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FEMALE HEROINES IN THE ENGLISH GOTHIC NOVEL

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DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

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## INTRODUCTION

In a brilliant parody of the Gothic novel Jane Austen jokes about the differences between men and women, claiming that the former read history and the latter only novels. The novel mentioned above is *Northanger Abbey*, and the young heroine affected by reading novels is Catherine Morland. Albeit she enjoys reading novels and in particular Gothic novels, she is still somewhat ashamed of her taste in literature. However, her embarrassment decreases when she hears that the object of her adoration is also greatly fond of Mrs. Ann Radcliffe's writing: "I am very glad to hear it, indeed: and now I shall never be ashamed of liking *Udolpho* myself. But I really thought before, young men despised novels amazingly."<sup>1</sup> Austen's tone is only gently mocking her heroine's taste in literature, on the contrary she acknowledges the genius of Ann Radcliffe and other great novelists of the time. Indeed, if her sarcasm is targeted against anyone, it would be against the literary critics and the general population who discarded the Gothic novel as a trifling genre read by women.

It is striking since Gothic novels are not exactly what could be called a proper reading for young women. The novels portray all types of violence and cruelty, they tell stories of incest, unbelievable brutality, and horrors. In the case of Ann Radcliffe some of the horrors and supernatural events are explained away, however all the afore mentioned elements are present even if only insinuated. What is particularly disturbing is that the characters who suffer the most are the female heroines, and indeed the Gothic novel is about "a male-dominant world full of terrors for every female."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, or perhaps precisely because of this the Gothic novel has been closely tied to female readership. The reason behind this is that despite all the difficulties that the heroine encounters, in the end it is a story of her journey of coming into some power and property.

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<sup>1</sup> Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (London: Penguin Books, 1994), 95.

<sup>2</sup> Jerrold E. Hogle, "Introduction: the Gothic in Western Culture", *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), p. 10.

The Gothic novel traces its beginnings to Horace Walpole who in the year 1764 published *The Castle of Otranto*, and later in the second edition added a subtitle to his work “A Gothic Story”. After almost two decades of seeming stagnation the Gothic genre is continued by Clara Reeve and later on reaches its peak with the works of Ann Radcliffe, “the Great Enchantress”, a term coined by Robert Miles, who also proceeds to justly call her “one of the most influential novelists of her generation”<sup>3</sup>. He further argues that even though genres of such magnitude as the Gothic novel do not have a single author that stands out among the rest, it was “she who galvanized Walpole’s moribund literary experiment, setting it stalking about the land, to the peril of young ladies.”<sup>4</sup> The genre continues to develop and expand over the turn of the century with such writers as Mary Shelley, Matthew Lewis, William Godwin, Charles Robert Maturin and others, up to the 1820’s where the Gothic novel as a genre discontinues but never truly disappears, influencing such authors as the Brontës, Dickens, Wilde and even crossing literary boundaries into modern horror movies.

The influence of the Gothic is undeniable, however its position in literary criticism was and perhaps still is ambivalent. Even at the times of its peak the Gothic novel was an object of mockery and parody, illustrated perhaps best by afore mentioned novel by Jane Austen. The genre has been often also overlooked by literary critics as a ‘low’ genre, one of the reasons being, according to Miles, precisely the affiliation with female readership:

One such change [in the 1820’s] was the development of a certain kind of literary snobbery, which for many years blinded critics to the obvious fact that many of the decade’s canonical texts were first and foremost tales of terror. Such snobbery was undoubtedly connected to the material fact that for the first time women, at least as readers, were associated with a form that challenged (or was perceived to challenge) traditional literary authority.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Miles, *Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 2.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Miles, *Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 2.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Miles, “The 1790s: the effulgence of Gothic,” *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), p. 60.

This is a somewhat bold statement, since the Gothic novel with its formulaic plots and characters is an easy target for criticism and ridicule even without the female affiliation. Almost every Gothic novel contains the following: a decaying castle with winding corridors and dungeons, sublime landscapes infested with banditti, a maiden in distress, and a pursuing, malicious villain who is usually a father figure or a member of the clergy.

Regardless of how Gothic fiction was perceived at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries or its neglect by literary critics, the Gothic novel was a wide-spread phenomenon at the time. Moreover, the genre is a descendant of previous literary tradition, the novel of sensibility: “Her [Radcliffe’s] optimistic view of the human condition and the unfailing belief in the final triumph of the good indeed confirm her work as being rooted in the cult of sensibility.”<sup>6</sup> The tie to the novel of sensibility is especially true in the case of Radcliffe, but it is not only the belief in the triumph of the good that is important, but also the general tendency to be preoccupied with the fate of an individual. This connects Radcliffe not only to the novel of sensibility but also to the Richardsonian novel<sup>7</sup>, and most importantly to the rest of the Gothic writers who to a lesser or greater extent all tried to describe the inner processes of their heroes or heroines.

The stress upon the individual’s fate and decisions is one of the primary concerns of the Gothic writer, and as has been stressed before, it is usually the female heroines and their plight that is most thoroughly described. In fact James P. Carson argues that the Gothic novel does nothing new but continues the pre-dominant eighteenth-century British fiction tendency on representing a heroine’s perspective: “Representations of the heroine’s perspective and imagination reveal less a new psychological focus of the novel than they do a continuing

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<sup>6</sup> Kateřina Klosová, “Very Much a Woman of Reason and Propriety”: Ann Radcliffe’s Female Gothic Romances and their Eighteenth-century Contexts, M.A. thesis (Prague: Filozofická fakulta, Univerzita Karlova, 2008), 9.

<sup>7</sup> The Gothic novel of course traces some of its origins to Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, for example the fascination with grotesque violence. Both Walpole and Radcliffe cite Shakespeare as one of the greatest influences. In this, the Gothic novel sets itself in the tradition of classical English writing. At the same time it has been suggested that violence and cruelty inherent to the Gothic novel are a reflection of the turbulent revolutionary times, taking place on the continent, particularly the French Revolution.



exploration of the epistemological questions that dominate eighteenth-century British fiction.”<sup>8</sup> The epistemological questions that Carson refers to are the questions of ethics and the voice of conscience. This juxtaposition of what is proper according to society and norms, versus what is best for an individual will be one of the major concerns of my diploma thesis.

The importance of the Gothic novel in English literary history has already been outlined. The thesis will try to show that the female heroines in the English Gothic novel, even though often weak and powerless, are at the same time exploring social and individual boundaries. It is true that the Gothic is somewhat inclined to stereotyping its characters, and that is no exception when it comes to the heroines, however this seeming weakness is actually advantageous for the analysis since it allows the study the certain patterns of behavior and actions.

One of the main characteristics of the Gothic novel is that the plot of the novel is usually removed in time and place from its contemporary readership. And even though most of the time the heroines are devout Catholics of the late Middle Ages, their perception of the world and the way of thinking reflects the English Protestant thinking of Radcliffe’s time. It is perhaps intentional and as Ellen Moers notes: “There is something very English about Mrs. Radcliffe’s doll heroines; and something of perhaps solidier historical than literary significance.”<sup>9</sup> Therefore in exploring the Gothic heroines, it is not only a literary analysis of a certain type of literary phenomena, but at the same time it reflects the thinking and values of England of its time.

The title of this thesis is *Female Heroines in the English Gothic Novel*, however this might seem as an over-ambitious one because it is impossible in this short thesis to scope the whole wide range of the Gothic novel. Even if the time span will be limited from the first edition of Walpole’s novel 1764 to what could be called the last true English Gothic novel,

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<sup>8</sup> James P. Carson, “Enlightenment, popular culture, and Gothic fiction,” *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth Century Novel*, Ed. John Richetti, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), 260.

<sup>9</sup> Ellen Moers, *Literary Women* (New York: Anchor Books, 1977), 211.

which is Charles Robert Maturin's *Melmoth, the Wanderer* published in 1820, I am aware of the fact that there are still many works of importance that I have left out. Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* is one of the first novels to be analyzed, not only because he is the pioneer of the English Gothic novel but also because his heroines are a perfect example of what could be called a 'damsel in distress'. An innocent, chaste, young and beautiful heroine victimized and terrorized by their father, *The Castle of Otranto* actually gives two examples of such heroines, and they are in turn being juxtaposed to each other. The thesis will look not only at the relationship between two protagonists but also their relationship to their mother figure, who is in turn the annihilatingly selfless role model for the Gothic heroine.

Ann Radcliffe's works are of course of the utmost importance for my thesis. Her influence on the Gothic novel is vast, furthermore, she seems to react to Walpole's heroines who are only passive figures responding to the patriarchal and social order. Since her works are the most numerous of all the Gothic writers, it seems only right, that more than one of her novels is included in the analysis, the novels that will be discussed here are *A Sicilian Romance* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. *A Sicilian Romance* is Ann Radcliffe's second novel, where she is still developing her characters. It also includes the doubling of the protagonists, therefore the analysis of this novel is connected with the analysis of *The Castle of Otranto*. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is one of her most prominent and famous works and the protagonist Emily St Aubert is perhaps one of the best developed and interesting characters. The last novel included in this thesis is Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*. *The Monk* has been one of the most controversial, violent, and popular Gothic novels of its time and perhaps still remains so today. Since Lewis claimed his inspiration to have come from Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and in his work he explores the questions of education, which Radcliffe is equally concerned with, these two novels will be analyzed together in the second chapter of this thesis.

It has been noted that the critical reception of the Gothic novel has not always been positive or given much attention, however the last several decades have seen an upsurge in the study of the Gothic, and in particular in the context of female writing and gender conflict. The two publications that are important are Diane Hoeveler's *Gothic Feminism* and Donna Heiland's *Gothic and Gender*, both written and published in the recent fifteen years. While the analysis includes these works, they are approached with caution and reserve since some of the arguments are far fetched to fit their specific gender approach to the Gothic novel. The work of Maggie Kilgour *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*, David Punter *The Literature of Terror*, Robert Miles *Gothic Writing 1750 – 1820: a Genealogy* are used extensively due to their detailed analysis of the individual characters. From the earlier publications, the work of J.M.S. Tompkins's *The Popular Novel in England 1770 – 1800* and Robert Kiely's *The Romantic Novel in England* are also significant for their contributions to this thesis.

# **1. THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO (WALPOLE) AND A SICILIAN ROMANCE (RADCLIFFE)**

## **1.1. The Question of Characterisation of the Female Heroines**

It can be difficult at times to discuss characterization and personalization of the female heroines in the Gothic novel, when many critics argue that the characters in these novels are mere ciphers, mere shadows reacting to the surroundings. In his preface to *The Castle of Otranto* Walpole claims that he is blending two kinds of romance. While there is epic romance present, the novel also contains the neo-classical notions of rules of probability, and therefore his characters are fairly believable.<sup>10</sup> Many critics would argue against this and claim that there is no characterization, apart from the general atmosphere of the Gothic castle. This notion is supported by Kiely who, in his impressive overview of the romantic novels in England, writes:

At the beginning, nobody knows who anybody is and, at the end, it no longer makes any difference because identity has been sacrificed to atmosphere. Believable relationships – sexual or otherwise – are impossible, not because the state is tottering with corruption, but because the essence of individual identity has been dislodged from its human centres and diffused in an architectural construct which seems to have more life than the characters who inhabit it.<sup>11</sup>

Kiely continues to credit all characters' actions as a response to external settings and an absolute absence of internal motivation. It is perhaps proper to say that Gothic characters greatly lack individuality, since many of them are some kind of constructs, however to say that they are lacking internal motivation is utterly superficial. The internal motivation of the

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<sup>10</sup> E. J. Clery, "Explanatory Notes" to *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 117.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Kiely, *The Romantic Novel in England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 40.

Gothic characters is perhaps affected by various incongruous reasons, and is somewhat predictable, but it is present.

