eighteenth-century view that the aristocracy was morally corrupt and that the rising middle class, represented in *Zofloya* by Lilla, was justified in taking their place. Lilla represents pristine virtue, "free even from the smallest taint of corrupt thought, […] expressing a seraphic serenity of soul" (p.133). Innocent, uncorrupted and benevolent, Lilla is the opposite of Victoria. To some extent, however, she is uninteresting, not to mention unfitted for reality in which dark forces, both material and moral, present threats. Hoeveler argues that the new bourgeoisie promoted emotional restraint, fidelity, calmness and reasonable decorum with the ideal mother as the paragon of domestic virtue and goodness.[13] In this context, Dacre is indeed criticising the old aristocracy represented by Laurina and Victoria for being vain and self-indulgent compared to a new idealised bourgeois middle class based on reason, restraint and domestic virtue. And yet Victoria's self-determinism sets her apart from Lilla's inherent victimhood and passivity.

---

[11] Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalisation of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontes* (State Park: Pennsylvania State University Press,1998), p.127.
[12] Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, p.20.
[13] Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism,* pp.143-45.

Dacre's novel is set in fifteenth-century Venice, a prominent trading capital made prosperous by the fortunes of the Spanish Empire. Venetians are described as:

> a proud, strict, and fastidious people – in no country was the pride of nobility carried to a greater extent; […] The Venetians were fond of their mistresses, and jealous of their wives to a degree, uniting the Spanish and Italian characters in a most sublimated state of passion. To avenge an injury sustained, or supposed to be so, to achieve a favourite point, or gratify a desire otherwise unobtainable, poison or the dagger were constantly resorted to. Sanguinary and violent by nature, climate, habit and education, the hatred of the Venetian once excited became implacable and endured through life. (p.5-6)

Dacre's description of the Venetian's "pride in nobility" would have resonated in early nineteenth-century Britain, following the debates over inherited aristocratic titles versus earned income started in the wake of the French Revolution, particularly as radical critics condemned the aristocracy as a "Gothic institution," better suited to a previous Catholic society rather than a modern Protestant Britain.[14] Dacre renders her critique of aristocratic values, as a diatribe against uncontrollable, habitual passions inherited from earlier generations, based on aristocratic values and an unavoidable part of their nature. In her description of Venice, Dacre portrays a proud, passionate and violent people, of which Victoria is a prime example. Yet Victoria appears to be ostracised by her own class due to her conduct, which is insufficiently feminine: "the society of Victoria was generally shunned […] on account of her own violent and overbearing disposition, which rendered her obnoxious to the young nobility of Venice" (p.15). When her father asks why she does not meet with people her own age she blames her mother's disgrace for her isolation. There is no acknowledgement

[14] Amanda Goodrich, *Debating England's Aristocracy in the 1790s: Pamphlets, Polemics and Political Ideas* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2011) p.171.

by Victoria, that her own behaviour is a contributing factor. This lack of personal responsibility and unrepentant attitude can be seen throughout the novel.

The Marchese naively hopes that the bad habits Victoria has learned in childhood may be reversed: "Vainly did the Marchese hope that time, by maturing her reason, and improving her ideas, would correct the wrong bias of her character; for strict education alone can correct the faults in our nature; […] haughtiness might have been softened into noble pride, cruelty into courage, implacability into firmness" (p.14). The narrator signals that the Marchese is wrong in thinking time alone will correct her nature, only a strict education could do this, though the narrator implies that the educational ideals of this culture are problematic, encouraging only a focused form of Victoria's faults, pride in place of haughtiness. Indeed, Wollstonecraft had argued that the current state of girls' education encouraged haughtiness, as the "artificial weakness" impressed on girls "produces a propensity to tyrannize and gives birth to cunning"[15] Hoeveler, extending Wollstonecraft's ideas, argues that women who were not given a proper education were perceived as victims of their own follies, taking on the "masculine" traits of pride, greed and lust.[16] Victoria will develop all of these characteristics. This is part of the ambiguity in the novel: whether reform through education is now possible for Victoria and whether, if she had received a stricter education when she was younger, things would have been different. When Lorendini, her father, is mortally wounded, he suggests Victoria also has a moral obligation "to keep a guard over thy conduct, so that no possible evil may be derived from thy example" (p.18). He suggests that as a member of the aristocracy, Victoria has a duty to set a standard of behaviour for the lower classes to follow, and his dying instructions voice a critique of aristocratic moral complacency. Equally, he requires Laurina "to repair, in some measure, the evil thou hast done" (p.19), focusing on the

[15] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, A Vindication of the Rights of Man, A Historical and Moral View of the French Revolution*, ed. Janet Todd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.75.
[16] Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism*, p.127.

damage she has done to her children through her example. He says to Laurina that Victoria's horrific early experiences will be transformed to her benefit, "if thou will *yet* have courage and resolution to abandon thy guilty career, and to instil into her mind, by thy *future example*, principles of virtue and honour" (p.20). He believes that through education, instruction and example Victoria's temperament can be changed. The narrator casts doubt on this possibility and it also relies on Laurina reforming her conduct and setting a good example, which further undermines the possibility. As Wollstonecraft points out, the quality and type of women's education has consequences for the wider society as mothers instruct the next generation.

Dacre is aware that education does not happen in a vacuum. The Marchese instructs Laurina to find Leonardo and "retire with him, and thy daughter Victoria, far from Venice, for Venice, methinks, is no longer a place for thee." (pp.19-20). The idea that morality can be shaped by our environment is supported by Rousseau in *Emile,* where he states: "We are born sensitive and from our birth onwards we are affected in various ways by our environment."[17] Removing Victoria from a decadent, passionate often violent location is seen by her father as a way of separating her from negative influences, enabling education and example to correct her moral and behavioural faults. Mastering a person's inclinations to resist pleasure or pain was advocated by John Locke, whose moral and pedagogical ideas remained influential going into the Romantic era, as a way of encouraging moral behaviour in society. He argued this mastery is a habit which should be cultivated as early as possible and verified by those who teach it.[18] The suggestion is that a habit can be learned at any time, but like Rousseau Locke favours education at an early age, and the issue of rehabilitation is not commonly addressed in Locke's reception.[19] Removing Victoria from a negative environment endorses Rousseau's

[17] Rousseau, *Emile*, p.7.
[18] John Locke, *On Education* (1693), ed. Peter Gay (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), p.38.
[19] Margaret J M Ezell 'John Locke's Images of Childhood: Early Eighteenth-Century Responses to *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 17 (1983-84), 139-55, (p.151).

ideas that we learn from social interaction and hence that removal from corruptive influence is desirable. However, the narrator questions whether habits acquired in youth can be corrected as an adult. In *Zofloya* it seems possible in theory, especially as Victoria's damnation is not consolidated until very late on and after an angelic warning that one presumes could have reversed her plight. Dacre seems unwilling to allow her heroine to embrace any change leading to redemption, unlike Laurina.

Initially, it appears Laurina intends to keep the promise she makes to her dying husband as she writes to Ardolph: "But mark my determination – it is to see you no more! – With Victoria, the innocent sufferer for her mother's crimes, […] I shall retire for a time to a remote province" (p.23). The suffering Laurina refers to here is shame and loss of reputation. Aristotle states shame is socially constructed and only occurs where reputation matters, other people's opinions are valued, social rank is important, and honour is won or lost.[20] Moving away from Venice's rigid and hierarchical social order will reduce the loss of her reputation, as public knowledge will diminish, though the moral taint remains. Laurina and Ardolph take Victoria to the home of Laurina's cousin, Signora di Modena. Laurina's maternal compassion seeks to mitigate the potential hardship occasioned by her daughter's incarceration, but her own lack of credibility is exposed by the cruel Signora who treats her with contempt. Her request that the Signora not be harsh with her daughter prompts an adverse reaction: "Hastily, and with a look almost amounting to horror, the pure and dignified Signora withdrew her hand, as from the touch of pollution." By using Catholicism as the moral high ground, she seeks to elevate her social position above Laurina with the result that: "Laurina turned aside, with shame, even from the *shew* of virtue in its most ungraceful form, pride and affection" (p.42). The word "shew" suggests her morality is only superficial. In this way, the novel suggests that upstanding conduct, though desirable, can amount to sanctimonious egotism and

[20] Daniel M Gross, *The Secret History of Emotions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p.42.

ineffectual censure. Laurina has previously rejected her husband's dying wish to take the children away from Venice and is now left with two equally bad options. Ardolph does not want Victoria with them; alternatively, it means leaving Victoria with her cousin to try to improve her behaviour through strict discipline. Despite her mistakes, Laurina is the only character to whom Dacre gives the hope of redemption, as she transcends the shame and physical attacks of Ardolph to finally be forgiven by her husband on his deathbed and her son on hers. She is the least extreme and, insofar as she experiences a moral conflict, the most real of all the characters, and therefore holds the greatest potential for reform.

Ardolph argues that his motivation for taking Victoria away from Venice aligns with the project of education and correction: "by a due course […] of 'restraint, and privation of every incitement to evil, change for the better shall be perceptible in her disposition'" (p.41). He proposes to imprison her as a form of discipline, purportedly to separate her from those who may exert an evil influence over her. In principle, this is not without merit, as Zofloya will later gain influence over Victoria by appealing to her selfish desires. Signora di Modena promises to "do the duty of a good catholic toward your child. I shall study the preservation of her soul, and more her spiritual interest than her temporal vanities" (p.42). John Bender argues that the "penitentiary idea," the collective view within eighteenth-century society that withdrawal from society and isolation were conducive to moral rehabilitation, was taken up by writers of prose fiction, who similarly to prison reformers and legal thinkers understood "character" as something that could be shaped by narrative and reflection. When looking at life within a penitentiary Bender describes an impersonal supervisor who holds the individual conscience, where isolation is not for reflection and forgiveness but to enable the supervisor to restructure the inmate's identity through narrative resources.[21] The Signora's intention to

[21] John Bender *Imagining the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p.203.

curb Victoria's proud and haughty nature through punishment and humiliation fits this cultural development, but it is treated ambivalently. The Signora suffers from the same pride and lack of humility that plagues Victoria, and her commitment to Catholicism is superficial at best, making her actions vindictive and self-serving not rehabilitating, just as Ardolph's motivations for Victoria's internment are selfish. In this respect, *Zofloya* challenges the "penitentiary idea" making it not align with Protestant self-sacrifice but Catholic abuse, again frustrating any opportunity that Victoria has for redemption.

In Victoria's case, cruel discipline does not seem to work, instead cultivating "the most refined artifice, which, by practice, became imbued into the mass of her other evil qualities" (p. 50). She learns to control her emotions not to become more virtuous, as the penitentiary idea would demand, but to enable her to manipulate people into believing she is complying, yet still getting her own way. This is an extreme manifestation of the subterfuge Wollstonecraft believed women were led to because of their infantilisation. "The trifles which, with grace, she pressed upon Catau, were acceptable, and had their desired effect; for vulgar minds are *almost always* mercenary:" (p.56). Zigarovich refers to this as a kind of courtship, hierarchical and based on Victoria's own self-interest, but using disguise and shifts in class to lure Catau into aiding her escape.[22] Victoria is prepared to use whatever means possible to get what she wants by turning punishment into an opportunity. Strict restraint imposed on a rebellious spirit, *Zofloya* suggests, will only drive those feelings inward, resulting in subterfuge and manipulation. The novel advocates but problematises educational structures based on discipline; an emotional regime that is more forgiving, nurturing, inclined to support individuals to reform, and promote self-regulation is preferable to the disciplinary regimes that predominate.

[22] Jolene Zigarovich 'TransGothic Desire in Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*', in *TransGothic in Literature and Culture*, ed. Jolene Zigarovich (London: Routledge, 2018), pp.83-84.

The Marchese and Marchesa as indulgent parents never taught their children the virtues of prudence and self-discipline. Therefore, "Victoria was a girl of no common feelings – her ideas wildly wandered, and to every circumstance and situation she gave rather the vivid colouring of her own heated imagination, than of truth" (p.28). Victoria is still a girl, and it is Berenza who has the power to awaken that desire in her. "Wildly wandered" suggests an impetuous lack of focus and control, the "vivid colouring" that makes situations appear more attractive than reality. This presentation of Victoria's "feelings" relates to Thomas Hobbes's ideas on emotions, which relate excesses to the desire for domination. Hobbes states that excessive passion is the function of an overheated imagination where power comes at the expense of another.[23] Thus Victoria's exuberant passion stems from an unrealistic outlook, and it manifests in a capacity to manipulate and dominate others as well as susceptibility to influence which culminates in her relationship with Zofloya. Victoria sees her mother's relationship with Ardolph only as a great romance: "She had ever contemplated the seductive, and, in appearance, delightful union of her mother with Ardolph" (p.28). The irony is the reader is aware at the beginning of the novel of Ardolph's intentions to break up the marriage of the Marchese and Marchesa. By the end of the novel, Ardolph is shown not only to be controlling but violent and abusive. Victoria is unable to discern the difference between imagination and reality because she lacks the experience. When Berenza compliments and flatters Victoria, "her sentiments were those of envy, and of an ardent consuming desire to be situated like that unhappy mother" (p.28). The narrator uses the word "envy" to relate Victoria's feelings to her mother, showing that a misguided sense of competition and emulation is the cause. When she had contemplated and imagined her mother's "delightful" relationship, she could not define what she was feeling (her ideas are "inexplicable to herself"). It is only when Berenza stirs up a desire within her that she realises she wants the

[23] Gross, *Secret History of Emotions,* p.81.

same relationship as her mother. However, while Victoria imagines her mother as happy, the narrator informs the reader that Laurina is not. The play on the word "happy" – as a state of pleasure – but also as a moral condition that might be antithetical to pleasure – indicates the novel's sophisticated play with Victoria's emotional confusions; her conflation of the ideal and actual, her incorporation of pernicious examples and her undeveloped formulation of a pursuit of happiness.

The Consequences of Unchecked Female Desire

The description of Venice in *Zofloya* states the Venetians were fond of their mistresses and jealous of their wives. When Berenza proposes she become his mistress, Victoria's "vanity easily led her to believe that Berenza thought marriage a degrading and unnecessary tie to a love like his" (p.28). Victoria believes being a mistress is a positive state, as marriage implies ownership akin to property and such confinement warps genuine feelings. Craciun argues that protofeminist writing in the Romantic period came to understand marriage as entailing a loss of individual identity, mobility and independence.[24] The irony is that as a mistress Victoria is equally dependent on him for financial provision and physical protection. Unbeknownst to Victoria, Berenza does not consider her good enough to be his wife and, through marriage, he sees himself as raising her status. However, "the wild and unrestrained sentiments of Victoria, prevented her from being offended at the proposition" (p.29). Her emotions again distort her sense of reality. Following Hobbes's view of emotions, Victoria's overheated imagination has resulted in an excess of passion; through the combination of her temperament, the acceptance of mistresses in Venetian culture, and her mother's example, Victoria is blinded to the fact that she should be offended by Berenza's initial proposal while she is still in her parent's house. David Hume refers to passion as an impulse and one that can only be countered by a contrary

[24] Adriana Craciun, *Fatal Women of Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) p.147.

impulse, hence his statement that reason cannot override passion.[25] It is Victoria's wild, unrestrained passion and imagination which causes her to make ill-informed decisions. She only changes her status from mistress to wife, when she discovers the real reason why he will not marry her and her passionate indignation replaces her desire to remain single. If we apply Hume's argument, that the motivation for action is pleasure or pain, this supports Poovey's view that those moralists who advocated ideas of feminine propriety, indulging in any desire will give rise to overwhelming pleasure and a greater disgust for the rational nature.[26] Both passion and motivation work together to reduce the power of reason in the situation. However, readers of the novel would have been appalled that she would agree to be his mistress, as this went against all the teachings on chastity and the need to find a good husband. Wetenhall Wilkes in *A Letter of Genteel and Moral Advice to a Young Lady* (1740) describes chastity as "essential and natural" with any deviation "a receding from womanhood". He goes even further to denounce an immodest woman as "a kind of monster, distorted from its proper form".[27] Victoria's uncontrolled desire makes her look monstrous in the reader's eyes, at a time when, as Janet Todd points out, marriage was considered to be the high point of a woman's life.[28] However, once removed from her parents' house to a place of confinement, her choices become limited. As Stephen Burley argues, when she flees captivity, she becomes a desiring woman in need of a husband but unable to seek one. He also notes that as a runaway Victoria must also negotiate the best arrangement possible.[29] Whereas previously she could have rejected his proposal to become a mistress now she has to accept this position out

[25] Davie Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, (1739) ed. Earnest Mossner (London: Penguin Classics, 1985), p.274.
[26] Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer,* p.20.
[27] Wetenhall Wilkes, 'A Letter of Genteel and Moral Advice to a Young Lady' (1740), in *Women in the Eighteenth-Century; Constructions of Femininity*, ed Jones, p.30.
[28] Janet Todd, 'Introduction', *Female Education in the Age of Enlightenment, Volume 1*, ed. Todd (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1996) p.xv.
[29] Stephanie Burley 'The Death of Zofloya: or the Moor as Epistemological Limit' in *The Gothic Other: Racial and Social Construction in the Literary Imagination*, ed. Ruth Binstock Anolik (London: McFarland & Co., 2004), p.201.

of necessity. A deficient education has knock-on effects, restricting the capacity for ethical decisions.

Having established the impetuous Laurina and rebellious Victoria, Dacre introduces the reader to the idealised, compliant Lilla. When she meets Henriquez, she is only thirteen, two years younger than Laurina was when she married her husband. Both are young, but their approach to marriage is very different. Lilla's father opposes her marriage on the grounds of youth. Even when he dies Lilla will not disobey his wishes and insists on waiting a year before they marry. Hoeveler argues Lilla is iconic and statuesque, presented as the ideal female of the new domestic ideology.[30] She is faithful and obedient to her father's wishes even when he is not around to enforce them. The obedience to the father is somewhat undeserved, as he principally wants a better match than Henriquez, showing that status more than considerations of their happiness determines the treatment of young people. Lilla is described in terms that resonate with conduct-book ideals of femininity and Burke's aesthetic of beauty:

> Pure, innocent, free even from the smallest taint of a corrupt thought, was her mind; delicate, symmetrical, and of fairy-like beauty, her person so small, yet of so just proportion; sweet expressing a seraphic serenity of soul, seemed her angelic countenance, slightly suffused with the palest hue of the virgin rose. (p.133)

The narrator uses a profusion of idealised attributes, all of which are unobtainable for Victoria, but also for any human being. The description here uses a pristine physicality to reflect an ideal mental state, as Lilla embodies both serenity and diligence. In contrast to this hyper-feminised description, Victoria is now defined by her "bold masculine features" (p.213). Victoria is also described as being as beautiful as an angel at the start of the book, but

[30] Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism,* p.153.

her aggressive sexual desire has made her appear darker and more masculine. Lilla's innocence also causes her to accept everything at face value; as no corrupt thought enters her mind, she sees the best in everyone, making her susceptible to manipulation. Both Victoria and Lilla have a distorted view of reality. One is based on an inflated view of her own worth, the other on a naïve view of the goodness of others: "Never was unconscious guest received with feelings and with thoughts so hostile as was the innocent Lilla by Victoria! Yet still the smiles played upon the disciplined features, of the accomplished hypocrite, […] her conduct was such as to excite a timid gratitude and respect in the breast of her lovely visitor" (p.129). Victoria whilst at Signora Modena's has learnt to disguise her true feelings to the point that she is now regarded as an "accomplished hypocrite." Although women were taught not to express their opinions, the use of the word hypocrite suggests Victoria went far beyond this with the beginning of a malevolence that will grow throughout the book. In contrast, Lilla is referred to as expressing timid gratitude and respect as a new member of the family as she expects to marry Henriquez. Her naïve acceptance is shown in her interactions with Victoria as she "placed confidence in her smiles, and courteous demeanour;" (p.133). She thinks Victoria is genuine. When Victoria appears unhappy, she wants to make things better: "the innocent Lilla too, with gentle sweetness, would sometimes approach, and seek, by endearment or lively converse, to remove what was so evident to all. But the efforts of the lovely girl appeared rather to injure than to benefit Victoria" (p.138). Lilla's goodness provides a catalyst for Victoria's anger and jealousy to the point where these unrestrained emotions result in Lilla's destruction in a frenzied attack.

Following Hoeveler and Armstrong, Adriana Craciun argues that the bourgeois order put maternal, nurturing, middle-class women at the moral centre of the new socio-economic order. This relied on complementary sexual differences and gendered sexual spheres which characterised women as passionless. The alternative is a single-sex, characterised by cruelty

and misery which would be labelled as unnaturally masculine in a woman.[31] Hoeveler sees Victoria as a threat to such middle-class values, as an aristocrat with unbridled passion, pride and lust, to the point where feminised sexuality rivals Satan.[32] When Zofloya returns after being murdered and is resurrected as Satan, he inspires hope in Victoria of being able to fulfil her desires. Victoria's animation flows from the possible outcome of a violent murderous desire where the removal of Berenza guarantees her the affection of Henriquez. Berenza sees her change in attitude as "the dawning triumph of vigorous reason, over the morbid refinements of a sickly fancy" (p.143). Berenza simply believes Victoria has overcome her melancholy feelings, not suspecting that Zofloya has given her hope of fulfilling her dark desires. Victoria's view of Lilla is hostile and prefigures what is to come, as she "returned her caresses with gloomy eagerness, as the murderer might be tempted to fondle the beauty of the babe, whose life he intended to take" (p.143). "Babe" speaks of youth and innocence. Victoria's frenzied act of violence is referred to by Davison as a sacrificial slaughter of the feminine ideal, the promise of innocence and motherhood.[33] Victoria seeks to kill the feminine ideal as it is based on a masculine construction of how the ideal woman should look and behave to promote a stable bourgeois society. Only by removing extreme virtue and extreme vice can society acknowledge that reality lies somewhere in between moral poles.

Victoria's attack on Lilla is the ultimate act of extreme violence and demonstrates how consumed by jealousy Victoria has become. Dunn describes Victoria's disgust and loathing of Lilla's femininity, arguing that she sees in her rival an empty vessel, a false feminine ideal.[34] Lilla lacks any opinion or personality of her own; she is submissive, compliant, silent and undemanding with no desires of her own. The murder is described in terms designed to evoke

---

[31] Craciun, *Fatal Women of Romanticism*, pp.3-9.
[32] Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism*, pp.143-45.
[33] Carol Margaret Davison, *Gothic Literature 1764-1824* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p.40.
[34] James A Dunn 'Charlotte Dacre and the Feminisation of Violence', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 53:3 (1988), 307-327, (p.314).

sympathy, but perhaps also the unrealistic ideal Lilla represents. As Victoria drags her from her cave Lilla "raised her eyes, of heavenly blue, to the stern and frantic countenance of her gloomy persecutor, appearing, in figure, grace and attitude, a miniature semblance of the Medicean Venus" (p.223). The Medici painting of the birth of Venus became a standard of female beauty, but by making her smaller she becomes a vulnerable figure in need of protection. (note 223, p.279). Lilla represents the passive victim, a poor friendless orphan, defenceless, her delicate feet leaving blood-red traces on the rocks. She also represents something spiritual – heavenly, grace, Venus, blood red rocks – like Venus goddess of love, born from the ocean, she is the antithesis to Victoria's demonic aggression. Victoria is referred to in terms of masculine aggression and absence of emotional control: "Fired to madness [...] no longer mistress of her actions, nor desiring to be so, [Victoria] seized by her streaming tresses the fragile Lilla [..] she stabbed her in the bosom, in the shoulder, and other parts" (p.226). Dunn suggests that such actions mimic male penetration with continual stabbing.[35] Although the violence of Victoria's actions does suggest rape her intention is not to violate Lilla sexually but to take her life and so remove her as a rival for Henriquez's affections. Her random stabbing not only suggests loss of control but a disfiguring of Venus and that to destroy what is beautiful in a rival is a form of female jealousy. To try and save her life, Lilla appeals to Victoria's compassion, beginning with epithets that underscore her naivety: "Sweet and gentle Victoria, murder not, then, the friendless Lilla who for worlds would not injure thee!" (p.224). Unfortunately, Victoria's jealousy can find no other way of removing Lilla from Henriquez's heart. "Barbarous Victoria! – look down upon me, behold what thou hast done and let the blood thou hast shed appease thee […] have pity on me – and I will pray of heaven to forgive thee the past!" (p.225). Lilla becomes Victoria's conscience, instructing her to look at what she has done, the blood she has shed, and feel pity and regret for such a rash

[35] Dunn 'Charlotte Dacre and the Feminisation of Violence', p.314.

action. Then in true humility, she says she will intercede for Victoria so that heaven may forgive her past wrongdoing. The idea of intercession is reinforced by the words "blood", "appease", "heaven", and "forgive", which take on a Christlike symbolic spiritual dimension in contrast to Zofloya's demonic presence. Dunn argues that Dacre does not lament female victimisation or the demise of female passivity but by allowing Victoria to develop aggressive masculine traits she shows that women do not gain sexual justice, they swap one set of traits for another.[36] The death of the submissive, superficial, passionless female is not seen as detrimental to society, however, the assertive, aggressive female does not benefit from the same social status as men and so women are just swapping one set of inhibiting characteristics for another. Craciun goes even further by suggesting the destructive nature of violent female desire destroys both virtue and vice consigning both to the abyss.[37] If Lilla represents virtue and Victoria vice, then Victoria's violent jealousy will destroy both women. Victoria exposes the fallacy that women are incapable of committing violent crimes against each other and that the two sexes are binary opposites. The death of Lilla also demonstrates that passive virtue is not rewarded in this life and is sacrificed to evil desires.