The works of Ann Radcliffe, though different from that of Walpole, are affected by the same criticism. Radcliffe's heroines change and evolve from novel to novel, however many see the same woman with a different name, dress and setting. Not only is it the same woman, but according to Hoeveler, it is also a woman with no motivation of her own but simply an unconscious construct of her time:

So we are forced to ask ourselves, does the meaning of the female gothic reside in the character and destiny of the heroine or her trials? I think not. The female characters in female gothic novels appear to be as mechanical as the setting, the conflict, and the villains.<sup>12</sup>

For the modern reader it is perhaps possible to view Gothic heroines simply as a product of their time and a reflection of Ann Radcliffe's, and women's anxieties in general, however this is exactly the reason that they are interesting. All their actions and motivations are somehow reflection of their surroundings. This way, one is not only studying the characters, but in a way also gains insight into the general atmosphere, the transitional time between the eighteenth and nineteenth century England. After all, no matter, how much an author may try to isolate and characterize their protagonists according to the novel, author's views and contemporary events still to some degree saturate the character, therefore the characters to some extent reflect the period when Ann Radcliffe was writing.

In fact, as was mentioned in the introduction, the Gothic novel is a product of turbulent times, and in itself is a very conflicting genre, moving from realistic portrayal of life to a more fantastical setting and time, set in Catholic Europe but at the same time clinging to English protestant morals. Analogous to this, the characters in the Gothic novel, are superstitious but deeply religious, obedient but also rebellious. Walpole calls the Gothic novel

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<sup>12</sup> Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontes* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 55.

a mix of genres and a new kind of novel but at the same time declines all claims to originality. These juxtaposing feelings are as Kilgour notes, true to the whole eighteenth century:

One of the consequences of this strategy of self-effacement, however, is that it encourages a transference of authority and responsibility from the writer to the reader. While the eighteenth century is often identified as marking the birth of the modern author, it also anticipates his recently announced death, through an increasing shift from the author to reader as a centre of attention, and hero or heroine of the act of interpretation.<sup>13</sup>

Therefore, in one aspect, Hoeveler is right, that the birth of the Gothic novel and heroine are deeply affected by the contemporary events, and anxieties, and that in many aspects the Gothic heroine is simply a reflection of a perfect eighteenth century English, middle class, protestant morale, however this does not make the heroine mechanical. This double reflection of the author and the readership is precisely what is so fascinating about the Gothic heroines. Therefore what one sees here is a slow and incomplete transition from the personality of the author to the more detailed characterisation of the heroines, that will become more and more pronounced in the nineteenth-century English literature.

### **1.1.1 *The Castle of Otranto***

It is important to note that even though the Gothic heroines do represent the English consciousness, they are not simply mirroring the contemporary life. Very few readers of the Gothic novel would be able to find themselves in the situations happening to the heroines in these novels. Therefore Walpole's claim that the Gothic novel represents how mere men and women would act if they were in these extraordinary situations, is more of a guide, how women and men should react were they to find themselves in this situation. It is an interesting

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<sup>13</sup> Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), 22.

structure where literature is on the crossroads, where fantasy and impossibility<sup>14</sup> are tied with ethics and principles.

The Gothic heroine is, what Hoeveler calls, professionally feminine and victimized: self-effacing, obedient, loving, passive, silent, and long suffering. This is precisely the kind of heroines that one sees in Matilda and Isabella in *The Castle of Otranto*, and in Emilia and Julia in *A Sicilian Romance*. What all of these characters have in common is:

Wise passiveness, reasonableness, tamed emotions, and rational and disinterested love instead characterize the true gothic heroine, who proves her worth by controlling and professionally commodifying her emotions in even the most harrowing of situations.<sup>15</sup>

What Hoeveler means by professional commodifying, or the term that she uses most “professional femininity”, is a “cultivated pose, a masquerade of docility, passivity, wise passiveness, and tightly controlled emotions.”<sup>16</sup> One of the most fitting examples of adjusting her emotions and behaviour to appropriate standards is seen in *The Castle of Otranto*, where Isabella on the run from Manfred meets Theodore in the forest, who vows to protect her, and entreats her to hide in the depth of a cavern. To which, Isabella responds whether it would be appropriate if anybody were to find them together alone in a cavern: “Though all your actions are noble, though your sentiments speak the purity of your soul, is it fitting that I should accompany you alone into these perplexed retreats? Should we be found together, what would a censorious world think of my conduct?”<sup>17</sup> It might seem to the modern reader that Isabella’s concern with propriety is exaggerated, and perhaps comical; a similar situation

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<sup>14</sup> That is not to say, that the plot of some of the Gothic novels is absolutely fantastical. There is perhaps a time and place in history where even more gruesome events have taken place, however a heroine, with a clearly protestant English view of the world finding herself in a Catholic setting, an inaccurate Catholic setting, is simply impossible.

<sup>15</sup> Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontes* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 60.

<sup>16</sup> Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontes* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), xv.

<sup>17</sup> Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, ed. W. S. Lewis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 76. Further references are given after quotations in the text.

however, can be found later in the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, where Emily fleeing for her life realizes that she has forgotten her hat and has to solve this indecent situation. One has to understand that for an eighteenth century audience the choice between physical oppression, and loss of reputation was a dramatic one.<sup>18</sup>

One of the two heroines from *The Castle of Otranto* is Isabella. She is the daughter of the marquis of Vicenza, and in the opening scenes of the novel, she is to be wed to Conrad, the son of Manfred, the prince of Otranto. Conrad is very young and sickly, however Manfred wants to make sure he gets married so that he can produce a male heir and thereby avert the dreadful prophecy of his family's fall, "That the castle and lordship of Otranto should pass from the present family, whenever the real owner should be grown too large to inhabit it." (*Otranto* 17) The son is unfortunately killed by a giant helmet falling on him. There is not a substantial insight into the qualities of Isabella, however the reader does learn that she is relieved of not having to marry Conrad, and not to have Manfred as a father in law, who she believes to have a violent character, and that due to the way he treats his wife and daughter, "[Manfred] had imprinted her mind with terror, from his causeless rigour to such amiable princesses as Hippolita and Matilda." (*Otranto* 20) Manfred treats Isabella agreeably, however his treatment of the other two females in his household, makes Isabella aware of his true character.

The amiable princesses, Hippolita and Matilda, are respectively the wife and the daughter of Manfred. Both Hippolita and Matilda are virtuous and selfless creatures. It is hard to say, exactly who is the main heroine in *The Castle of Otranto*, since both Matilda and Isabella are equally gentle, beautiful, young and in the novel both equally dynamic. Compared to *A Sicilian Romance*, where similarly two heroines are introduced but only one is involved in romantic and other adventures, in *The Castle of Otranto*, both heroines go through a rite of

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<sup>18</sup> E. J. Clery, "Explanatory Notes" to *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 124.



passage of falling in love. It is an interesting dynamic where both heroines fall in love with the same person, Theodore<sup>19</sup>, which does not happen in the later Gothic novels, in none of the following works are two equally deserving heroines who have to share a burden of one object of desire, or does a heroine experience an unrequited love for someone.

Isabella is the first to encounter Theodore, who helps her escape the undesirable association with Manfred, who after the death of his son, plans to marry Isabella himself in order to produce a male heir. Theodore later encounters Matilda, who in turn saves his life, and falls passionately in love with her. Through different lapses of accident and fate, Theodore encounters Isabella and once more fights for her honour but letting her know that his heart is involved elsewhere. It is a very interesting encounter, when Isabella and Matilda find themselves together in the same room with Theodore (where Hippolita, Manfred, and Frederic, the father of Isabella are also present). Isabella is justly jealous of Matilda, whereas Matilda is jealous but is trying to subdue her emotions. When the two ladies find themselves alone, each one of them is too gracious to ask the other about Theodore, however in the end they proceed to talk about him, "Thus jealousy prompted, and at the same time borrowed an excuse from friendship to justify its curiosity." (*Otranto* 86) In the end, Isabella confesses to Matilda, that the latter is the object of Theodore's affection, and realization that he prefers Matilda to her, makes her yield the beloved object to her friend.

In this conversation between two heroines Matilda proves herself to be the humbler and simpler one. Perhaps this is why she is the object of Theodore's adoration, and not Isabella. At the end of their conversation, Hippolita, Matilda's mother enters and announces that she has suggested to Manfred that Matilda marry Frederic, in order to avert total destruction of the house of Manfred. Matilda is terrified, and begs her mother not to make her marry Frederic. Matilda, even though the exact mirror of her mother, self-defying and kind, is able to stand up for herself when it comes to her heart and devotion to Theodore. In fact, it is

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<sup>19</sup> A noble and honest youth who is later discovered to be the true heir of Otranto.

after encountering Theodore, that Matilda for the first time dares to disobey her father, by freeing Theodore from confinement and death sentence, even though she claims it to be done in the name of charity, “Young man, said she, though filial duty and womanly modesty condemn the step I am taking, yet holy charity, surmounting all other ties, justifies this act.” (*Otranto* 72) This is a dilemma that all Gothic heroines face, the choice between abiding by patriarchal authority and the rights as an individual.

As Miles stresses, the Gothic novel moves into a different direction than simple father daughter opposition:

The conflict between the peremptory father and the fractious daughter ceases to be the simple generational one of conventional romance comedy finding itself inflected, instead, as a conflict between “alliance” or patriarchy and “sexuality” or the rights of the individual.<sup>20</sup>

In fact, Matilda when choosing between alliance and perseverance of her family, by marrying Frederic, and her heart and passion - Theodore, she does not in reality have a choice. She cannot make this choice because her family is already destined to perish. This is shown as the statue of Alfonso the Great keeps appearing in giant pieces all around the castle. Her ancestor's sins fall on Manfred, the grandson has to re-pay for the sins of his grandfather, but as it shows, in passions and violence he is not much better than his ancestor. Another aspect to consider is that in marrying Frederic, Matilda would continue her mother's unhappy future. Even though we are unaware of Hippolita's motivations when marrying Manfred<sup>21</sup>, the marriage is a miserable one for her. In marrying Theodore, Matilda would be breaking the chain of unhappy and repressing marriages.

Isabella finds herself in a similar situation to Matilda twice, first when she is to be married to Conrad, the sickly son of Manfred, but is delivered from it by the fulfilling

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<sup>20</sup> Robert Miles, *Gothic Writing: 1750 – 1820, A Genealogy* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 108 - 109.

<sup>21</sup> The reader is aware of the unhappy marriage of the mother in *A Sicilian Romance* and what unlucky destiny led her to marry someone she did not love or admire.

prophecy. The second is when Manfred decides to marry his son's bride and produce the needed male heir. The fact that Manfred wants to marry Isabella is wrong both from the fact that he is still married to Hippolita, but also by the fact that Isabella is his almost daughter in law, "Manfred's case is further complicated by the desires of a technically incestuous nature (for Isabella, the fiancée of the perished Conrad), desires compounded by the 'mistaken' stabbing of his own daughter in a fit of sexual jealousy."<sup>22</sup> It is also what Kilgour calls the perverted Oedipal fantasy of self-perpetuation.

Manfred's desire of a male heir can be only fulfilled if he manages to obtain Isabella's hand in marriage, which in turn he can only get by divorcing Hippolita. Manfred's line is therefore, ironically and paradoxically in the hands of the female characters, directly in Hippolita's who has to accede to divorce (even though one might argue that there is not much choice to be made there), and indirectly by Isabella if she manages to provide a male heir. Manfred's authority is indisputable but it is still tied to the female characters, "Manfred has to rely on women to perpetuate his rule, and works to control them in any way he can."<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, it is not a very tangible power that the women have, specifically Hippolita, since as one can see in *A Sicilian Romance*, there are other ways to deal with unwanted wives. Hippolita, of course, agrees to the divorce but, Isabella, in the mean time escapes the castle and hides in a church of St. Nicholas, where she is safe from Manfred, "She is where orphans and virgins are safest from the snares and wiles of this world; and nothing but a parent's authority shall take her thence." (*Otranto* 49) Parental authority can remove her from there, and in the case of Isabella it is represented by her father Frederic. Frederic, in fact appears not long afterwards to save the daughter and help complete the dooming prophecy of the house of Manfred, however he is also blinded by passionate affections. Frederic's preference for

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<sup>22</sup> Robert Miles, *Gothic Writing: 1750 – 1820, A Genealogy* (London: Routledge, 1993), 111.

<sup>23</sup> Donna Heiland, *Gothic and Gender: An Introduction* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 13.