Dacre's treatment of moral corruption is gendered in ways that suggest wickedness is endemic in or unavoidable by women. This can be seen in the different treatment of Victoria and her brother. Victoria and Leonardo are brought up in the same household but have different temperaments. As a son, he would be expected in time to fulfil the role of husband and enter the public sphere. Leonardo is described as "having been as much the victim of an injurious fondness as herself, possessed, with all the bolder shades of her character, a warm impassioned soul, yielding easily to the seductions of the wild and beautiful, accessible to temptation, and unable to resist, in any shape, the first impulse of his heart" (p.4). Dacre

[36] Dunn, 'Charlotte Dacre and the Feminisation of Violence', p.314.
[37] Craciun, *Fatal Women of Romanticism,* p.131.

acknowledges that Leonardo is just as much of a victim of a parent's overindulgence as Victoria, and he is similarly impulsive, but his temperament is different. He is warm and impassioned, suggesting a benevolence compared to Victoria's evil nature. In common with his mother, there is an inability to resist the wild and the beautiful which will lead him to Megalena. From an educational point of view, Locke states that "the difference to be found in the manners and abilities of men is owing more to their education than to anything else."[38] For Locke, education includes all sensory experiences and the people Leonardo meets will shape his outlook, but not to the exclusion of his natural temperament. When he meets the widow her "Sorrow was in unison with the heat of the youth, and in a gentle voice he asked if her grief might admit of consolation and assistance" (p.95). It is his compassion that prompts Leonardo to offer to work for her in exchange for food and lodgings. Yet like Victoria, he does not forget his mother's part in his circumstances, as in his accusatory apostrophe: "Mother unkind! to thee, and thee alone, do I owe all this!" (p.97). The narrator reinforces the sentiment with the warning: "Let other mothers tremble at this reflection, and pause on meditated guilt" (p.97). Leonardo blames Laurina for his circumstances; relying on the benevolence of strangers, he does not attribute any deficiencies of character to her, unlike Victoria. Leonardo's temperament like Victoria's is based on his inner nature and reinforced by his circumstances. Due to societal pressures on girls and women, Victoria's impetuousness takes the form not of impulsive virtue but unrestricted selfishness.

Dacre uses women with strong independent passions to show how destructive uncontrolled female emotions can be on the people around them. When an attempt is made on Berenza's life the true reason he did not want to marry Victoria is revealed. Barlaska argues Victoria must sacrifice her own blood to prove her worth to redeem both herself and her

[38] Locke, *On Education*, p.26.

mother.[39] When she unwittingly defends him from the assassin his narcissism convinces him this is true devotion.[40] For Berenza it is her sacrifice that makes her worthy to be his wife, but the irony is it was an accident, not intentional, and it is Berenza's belief in his own superiority and Victoria's devotion, that causes him to admit the real reason he did not propose. The narrator points out that if he had stopped at the proposal, pride would never have let Victoria imagine that he considered her unworthy, but now a "sudden hatred and desire of revenge took possession of her vindictive soul" (p.126). In Victoria's imagination, she had not seen marriage as a sign of faithfulness and commitment, only as a formality. Ann Jones argues that *Zofloya* represents Victoria's anger as unjustified compared to Berenza's sincere and honourable love: that women accepted one code for men and another for themselves.[41] Although many eighteenth-century women accepted their subservient status, Victoria is not one of them. Her anger stems from asserting her own rights and emotions and although Berenza's love may be sincere, it is not honourable. Despite Victoria being a woman in distress, he does not offer her protection and preserve her status by making her his wife but exacerbates her plight by making her his mistress. The narrator draws attention to his status by describing him as refined and her as vindictive, as Berenza once felt she was unworthy to be his wife. This draws the narrator's judgment, arguing: "she despised and undervalued the advantages she possessed" (p.128). The implication is that these advantages are linked to Berenza, but Victoria is also a member of a Venetian noble house. Therefore, we are encouraged to regard her anger as justified, but her pride causes her to take her initial revenge by marrying him and she feels she is triumphing over his dignity and pride. It is significant that initially revenge for Victoria is conforming to society's norms and marrying the man she

[39] Reema Barlaska, 'Maternal Femininity: Masquerade and the Sacrificial Body in Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya, or the Moor*', *Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Stories*, 18 (2020), 30-46, p.38.
[40] Jennifer Airey, "He bears no rival near the throne": Maale Narcissism and Early Feminism in the Works of Charlotte Dacre, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 30:2 (2017) 223-41, p.234.
[41] Ann Jones, *Ideas and Innovations: Best Sellers of Jane Austen's Age* (New York: AMS Press, 1986), p.232.

is living with. Ironically by assuming the role of devoted wife she is gaining power over Berenza which will later make administering poison easier. Victoria's independent rebellious spirit leads her to become Berenza's mistress, but equally her vindictive manipulative nature allows her to take on the appearance of conformity whilst still retaining her murderous intentions. This then becomes the flaw in society's need to control women's physical and intellectual freedom. Men can impose financial and legal restraints, but they can never be certain the passive, submissive guidance advocated by the conduct books is being followed.

Hoeveler draws attention to the fact that eighteenth-century conservative thought subscribed to the idea that control of the female body through marriage and regulation of the mother's sexuality was the foundation of bourgeois society.[42] A stable family-based system founded on restraint was seen as a replacement for a corrupt, privileged aristocracy. Laurina's uncontrolled female desire can be seen as an aristocratic, corrupted, destabilising influence. A full century earlier, Mary Astell had argued that desire does not originate from a woman's emotion, imagination or body, but there are reservoirs of passion that need to be restrained due to the need to uphold propriety.[43] This, however, is contradicted by Senior Zappi's wife who initiates the seduction of Leonardo based on a vain misunderstanding that his affection is for her and not her daughter. "The passion of Zappi's wife had by this time grown to such a height," the narrator states, "that she felt it utterly impossible longer to conceal it from the object that inspired it" (p.90). Signora Zappi is an example of unrestrained passion, vanity and miseducation that prioritises acquiring a husband over moral fortitude. The result is contempt and indignation, as she "resolved, in the tumultuous vengeance of her soul, to destroy and blacken the youth whose virtue she had failed to corrupt" (p.92). Although the narrator condemns Signora Zappi for her lack of control, Leonardo is not exonerated, as she is said to

[42] Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism,* p.157.
[43] Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer,* p.4.

be not tempting enough and his flaw of being easily seduced remains. The destructive nature of female passion does not lead to the break-up of the family, but Leonardo is forced to leave out of consideration for the husband. The corrosive nature of unrestrained passion has not been eliminated in this family; it has merely been covered over until another temptation arises.

Leonardo's lack of restraint and weakness for seduction is exposed in his meeting with Megalena Strozzi, a former mistress of Berenza and accomplished manipulator of men. Moreno points out that Megalena is very close in spelling to Magdalena and the opposite of Madonna.[44] Unlike Signora Zappi "she knew better how to disguise, beneath an artificial delicacy and refinement, the tumultuous wishes of her heart" (p.105). Megalena is more subtle and cunning than other women; as a mistress, she depends on her ability to please a man to secure his interest. Her approach is more subtle as she draws Leonardo into a dependent relationship. Despite being several years his senior "her playful yet elegant manners, her various seductive blandishments, obtained the ascendancy over his imagination, […] she had bewitched and enslaved his heart, she had awakened his soul to new existence; the image of the delicate Amamia faded from his mind, and a more wild, a more unbounded passion took possession of it, in the form of Megalena" (p.106). The description of Leonardo's character states that he cannot resist the seduction of the wild and beautiful woman. She is described as bewitching and enslaving; Craciun refers to this as using her sexuality to charm and master men.[45] Where Amimia's youth and innocence may have brought out a more peaceful and controlled side of Leonardo, Megalena has encouraged the wild and unbound passion within him:

[44] Beatriz Gonzalez Moreno, 'Gothic Excess and Aesthetic Ambiguity in Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*', *Women's Writing* 14:3 (2007) 419-434, (p.426).
[45] Craciun, *Fatal Women of Romanticism,* p.149.

> Such was the fatal empire that a worthless wanton had acquired over a young and susceptible heart left to its wild energies, ere reason could preponderate; and thus darkly coloured became the future character of one, yielding progressively to the most horrible crimes, which if differently directed in early youth, might have become an honour and an ornament to human nature. (p.115)

Victoria blames her mother for corrupting her character and setting a bad example. The narrator here suggests that if Leonardo had not fallen under the influence of Megalena, who is described as a worthless wanton, he might have been a better person. There is no suggestion that, like Victoria, Leonardo is inherently evil; instead, the narrator blames a corrupting female influence. He is deceived into thinking "Megalena never appeared more beautiful to him than at those times when she was urging him to the commission of some horrible evil; so that deeds, however repugnant to his nature, and the loss of her love, bore in his deluded eyes no comparison" (p.119). Leonardo also suffers from the fear of loss and the idea that if he does not do her bidding, he will lose her love. Fear overcomes guilt as a motivating and corrupting force. Just as Laurina's actions destabilise Victoria's life, Megalena undermines and corrupts Leonardo's.

Dacre introduces an Old Testament biblical element by referring to a generational curse to punish the children for the sins of the parent's up to the third and fourth generation.[46] Victoria is referred to as having inherited a taint from her mother: "the curse of Laurina entailed upon the daughter, […] Victoria dwelt with unrestrained delight upon the attractions of the object, that had presented itself to her fickle and irregulated mind" (p.132). The narrator links the two women together with infidelity as a curse which is repeated through a lack of discipline. When Victoria is introduced to Henriquez, she abandons expected marital fidelity

[46] Exodus 34:7.

and displays her fickle nature, gazing "upon him with admiration, in an instant drew ungrateful comparisons between their persons, to the disadvantage of him in whom her soul should have discerned no fault" (p.129). The conduct book author Wetenhall Wilkes argues that happiness is contentment for a young lady and aiming any higher than this only causes grief and disappointment.[47] Victoria like her mother before her, instead of being content with her husband, rejects contentment and looks for something better which results in murder. A fault is exactly what Victoria looks for to legitimise her behaviour and abdicate personal responsibility. Berenza's "conduct towards her had been solely actuated by selfish motives. […] his regard for her had been of the most unworthy kind, and his anxiety to ascertain her love for him, ere he took advantage of the situation into which she had thrown herself" (p.134). John Gregory in *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters'* [1774] points out that women do not have the same degree of choice compared to men. He suggests women marry out of a sense of gratitude that a man has preferred them over another woman.[48] The narrator's comment "the situation into which she had thrown herself" implies that Victoria should be grateful to Berenza for taking her in and that "fault" has a dual meaning and perhaps she should not be looking at his mistakes but her own. Unfortunately, Berenza's behaviour complicates this; he was not prepared to marry her until she risked her life for him and he discarded his other mistress for Victoria. It is therefore difficult to see him without fault and blameless. Whereas Berenza chooses Victoria, Henriquez will not look at anyone other than Lilla. Ardolph pursues Laurina, but Victoria pursues Henriquez making the curse less about infidelity than control and self-discipline. Victoria oversteps the boundaries of female decorum and violates the marriage bond in her desire for Henriquez.[49] Dacre exposes the

[47] Wetenhall Wilkes 'A Letter of Genteel and Moral Advice to a Young Lady' (1740), in *Women in the Eighteenth-Century: Constructions of Femininity*, ed. Jones, p.35.
[48] John Gregory, 'A Father's Legacy to his Daughters' (1740), in *Women in the Eighteenth-Century; Constructions in Femininity*, ed. Vivien Jones, (London, Routledge, 1990) p.50.
[49] Carol Margaret Davison, 'Getting their Knickers in a Twist: Contesting the 'Female Gothic' in Charlotte Dacre's Zofloya' *Gothic Studies* 11:1 (2009), 32-45, (pp.36-38).

double standard which requires female restraint, gratitude and fidelity whilst allowing husbands free choice to act on their own desires without condemnation.