Matilda prevents him from taking the right action and saving his daughter from an incestuous marriage.

Matilda, who is the object of everyone's desires, is unaware of her own virtues and is a true Gothic heroine to her very last breath. She dies a tragic death of being stabbed by her father, in a jealous rage, when he believes her to be Isabella. Manfred hears that Theodore is with a lady by the tomb of Alfonso in St. Nicholas church, thinking it to be Isabella, he rushes to the church and stabs Matilda. When Manfred realizes what he has done he is shocked and tries to kill himself as well. While everyone is in chaos, Matilda asks for forgiveness from her father, explaining that she met Theodore accidentally, and has come to the tomb to pray for her father. In her dying moments Matilda forgives her father, asks her mother to forgive her father, asks for her own forgiveness for accidentally seeing Theodore and even tries to tie Theodore with Isabella, an admirable end to a Gothic heroine. Manfred repents all his actions, and relates the story of his grandfather, who has poisoned Alfonso, the true owner of the castle of Otranto. He and Hippolita both retire to neighbouring convents.

In the conclusion it is also revealed that Theodore is the grandson of Alfonso and an heir to Otranto. Frederic offers the hand of Isabella to Theodore, but his grief for Matilda prevents him from loving Isabella. It is by frequent discourse about Matilda with Isabella that he decides to spend the rest of his life with Isabella, "but Theodore's grief was too fresh to admit the thought of another love; and it was not till after frequent discourses with Isabella, of his dear Matilda, that he was persuaded he could know no happiness but in the society of one with whom he could forever indulge the melancholy that had taken possession of his soul." (*Otranto* 115) An unconventional ending for a Gothic novel, since the end perhaps solves and completes the story of betrayal and usurpation, but does not resolve the personal and individual aspects. Matilda, a true representation of righteousness and kindness, in the end falls victim to her ancestors' sins, and Isabella who is almost equal in her integrity to Matilda, is left to spend the rest of her life with a ghost of Matilda hovering over her marriage. The fact

that she willingly chooses this life for herself, appears as a cycle, a repetition of Hippolita's life, and even though everything seems right in the house of Otranto, nothing positive awaits the female heroine as she willingly accepts a life of silent suffering.

### 1.1.2. *A Sicilian Romance*

In *A Sicilian Romance*, one of the earliest novels of Ann Radcliffe, two young maidens find themselves in a similar situation as Matilda and Isabella in *The Castle of Otranto*. Emilia and Julia are daughters of Ferdinand, the fifth marquis of Mazzini<sup>24</sup>. The adventures for the two maidens unravel perhaps at a more measured pace than in the previous novel. The reader encounters Emilia and Julia isolated in a castle of Mazzini, their father having re-married after their mother's death to a beautiful and unconquerable Maria de Vellorno, leaves them in the castle to live a more animated life at Naples. They are attended by loving and caring Madame de Menon, a long time friend of the deceased marchioness, the mother of Emilia and Julia.

The life that the three isolated women lead at the castle is quite remarkable. Despite their segregation, and what could be called their captivity, they lead a happy and tranquil life playing music, and discussing literature. The women live in perfect harmony, and it is fair to say that their interests and characters are equally divided. While Julia is of a livelier cast, she enjoys music and has a passion for literature, Emilia is of a much more tender and dignified disposition, "Emilia's taste led her to drawing, and she soon made rapid advances in that art. Julia was uncommonly susceptible of the charms of harmony."<sup>25</sup> This division of emotions versus reason is very common in Gothic and sentimental literature, in her notes to the novel, Milbank mentions the heroines of Sophia Lee's *The Recess*, Matilda and Elinor, or Julie and Claire, in Rousseau's *Julie; ou, La Nouvelle Heloise*. It is probable that the two sisters of *A*

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<sup>24</sup> The name of the tyrant father of *A Sicilian Romance* is Ferdinand, however since his son's name is also Ferdinand, and except for the introduction of his character on the first page, Radcliffe refers to him as the marquis, therefore, for convenience sake, he will be later referred as the marquis, or marquis of Mazzini.

<sup>25</sup> Ann Radcliffe, *A Sicilian Romance*, ed. Alison Milbank (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 4. Further references are given after quotations in the text.

*Sicilian Romance* have influenced Jane Austen in her work, specifically *Sense and Sensibility* where Marianne's excess of sensibility is applied in the art of music and Elinor's good sense is demonstrated by the art of drawing.

Except for occasional melancholy on Julia's side for not being able to explore, in her imagination, the more splendid world outside, the women spend their time in refined conversation and enjoyment of each other's company. They spend most of their time in Madame de Menon's apartment, which has a breathtaking view of the sea and surroundings. On fine evenings the ladies dine in a pavilion attached to the castle, and have the view of boundless range of sea and land. Even though the two young siblings are quite mature, Emilia twenty and Julia eighteen, neither of them have passed the boundaries of the castle. It is a wonderful, picturesque setting that the women find themselves in, however it has its drawbacks. When one looks at the definition of the word picturesque, it is literally: a landscape suggesting or suitable for a picture.<sup>26</sup> This view from the castle of the surroundings is precisely just a painting, a beautiful picture that they look at but it is nothing that they can experience themselves.

This distanced experience of nature, is on one hand a sign of their imprisonment, but also allows them to composedly, without external impulses to take in the beauty of their surroundings. The view is an important part of Julia and Emilia's life but also highlights their isolation, "Their predisposition to the aesthetics of the visual, of landscape appreciation, is a mark of their imprisonment (they have nothing else to focus their desire on) but marks, too, what is most precious in their identity."<sup>27</sup> On one hand the heroines of Radcliffe's novel are able to appreciate nature and their surroundings, and study undisturbed different kinds of art, and develop their sense of aesthetics. On the other, however, this perception of the world only intensifies their seclusion and in a way helplessness.

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<sup>26</sup> "Picturesque," *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*. 2010. Merriam-Webster Online. 2 February 2010  
<<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/picturesque>>

<sup>27</sup> Robert Miles, *Gothic Writing: 1750 – 1820, A Genealogy* (London: Routledge, 1993), 137.

The love and appreciation of nature is what ties all of Radcliffe's positive characters together. It is a sensibility uncorrupted by city life and conventions that responds to nature. A corrupt and foul character can be recognized in an instant due to his/her inability to appreciate nature. Another trait that makes the positive character stand out from the negative ones, is that not only are they able to appreciate art, but they are also able to produce art, most of Radcliffe's major heroines possess a creative genius. Tying this back to the previous comment about Radcliffe projecting her persona as an author to her heroines, it can be said that the women tied to their homely circle channel their sensibility into different forms of art:

It marks the creation of the persona of the heroine as artist, and as author-surrogate; a figure which, like the explained supernatural, became a trademark. The introduction of this type relates closely to her won self-identity and public recognition as a female author.<sup>28</sup>

Thus, albeit imprisoned, this confinement promotes an ability to view the world differently, and the heroines, just as the author herself, are able to project their sensibility into art.

The isolation and confinement of the heroines might deepen their aesthetic potential and encourages the creative genius, however the price of acquiring these qualities seems to be somewhat high. The women are almost erased from the public sphere, and except for each other's company, the lives of Emilia and Julia, do not seem much more exciting than that of their mother's who is confined in the recesses of the castle of Mazzini (the mother of the heroines is believed to be dead, but all the time is in fact in the castle, imprisoned and attended to by Vincent, a faithful servant of the marquis). The heroines are not only marginalized from the rest of the world but they are also marginalized in the castle.<sup>29</sup> They inhabit only one wing of the castle, and are prevented from exploring the rest of the castle, partly due to the locks and partly due to feminine apprehension. In fact, were it not for the

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<sup>28</sup> E. J. Clery, *Women's Gothic: From Clara Reeve to Mary Shelley*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Gateshead: Athenaeum Press Ltd., 2004), 68.

<sup>29</sup> See Donna Heiland, *Gothic and Gender: An Introduction* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 58.

death of Vincent, it is a question whether the marquis would have returned to the castle at all. With the death of Vincent, who provided food for his imprisoned wife, the marquis is forced to make a decision to return to the castle of Mazzini, and take care of her himself, since he would not be able to disclose the awful secret to anyone else.

It is with the death of this caretaker, that the marquis, his wife, and his son (the brother of the two heroines) return to the castle and bring back life and amusement. The life that prior to the arrival of their tyrant father has been tranquil and uneventful starts to take a completely different turn. The marquis returns to the castle with the marchioness and numerous other guests, including a young gentleman of the name of Count Hippolitus de Vereza. Julia, the young, heroine immediately falls in love with Hippolitus, finding that his captivating appearance is also reflected in a gentle soul and appreciation of music. The problem arises, however, since the insatiable marchioness is also attracted to Hippolitus, her attraction being strengthened by the fact that he does not respond to her temptations. Seeing that Hippolitus is attracted to Julia, she is enraged by rejection and jealousy, to get rid of her rival she suggests to the marquis an eligible fiancé for Julia.

The fiancé chosen by Julia's father is Duke de Luovo. He is a man of enough consequence that the marquis would be desirous of a connection with him, and at the same time of a similar character, "The love of power was his ruling passion; - with him no gentle or generous sentiment meliorated the harshness of authority, or directed it to acts of beneficence. He delighted in simple undisguised tyranny." (*A Sicilian Romance* 57) It is a marriage that is unsolicited not only because of Julia's attraction to Hippolitus but also of the character of the duke. If she were to marry Duke de Luovo, she would be de facto walking in her mother's footsteps of an unhappy marriage. Julia is mortified when she hears about her prospects. It is a difficult choice that arises before Julia, a prospect of an unhappy marriage to a cruel and unloving tyrant, or that of compromising her integrity by eloping with Hippolitus.



When Julia is informed that in three days she will be married to Duke de Luovo, her brother Ferdinand and Hippolitus come to her chamber, entreating her to elope with Hippolitus. It is a similar choice that Matilda is forced to make in *The Castle of Otranto*, between obedience to her father and her rights as an individual. The choice in Matilda's case is not really a choice, she would not disobey her father, the possibility of marrying someone else against her father's wishes, is only a subtle and theoretical notion, that is not worded. In case of *A Sicilian Romance*, one might say that Radcliffe is being quite revolutionary, not only does she allow Julia to follow her heart, but this opinion is voiced by others very prominently, "Fly," said he, "from the authority of a father who abuses his power, and assert the liberty of choice, which nature assigned you." (*A Sicilian Romance* 61) What is only suggested in *The Castle of Otranto* is boldly pronounced by Hippolitus. He is seconded by his friend and Julia's brother, Ferdinand, who tells her, "do not suffer the prejudices of education to render you miserable. Believe me, that a choice which involves the happiness or misery of your whole life, ought to be decided only by yourself." (*A Sicilian Romance* pp. 62 – 63) Essentially, he is saying not to rely on social decorum and her upbringing, but to make decisions based only on her own beliefs. Taking into consideration the time and society when this novel was published, this is a very bold and strong remark on the side of Radcliffe.

The notion that an individual, especially a female, should make a decision based only on her own consideration must have been somewhat controversial at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, let alone that it is uttered by a youth of Catholic upbringing of late Middle ages. Julia is not so rash in her statements and decisions, as her brother and object of her love are. She is aware that by elopement she will be happy but is made unhappy by the thought of compromising her principles:

She would escape the dreadful destiny awaiting her, but must, perhaps, sully the purity of that reputation, which was dearer to her than existence. In a mind like hers,

exquisitely susceptible of the pride of honour, this fear was able to counteract every other consideration, and to keep her intentions in a state of painful suspense. (*A Sicilian Romance* 62)

For Julia, her integrity and reputation is almost as dear to her as life and happiness. She is unable to choose between the two, she knows what is the right thing for her to do but is unable to proceed with her wishes because of all the considerations of pride and honour.