Victoria's Inner Psyche and the Transfer of Power

Zofloya begins with a heroine who is the victim of a negligent education, pernicious examples, and a wider culture that in its Catholicism and aristocratic ethos is unpropitious to virtuous conduct. It takes Victoria through a series of circumstances that reinforce her subordinate status, whether as daughter, wife, or mother, and it suggests that there is a social organisation that victimises women to the degree that degraded power grabs and demeaning seductions are the norm. However, the novel increasingly progresses from the social to the psychological, and in the progress of Victoria towards damnation, *Zofloya* explores the mental state of turpitude and irredeemable vice based on unregulated desire. It does so through the relationship with the titular Moor, a slave who advances to mastery over Victoria.

The desire for Henriquez which drives Victoria to madness and distraction manifests in her dreams: "Horrible images possessed her brain, and her heart seemed burning with an intense and unquenchable fire." (p.135). At first, there is no focus or direction to her dreams. This outlook owes something to a larger oneiric outlook, typified by John Locke's assertion that "The dreams of sleeping men, as I take it, all made up of the waking man's ideas; though for the most part oddly put together."[50] The novel shares moral philosophers' interest in inchoate feelings expressed unconsciously. Then she sees Henriquez and Lilla happily walking in the garden which produces "a deep groan [that] broke in sleep from the miserable Victoria" (p.135). Henriquez is the focus of her desire and his union with Lilla is something she wishes to prevent. As Hume asserts, pleasure and pain are the chief motivating forces for

[50] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, (1689) ed. Pauline Phemister (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.58.

our actions,[51] and the groan within her dream suggests this is an outcome that will cause her pain and something she wants to change. "She became even herself astonished," states the narrator, "at the violence of the sensations which shook her, and for an instant believed herself under the influence of some superior and unknown power" (p.135). The idea of losing control of consciousness reflects the eighteenth-century fear of madness.[52] Driven by her own subconscious desire, Victoria suffers the horror and confusion of trying to make sense of her disordered thoughts. Davison argues that the Zofloya in her dreams is a manifestation of Victoria's repressed self and as such he both attacks and terrifies her.[53] Although the events in her dreams are driven by her own desires, there is an element of facilitation, whereby Zofloya is seeking Victoria's permission, suggesting an enabling unknown power. Satan in the guise of Zofloya may have gained access to her dark desires through her dreams but he is not bound by them.

The image of the Moor who appears in Victoria's dreams conforms to the idea of the mysterious, exotic other, but the real purpose of the dreams is to predict the outcome of Victoria's uncontrolled desires and for Satan to gain her consent. When the Moor first appears in her dreams he is dressed in "a habit of white and gold; on his head, he wore a white turban, which sparkled with emeralds and was surmounted by a waving feather of green" (p.136). Victoria looked upon him with "inexplicable awe" suggesting a fascination with the exoticism, wealth and power he presents. However, when he bent the knee, "her mind filled with terror, she looked upon him with dread, and essaying to fly, she stumbled and awoke" (p.136). Burley argues Victoria does not know what the dreams mean, but the horror and struggle to awake suggests her subconscious registers the danger of the uncanny

[51] Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature,* p.167.
[52] John Dussinger, *The Discourse of the Mind in Eighteenth-Century Fiction,* Vol 80, (Netherlands: Walter de Gruyter, 2011) p.13.
[53] Carol Margaret Davison, 'Getting their Knickers in a Twist: Contesting the 'Female Gothic' in Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*' p.42.

transformation of power. Also, Victoria fails to recognise her own evil, this is part of the subconscious truth which eludes her.[54] She attributes the dream to her disturbed state of mind and the pain of seeing Henriquez with Lilla. The pain is due to her inability to gratify her own morally corrupt desires. Emphasising Zofloya's race, the submissive stance confirms his status as a servant, yet also regarded as an ignoble savage capable of treachery and not to be trusted.[55] Victoria prefers to see danger in the "racial other" than acknowledge the evil within. When she falls asleep again, she sees Henriquez and Lilla being married. The Moor then becomes the obstacle that stands between them offering her a choice: "wilt thou be mine?' in a hurried voice whispered the Moor in her ear. 'and none then shall oppose thee'" (p.136). The Moor is like the snake in the Garden of Eden offering Eve (Victoria) a choice. Brewster compares this part of *Zofloya* to Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Satan's question – is man supreme if he must give up his happiness for right and wrong?[56] There is something seductive in the whisper, ear and the promise of anything she wants. However, Victoria hesitates; this could be due to the taboo of an interracial relationship, or she may doubt the ability of a servant to fulfil this promise. He repeats his question in a louder voice and is more specific – "and the marriage shall not be!" (p.136). This is her ultimate desire and what Zofloya will use to bind her to him. In the rest of the dream, we see Lilla as a pale spectre and Berenza on the floor covered in blood, pre-figuring what will happen later. Satan is establishing a series of events and asking Victoria to be complicit in their execution. Victoria's hesitation is not because she is appalled at the thought of murder but because she questions the success of the plan. Her own selfish desires blind her to the destruction she is causing and to the ultimate consequences for her own life, as Satan will exact the ultimate punishment.

---

[54] Burley, *The Death of Zofloya,* p.203.
[55] David Crandell 'Monostatos, The Moor', *Brigham Young University Studies* 43:3 (2004), 170-179, p.172.
[56] Glen Brewster, 'Monstrous Philosophy: Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya, or The Moor* and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*' *Literature Compass*, 8:9 (2011), 609-619, p.615.

Satan in the guise of Zofloya draws Victoria to him by manipulating her emotions and getting her to confess her darkest desires. The Bible states in 2 Corinthians 11:14 that the devil will appear as an angel of light to deceive and manipulate humanity. Without knowledge and education, men and women could easily be deceived. Victoria's desires are described as a disturbing secret that she has kept hidden, a poisonous, corrosive worm. At first, she is appalled, "She was now on the point of betraying her inmost thoughts, her dearest wishes, her dark repinings, and hopeless desires; of betraying them too, to an inferior and an infidel!" (p.149). This is Victoria's pride and sense of superiority asserting themselves, as opposed to any insight or knowledge of his character. She still thinks of him as a servant and a Muslim and therefore beneath her in every way. As Hoeveler points out, she is a white sexual predator who has pursued not one but two men and is about to collude with a foreign, Black servant.[57] When Victoria looks at him her opinion changes: "he appeared not only the superior of his race, but of a superior order of beings" (p.149). Nothing in Zofloya's status or appearance has changed, only Victoria's opinion of him, and this is because she involuntarily says his name, suggesting a desire that is beneath the level of conscious understanding. He asks her not to judge him based on his appearance: "Does the Signora believe, then, that the Moor Zofloya has a heart dark as his countenance?" (p.151). Dark suggests evil intent, but his skin colour also sets him apart as different, foreign and something to fear. The narrator explains that his voice dispels any uneasiness Victoria feels. Previously Zofloya has invaded her dreams to encourage her to recognise her deepest desires; now he influences her waking thoughts to elicit a confession and bring her closer to him. Victoria's senses have been deceived and she does not have the knowledge or experience to recognise the deception. This idea of superiority satisfies her pride and makes him worthy to hear her confession of desire for

[57] Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism*, p.149.

Henriquez. The irony is that this master-servant relationship is beginning to shift with Zofloya gaining more power and influence over her mind.

Brewster states Victoria extends Eve's reasoning in Milton's *Paradise Lost* by suggesting that freedom is about fulfilling her desires. This allows Zofloya to convince Victoria that she should not submit to any authority but her own.[58] The irony is that Zofloya's words are designed to entrap Victoria and bring her under his authority. He points out she is Catholic and already married, to which she responds that for Henriquez "I would forfeit my hopes of heaven!" (p.149). His smile at her sacrificial confession promotes an adverse reaction: "I perceive I have condescended too far" (p.149). She still sees Zofloya as a servant and wants to reassert her position. As Brewster suggests, Satan wants to convince Victoria that she is justified in seeking fulfilment of her own desires: "'It is not that you hesitate,' in an accent half disdainful, returned the Moor; 'and why should you hesitate? He had no hesitation in sacrificing to himself your young and beautiful person, for his gratification" (p.155). Victoria has previously argued that Berenza was selfish in taking advantage of her youth and vulnerability, and therefore Satan is using her own argument to manipulate her. The sincerity of his words are undercut by the "half disdainful" tone of his words. Victoria's hesitation implies that deep down she still has an element of conscience and perhaps murder is too extreme to countenance. Her many failings up to this point, which can be accounted for if not excused by circumstances, have not taken her to the brink of damnation, but such illicit desires will. Satan, as Zofloya, questions whether she would subjugate herself to a confessor. Although Venice is a Catholic state Satan is appealing to her pride by suggesting Victoria is allowing someone else to control her life. From a moral standpoint, Dacre is showing how Satan uses our own weaknesses against us to manipulate individuals into committing vice. In

[58] Brewster, 'Monstrous Philosophy', pp.614-15.

the case of Victoria, she falls prey to his manipulation due to her proud and haughty nature, her sense of superiority and her selfish desires.

From the specifics of Victoria's situation, Dacre has Satan question the broader implications and restrictive nature of right and wrong. Zofloya asks "what is the boasted supremacy of man, if, eternally, he must yield his happiness to the paltry suggestions of scholastic terms, or the pompous definitions of right and wrong? His reasoning mind, then, is given him only for his torment, and to wage war against his happiness" (p.155). Satan is suggesting man does not have free will if he is bound by the rules of right and wrong set by society. In a similar vein, Hume argues that right and wrong have no foundation in nature and that virtue and vice are either based on self-interest or the prejudice of education.[59] Satan suggests that the self is predominant in nature and it is individuals who make themselves subject to a confessor. Hume went on to state that virtue and vice were not discernible by reason or comparison and the difference is distinguished through impressions of pleasure or pain.[60] This presents a subjective purely secular view of right and wrong letting the individual decide. In common with Adam Smith, Hume pointed to the idea that sympathy is essential to our capacity to approve or disapprove of the character's actions as being moral or not. The capacity to make moral judgments plays a role in supporting community bonds.[61] This extends Satan's argument from individual morality, to the responsibility for wider society and it could be argued that this is where the overarching rules are applied, not to restrict individual choice but to protect the wider community. Moral rules or guidelines are therefore introduced precisely to stop extreme acts of violence, or waging war against one another. Victoria accepts "the cool deliberateness of his manner, in expressing his sentiments," and this induces

[59] David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Understanding,* p.346.
[60] Hume, *A Treatise on Human Understanding,* p.522-3.
[61] Sayer McCord, 'Hume and Smith on Sympathy, Approbation and Moral Judgement,' *Social Philosophy and Policy,* 30:1-2 (2013), 208-236 (p.209).

"Victoria to believe that they were the result of conviction, deducted from accurate reflection, and the having given to the subject the rational consideration of a towering and superior mind, rather than the cruel or forced constructions of the moment" (p.156). Deliberation, reflection, consideration and conviction all suggest this is a reasoned approach expressed without passion or emotion. This gives his words a greater validity and exposes the appearance of rational consideration which can be used to manipulate the uncritical mind. Victoria is correct in seeing Satan as a superior mind, as he uses her selfish desires to convince Victoria her life is worth more than Berenza's. She does not display the sympathy advocated by Smith and Hume to judge if her actions would be considered moral or not. A moral education may have helped her recognise that murder is not acceptable and her mother's example should have alerted her to the act that no good can come from committing infidelity.

Victoria now realises how little power she has and that the balance of power has shifted, the master-servant relationship reversed. This lack of control makes her feel vulnerable, as she realises "that she was no longer mistress over herself or her faculties. – Chill horror took possession of her, […] seeming subject as it were to an unknown power, and unable to resist" (p.232). The chill of realisation represents the fears of white society that they will lose control and that the proper social and racial order will break down. This is when Zofloya suggests to Victoria that they should run away into the mountains to escape the law. Thus, the servant suggests to the master that they be removed to a more isolated location, signalling a power shift.[62] He is positioned against the backdrop of the violence of nature: "Amidst these awful horrors, with folded arms and majestic air, stationed nearly opposite to her stood the towering Zofloya" (p.233). Zofloya is now in control as symbolised by his towering presence over Victoria who is lying on the earth. Victoria is not only subdued physically, but emotionally as she surrenders to a superior being and anxiety gives way to

[62] Burley, 'The Death of Zofloya', p.202.

awe: “For the first time she felt towards him an emotion of tenderness blended with her admiration […] she experienced something like pride, in reflecting, that a Being so wonderful, so superior, and so beautiful, should thus appear to be interested in her fate” (p.233). Victoria now sees Zofloya against the backdrop of the sublime terror of nature and seeks refuge with the proud figure of the Moor.[63] She is admitting to herself that Zofloya is in control, and when she meets the banditti that authority is acknowledged publicly. Zofloya explains: “The Signora is not my wife […] neither is she my mistress – she will be mine, however, for we are linked by indissoluble bands” (p.239). By emphasising the fact that Victoria is not his wife or his mistress he is showing he does not need to possess her body as he has possession of her mind through her desires. He refers to an agreement that is beyond the physical body and cannot even be broken in death. She has effectively sold her soul to the devil becoming his servant and relinquishing control over her own life.

When Zofloya leaves her to go on an excursion with the banditti, Victoria reflects on her life, still blaming her mother for her misfortune, taking no personal responsibility: “‘do I repent me of that which I have done? No, – I regret only the state in which circumstances have reduced me’” (p.246) When she is allowed to change, she rejects it. Victoria dreams of an angel who has come to warn her “because it is the first, for many years, in which a spark of repentance hath visited thy guilt benighted soul – The Almighty who wishes to save his creatures from destruction, permits that I appear before thee – If thou wilt forsake even yet, the dark thorny path of sin, if thou wilt endeavour, by thy future life, to make amends for the terrible list of the past, yet shalt thou be saved; above all, thou must fly the Moor Zofloya, who is not what he seems” (p.247). The angel is giving Victoria a way out, a chance to do the right thing in the future, just as the Marchese asked Laurina to lead a better life as an example

[63] Beatriz Gonzalez Moreno, ‘Gothic Excess and Aesthetic Ambiguity in Charlotte Dacre’s *Zofloya*’, *Women’s Writing*, 143, (2007), 419-434, (p.430).

to Victoria. However, like Laurina she appears incapable of doing this, inhibited paradoxically by the emotion that has hitherto failed to steer her right, shame: “She felt ashamed to yield observance to a dream […] ‘I will not yield thus to a vision – a frolic of the fancy, let loose when the senses slumber – and for that to quit Zofloya’” (p.248). She dismisses this dread as unreal superstition. She also has a misplaced loyalty towards Zofloya because he has given her what she wanted, even though the seraph reveals to her the monstrous nature of Zofloya. When he appears her thoughts become confused and there is an element of fear, suggesting something is unsettling about the Moor but hearing his harmonious voice and flattering attention causes her to ignore these feelings. This is how Zofloya binds Victoria to him, making her feel dependent and that he is her only escape from justice. Victoria’s refusal to take personal responsibility for her actions and admit blame blinds her to any redemptive action and seals her fate. Dacre has shown that even for the most wicked actions, there is the possibility of redemption, but it must be an active choice.

After Victoria has dismissed the warning of the angel and refused to abandon Zofloya or change her ways the reader is presented with Leonardo’s compassion for his mother. As the only character willing to admit her mistakes she appears to be the only one worthy of forgiveness: “Speak! – speak to thy poor mother, Victoria,’ cried the superior soul’d Leonardo – ‘hast thou been in thine own conduct so faultless, and so pure, that thou should’st deny to thy mother the assurance of love and pardon in an hour like this?” (p.257-8). Leonardo refers to his “poor mother” and he is called “superior soul’d” as he considers the feelings of someone other than himself. He challenges Victoria about her own conduct not being above reproach and therefore she should not deny forgiveness to her mother. Victoria’s response is still to blame Laurina: “’Tis thou who hast caused my ruin; on thy head, therefore, will my sins be numbered. – Can I – oh can I reflect upon my deeds of horror, without arraigning thee as the primary cause? Thou taughtest me to give the reins to lawless passion” (p.258). She has

previously stated that she feels no regret for what she has done and therefore takes no responsibility. After her mother's death, Leonardo states, "thy base mind was naturally evil; – a mother's example might have checked thy depravity but could never have rendered thee virtuous!" (p.259). Leonardo here tends towards Hobbes's view that people are driven purely by self-interest.[64] What drives mankind to oppose one another according to Hobbes are feelings of indignation, jealousy, vainglory and cruelty. His remedy is to employ the social passions of benevolence, kindness and pity.[65] The idea that Victoria could never be virtuous as she is too self-centred in her thinking would suggest her character was established at birth and she was incapable of benevolence and change.

Hume stated that morality was not a matter of reason, as virtue and vice are not matters of fact. Murder contains certain passions, motives, violations and thoughts that are external to the object. When reflecting on the matter we develop a feeling of unease or disapproval and this sentiment we call blame.[66] As Hume points out, vice is not a matter of reason, and in *Zofloya* it is motivated by Victoria's innate selfish desire for pleasure, and her lack of reflection is demonstrated by her unwillingness to take personal responsibility and accept the blame for her actions. The reader may agree with Victoria that her mother has set a bad example and neglected her education, but her willingness to acknowledge her mistake and ask her children's forgiveness shows humility and remorse along with taking personal responsibility for her actions. This would leave the reader with an agreeable impression which Hume refers to as virtuous. In contrast, Victoria does not regret what she has done, blames her mother and stubbornly refuses to forgive her. By using different characters' opinions, Dacre advances different reasons why Victoria behaves the way she does. Her father trusts in the

[64] Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.86.
[65] Gross, *Secret History of Emotions*, p.48.
[66] Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature,* p.520.

power of education and a change in her social environment to correct her bad habits; Victoria blames her mother's bad example; and Leonardo states she is evil from birth. The novel stages a debate about the origins of evil but blurs the nature-nurture question, and even the issue of whether evil is an internal state or a set of actions prompted by an external agent. By refusing to let Victoria succumb to redemption, her refusal to take personal responsibility and her lack of compassion for her mother, Leonardo's assertion that she is inherently and ineluctably evil would appear most correct. However, the narrator's last words ask the question of whether these crimes are the result of the devil's influence or due to some other reason. The narrator ends with the statement: "Either we must suppose that the love of evil is born within us (which would be an insult to the Deity), or we must attribute them (as appears more constant with reason) to the suggestion of infernal influence" (p.268). By suggesting all humans are born without the love of evil, and that instinct tends towards benevolence and virtue, the narrator is excluding the doctrine of original sin and the creation of an unredeemable character would undermine this idea. Demonic influence along with the example of her mother appears to be just another deflection from taking personal responsibility for her own actions which would correspond with Dacre's aim to produce a moral tale, albeit one that defies a simplistic moral.

Conclusion

The gothic novels of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries introduced readers to a stronger element of fear and a greater sense of evil than their more realistic precursors. Domestic settings which predominated the mainstream of novels from the mid-eighteenth century onwards meant women were defined in terms of their emotional natures.[67] The conduct books set out to define this emotional nature in terms of cultural propriety and self-

[67] Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, p.4.

restraint. Therefore, any attempt to describe a physical form of sexuality that had been repressed or denied creates a division between human nature and cultural identity imposed by society.[68] I have argued the emotional shift towards fear, anxiety, sexual desire and the supernatural forged a community of writers and readers who wanted to explore these topics. Barbara Rosenwein defined these groups which form around common themes as emotional communities; such communities have their own particular values, modes of feeling and ways of expressing those feelings.[69] Gothic writers emphasised fear, anxiety, desire and the supernatural in changing times. Some writers such as Ann Radcliffe took a more conservative approach, showing the triumph of virtue over vice, while others such as Matthew Lewis and Charlotte Dacre chose to portray evil in its fullness, producing stories of damnation. All writers were committed to provoking new emotions in their readers and can be seen as contributors to the creation of an emotional community. As Hans Robert Jauss explains works are not experienced or produced in a vacuum.[70] Gothic writers were aware of each other's work and were obviously influenced by each other. The professional critics, however, generally took a more culturally conservative view, especially in terms of female sexuality and desire.

Dacre had read and admired Lewis and her first novel was dedicated to him. In addition, *Zofloya* was originally published under the pseudonym Rosa Matilda after Lewis's demon character in *The Monk.* Gothic novelists, both male and female, concentrate on horror or terror, transgressing the boundaries of normal, accepted behaviour to highlight the darker psychological feelings provoked by fearful situations. Lewis with his emphasis on German tales of terror, the supernatural and satanic influence was seen as producing revulsion and

---

[68] Amstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, p.12.
[69] Barbara Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling: A History of Emotions 600-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p.29.
[70] Hans Robert Jauss, 'Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory,' *New Literary History*, 2:1 (1970), 7-37, (p.12).

horror and was labelled male gothic. Ellen Moers first coined the term Female Gothic in *Literary Women* in reference to women authors and the psychological gothic associated with Ann Radcliffe and her absent mothers and threatening villains.[71] Smith and Wallace defined female gothic as an expression of women's fear of entrapment within the domestic space.[72] Gothic villains abduct and confine orphaned daughters in castles, towers and convents to exclude them from the world or subject them to sexual violence. Shajirat goes further arguing the young heroine's development comes from the disruption and danger of the real world where men in positions of power threaten the heroine's autonomy and integrity with sexual violence. She states horror is not located in the supernatural but in a world where men subjugate women[73] As the heroine-villain of *Zofloya*, Victoria does not fit neatly into either the male or female gothic category. Dacre's largely female-centred novel suggests female gothic, but her violent passion links her to the male gothic, although as Ann Jones points out her descriptions are less gruesome than Lewis's and are always related to the plot and theme.[74] Like Lewis, she uses a corrupted protagonist to "create a feeling of affect in its readers."[75] Alan Sinfield refers to any challenges to the dominant ideology as faultlines which highlight unresolved issues to plausibility, such as female sexuality.[76] To resolve these issues the dominant ideology must reassert its claim to plausibility.[77] Dacre, I have argued, wanted her readers to think beyond conventional female stereotypes. *Zofloya* reflects this by condemning the selfish desires of Victoria, valuing the mother within the family and acknowledging the racial other in both class and culture. This leads to positive values being attached to benevolence and kindness to promote harmony in society, compared to jealousy

---

[71] Ellen Moers, *Literary Women,* p.90-91.
[72] Andrew Smith and Diana Wallace, 'The Female Gothic, Then and Now', *Gothic Studies,* 6:1 (2004), 1-7, p.1.
[73] Anna Shajirat '"Bending her Head to Gentle Swift Decay": Horror, Loss and Fantasy in the Female Gothic of Ann Radcliffe and Regina Maria Roche', *Studies in Romanticism* 58:3 (2009), 383-412, p.383.
[74] Jones, *Ideas and Innovations*, p.240.
[75] Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), p.6.
[76] Alan Sinfield, Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and Political Dissent in Reading (Berkley: University of California Press, 1992), p.47.
[77] Sinfield, p.41.

and cruelty which foster violence, and create an emotional community. Gothic writers moved away from the realist tradition to apply the techniques of sentimental virtue in distress to deviant behaviour. This fostered emotions of horror and disgust as readers reacted to the actions and reactions of the characters.