After much painful consideration, Julia opts for elopement. Her hesitation might not be comprehensible to the modern reader but for Radcliffean readers there was much suspense.<sup>30</sup> Radcliffe's portrayal of the situation is, however, somewhat dubious. She writes "susceptible of the pride of honour", where it is the mind that is impressionable, easily influenced to the notions of honour, as if, this notion of honour is only an illusion, appearance of honour. It almost seems as if Radcliffe is mocking Julia or judging her susceptibility to the surroundings, however it is more likely that Radcliffe is sympathising with her heroine. Her heroine is trapped in a world where she is imposed with false notions of honour and obedience, which are not always the right or only choices, however she is unable to see the other options.

Unlike Matilda in *The Castle of Otranto*, Julia has the support of her brother and Hippolitus, and her personality that guides her in the right direction. By expounding on Julia's thoughts about her situation, Radcliffe is not looking down upon her heroine but rather trying to explain her motives. In fact, her heroines, just as the rest of the Gothic heroines, are tragic since they do not have many options in their lives. Later on in the novel when Julia believes Hippolitus to be dead, she is put before two decisions, either entering the convent or an unhappy marriage. Julia is horrified at the thought of both of these options, whether to be

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<sup>30</sup> Compare the afore mentioned instance in *The Castle of Otranto* where Isabella is hesitating entering a cave with Theodore, even when her life is at risk. Compared to that, Julia's situation is very problematical.

immured for life in a convent or to marry Duke de Luovo which is an equivalent to death.<sup>31</sup> Julia is forced to choose between a convent and marriage by the Abbot of St. Augustin monastery, where Julia and Madame de Menon (who discovers Julia hiding in one of the villages) take refuge. However, unlike the monastery in *The Castle of Otranto*, the monastery in *A Sicilian Romance* is not a safe sanctuary. The abbot abuses his power to terrorize and manipulate the heroine. Both the Abbot and marquis of Mazzini suggest something very negative about patriarchal authority.

Many critics have noted that Radcliffe's hesitant approach to patriarchal unlimited authority and absolute power in general is perhaps a reflection of an English protestant dogma that was present at the turn of the century. It is noteworthy that apart from the very end of the novel, the heroines are happiest when they are alone and segregated in the castle. The negative aspects of this seclusion have been discussed previously, however, there is still a sense that the heroines were happier before the arrival of men. Emilia with the arrival of the marchioness who brings liveliness and at least in the beginning joy to the castle of Mazzini, still feels some kind of an apprehension, "The tranquil heart of Emilia was not proof against a scene so alluring, and she sighed at the prospect, yet scarcely knew why." (*A Sicilian Romance* 15) Even though she is happy to see her brother and father, there is still a feeling that all this gaiety breaks up the tranquil and idyllic female household.

In this early novel of Radcliffe's the division between evil patriarchs and suffering women is quite pronounced. Women are constantly being attacked and threatened by men; Hoeveler suggests that this is a characteristic common to all of Radcliffean novels. This notion is not completely accurate, because we do have positive father figures in her later works, only to mention Monsieur St. Aubert from *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, however she does mention an interesting detail that, "Women are never happier in Radcliffe's works than

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<sup>31</sup> Heiland, *Gothic and Gender: An Introduction* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 59.

when they are living in small groups together and apart from men.”<sup>32</sup> It is more appropriate to say that women are happiest before the young heroines reach maturity and meet their potential partners. Almost, as if their sexuality and ability to attract the opposite sex is immediately punished by the tyrant father, and only after enduring life-threatening situations and proving one’s integrity, the heroine is happily reconciled to her husband.

## **1.2. The Analysis of the Mother Figures**

### **1.2.1 *The Castle of Otranto***

It is not the purpose of this thesis to revert basing the identity of the heroine solely on familial parental relationship, nor to focus it on a simplified Electra or Oedipal complexes, however it would be an error to omit the filial relationships in the Gothic novels, particularly when it is a daughter mother relationship. Mothers are notoriously absent from Gothic texts, and are sometimes replaced by surrogate mother figures, at other times by a father, and other a tyrant father figure. In the texts where a mother figure is present, it is more often than not, a powerless, meek creature with an absence of will and determination. This negative characterization is perhaps an interpretation of a modern reader, since with the aforementioned weakness hand in hand go qualities revered at the turn of the century, such as unyielding moral superiority and gentleness of character. From *The Castle of Otranto* to *A Sicilian Romance*, an absence of a mother or her complete subjection to the husband causes the heroines to flee through subterranean passages and recesses of the castle, to find themselves in dangerous circumstances, and in the case of Matilda in *The Castle of Otranto* even death. The identification with the mother or mother figure is an important process in the

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<sup>32</sup> Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontes* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 53.

formation of the heroine's identity, but as further analysis will show, the heroines often subconsciously run from this identity and at times the connection can be a self-destructing one.

The Gothic novel is often criticized for creating a set of interchangeable, undeveloped characters that act more as mere symbols. Mother characters can particularly be branded as stereotypical passive and victimized beings. The mother in *The Castle of Otranto* is the first prominent example of this:

“Hippolita is the prototype of a long series of victimized wives, most notably, in the period, the wretched prisoners of Radcliffe's *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) and Regina Maria Roche's *The Children of the Abbey* (1776). But her situation is never so affecting as theirs; she wanders freely if pathetically through the castle, her passivity a positive aid to Manfred's villainy.”<sup>33</sup>

Hippolita is a woman that is at most described as an “amiable lady” (*Otranto* 17, 20) and one of her prominent qualities is swooning every time there is a commotion. Note her reaction when her only son is killed by an enormous helmet, “The princess Hippolita, without knowing what was the matter, but anxious for her son, swooned away.” (*Otranto* 18) As soon as she comes to her senses, however, she enquires after her husband. Hippolita swoons several times throughout the novel, nevertheless she is able to sustain herself whenever she thinks of the well being of her husband. When Hippolita hears of the gigantic leg and foot in the great chamber, she hastens to observe the place and if needed bring herself as a sacrifice to “save her lord any additional shock.” (*Otranto* 37)

Hippolita is amiable, passive, and genteel but her outstanding quality is inability to think of herself or anybody except her husband. Her loyalty is perhaps best represented when Isabella, her daughter in law, informs her about Manfred's intention of divorcing her. She resolves to offer herself to this divorce, believing that her sacrifice “may atone for all.”

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<sup>33</sup> E. J. Clery, “Introduction” to *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. xviii – xix.

(*Otranto* 90) Ironically, all of her actions instead of atoning the bad deeds of Manfred, actually fuel and promote Manfred's further ill doing. It is Hippolita's idea to propose marriage between Matilda and Frederic, Isabella's father. This design encourages Manfred's plan of marrying Isabella and by this retaining the Castle of Otranto. In her selfless act of love and devotion to her husband, Hippolita is ruining the lives of her loved ones and others, most importantly the life of Matilda and Isabella. For Matilda being married to Frederic would mean separation from her love interest, Theodore, for Isabella it would mean marrying a man she has learned to abhor due to his deeds to Hippolita and Matilda.

Hippolita's selfless act goes far beyond of what is expected of a wife and undermines her abilities as a mother. Even though the mother is present in *The Castle of Otranto*, unlike the mother in *A Sicilian Romance*, it can be said that she is a mere ghost of a mother, who is willing to sacrifice herself but in doing so, also undermining the happiness of her daughter, and basically leaving her at the mercy of a tyrant father. It is argued by Kiely that the characters in *The Castle of Otranto*, especially the heroines are mere imitations of another literary figures:

Nearly all of its major characters are shadows of the more substantial literary figures whom they vaguely resemble. Unable to think, to feel, to believe, they exist in a frantic whirl of meaningless motion cut off from one another and even from the imaginary world they inhabit.<sup>34</sup>

However, it is important to note that it was not the intention of Walpole to portray characters as mere puppets reacting to outside impulses. His aim indeed was to portray the characters as close to reality as possible and to allow them to act and think for themselves, "in short, to make them think, speak and act, as it might be supposed mere men and women would do in

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<sup>34</sup> Robert Kiely, *The Romantic Novel in England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 41.

extraordinary positions.”<sup>35</sup> If it is indeed what Walpole was trying to portray then it says nothing positive about the female characters, specifically Hippolita. At the end of the novel she willingly makes a choice of entering into a monastery, and by that not only loses her daughter, but also all the claims she has as a wife to property and title. Manfred leaves to enter the convent to repent his sins as well, however Hippolita’s choice much more than an active and conscious choice seems to be another act of blind conformity to her husband.

### 1.2.2 *A Sicilian Romance*

Hippolita’s willing choice of leaving to monastery is a pitiful one, however it is important that she has the ability to make this choice, no matter how elusive her right to make decisions might be. In *A Sicilian Romance*, Louisa Bernini<sup>36</sup>, the wife of marquis of Mazzini, is not allowed to make this choice; she is literally buried alive in the distant recesses of the castle, believed to be dead by her children, and everyone else except her husband who is responsible for this deed. Louisa Bernini is described as “a lady yet more distinguished for the sweetness of her manners and the gentleness of her disposition, than for her beauty.”( *A Sicilian Romance* 4) She is believed to have died suddenly, and this leaves her two daughters and a son under the care of their stepmother, Maria de Vellorno, whom the marquis marries soon after the marchioness’ sudden death. The marquis and his new wife take the son and leave to Naples, leaving his two daughters in the care of the late marchioness’ long-term friend, Madame de Menon. Note, that even though in *A Sicilian Romance*, the three mother figures are all present, however not at the same time. They are always switching places with each other as the mistresses of the castle of Mazzini. Maria de Vellorno takes Louisa

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<sup>35</sup> Horace Walpole “Preface to the Second Edition” in *The Castle of Otranto*, ed. W. S. Lewis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 9 – 10.

<sup>36</sup> Louisa Bernini is the maiden name of the marchioness; similarly Maria de Vellorno is the name of the second marchioness prior to the marriage with marquis of Mazzini. In *A Sicilian Romance*, Maria de Vellorno is referred to as the marchioness, and at the appearance of Louisa from the dead (the true marchioness) again as Maria de Vellorno. In order to avoid confusion and economy of words, the women will be referred to under their maiden names.

Bernini's place, and even though she is alive, no one is aware of her presence, except as a spectre. While Madame de Menon is taking care of the education of the two orphaned daughters, Maria de Vellorno is at Naples, and as soon as she comes back to the castle of Mazzini, she drives away Madame de Menon into a nearby convent. Finally, Louisa Bernini is restored to her rightful place only after the death of Maria de Vellorno.

The importance of Louisa Bernini lies precisely in the fact that she is not present for most of the novel. The fact that Louisa Bernini plays a big role in the novel as the mother of the two heroines, or that her absence and later re-appearance has a great effect on her daughters Julia and Emilia is undeniable, however a question arises: why is there such a need for the absence of their mother? Why does not Marquis de Mazzini provide his wife with an option of divorce and leaving to the convent? Judging from the character of Louisa Bernini, she would not be able to withstand the strong temper of her husband. One explanation for this mystery can be sought in the psychoanalytic approach which argues that for male imagination there can be only one woman in his life, therefore the need to bury his first wife in the debris of the castle. This theory is expanded further, to mean that a woman cannot function as a mother or a wife at the same time; it would also mean that the division for a female into mother, lover, wife, and/or friend is practically impossible. In the words of a feminist and sociologist Lucy Irigaray, "our western culture rests on the murder of the mother,"<sup>37</sup> this would also explain the complete isolation of the heroine in most of the Gothic texts. Note in both of the analysed texts, *The Castle of Otranto* and *A Sicilian Romance*, there is a doubling of the main heroine, however only one is allowed the romantic adventures, while the other serves as a loyal confidante. More specific and relevant example however is the replacement of one mother Louisa Bernini, by a mother in law Maria de Vellorno.

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<sup>37</sup> Luce Irigaray from *Le Corps-a-corps avec la mere* as quoted in Alison Milbank, "Introduction" to *A Sicilian Romance* by Ann Radcliffe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), xxiv.



The fact that Louisa Bernini is still alive and in a way haunts the whole castle represents her dominant position at the castle. Considering, that many critics have viewed the building in the Gothic texts as the main character as well, we can draw a parallel, and associate Louisa Bernini with the castle. Her personality and character can be seen as an embracing body, and the cloisters and passages as a “womb” like presence. Therefore, running through the passages the heroine is running away from danger presented by a male admirer, but also trying to escape and find its way through the “maternal body,”<sup>38</sup> only to find herself locked up with the mother in the dungeons.