Robert Mayo states that between 1770 and 1820 fiction was found in one-third of all periodicals and between 1796 and 1806 one-third of all those novels were gothic. In 1798 *The Ladies Monthly Museum* was forced to curtail the amount of gothic romance published after attacks by an outraged minority of its reading audience.[78] In an early review, of *Zofloya,* William Nicholson describes Victoria as having a "vicious affection" and a "diabolical temper." He blames her for her situation but argues this is not a moral tale, or at least fails to be convincing as one. The article states it is insufficient to detail events, but must draw cause and effect, and establish motives and principles.[79] To dismiss the novel as not a moral tale ignores the narrator's opening comments along with the overwhelming influence of her mother's behaviour and Victoria's own selfish desire as the driving motivation behind her actions which are manipulated and controlled by Zofloya.

Other early critics focussed on the inappropriate subject matter of female sexuality and drew unfavourable comparisons with Lewis's *The Monk*. *The Monthly Review* described it as "void of merit, so destitute of delicacy, displaying such disgusting depravity of morals, as the present. It is a humble, very humble imitation of the Monk".[80] By portraying Victoria as a woman of passion with little self-control over those desires, the reviewer alleges, *Zofloya* goes against the cultural view of women as docile and submissive. Therefore, she appears depraved and out of control. Victoria is the female equivalent of Ambrosio in *The Monk*,

[78] Robert D Mayo 'Romance in the Magazines' *PMLA* 65:5 (1950), 762-789, p.766.
[79] William Nicholson, 'Zofloya, or The Moor', *General Review of British and Foreign Literature,* 1:6 (June 1806).
[80] Quoted in Charlotte Dacre, *Zofloya*, ed. Adriana Craciun (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1997) p.261.

seduced by evil into believing that she can have whatever she desires. The crucial difference between the two books is that Victoria's aristocratic desires are indulged from birth, but Ambrosio's life is one of repression and discipline. *The Annual Review* goes even further, not only attacking the language used but Dacre as a female author. It states "there is a voluptuousness of language and allusion, pervading these volumes, which we should have hoped, that the delicacy of the female pen would have refused to trace; and there is an exhibition of wantonness of harlotry, which we should have hoped, that the delicacy of a female mind, would have been shocked to imagine."[81] The idea that Victoria is happy to be Berenza's mistress and Laurina would leave a happy marriage for another man undermines the stability of the family unit on which a stable society is built. The implication is that Dacre should not be able to imagine female sexual desire, and by writing about it she is somehow tainted by this shocking behaviour.

In addition, *The Monthly Review* argues that "the greatest number of the characters are so depraved, as to excite no other sentiment but disgust; […] but three that can be called good, […] Lorendini, Henriquez and Lilla."[82] Interestingly, the critic has chosen the characters that most closely resemble the culturally prescribed norms for social behaviour. Lorendini is the loyal forgiving husband, Henriquez the dedicated suitor, and Lilla the subservient female. All of them die upholding the values of loyalty, obedience, and self-restraint. Hutcheson refers to disgust as something which falls below expectations.[83] Eighteenth-century expectations for women would include chastity and modesty, attributes which Victoria does not confirm. The critic reserves his disgust for those characters that pursue their own desires such as Ardolph and Victoria, but equally makes no distinction

[81] Quoted in *Zofloya*, ed. Craciun, p.262.
[82] Quoted in *Zofloya*, ed. Craciun, p.261.
[83] Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections* (1756) ed. Aaron Garrett, (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2002), p.85.

between the more compassionate Henriquez and repentant Laurina. Agreeing with Henriquez's assessment of Victoria's character the critic argues "the supernatural agent is totally useless, as the mind of Victoria, whom Satan, under the form of Zofloya, comes to tempt, is sufficiently black and depraved naturally, to need no temptation to commit the horrible crimes she perpetrates."[84] This chapter by contrast has argued that the novel is more ambiguous on this question of the source of Victoria's wickedness, as well as its point of no return, and that instead merely of depicting the descent of an inherently vicious woman, *Zofloya* explores the emotional and moral logic of a misguided upbringing, unjust social system, and psychological condition of unrestrained desire. The critic suggests that Satan merely encourages and supports Victoria's desires but does not initiate them. Victoria's desires have been encouraged by her parents over a long period of time and this has made her self-centred and unscrupulous. With the link between imagination and appetite, it was alleged that reading works such as *Zofloya* could lead to destructive and anti-social desires: that the bad example it ostensibly warns against, could be embodied by the book itself.[85] Kilgour argues the gothic novel sought to resurrect supernatural forces as a rebellion of the imagination over reason.[86] This produced a critical backlash; Victoria is described as having a vivid imagination which not only colours but distorts her outlook. The concern was that this separation from reality may extend to the reader and the warnings in the text may be lost.

The Library Journal takes a graphic view of the corruption that can result from an overactive imagination. Referring to Dacre it states: "ladies of her description may be, and very often are, imposed upon. The reason is that unfortunately, they have the seeds of nonsense, bad taste, and ridiculous fancies early sown in their minds. These having come to maturity, render the brain putrid and corrupt, and the consequence is the formation of millions

[84] Quoted in *Zofloya*, ed. Craciun, p.261.
[85] Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*, p.7.
[86] Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*, p.3.

of the strangest maggots that one can conceive. [..] that our fair authoress is afflicted with this dismal malady of maggots in the brain is, alas, but too apparent."[87] The review tends to align Dacre as the author with Victoria as a character, both mentally disturbed. This is reducing female desire and imagination to a disease rather than admitting women have the same natural desires as men. This is supported by Bienville's medical treatise that states the imagination is the source of sexual pleasure and disorder. For him, the brain and the imagination worked together, and he rejected the idea of a mechanical nervous system.[88] Although Dacre does highlight the eighteenth-century fear of madness through unconscious dreams, she uses it as a portent of things to come and a reflection of Victoria's dark psyche. Madness is about loss of control and one of the issues Dacre highlights, is Victoria's failure to take personal responsibility for her own actions and to try and constantly shift the blame onto her mother.

The General Review of British and Foreign Literature did not see a future for the novel, stating "if the plot had been more original, we doubt not that this novel would have obtained a higher rank in the public estimation than it is now likely to acquire."[89] Yet the novel sold 754 printed copies in six months, was published in two editions, translated into French, and inspired a chapbook version called *The Demon of Venice* printed in 1810. Along with its early reception, it is credited as the inspiration for Percy Bysshe Shelley's novel *Zastrozzi* (1810), and although the Marquis de Sade did not comment on the novel directly, he made the point that it is not always the triumph of virtue that wins over the reader.[90] Despite the critics, Dacre's novel was popular and read by critics and contemporaries alike.

The narrator at the beginning of *Zofloya* invites readers not simply to consume the novel as a work of fiction but to think about cause and effect: "The historian who would wish

[87] Quoted in *Zofloya*, ed. Craciun, p.265.
[88] Craciun, *Fatal Women of Romanticism*, p.120.
[89] Quoted in *Zofloya*, ed. Craciun, p.263.
[90] The Marquis de Sade, *The Crimes of Love: Heroic and Tragic Tales, Preceded by an Essay on Novels*, ed. and trans. David Coward (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p.11.

his lessons to sink deep into the heart, thereby essaying to render mankind virtuous and more happy, must not content himself with simply detailing a series of events – he must ascertain causes, and follow progressively their effects" (p.1). Dacre wants the reader to look at what happens to Victoria, her motives and her faults, and to experience degrees of sympathy and revulsion by turns, to come to a judgment about her conduct. The Marquis de Sade speaks of painting crime in the most "hellish colours" to provoke a reaction in the reader of hate and fear, but there was clearly a widespread fear that to depict evil was to promote it, especially so for a female author and one presenting a wicked woman.[91] Although Dacre offers Victoria the opportunity of redemption, she rejects it out of pride and conceit, thus her punishment is sealed. This adds an element of personal choice to the novel, based on lived experience, which includes giving in to the devil's temptation. The critics claim *Zofloya* has no pretensions to be a moral tale, but it is not a conduct book and instead aims to show the selfish, destructive side of human nature and the requirement for everyone to exercise personal responsibility.

Female protagonists were not uncommon in gothic novels, following the example of Ann Radcliffe, but they were usually victims of a male antagonist. By contrast, Dacre puts a female protagonist with an aggressive, selfish, unrestrained will at the centre of her novel, even having her commit murder in pursuit of her aims. Like Lewis' *The Monk*, which Dacre greatly admired, this novel reinforced society's fears regarding unrestrained female desire. Also, like *The Monk,* Dacre's novel resurrects a spiritual element by giving the devil a profound influence over the protagonist's unconscious thoughts and dreams. This suggests a moral message; a lack of restraint over our own desires leaves the door open to corrupting spiritual influences, which may further entrap individuals in a cycle of immoral actions. Victoria's descent into evil, aided by Zofloya, represents the dangers of unchecked passion

[91] Marquis de Sade, *The Crimes of Love,* p.20.

and the consequences of ignoring moral and societal boundaries. Dacre thus uses the supernatural not just as a plot device but as a means of emphasising the internal and external struggles faced by a woman who defies the expected virtues of her gender. Through this, Zofloya explores the dark potential of female agency when it is untethered from the moral constraints imposed by society.

Thesis Conclusion

This thesis has demonstrated that emotions and their control are central to the late eighteenth-century gothic novel, serving as both the driving force behind the genre's most dramatic plots and the lens through which broader cultural concerns are examined. By analysing *The Monk, The Italian, The Old Manor House, The Children of the Abbey* and *Zofloya*, my research has shown that the gothic literature of the late eighteenth century was not merely a vehicle for entertainment but also a crucial medium for engaging with contemporary theories of emotion. These novels reflect and interrogate the era's evolving ideas about sensibility, emotional regulation and psychological health, offering insights into how popular writers disseminate and grapple with Enlightenment and Romantic understandings of human affect. The gothic's exploration of emotional extremes, the interplay between reason and passion and the consequences of emotional repression underscores its importance in articulating and testing societal anxieties about the role of emotion in a rapidly changing world.

Emotion is an essential unifying element in gothic novels of this period. This is not just the distinction between psychological terror and horror (Radcliffe and Lewis) highlighted by early critics, but the resilience and righteous indignation of the heroines, the impulsive nature of the hero and the need for restraint. I have used Hutcheson's theory of man's innate goodness to show how positive emotions such as benevolence and empathy are contrasted with pride, selfishness and vanity, reinforcing the transition from the old hierarchical system to a new merit-based individualism. These new values establish a new emotional community, as outlined by Rosenwein and highlight the emotional conflict between the old and new that brings emotional suffering suggested by Reddy through goal conflict. When these ideas are applied to the lesser-known works highlighted by feminist critics like Diane Long Hoeveler it

reinforces the argument that these books deserve greater recognition and that gothic emotions are not limited to fear and distress.

The Monk -demonstrates the most fantastical elements of the gothic, drawing on German folk traditions to create what Ann Radcliffe called gothic horror, in contrast to her more psychological gothic terror. However, both types of novel include vulnerable female heroines subjected to the terror of confinement and persecution, eliciting the reader's sympathy. These heroines conform to the standards established in the conduct books for a "proper lady": where Radcliffe differs from Lewis is that her heroine pushes the boundaries of individuality and independence, although never crossing the line into male dominance. The women who deviate from the standard of purity are labelled as monstrous and demonic, encouraging the reader to condemn them and view any punishment as justice. Meanwhile, Smith and Roche, while adopting some of Radliffe's heroines' attitudes, deviate from her by not embracing the anti-Catholic, demonic theme but instead adopting a class-based political critique. Mrs Rayland becomes the controlling matriarch in Smith's work, becoming just as much a victim of those around her as the hero and heroine, therefore, drawing a certain amount of sympathy from the reader. For Smith, it is about the fight against the unjust system rather than an individual. Whereas Lewis and Radcliffe show the difference in values between traditional, repressive Catholic institutions and the needs and desires of the younger generation, Smith and Roche draw a distinction between the older nobility and the younger generation to show how values are changing. With *Zofloya* Dacre turns the gothic back to Lewis' dark spiritual nature by invoking Hobbes' ideas that mankind is naturally selfish and competitive, even resorting to murder to achieve their goals. By going beyond Radcliffe's positive portrayal of female characters as having intelligence and agency, to portray a female character who is not just empowered but deeply corrupt and morally compromised. Dacre suggests the limits of female autonomy in gothic fiction. Victoria's ambition, driven by a

combination of suppressed desires and societal repression, leads her to embrace an unchecked will that ultimately makes her a villain rather than a victim.