The heroines might be running in and out of the recesses of the castle and mother presence, but the absence of the mother does not make the children happier, or more self aware, unconsciously they are always seeking for her presence. As soon as Ferdinand is informed by his sisters about the strange sounds and light emerging from the southern side of the castle, he immediately proceeds to explore the cause of this, unknowingly moving closer to his mother. After all her adventures, and near death experiences, Julia finds herself back in the subterranean abodes of the castle of Mazzini, but mainly she finds the confined cavern and her mother there. Up to this point Julia’s future did not look promising or cheery, however from this moment on, all things are made possible, Marquis de Mazzini is poisoned by Maria de Vellorno, Ferdinand is not dead, neither is Julia, her mother, or Hippolitus, and all the characters are happily reunited. It seems that the marriage and happy future of Julia, prevented by her father, is finally made possible by the appearance of her mother.

The mother, for most of the novel, is the uncanny, the ghost, the voices from the other side, she is also the explained supernatural and the sublime in a way:

If sublime experience in Radcliffe leads one inevitably and ironically back into the world, the most important form of that experience occurs not as a result of human interaction with nature,

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<sup>38</sup> Holland and Sherman in “Gothic Possibilities” as quoted Alison Milbank, “Introduction” to *A Sicilian Romance* by Ann Radcliffe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), xxi.

the supernatural, or even the divine. Instead, it occurs in mother-daughter relationships, which as I noted earlier – have long been recognized as central to the genre of female gothic.<sup>39</sup>

Heiland suggests that the sublime experience in *A Sicilian Romance* occurs not from the outside observation of the sublime nature but rather from the inner experience of the absent mother. The missing mother as a literary convention here serves to heighten the feeling of paternal threat coming from the patriarchal father and the heroine's fear is removed when she reconnects with the mother. There is a necessity therefore to address the mother in the Gothic novel, even if she plays a marginal role, and even a greater need to analyse her in relation to the main heroine.

Mother-daughter relationship is central to Radcliffean novels, but it is also the case in *The Castle of Otranto*. Matilda, who is a model of filial obedience, who has never prior to the beginning of the novel been guilty of disobeying her father's orders, is much more affected by her mother's wishes and orders. Even though she is to marry Frederic upon her father's orders, she tells her mother that she will not do so, until she orders it, "I will not marry Frederic until thou commandest it. (...) A frown from thee can do more than all my father's severity." (*Otranto* 93) Likewise, in *A Sicilian Romance*, Julia experiences the strongest emotions when encountering her mother, previously she is much affected by seeing a spectre, which is in fact her mother. Julia's tie to her mother is represented early on in the novel by one of the most basic Gothic devices, a picture. Julia finds a miniature of her mother and without even realizing the persona depicted feels strong connection to her, "She sighed and wept, still gazing on the picture, which seemed to engage her by a kind of fascination." (*A Sicilian Romance* 27) Julia brings the picture to Madame de Menon, and this is an incentive for Madame de Menon to tell the girls the whole story of their mother. Their mother's tragic love brings Julia and her mother closer to each other.

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<sup>39</sup> Heiland, *Gothic and Gender: An Introduction* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 61.

It is clear that the identity of a Gothic heroine is not complete until she finds her mother, or at least learns more about her mother's life. The reason for this is of course that the parent is an obvious part of one's identity, a quality that is amplified in the Gothic novel in a mother-daughter relationship. Not only is the mother part of the background for a young heroine but also their future. According to Kristeva, Irigaray, and others, the discovery, or re-discovery in this case, creates one's identity as a female, or to quote Milbank on a similar opinion, "The child can now understand himself or herself as the product of the union of male and female – of a truly sexual union – and understand that the mother is also a lover."<sup>40</sup> What happens here is that the previous dichotomy that was impossible (the division between a mother and a lover) for male and western psyche, according to Irigaray, merges into one. This merging prepares the heroine herself to become a dichotomous whole as well, by entering a union of marriage, she will become a lover and a mother. This unity being impossible prior to identifying with her mother.

Julia's identification with her mother is an essential one but not dominating or oppressive. By finding her mother, Julia, becomes more of an individual herself and she finally succeeds in understanding of herself as separate from her mother.<sup>41</sup> Instead of merging identities, they open their identities to those of others. She returns to her origin, and by understanding her mother and her background is able to follow through with her own life. In saving and in the end protecting her mother from the tyrant father and husband, the heroine is able to fulfil her destiny different from her mother and at the same time the one that the mother would have wished for herself. The mother is sacrificed and bears the cross so that her daughter's life is complete. The mother in *The Castle of Otranto* wants to bring herself to the sacrifice, but rather in order to save the family honour and her husband, therefore, her

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<sup>40</sup> Alison Milbank, "Introduction" to *A Sicilian Romance* by Ann Radcliffe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), xxv.

<sup>41</sup> More on the subject and more on the discourse of Milbank and Freeman see Heiland, *Gothic and Gender: An Introduction* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 62.

meekness in the novel actually serves to promote her daughters unhappiness and in the end death.

The only choice that the mother is given in both of these novels is that of a sacrifice and subordination, but at the same time, their what could be called 'proper' behavior, instead of promoting their or their daughter's happiness, only promotes further tragedy. The question arises whether the choices that the mothers, and in turn their daughters make are really the 'proper' ones. In Radcliffe's later novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, she seems to question this blind obedience to a social code. What we see in the later Gothic novels is a slow transition from a reactive and passive heroine to an educated and a more active one. Perhaps, in Lewis's novel *The Monk*, the concern of what is truly 'moral' set of behavior is only raised but never raised, however he does address the inherent problems in the early conventions of the Gothic heroines.

## **2. THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO (RADCLIFFE) AND THE MONK (LEWIS)**

### **2.1. Education. Chastity as an Indiscretion in *The Monk***

Much has been said and written about Radcliffe's use of the explained supernatural. The readers as much as the characters in the novels themselves are deceived into believing in supernatural events, beliefs that are in the end shattered and explained away, not always in the most convincing matter. One of the reasons for this is, according to Botting, to bring the readers back to the eighteenth-century convention of realism and reason, but more importantly back to the reality and away from over indulgent fantasy and imagination: "While extremes of imagination and feeling are described in the novels, the object is always to moderate them with a sense of propriety."<sup>42</sup> Ann Radcliffe in her most celebrated work, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, presents the readers with what could be called a traditional Gothic heroine, one with impeccable moral standards, well educated in different kinds of art, with special understanding of music and art, and most importantly what could be called a victim of 'sensitivity'. This simple explanation, however, does not grasp the whole concept of Radcliffe's heroine; Emily, is not simply a Gothic heroine swayed by every misfortune that she encounters but rather a heroine who is taught moderation in sensibility and other excesses of emotion and her ability to use this self-restraint in her ventures.

*The Mysteries of Udolpho* begins with a fairy like setting of La Vallee where Emily St Aubert lives with both of her parents in a perfect, harmonious relationship. Their happiness is obstructed only by the early death of Emily's two brothers, the event that Emily's parents managed to overcome with humility and patience. In her early years, Emily is described as one with "delicacy of mind, warm affections, and ready benevolence; but with these was observable a degree of susceptibility too exquisite to admit of lasting peace."<sup>43</sup> This

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<sup>42</sup> Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 1996), 65.

<sup>43</sup> Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, ed. Bonamy Dobree (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 5. Further references are given after quotations in the text.

inclination to sensibility is something that Emily's father, Monsieur St. Aubert, watches with an apprehension and something that he tries to subdue, by means of educating his daughter, "He endeavoured, therefore, to strengthen her mind; to enure her to habits of self-command; to teach her to reject the first impulse of her feelings, and to look, with cool examination, upon the disappointments he sometimes threw in her way." This early education is critical when analysing Emily's character, her disposition to sensibility and her ability to command her emotions is in fact the most important theme in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.

To one who has read *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, or indeed any other Gothic novel it might seem contradictory that a novel filled with emotions and feeling is in fact insisting on its restraint. Indeed, as Terry Castle notes Radcliffe's heroines are often very affected by their emotions:

Her [Radcliffe's] heroes and heroines are invariable distinguished by their emotional sensitivity and intense responsiveness to the sublimities of nature. At the same time, however, Radcliffe regularly depicts her female characters as painfully vulnerable to 'imaginary fears'.<sup>44</sup>

It is still a matter of critical debate whether Emily manages to moderate her emotions and feelings, however it is indisputable that Radcliffe views self-restraint as a means of inner strength and ability to overcome difficult situations that her heroines find themselves in.

Emily, as might be expected in a Gothic heroine, loses her mother early on in the novel. It is at these moments that she is being tested in her ability to overcome severe emotions. Her plight is intensified, since her father's death closely follows. Once again, the last words of St. Aubert to Emily prior to his death are a warning against excesses of sensibility, "Above all, my dear Emily [...] do not indulge in the pride of fine feeling, the romantic error of amiable minds." (*Udolpho* 79) As Emily returns from the journey she has

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<sup>44</sup> Terry Castle, "Explanatory Notes" to *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Ann Radcliffe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 678.

undertaken with her father to her native home, she realizes the full significance of her father's education. As she is left orphaned and alone she ponders on his words and reflects to herself that the teaching has not been lost on her, "Yes, [...], let me not forget the lessons he has taught me! How often he has pointed out the necessity of resisting even virtuous sorrow; how often we have admired together the greatness of a mind, that can at once suffer and reason." (*Udolpho* 92)

Emily's strength is manifested not only in her ability to overcome emotional turmoil but also the ability to manage the little inheritance that she receives from her father. St. Aubert informs Emily that she is consigned to the care of her aunt Madame Cheron, and while she is not exactly the person he would choose as her guardian, she's the only female relation that Emily has. While warning Emily of dangers of sensibility, St. Aubert also makes Emily promise to destroy some manuscripts in his study and most importantly to never sell La Vallee and make sure that if she were to marry to make an article in the contract, that the chateau will always be hers. It is significant that while concerned for Emily's mental well being, he is also concerned for her material security, "His [St. Aubert] desired legacy to her [Emily] is thus an independence – a personal integrity or wholeness – that ensures she will not lose herself or her property to another."<sup>45</sup> St. Aubert's education leaves Emily with strong moral support and ability to defeat her misfortunes. Once again, it is important to mention that there is a critical disagreement on how well she manages to reinforce his lessons in her further adventures, nevertheless her efforts are rewarded and she comes out victorious in the final chapters of the novel.

Matthew Lewis in his most celebrated and criticized work, *The Monk* deals with education completely differently than in Radcliffe in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. In this novel, the readers are also presented with a sensitive, naïve, beautiful heroine, Antonia. Antonia is first introduced at the Church where she comes to listen to the sermon preached by the Monk

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<sup>45</sup> Donna Heiland, *Gothic and Gender: An Introduction* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 74.

of the Capuchin order, Ambrosio. She attends the sermon with her aunt Leonella, and as soon as she utters the first syllables she attracts the attention of a gentleman close by, Don Lorenzo, “The voice came from a female, the delicacy and elegance of whose figure inspired the Youths with the most lively curiosity to view the face to which it belonged.”<sup>46</sup> Lorenzo and his friend are unable to view Antonia’s face because she is wearing a veil, which is a custom in Murcia, where she and her mother have been residing.

Lorenzo and Don Christoval engage in a conversation with Antonia and her aunt Leonella, the latter devoid of all propriety tells the story of Antonia and her mother Elvira, and the reason they are in Madrid. Elvira and Leonella were daughters of “as honest a pains-taking Shoe-maker as any in Cordova” (*The Monk* 13). Elvira, unfortunately, fell in love with a Nobleman, the son of the Marquis de las Cisternas, and they got married secretly, against the Marquis’s wishes. The old marquis was enraged, and Elvira and her husband were forced to flee Spain, leaving their two-year-old son with the Marquis. Elvira and her husband spent thirteen years in the Indies, where her husband died, and she returned to Spain with Antonia, her daughter, while still an infant. The marquis assigned Elvira a small pension and allowed her to live in an old castle in Murcia. After the death of the old marquis, the Steward refused to pay the pension any longer, and Elvira has come with her daughter to supply to his son, to renew it.

Lorenzo’s interest in Antonia prompts him to try and help her and her mother. Being an old friend of the young Marquis de las Cisternas, he believes that he will be able to promote their well being. Lorenzo seeks out Don Raymond<sup>47</sup>, and the latter reveals to Lorenzo that he has fallen in love with his sister. The novel using the conventional Gothic narrative structure of story within story, starts conveying the adventure of Raymond and

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<sup>46</sup> Matthew Lewis, *The Monk*, ed. Howard Anderson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 9. Further references are given after quotations in the text.

<sup>47</sup> Don Raymond is the Marquis de las Cisternas. When recounting his story with Agnes, he uses the name he has adapted for his travels, Alphonso d’Alvarada. Don Raymond will be used throughout the analysis, except when in the quotation from the narrative, where Alphonso d’Alvarada will be kept.



Agnes. Raymond is concerned for the security of Agnes, who was forced to take the veil and enter the convent in Madrid. While Lorenzo is preoccupied with saving his sister, Antonia becomes the object of adoration of corrupted Ambrosio, who manages with the use of supernatural power to rape her and subsequently ends up killing her.

As noted previously Antonia is a classic Gothic heroine in that she is naïve and innocent. This is however, where one encounters the first conflict with the traditional Gothic novel notions. While Radcliffean heroes and heroines are similarly inexperienced and uncorrupted, in this lies their strength and power over others and it is what helps them overcome difficult situations. In the end it is exactly their chastity that is rewarded. In the case of Lewis, it is the exact opposite, innocence is what brings about Antonia's downfall, and moreover it is her pureness that attracts the unwanted attentions of the lust craved Ambrosio.

When describing all the virtues and righteousness of Ambrosio, Lorenzo remarks that one of the reasons that he is considered to be a Saint is that he has never transgressed a single rule of his order, and furthermore he is reported to not know in "what consists the difference of Man and Woman." To this Antonia responds thus, "Does that make a Saint?" enquired Antonia; "Bless me! Then I am one?" (*The Monk* 17) Antonia is subsequently scolded by her aunt Leonella, who almost proceeds to enumerate the main differences between the sexes. What is important about this scene is that Lewis, from the very beginning reveals the whole extent of Antonia's innocence and ignorance. Lorenzo very perceptively reacts to this manifestation of Antonia's state of mind by warning her that not everyone is as uncorrupted as she is, "Artless yourself, you suspect not others of deceit; and viewing the world through the medium of your own truth and innocence, you fancy all who surround you to deserve your confidence and esteem. What pity, that these gay visions must soon be dissipated." (*The Monk* 21) These last words of concern that Antonia is soon to discover all the evil contained in human minds, is an important foreshadowing of the tragic future that will befall Antonia.

Ambrosio who in his outward appearance is an embodiment of virtue and morality, is in fact corrupted by pride and vain ambition. Lewis notes that were Ambrosio left to himself and his true nature was not suppressed by the rigid monastic education, he would have been “an ornament to his Country”, but as it turned out he was raised in “selfish partiality” (*The Monk* 237) and became jealous of the others equal to him and disdainful to those beneath him. Ambrosio is seduced by Matilda who enters the convent as a young novice Rosario, later she reveals the truth of her love to him, and after some hesitation, Ambrosio falls victim to her womanly charms. Ambrosio insatiable with Matilda’s love turns to Antonia, who charms him exactly with her innocence, “Still her countenance was so sweet, so innocent, so heavenly, as might have charmed an heart less susceptible, than that which panted in the Abbot’s breast.” (*The Monk* 240) The description of Antonia makes her character resemble an angel. This is one of the ironic twists in Lewis’s narrative, that the person previously linked to being one fallen from heaven is Ambrosio.<sup>48</sup>

Ambrosio and Antonia, at the end of the novel are revealed to be sister and brother, but before this fact is exposed, there are many allusions in the text to the relationship between the two, no matter how different in reality they are. The first comparison is presented in the afore mentioned ignorance of the differences in female and male gender and as Maggie Kilgour notes, it is not a natural ignorance but one rather forced by education, “Innocence is equated not only with the absence of sexuality, but more precisely with the repression of the fact that there are actually two sexes.”<sup>49</sup> The repression in Ambrosio’s case comes from his monastic upbringing, and in Antonia it is her mother, who in order to protect her chastity conceals the truth about male and female relationships from her. This concealment is best illustrated by the oft quoted passage where Ambrosio wonders how Antonia can be this

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<sup>48</sup> Ambrosio’s origins are a mystery to everyone, since he was found as an infant by an abbey door. Of course, in the end, it is revealed, that he was left there by his grandfather, the hateful Marquis de las Cisternas. It is significant, however that he is believed to have fallen from heaven, which Capuchins link him to being a present from the Virgin, but there is a second, more accurate connection that links Ambrosio to the fallen angel, Lucifer.

<sup>49</sup> Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), 146.

innocent while reading the Bible, but later on he notices that the Bible that Antonia is reading, has been censored by her mother:

‘How!’ said the Friar to himself; ‘Antonia reads the Bible, and is still so ignorant?’

But, upon a further inspection, He found that Elvira had made the same remark. That prudent Mother, while She admired the beauties of the sacred writings, was convinced that, unrestricted, no reading more improper could be permitted a young Woman. Many of the narratives can only tend to excite ideas the worst calculated for a female breast: Every thing is called plainly and roundly by its name; and the annals of a Brothel would scarcely furnish a greater choice of indecent expressions. (*The Monk* 259)

Therefore, considering the Bible an improper reading for a young woman, Elvira hands her daughter with a Bible that she has herself re-written and altered or entirely omitted the improper passages. While this passage coming from Lewis might be considered blasphemous and cynical, it clearly illustrates the complete veil of innocence and protection that Elvira has cast over Antonia.

It may seem that the education of the characters in Radcliffe’s novels is no more instructive than in *The Monk*, that it is similarly concerned with fine sentiments and philosophical knowledge rather than practical information. However, in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, ignorance and the absence of knowledge of the vices of the world is considered a virtue, note the frequent exclamations of St Aubert on Valancourt, “this young man has never been at Paris” (*Udolpho* 36, 41), and while he is uneasy about what would happen to Valancourt were he to encounter Paris (and justly so), he still cannot help but admire the youth’s innocence. Lewis on the other hand seems to almost mock this kind of education, which consists in a lack of education in some areas. Antonia’s innocence is simply a badge of ignorance, “In contrast, the passivity and innocence of Antonia, whose education is designed

to make her a proper, if ignorant, lady, leads her to trust and even encourage the lustful Ambrosio, who ends up raping and murdering her.”<sup>50</sup>

The behaviour and actions of Ambrosio versus Antonia, illustrate the two different approaches and reactions to a certain model of education, in case of Ambrosio, his theoretical and isolated education only corrupts him, “Education does not make men whole individuals, but creates an internal abyss between a natural private self, which is essentially good, and an artificial and superficial public self, which is not only evil but further perverts the former by invading and distorting its desires.”<sup>51</sup> In Radcliffe, Valancourt’s secluded wondering and remoteness from people only invokes his inner virtues, in Lewis, isolation from the world is seen as suppressed force that is directed in the wrong direction once it is released. Similar link can be drawn in the case of Emily St Aubert and Antonia, in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* innocence and virtue is actually an asset that protects her, but with Antonia it is an exact opposite, it is an added allurement to the impious monk, “Antonia provokes him with her modesty and naivety, and her very innocence renders her powerless and contributes to her downfall.”<sup>52</sup> In fact, some of the critics imply that Antonia’s innocence is basically an incentive for rape.

There is a crude irony in *The Monk*, which reverts all efforts of a mother to protect and shield her daughter from the misfortune, to actually promote her daughter’s tragedy. The previous chapters deal in length with the influence of the mother and mother figures on the heroines in the earlier Gothic novels. The mother is either displaced and impotent or absent altogether. In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Monsieur St Aubert, unlike the previous ruthless Gothic fathers, takes on the role of a guardian and teacher. In *The Monk*, Elvira taught by her

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<sup>50</sup> William D. Brewer, "Transgendering in Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*" (*Gothic Studies* 6.2 (2004): 192-207. EBSCOhost. Web. 23 Sept. 2009), 194.

<sup>51</sup> Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), 144.

<sup>52</sup> Emma McEvoy, "Introduction" to *The Monk* by Matthew Lewis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 5.

own hardships does her best to protect her daughter from such a fate as hers but effectually leads her into an even worse one.

In the beginning of the novel Lorenzo charmed by Antonia, without delay asks her mother's permission to marry her. Lorenzo's father died leaving him a small inheritance but he is a potential heir to his uncle the Duke of Medina. Even though Lorenzo believes that there is no reason of his uncle to disapprove of Antonia and even if he disapproves he has enough fortune to support them both, Elvira taught by her negative experience is forced to reject his offer of marriage to Antonia, "Taught by experience that an union contracted against the inclinations of families on either side must be unfortunate, I will save my Daughter from those miseries, which I have suffered." (*The Monk* 213) One cannot help but wonder whether Antonia might have escaped her tragic ending if her mother was not so cautious and protective of her daughter's future. On the other hand, Elvira had justified reasons for her conduct.

While an option of elopement is always present to Radcliffe's heroines, none of them in fact have had this experience. In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Emily is on the brink of eloping with Valancourt but in the end decides not to. As one can see here, Emily essentially makes the right decision. She might have been able to avoid various dreadful adventures, but in the end, Emily can pride herself not only in a happy future with Valancourt but also in untainted conscience. Indeed Elvira's biggest mistake is not in refusing Lorenzo's application but her decision to elope with Antonia's father. Throughout the novel there are numerous instances where one wonders if Antonia would have been able to escape her tragic end: if Elvira had allowed the marriage to Lorenzo, without waiting for the approval of the uncle; if Antonia had not asked Ambrosio to be her mother's confessor; if Lorenzo was not delayed by the tribulations of his sister, and so on.<sup>53</sup> At the same time, there is a feeling of doom and

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<sup>53</sup> Lewis ironically notes that had Lorenzo or Raymond been informed of the death of Elvira, there was still a chance of Antonia being saved from Ambrosio, "Had He [Raymond] been informed that Elvira's death had left

inevitability to a tragic end of Elvira and Antonia, and Kilgour suggests that it is brought upon them by the very choice of Elvira to marry someone outside of her rank, “The original sin in the text is that of the mother, miscegenation, the crossing of social boundaries [...]”<sup>54</sup> There is in fact an almost perverted Oedipal pull for Ambrosio to be, unknowingly, the murderer of his mother Elvira.

Every attempt of Elvira to protect her daughter from the outside world only brings Antonia closer to her downfall. In fact, Lewis’s irony goes so far, that at times *The Monk* is on the brink of being a parody of itself. When Antonia overcome by all of her emotions, falls asleep in her mother’s room, Elvira’s ghost appears to her daughter to warn her of the approaching danger, “Yet three days, and we meet again.” (*The Monk*, 318) This unleashes a chain of events, Jacintha (the landlady) flies to Ambrosio, Antonia falls ill, and finally Ambrosio is able to follow through with his plan of gaining power over Antonia.

It has been noted, that in the interplay of Ambrosio’s emotions, it is not only lust and desire at work but also some kind of necessity for dominance. After the sexual intercourse with Matilda, Ambrosio becomes effeminised, while Matilda takes on the role of the more dominant partner.<sup>55</sup> Ambrosio effeminised by Matilda seeks a victim that he can dominate and blame his ruin on, “What seems to have held Lewis’s imagination more than institutional despotism was the more intimate and essentially psychological subjugation of one individual by another.”<sup>56</sup> Just as Matilda seduces Ambrosio, educates and models him according to her own vision, he tries to do the same with Antonia, but his success comes bitter to him in the end, and only renders him even more vulnerable and exposed.