All the authors discussed in this thesis draw on the emotions of fear, anxiety, pride, sympathy and desire to drive the story forward. Reason is used to dismiss, explain or ridicule superstition which is associated with ignorance and a lack of education. This in turn feeds into eighteenth-century discussions around education by Wollstonecraft, Hume and Locke. Traditionally education for women was not intended to promote independence but to make women better wives and mothers to equip the next generation. The importance of the mother's example is particularly prominent in Dacre's *Zofloya.* None of the authors attempts to undermine the hierarchy by suggesting women should be fully independent, and all reward the righteous with marriage as an ultimate refuge from their suffering.

The gothic builds on the domestic realist novel and sentimental fiction by adding an element of Burke's sublime to Rousseau's pastoral landscape. The domestic settings become the dark dungeons of the Inquisition, the legalistic abbeys and convents who repress emotions rather than teach restraint. They become places of confinement and fear ruled by tyranny and strict adherence to the rules which promotes suffering and loss. Inheritance is usurped and needs to be challenged to restore ownership to the rightful owners. Meanwhile, the gothic embraces male sentiment but also highlights how unchecked male emotion can be dangerous, exploring the suffering caused both to the individual and to others around them by jealousy and an impetuous nature. Villains not only cause distress to the heroine, but they display cunning and manipulation to engineer circumstances that will lead to shame and disgrace. By highlighting male emotion in these novels, my work expands our understanding of these novels and shows how excess sensibility can undermine the hero's position and allow the villain greater influence.

In my discussion of the novels, I have also shown that not all characters are portrayed as being black and white in their morality. Even characters like Ambrosio and Victoria, who ultimately prove irredeemable, are at least potentially subjects for the reader's empathy, as their authors explore the ways in which their wicked behaviour has been shaped by both internal and external forces. Both characters are products of their environments—Ambrosio, raised in the repressive confines of a monastery, and Victoria, subjected to societal pressures and gendered familial expectations. Their moral corruption is not presented as purely innate but as the result of a combination of personal choices, external influences and suppressed emotions. By humanising these figures and exploring their psychological and emotional struggles, the authors invite readers to reflect on the complexities of living a moral life within a changing society in which individual desire often came into conflict with emotional regimes that sought to control or stifle natural impulses. Society's expectations can be drawn from the historical context, recognising the tension between the traditional values of the nation expounded by Burke and the more revolutionary ideas of Paine. Although marrying for money at this time was frowned upon there were still ideas of status associated with wealth and position which promoted jealousy and discrimination.

Overall, this thesis has shown how these novels explore the more distressing emotions such as fear, anxiety, shame, jealousy, cunning and lack of restraint, but also promote a series of more positive ones—compassion, benevolence, respect, empathy—to provoke sympathy and understanding within the readership. This sympathy binds both the author and the reader in an emotional community. Through narratives of intense psychological and emotional turmoil, gothic fiction not only reflects the anxieties of the period—particularly surrounding issues of gender, power and morality—but also a means for readers to interrogate their own emotional responses and understand the role emotions play in navigating both personal identity and social conformity. In presenting exaggerated emotional extremes, these works

encourage readers to recognise the potential for both destructive and redemptive power within their own feelings, urging a deeper awareness of the forces that drive both individual and collective behaviour and contributing to a broader cultural conversation about the regulation and expression of emotion in both personal and public life.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Allen, Charles, *The Polite Lady or a Course in Female Education in a Series of Letters* (London: Thomas Canan, 1785).

Analytical Review, 16:5, (1793), 60-63.
Analytical Review, 24:7 (1796) 403-4.
Analytical Review, 25:5 (1797), 516-20.

Astell, Mary, *Some Reflections upon Marriage*, 4th ed. (London: William Parker, 1730).

Barbauld, Anna Laetitia, *On the Origin and Progress of Novel Writing* (London: F. C. & J. Rivington, 1820).

British Critic, 10:9 (1797), 266-270.

Burke, Edmund, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), ed. David Wormersley (London: Penguin Books, 1998).

Burke, Edmund, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), ed. Conor Cruise O'Brien (London: Penguin Books, 1986).

Critical Review, 8:5, (1793), 44-54.
Critical Review, 19:2 (1797), 194-200.
Critical Review, 23:6 (1798), 166-69 (p.166).

Dacre, Charlotte, *Zofloya* (1806), ed. Kim Ian Michasiw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Drake, Nathan, *Literary Hours or Sketches Critical and Narrative* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1798).

Dunlop, John, *The History of Fiction, Volume III* (Edinburgh: James Ballantyne and Co., 1814).

European Magazine and London Review, 31:1 (1797).
European Review, 31:2 (1797) 111-115.

Fielding, Henry, 'An Essay on the Character of Men' (1740), in *The Works of Henry Fielding*, 10 vols, ed. Leslie Stephen (London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1882), vol. 6.

Hutcheson, Francis, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections* (1756), ed. Aaron Garett (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2002).

Hume, David, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1739), ed. Peter Millican (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Hume, David, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40), ed. Earnest Mossner (London: Penguin Classics, 1985).

Lady's Monthly Museum, 1;10 (1798), 258-63.
Lady's Monthly Museum, 1:10 (1798), 434-37.

Lewis, Matthew *The Monk* (1796), ed. Emma McEvoy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

Locke, John, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), ed. Pauline Phemister (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Locke, John, *On Education* (1693), ed. Peter Gay (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964).

Monthly Magazine, 4:21 (1797-8), pp.102-4.

Monthly Review, 11;6, (1793), 150-53,
Monthly Review, 22 (1797), 282-84.

Monthly Mirror (1797), quoted in *The Critical Response to Ann Radcliffe*, ed. Deborah D. Rogers (London: Greenwood Press, 1994), p.53-54.

More, Hannah, *Essays on Various Subjects, Principally Designed for Young Ladies* (London: T Caldwell, 1785).

Rousseau, Jean Jaques, *Emile* (1762), trans. and ed. Barbara Foxley (London: J. M. Dent & Son, 1957).

Scots Magazine, 64:7 (1802), 545-548.

Scott, Sir Walter, 'Preface', in *The Novels of Mrs Ann Radcliffe* (London: Hunt, Robinson & Co, Printed by James Ballantyne and Company, 1824).

Scott, Sir Walter, *Miscellaneous Prose Works* (Edinburgh: Cadell, 1834).

Smith, Adam, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759; London: George Bell & Sons, 1802).

Smith, Charlotte, *The Old Manor House* (1793), ed. Jaqueline M. Labbe (Peterborough: Broadview, 2002).

Taylor, Kenneth Matheson, *The Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis*, (London: Henry Colburn, 1889)

Universal Magazine, 'On the Literary Pretensions of Mrs Bennett, Ann Radcliffe and Charlotte Smith', 11:66 (1809), 394-97.

Wilkes, William, *A Letter of Genteel and Moral Advice to a Young Lady* (Dublin, E Jones, 1740).

Wollstonecraft, Mary, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, An Historical and Moral View of the French Revolution* (1792), ed. Janet Todd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Secondary Sources

Airey, Jennifer, '"He bears no rival near the throne": Male Narcissism and Early Feminism in the Works of Charlotte Dacre', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 30:2 (2017), 223-41.

Andnova-Kalapsazova, 'Emotional Vocabulary and the Reconceptualisation of Emotions in Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian, or the Confessional of the Black Penitents*', *English Studies at NBU*, 5:1 (2009), 40-58.

Anolik, Ruth Bienstock, *Property and Power in English Gothic Literature* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2016).

Armstrong, Nancy, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

Armstrong, Nancy, *How Novels Think: The Limits of Individualism 1719-1900* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

Austen, Jane, *Emma* (1816), ed. Fiona Stafford (London: Penguin, 1996).

Backscheider, Paula, Review of Armstrong, *How Novels Think*, *The Scriblerian and the Kit-Cats*, 41:1, (2008), 49-51.

Baldick, Chris and Mighall, Robert, 'Gothic Criticism', in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, ed. David Punter (Oxford: Blackwell, 2012).

Barclay, Kate, *Sources for the History of Emotions: A Guide* (London: Routledge, 2020).

Barker-Benfield, G. J., *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

Barlaskar, Reema, 'Maternal Femininity: Masquerade and the Sacrificial Body in Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya, or the Moor*', *Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Stories*, 18 (2020), 30-46.

Bender, John, *Imagining the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

Benedict, Barbara, *Framing Feeling: Sentiment and Style in English Prose Fiction 1754-1800* (New York: AMS Press, 1994).

Blakemore, Steven, 'Matthew Lewis's Black Mass: Sexual, Religious Inversion in *The Monk*', *Studies in the Novel*, 30:4 (1998), 521-39.

Bobker, Danielle, *The Closet: The Eighteenth-Century Architecture of Intimacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020).

Bowers, Toni, *Force Or Fraud: British Seduction Stories and the Problem of Resistance, 1660-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Bragues, George, 'Business is One Thing, Ethics is Another: Revisiting Bernard Mandeville's *The Fable of the Bees*', *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 15:2 (2005), 179-203.

Brewster, Glen, 'Monstrous Philosophy: Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya, or The Moor* and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*', *Literature Compass*, 8:9 (2011), 609-19.

Brissenden, R. F., *Virtue in Distress: Studies in the Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1974).

Brooks, Peter, 'Virtue and Terror: *The Monk*', *ELH*, 40:2 (1973), 249-363.

Burley, Stephanie, 'The Death of Zofloya; or, the Moor as Epistemological Limit', in *The Gothic Other: Racial and Social Construction in the Literary Imagination*, ed. Ruth Binstock Anolik (London: McFarland & Co., 2004).

Chico, Tita, *Designing Women: The Dressing Room in Eighteenth-Century English Literature and Culture* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2005).

Clark, Henry, 'Conversation and Moderate Virtue in Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*', *The Review of Politics*, 54:2 (1992), 185-210.

Coventry, Angela, 'Mixed Emotions in Life and Art: On Hume's Direct Passions', *Think: Philosophy for Everyone*, 19:55 (2020), 75-83.

Cox, Jeffrey N., 'Ideology and Genre in the British Anti-revolutionary Drama of the 1790s', *ELH*, 58:3 (1991), 579-610.

Craciun, Adrianna, *Fatal Women of Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Crandell, David, 'Monostatos, The Moor', *Brigham Young University Studies*, 43:3 (2004), 170-79.

Darby, Barbara, 'The More Things Change … The *Rules* and Late Eighteenth-Century Books for Women', *Women's Studies*, 29:3 (2000), 333-55.

Dashwood, Rita J. and Lipsedge, Karen, 'Women and Property in the Long Eighteenth Century', *Journal of Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 44 (2021), 335-41.

Davison, Carol Margaret, *Gothic Literature 1764-1824* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009).

Davison, Carol Margaret, 'Getting their Knickers in a Twist: Contesting the 'Female Gothic' in Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*' *Gothic Studies*, 11:1 (2009), 32-45.

Davidson, Jenny, *Hypocrisy and the Politics of Politeness: Manners and Morals from Locke to Austen* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Delaney, James, *Starting with Rousseau* (London Bloomsbury, 2009).

Descartes, René, *The Passions of the Soul* (1649), ed. and trans. Michael Moriarty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Dew, Ben, 'Spurs to Industry in Bernard Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies,* 38 (2005), 151-65.

Dixon, Thomas, *From Passions to Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Dixon, Thomas, *Weeping Britannia: Portrait of a Nation in Tears* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Dunn, James A., 'Charlotte Dacre and the Feminisation of Violence', *Nineteenth-Century Literature,* 53:3 (1988), 307-27.

Durrant, David, 'Ann Radcliffe and the Conservative Gothic', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900,* 22:3 (1982), 519-30.

Dussinger, John, *The Discourse of the Mind in Eighteenth-Century Fiction,* Vol 80, (Netherlands: Walter de Gruyter, 2011).

Ellis, Kate, 'Charlotte Smith's Subversive Gothic', *Feminist Studies,* 3:4 (1976), 51-55.

Elster, Jon, *Alchemies of the Mind: Rationality and the Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Ezell, Margaret J. M., 'John Locke's Images of Childhood: Early Eighteenth-Century Responses to *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*', *Eighteenth-Century Studies,* 17 (1983-84), 139-55.

Felski, Rita, 'Identifying with Characters,' in *Character*, ed. Amanda Anderson, Rita Felski and Toril Moi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019).

Fletcher, Lorraine, *Charlotte Smith: A Critical Biography* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998).

Fong, Benjamin Y., 'Monsters of the Brain, Images of the Deity: Psychology and Religion in the Eighteenth Century', *The Journal of Religion*, 98.4 (2018), 519-40.

Ford, Thomas H., 'Mary Wollstonecraft and the Motherhood of Feminism', *Women's Studies Quarterly,* 37:3/4 (2009), 189-205.

Gallaway, W. F., 'The Conservative Attitude towards Fiction, 1770-1830', *PMLA,* 55:4 (1940), 1041-59.

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Gubar, Susan, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (1979, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020).

Gonda, Caroline, *Reading Daughters' Fictions 1709–1834: Novels and Society from Manley to Edgeworth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Goodrich, Amanda, *Debating England's Aristocracy in the 1790s: Pamphlets, Polemics and Political Ideas* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2011).

Gordon, Scott Paul, *The Power of the Passive Self in English Literature 1640-1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Graham, Catherine Macaulay, 'Letters on Education' (1790), in *Women in the Eighteenth Century; Constructions in Femininity*, ed. Vivien Jones (London: Routledge, 1990).

Grayling, A. C., *The History of Philosophy* (London, Penguin Random House, 2019).

Greenfield, Susan C., *Mothering Daughters: Novels and the Politics of Family Romance, Francis Burney to Jane Austen* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003).

Gregory, John, 'A Father's Legacy to his Daughters' (1740), in *Women in the Eighteenth Century; Constructions in Femininity*, ed. Vivien Jones (London: Routledge, 1990).

Gross, Daniel M., *The Secret History of Emotions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

Hershinow, Stephanie Insley, *Born Yesterday: Inexperience and the Early 'Realist Novel'*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019).

Hoeveler, Diane Long, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalisation of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontes* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998).

Hoeveler, Diane Long, 'Regina Maria Roche's "Children of the Abbey": Contesting the Catholic Presence in Female Gothic Fiction', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 31:1-2 (2012), 137-158.

Hofman, Elwin, 'A Wholesome Cure for the Wounded Soul: Confession, Emotions, and Self in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Catholicism,' *Journal of Religious History*, 42:2 (2018), 222-41.

Hogle, Jerold E., 'Recovering the Walpole Gothic: *The Italian: Or, the Confessional of the Black Penitents*', in *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic*, ed. Dale Townshend and Angela Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 151-67.

Howard, Jacqueline, *Reading Gothic Fiction: A Bakhtinian Approach* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994).

Howells, Coral Ann, *Love, Mystery and Misery: Feeling in Gothic Fiction* (London: Athlone Press, 1978).

Hudson, Hannah Doherty, *Romantic Fiction and Literary Excess in the Minerva Press Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023).

Jack, Malcolm, 'One State of Nature: Mandeville and Rousseau,' *Journal of the History of Ideas,* 39:1 (1978) 119-24.

Jauss, Hans Robert, 'Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory', *New Literary History,* 2:1 (1970), 7-37.

Jones, Ann, *Ideas and Innovations: Best Sellers of Jane Austen's Age* (New York: AMS Press, 1986).

Jung, Von Sandro, 'Conflicting Values in Charlotte Smith's *The Old Manor House*', in*British Romanticism,* ed. Jacqueline Labbe (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008).

Kelly, Gary, 'Romantic Novel', in *Encyclopaedia of the Novel (2 volumes)* (London: Fitzroy Dearbon Publishers 1998).

Kelly, Gary, *English Fiction in the Romantic Period 1789-1830* (London: Routledge, 2013).

Kennedy, Catriona, '"What Can Women Give But Tears": Gender, Politics and Irish National Identity in the 1790s' (PhD. University of York, 2004).

Kilgour, Maggie, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995).

Kipp, Julie, *Romanticism, Maternity and the Body Politic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Labbe. Jacqueline, (ed.) *British Romanticism* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008).
Lipsedge, Karen, *Domestic Space in Eighteenth-Century British Novels* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

Lüsebrink, Hans-Jürgen, and Reichardt, Rolf, *The Bastille: A History of a Symbol of Despotism and Freedom* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

Mayo, Robert D., 'Romance in the Magazines' *PMLA,* 65:5 (1950), 762-89.

McCann, Edwin, 'John Locke', in *Blackwell Companion to Philosophy: A Companion to Early Modern Philosophy,* ed. Steven Nadler (Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2002).

McMaster, Juliet, *Reading the Body in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

Messier, V. P., 'The Conservative, The Transgressive and The Reactionary: Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* as a Response to Matthew Lewis' *The Monk*', *Athena,* 25:2 (2005), 37-48.

Miles, Robert, 'Introduction', in Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian* (1797), ed. Miles (London: Penguin Classics, 2000).

Miles, Robert, *Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

Moers, Ellen, *Literary Women* (London: W. H. Allen, 1977).

Moreno, Beatriz Gonzalez, 'Gothic Excess and Aesthetic Ambiguity in Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*', *Women's Writing*, 14:3 (2007), 419-34.

Morin, Christina, 'Regina Maria Roche's *Children of the Abbey* (1796): Its Literary Life and Afterlife' in *Women's Authorship and The Early Gothic*, ed. Kathleen Hudson (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2020).

Nicholson, William, 'Zofloya, or The Moor', *General Review of British and Foreign Literature,* 1:6 (June 1806).

Nordius, Janina, '"A Kind of Living Death": Gothicizing the Colonial Encounter in Charlotte Smith's *The Old Manor House*', *English Studies,* 88:1 (2005) 40-50.

Norton, Rictor, *Gothic Readings: The First Wave 1764-1840* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 2000).

Nünning, Vera, 'The Affective Value of Fiction: Presenting and Evoking Emotions', in *Writing Emotions: Theoretical Concepts and Selected Case Studies in Literature*, ed. Ingeborg Jandl et al. (Bielefeld: Verlag, 2018).

Oliver, Kathleen M., 'Frances Sheridan's Faulkland, The Silenced, Emasculated, Ideal Man', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 43:3 (2003), 673-700.

Parreaux, Andre, *The Publication of The Monk: A Literary Event 1796-1798* (Paris: Libraine Didier, 1960).

Pinch, Adele, *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

Plamper, Jan, 'The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein and Peter Sterns', *History and Theory,* 49 (2010), 237-65.

Poovey, Mary, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley and Jane Austen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

Punter, David, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fiction from 1765 to the Present Day* (Harlow: Longman, 1996).

Radcliffe, Ann, *The Italian* (1797), ed. E. J. Clery (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Radcliffe, Elizabeth, 'Francis Hutcheson', in *Blackwell Companion to Philosophy: A Companion to Early Modern Philosophy,* ed. Steven Nadler (Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2002).

Radcliffe, Elizabeth, 'Hume's Psychology of the Passions: The Literature and Future Directions', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 53:4 (2015) 565-606.

Reddy, William, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Reddy, William, 'Sentimentalism and its Erasure,' *The Journal of Modern History*, 72:1 (2000), 109-52.

Richardson, Alan, *Literature, Education and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1780-1812* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Roche, Regina Maria, *The Children of the Abbey* (1796), ed. William D. Brewer (Richmond: Valancourt Books, 2016).

Rogers, Katherine, 'Inhibitions on Eighteenth-Century Women Novelists: Elizabeth Inchbald and Charlotte Smith' *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 11:1 (1977), 63-79.

Rogers, Katherine, 'Dreams and Nightmares: Male Characters in the Female Novel of the Eighteenth Century', in *Men by Women*, ed. Janet Todd (London: Holmes & Meer, 1981).

Rooney, Morgan, *The French Revolution Debate and the British Novel 1790-1814: The Struggle for History's Authority* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2012).

Rosenwein, Barbara, *Generations of Feeling: A History of Emotions, 600-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

Rosenwein, Barbara and Riccardo, Christiani, *What is the History of Emotions?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018).

Rosenwein, Barbara, 'Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions', *Passion in Context*, 1 (2010), 1-32.

Rosenwein, Barbara, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

Russell, Deborah, 'Domestic Gothic: Genre and Nature in Charlotte Smith's *The Old Manor House*,' *Literature Compass*, 10 (2003), 771-82.

Sade, Marquis de, *The Crimes of Love: Heroic and Tragic Tales, Preceded by An Essay on Novels* (1800), ed. and trans. David Coward (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Saglia, Diego, 'Looking at the Other: Cultural Difference in *The Italian*', *Studies in the Novel*, 28:1 (1996), 13-37.

Sayre-McCord, Geoffrey, 'Hume and Smith on Sympathy, Approbation and Moral Judgement', *Social Philosophy and Politics*, 30:1-2 (2013), 208-36.

Schaper, Eva, 'Aristotle's Catharsis and Aesthetic Pleasure', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 18:71 (1968), 131-43.

Schmitt, Cannon, ‘Techniques of Terror, Technologies of Nationality: Ann Radcliffe’s *The Italian*’, *ELH,* 61:4 (1994), 853-76.

Schroeder, Natalie Ellen, ‘Regina Maria Roche: Popular Novelist 1789-1834’ (Northwestern University, Ph.D. 1979).

Shajirat, Anna ‘“Bending her Head to Gentle Swift Decay”: Horror, Loss and Fantasy in the Female Gothic of Ann Radcliffe and Regina Maria Roche’, *Studies in Romanticism,* 58:3 (2009), 383-412.

Sinfield, Alan, *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and Political Dissent in Reading* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

Smith, Andrew and Wallace, Diana, ‘The Female Gothic, Then and Now’, *Gothic Studies,* 6:1 (2004), 1-7.

Stafford, William, ‘Gentlemanly Masculinities as Represented by the Late Georgian *Gentleman’s Magazine*’, *History,* 9:309 (2008).

St Clair, William, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Thompson, Helen, *Ingenuous Subjection: Compliance and Power in the Eighteenth-Century Domestic Novel* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

Todd, Janet, *Men by Women* (London: Holmes and Meer, 1981).

Todd, Janet, *Sensibility: An Introduction* (London: Methuen, 1986).

Todd, Janet, ‘Introduction’, *Female Education in the Age of Enlightenment, Volume 1*, ed. Todd (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1996).

Tooley, Brenda, ‘Gothic Utopia: Heretical Sanctuary in Ann Radcliffe’s *The Italian’, Utopian Studies,* 11:2 (2000), 42-56.

Townshend, Dale, and Wright, Angela, ‘Gothic and Romantic Engagement: The Critical Reception of Ann Radcliffe, 1789-1850’, in *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic,* ed. Dale Townshend and Angela Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

Watt, Ian, *The Rise of the Novel* (1957; Hamondsworth Penguin Books, 1963).

Williamson, Gillian, ‘The Georgian Landlady: Surrogate Mother, Love Interest or Hard-Nosed Businesswoman?’, *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies,* 44:4 (2021) 383-403.

Wright, Angela, ‘Spain in Gothic Fiction’, in *Spain in British Romanticism,* ed. Diego Saglia and Ian Haywood (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

Wright, Angela, *Gothic Fiction – A Reader’s Guide to Essential Criticism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Yeazell, Ruth Bernard, *Fictions of Modesty: Women and Courtship in the English Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

Zigarovich, Jolene, 'TransGothic Desire in Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*', in *TransGothic in Literature and Culture*, ed. Jolene Zigarovich (London: Routledge, 2018).