As was previously mentioned, many critics noted that innocence and chastity of Antonia is depicted almost as an invitation for the despotism of Ambrosio. In fact, Ambrosio

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her Daughter Friendless and unprotected, He would doubtless have taken such measures, as would have ensured her from every danger: But Antonia was not destined to be so fortunate.” (*The Monk*, 310)

<sup>54</sup> Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), 164.

<sup>55</sup> The interplay between Matilda and Ambrosio, and Matilda’s transformations will be discussed in the following pages.

<sup>56</sup> Robert Kiely, *The Romantic Novel in England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972) 115.

blames his fall on Antonia, “For your sake, have committed this murder, and sold myself to eternal tortures. Now you are in my power: The produce of my guilt will at least be mine.” (*The Monk* 379) Antonia is his, but as in the case with Matilda, Ambrosio instantly regrets his deed after it is accomplished, and once again Ambrosio puts all his blame on Antonia. In the terrible scene after Antonia’s rape, where the latter realizes what has happened to her, she tries to leave, but Ambrosio stops her saying that, “Fatal witch! Was it not thy beauty? Have you not plunged my soul into infamy? Have you not made me a perjured Hypocrite, a Ravisher, an Assassin!” (*The Monk* 385) Antonia is reduced to a simple state of a scapegoat.

Ambrosio determines to leave Antonia in the vaults under the monastery, where she was put after Ambrosio administered a ‘death potion’ to her. Antonia’s reappearance into the world would immediately accuse him of the crimes he has committed. As Ambrosio is contemplating his further actions, an angry mob led by the Marquis de las Cisternas and incidentally Lorenzo seeking to revenge his sister, burst into the vaults. In a moment of confusion, Antonia flees, and Ambrosio seizes her and stabs to death. Ambrosio’s obsession with Antonia is connected more with the idea of sexual and other possession, but once he gains it, he is devastated, “Women interest Ambrosio because he can possess them, yet possession inevitably kills them either literally or figuratively, rendering them the appallingly inhuman figures pictures here.”<sup>57</sup> Antonia is no more a woman she was at the beginning of the novel, but only a shell of unhappy being. Lorenzo finds her before she dies, and she is able to say a few soothing words to him.

As Antonia is dying and Lorenzo is holding her in his arms, as many other Gothic heroines completely devoid of selfishness, Antonia tries to calm Lorenzo down. Despite all the horrible things that happened to her, however, Lewis seems to offer Antonia at least the happiness of going to heaven to meet her mother. Compared to the sufferings of the Bleeding Nun and later Agnes, Antonia’s fate does not seem so horrifying, “Despite her rape, Antonia

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<sup>57</sup> Donna Heiland, *Gothic and Gender: An Introduction* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 41.

returns to a state of innocence; death rescues her from normal development, and the attainment of female sexuality which in the texts has been associated with a fate worse than death: the un-dead state of Agnes and the Bleeding Nun.”<sup>58</sup> Antonia’s fate is thus fulfilled, a fate which is foreshadowed throughout the whole text, beginning with the gypsy woman telling her her future, ending with her mother telling her they will be re-united in heaven.

On of the cruellest twists for Antonia is her easy replacement by Virginia de Villa-Franca. It seems that Virginia was chosen for her brother by Agnes, while still in the convent, “She could not have wished her Brother a more desirable union: Heiress of Villa-Franca, virtuous, and accomplished, Virginia seemed calculated to make him happy.” (*The Monk* 397) This turn of events has a resonance to the ending of Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto*, where Matilda is replaced with Isabella, after Matilda’s death. However, Theodore only stays with Isabella to indulge in a melancholy over Matilda’s death with someone, who knew her closely, that is Isabella. For Lorenzo, the memory of Antonia is replaced in time with the happy marriage with Virginia, “Antonia’s image was gradually effaced from his bosom; and Virginia became sole Mistress of that heart, which She well deserved to possess without a Partner.” (*The Monk* pp. 419 – 420) Similarly as in *The Castle of Otranto*, the sins of the parents are visited upon the children, Elvira’s elopement and marriage to a different social class, is annihilated with the death of Antonia and consequently of Ambrosio.

## **2.2. Sensibility, Proper Conduct and Property in *The Mysteries of Udolpho***

While in *The Monk*, every step Elvira takes to ensure her happiness or her daughter’s goes amiss, in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Emily who has strong moral values and good understanding and backed by her father’s education, manages to deal well with every misfortune that comes her way. Many critics see Radcliffe’s heroines as mere symbols or

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<sup>58</sup> Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), 161.



ciphers that only passively react to the external circumstances, in fact, many argue that Radcliffe's heroines are devoid of any characterization. The differences between the good and the bad female heroines is vast, but Kilgour argues that in general all the positive female heroines are only variations lacking any development or description, "In her attack on individualism, Radcliffe seems to deny women any discrete identity, so that they are simply a version of the same story, a story that is furthermore irritatingly recycled with minimal variation throughout her different novels."<sup>59</sup> It is true that Emily shares many characteristics with Radcliffe's other heroines, and perhaps many other Gothic heroines, but it is an exaggeration to say that Emily is completely lacking characterization. Emily perhaps is swayed by her emotions, and is prone to fainting and sometimes overindulgent in her imagination, but she shows to a great extent that her actions are influenced by her inner thought processes and logical judgement.

That Emily fully depends on her own judgement, and is not easily bent by her emotions or other people is particularly evident in the beginning of the novel in her relationship with Valancourt. In the early chapters Emily is orphaned and finds herself under the care of her only remaining female relative Madame Cheron. Madame Cheron while not a malevolent or evil woman, is a vain and somewhat imprudent lady who is easily influenced by ostensible flattery and vision of effortless profit. When first learning of Valancourt's attentions to Emily she rejects the courting and scolds her niece for impropriety, but when learning of Valancourt's influential relations, she blatantly promotes the union between the young lovers. In contrast, Emily, who is younger and is affected by her affections for Valancourt, still questions her conduct towards him and tries to judge his character:

For though in this narrow period she had observed much that was admirable in his taste and disposition, and though these observations had been sanctioned by the opinion of her father,

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<sup>59</sup> Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), 127.

they were not sufficient testimonies of his general worth to determine her upon a subject so infinitely important to her future happiness as that, which now solicited her attention. (Udolpho, 106 – 107)

Even though it is clear to the readers that Emily and Valancourt are the true lovers, it is of vast importance that Emily realizes that her affections alone are not good indicators of Valancourt's character.<sup>60</sup>

Prior to meeting Emily once more at Madame Cheron's house, Valancourt visits her at La Vallee. While she is aware that nothing in her conduct could be reproached, she rejects his visits since they could be seen as inappropriate. While with some of the Gothic heroines proper conduct is at times an obstruction to their happiness (the self-denying and excessively unselfish Matilda and her mother Hippolita in *The Castle of Otranto*, and to some extent Elvira in *The Monk*) Emily's conduct is in fact promoting her happiness and ensuring her well being. When Emily meets Valancourt under her aunt's supervision, and their union is accepted by both families, nothing stands in the way of their happiness, or so it seems. As Emily and Valancourt's marriage is approaching, Madame Cheron is courted by Montoni, whose sole motivation is Madame Cheron's supposed immense fortune. Montoni marries Madame Cheron and intervenes in Valancourt marrying Emily.

When Valancourt learns that his future happiness is obstructed by Montoni, he proposes Emily to elope. Emily's rejection of Valancourt's offer comes not only from consideration of herself, but also a concern for him:

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<sup>60</sup> In her brilliant parody of the Gothic novel *Northanger Abbey*, Jane Austen, recreates a similar situation, where the young protagonist, Miss Morland, meets an amiable Mr. Tilney. While Miss Morland is preoccupied with the thoughts whether it is proper for a heroine to be in love with a gentleman, prior to his proclamation of love to her, Mr. Allen whose charge Miss Morland is under, makes sure he finds out something about Mr. Tilney, "How proper Mr. Tilney might be as a dreamer or a lover, had not yet, perhaps entered Mr. Allen's head, but that he was not objectionable as a common acquaintance for his young charge, he was on inquiry satisfied; for he had early in the evening taken pains to know who her partner was, and had been assured of Mr. Tilney's being a clergyman, and of a very respectable family in Gloucestershire." (Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (London: Penguin Books, 1994), 17.) While Miss Morland is looked after and taken care by reasonable Mr. Allen, Emily is forced to take care of herself, which she does admiringly.

But duty, and good sense, however hard the conflict, at length, triumphed over affection and mournful presentiment; above all, she dreaded to involve Valancourt in obscurity and vain regret, which she saw, or thought she saw, must be the too certain consequence of a marriage in their present circumstances; and she acted, perhaps, with somewhat more than female fortitude, when she resolved to endure a present, rather than provoke a distant misfortune. (*Udolpho* 155)

This situation, where the heroine realizes that an elopement and an outlawed marriage might not be only harmful to her, but in the long run might also affect the happiness of her future happens, is revoking Elvira's experience in *The Monk*. Elvira, not as strong and prudent as Emily, decides to elope, and this decision renders her and her husband unhappy.

Elvira's happiness to a great extent stems from the realization that her decision has made her partner unhappy. It is a remarkable insinuation from two fundamentally different writers, such as Radcliffe and Lewis, that while Gothic heroines are sensitive and weak, their decisions in the early phases of courtship are the ones that are essential. Men in both of these situations are portrayed as the ones laying aside logic and sense as a result of emotion, while the heroines are the ones that have to make the final decision.

It is also a particularly interesting wording by Radcliffe that Emily had made her decision with "more than female fortitude". In the scenes prior to Emily's departure to Italy and her separation from Valancourt, it seems that Valancourt is the one more affected by his emotions, while Emily tries to subdue her passions. Some critics have seen this as the reversal of roles, where Emily is more masculine, and Valancourt is somewhat effeminised, "And just as Valancourt deserves his heroic status because of his feminised behaviour, so does Emily earn her right to be a heroine by aping traditional masculine qualities."<sup>61</sup> The argument follows that the truly good Gothic heroes are the ones effeminised, and that the heroines are able to succeed in their happiness due to their masculinity. This argument is, however, somewhat generalized and perhaps far-fetched. It seems rather that Radcliffe in her true moral

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<sup>61</sup> Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontes* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 99.

principles, once more tries to warn the reader of the excess of any kind, either sensibility or cruelty. In fact, it is the harmony of the individual versus the society and passion versus reason that is important in the character of Emily:

For Valancourt, social duty and individual desires are antithetical; the first is merely an artificial restraint, the second the only true authority. For Radcliffe, however, the two must be reconciled; the individualist male, always close to the rational gothic villain, must be restrained by the socialized female.<sup>62</sup>

It is important to Radcliffe that while her characters should be sensitive and open to their inner feelings and trials, they have to be aware of the social circumstances and responsive to the outside world.

Emily is balanced in her emotions and propriety, however it does seem that sometimes Radcliffe's concern for the decorum makes Emily a somewhat frustrating heroine, who does not always act according to her prior avowals. One of the disquieting instances is where Emily after surviving all the horrors at the castle of Udolpho, safe at Chateau-le-Blanc meets Valancourt, but before the couple can be happily reconciled, Emily learns from Count de Villefort of Valancourt's appalling behaviour in Paris. While there is some truth to Count de Villefort's account, it is greatly exaggerated and proves to be false in many aspects. Valancourt has succumbed to gambling, but his reputation of cheating money out of others and involvement with another woman proves to be fabricated. Valancourt tries to explain his conduct to Emily but she is resolved not to hear his side of the story. This proves to be almost fatal to the lovers, while Valancourt's name is cleared in the end, it is not due to Emily's efforts. Conduct of Emily toward Valancourt seems anti-climatic and somewhat disappointing in some aspects:

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<sup>62</sup> Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), 136.

There is nothing salutary, creative, or formative about Emily's interior experience. She does not emerge from her captivity in Udolpho with a fuller comprehension of the complexities of human nature or sympathy for its weaknesses: she is willing to dismiss Valancourt from her life at the first hint that he had gambled and caroused during his stay in Paris and, in fact, becomes so hysterical at the thought, that the poor fellow can never attempt to explain himself without causing her to become faint.<sup>63</sup>

While for Kiely, Emily's behaviour seems to be a work of hysterical mindset, Emily's action can also be seen as one of a reasonable and sensible mind. Once again, Emily shows that she has more sense than her aunt, and she is not willing to risk marrying someone who has proven to be unworthy of her.

Emily's conduct toward Valancourt is perhaps hasty but in doing so, she's keeping in mind her father's education and principles. She is ensuring her emotional and indeed her material well being as well. If in fact Valancourt has fully yielded to gambling, it is possible that by marrying him Emily would be risking her property, especially La Vallee that is dear to her.

Emily's conduct to Valancourt shows her as a reasonable and conscientious heroine, but even she is not always unaffected by sentiment. Emily, while condescending to her superstitious maid Annette, is responsive herself to ghost stories and as regards to Montoni imagines all possible and impossible cruelty. Emily's gullibility is many times a source of unnecessary terror to her, the skeleton behind the veil being one of the infamous instances, but also her anxiety over her aunt causes her to endanger herself. Emily's sensibility at such occasions seems foolish, but at times serves as foreshadowing and depicts her as an intuitive person. The very first day that Emily arrives with Montoni and her aunt at the castle of Udolpho, she feels that somehow her destiny is connected to this castle, "A strange kind of presentiment frequently, on this day, occurred to her; - it seemed as if her fate rested here, and was by some invisible means connected with this castle." (*Udolpho* 250) Though much of the

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<sup>63</sup> Robert Kiely, *The Romantic Novel in England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 78.

narrative of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* takes place outside of the castle, Udolpho is a central setting where Emily's destiny is decided.

It is at the castle of Udolpho that much of the interaction between Emily and Montoni, the embodiment of a Gothic villain, takes place. The castle is a juxtaposition to the idyllic pastoral La Vallee, and tyrannical Montoni is the opposite of benevolent and caring St Aubert. The character of Montoni owes much to previous literary villains, most notably Miltonic Satan and Walpole's Prince Manfred, however there is also some kind of 'ruined majesty'<sup>64</sup> about him that strangely scares and attracts Emily at the same time: "Emily observed these written characters of his thoughts with deep interest, and not without some degree of awe, when she considered that she was entirely in his power." (*Udolpho* 192) Many critics have noted that Emily's dread of Montoni is bordering on semi-erotic fascination, and furthermore linked it to the notorious incestuous relationships in the Gothic novels.

Montoni may well be a variation of a tyrannical father figure, however in this case his sole motivation is financial gain: "Although she [Emily] fears sexual violation or worse at his hands, Montoni's interest in her is more economic than libidinous: he simply wants her money."<sup>65</sup> Montoni's reason for marrying Madame Cheron is simply her property, once he realizes that he will not be able to get money out of her he turns to Emily, whom he ironically considers to be wiser than her aunt: "I am not in the habit of flattering, and you will, therefore, receive, as sincere, the praise I bestow, when I say, that you possess an understanding superior to that of your sex." (*Udolpho* 380) He continues by enumerating the main follies of women, according to him greed and love of power, the flaws that are mainly his own and Madame Cheron's. Emily is unaffected by these emotions but is not willing to give over her property, one of the main reasons being her feelings toward Valancourt.

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<sup>64</sup> Terry Castle, "Explanatory Notes" to *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Ann Radcliffe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 678.

<sup>65</sup> Terry Castle, "Introduction" to *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Ann Radcliffe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), x.

Emily would have handed over all of her property in order to secure her aunt's life but once her aunt is no more, Emily's determination is strengthened with the thought that her aunt had died securing this property and what is more important is that it would secure her future happiness with Valancourt:

For Valancourt's sake also she determined to preserve these estates, since they would afford that competency, by which she hoped to secure the comfort of their future lives. As she thought of this, she indulged the tenderness of tears, and anticipated the delight of that moment, when, with affectionate generosity, she might tell him they were his own. (*Udolpho*, 379)

Once again, Emily proves herself to be much more resilient than Valancourt, while she is enduring all kinds of horrors at Udolpho, he turns to gambling when overcome by his sorrow of losing Emily's company. In the end, it is also Emily herself that escapes from Udolpho, without Valancourt's help. It is true that Emily at times is a classic Gothic heroine in that she is haunted by shadows or mysterious music, but on the other hand she is also portrayed as a very active and able heroine, "there's undeniable gratification in knowing how she finds her way around the darkest recesses of the castle in the middle of the night; how she heats up her damp room, barricades the unlocked door, gains the sympathy of the servants..."<sup>66</sup> Emily is a very resourceful heroine, in many regards, since she is not only threatened by Montoni but also constantly under Count Morano's unsolicited affections.

Emily's situation where on one hand she is under constant threat to her life by Montoni, who is after her property, and on the other hand by Count's Morano's efforts to kidnap her, is similar to her accommodation in the double chamber. When Emily enters her room at Udolpho, she finds out that there are two doors to her chamber and to increase her anxiety, the second door cannot be fastened from the inside, "By placing a heavy chair against

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<sup>66</sup> Robert Kiely, *The Romantic Novel in England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 75.

it, she in some measure remedied the defect; yet she was still alarmed at the thought of sleeping in this remote room alone, with a door opening she knew not whither, and which could not be perfectly fastened on the inside.” (*Udolpho* 235) Emily’s chamber is the only place of retreat that she knows, but at the same time, it is also one of the most dangerous places in the castle. Indeed, Count Morano’s plans of kidnapping Emily are almost successful due to this second door leading to the secret passages. The double chamber serves as a kind of metaphor for Emily’s vulnerability at the castle of Udolpho: “With two doors, only one of which can be fastened from inside the room, the heroine is in a continually besieged condition – open to all corners.”<sup>67</sup>

Emily’s situation where Montoni tries to take away her property and preferably marry her to a wealthy man, echoes Julia’s in *A Sicilian Romance*, where Julia’s father tries to have her married to a man of high wealth and title, so he can profit from her marriage. Emily is at the same time haunted by Morano and his unwelcome attention, and at times by Montoni’s accomplices, whom Montoni unleashes upon Emily as a warning of what will happen to her if she does not bequeath her estates to him. Interestingly enough, the only person in the castle who is able to ensure her protection and does not want to rape her is Montoni. In fact, when Emily is for the second time rescued from Morano’s plan of kidnapping her, Emily is relieved to be back at the castle. Since Morano’s tyrannical and ruthless treatment is still better than sexual attentions of other men, and taking into consideration the death of Madame Cheron, Montoni for the moment becomes Emily’s only relative.

Emily’s situation seems almost desperate, but in the end, she is able to endure all the horrors of Udolpho and she escapes from the castle with the help of Ludovico and Monsieur Du Pont. The escape is perhaps somewhat anti-climatic, since after all the horrors and schemes to escape, it is a hasty turn of events, and Emily all of a sudden finds herself free.

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<sup>67</sup> Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontes* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 100.



From this point on, the plot unravels in a fast pace but another adventure awaits Emily at Chateau-le-Blanc. Several critics have noted the kind of nonentity of Radcliffe's heroines, and the events that take place after Emily escapes from Udolpho testifies it for them, "For David Durant therefore, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is a novel of anti-education, or Unbildung, in which Emily remains unchanged by her experiences learning nothing from the events she passively endures."<sup>68</sup> The statement is accurate in that it claims that Emily does not change much throughout the novel, however of all the Gothic heroines, Emily is the least that could be described as passive.

For a Gothic heroine, Emily is quite perceptive; she does not consider everyone to be as good as herself. She is able to form a quick opinion about others, even her closest family. As to her passivity, it has been discussed that Emily's ingenuity is one of the most interesting parts of the novel. Another important factor is that Emily is able to escape the castle of Udolpho through her own resourcefulness; she does not sit idly awaiting for Valancourt to save her. It is true that she escapes with the help of a man, but it is Ludovico who is responsible for her escape, a servant whom she throughout the novel prompts to find means of escape. Emily is not devoid of oversensitive nature, exaggeration, and long rambling thoughts on the sublime. At the same time, however, she uses all her talents to protect herself from outside danger and not only come out flawless, but also triumphant in her endeavour to procure herself and Valancourt material security.

### **2.3. Secondary Characters in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and in *The Monk***

It must be remembered that Emily does not receive any help from Valancourt, but neither does she receive any from her relatives. She is orphaned at a young age, and her only female relative Madame Cheron is a vain, superficial woman, who cares for nothing but her

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<sup>68</sup> Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), 114.

own gratification. She is not a mean or unkind person, but she is shallow and not very compassionate. Emily is not deceived in her aunt, realizing very early on that there will be no support from her aunt's side:

To the discovery, which had just been forced upon her, of Montoni's unworthiness, she had now to add, that of the cruel vanity, for the gratification of which her aunt was about to sacrifice her; of the effrontery and cunning, with which, at the time that she meditated the sacrifice, she boasted of her tenderness, or insulted her victim; and of the venomous envy, which, as it did not scruple to attack her father's character, could scarcely be expected to withhold from her own. (*Udolpho*, 205)

Not only is Madame Cheron offending the memory of Emily's father, she does so under pretence of common sense and understanding.

Madame Cheron's most distressing traits of present themselves in Venice, when Count Morano is courting Emily. Count Morano proposes to Emily, but she rejects his suit, however Montoni decides for Emily that she is to marry him, since he believes that Morano will offer him a large enough bribe to cover his debt. Fortunately, Emily is saved from this marriage, as it turns out that Morano is perhaps as destitute as Montoni is, but not before Emily is put through a horrible ordeal from her aunt's side, "The scenes with Madame Montoni are particularly disturbing in this regard, since the older woman is, after all, Emily's closest blood relation. One of Radcliffe's darkest and most Richardsonian insights is that kinship does not guarantee loving feeling."<sup>69</sup> Emily's terror here is only psychological, however it is tied back with a notion, that perhaps murder, torture and rape within family were not so common as

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<sup>69</sup> Terry Castle, "Introduction" to *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Ann Radcliffe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), xviii.

Gothic novels describe, but it does show the reader that at times the ‘natural’ social order, at least for a woman, can be just as terrifying as in the novel.<sup>70</sup>

The motivation behind Madame Cheron’s insistence on Emily marrying Count Morano is unclear, whether it is total compliance to her husband, or if it is jealousy and a wish to get rid of her niece. The motivation of Montoni is clear in this case, the prospect of gaining money from Morano and part of Emily’s inheritance. Montoni’s passion is money and wealth, and power that comes with it. His driving passion for money is the reason he marries Madame Cheron in the first place, “Montoni’s interest in both women turns entirely on the fact that they either have or can help him attain property that will rescue him from a desperate financial situation, and to their credit, he does not get what he wants from either one.”<sup>71</sup> Madame Cheron’s wealth is not what she presented it to be, and the little that she had was bequeathed under her name. Though silly and indulgent, her vanity suffers when she realizes that the only reason Montoni married her was her wealth, and instead of acknowledging that to some extent she is responsible for her forthcoming misfortunes, she holds on even more dearly to her property.

Madame Cheron realizes the full extent of her mistake only after the arrival at the castle of Udolpho. Locked up in her chamber, with cruel treatment from her husband, Madame Cheron, is still obstinate and refuses to hand over her property to Montoni. This is an important statement coming from Radcliffe, a morale that the evil and immoral are punished by their own defects. The same is true for Montoni who is punished for his schemes, not only by not being able to rescue himself from the debts, but also by having to deal with an imprudent Madame Cheron:

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<sup>70</sup> More on the social criticism indicated in Radcliffe, but more plainly worded in Wollstonecraft, see Caroline Gonda, *Reading Daughter’s fictions 1709 – 1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) pp. 156 - 157. The author deals with Maria Wollstonecraft’s *Maria, or the Wrongs of Woman*.

<sup>71</sup> Donna Heiland, *Gothic and Gender: An Introduction* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 75.

He had been deceived in an affair, wherein he meant to be the deceiver; out-witted by the superior cunning of a woman, whose understanding he despised, and to whom he had sacrificed his pride and his liberty, without saving himself from the ruin, which had impended over his head. (*Udolpho*, 190)

Upon this discovery, Montoni tries to at least obtain what he can from Madame Cheron, but is completely unsuccessful at it. Taking into account that Montoni is a Gothic villain, it is interesting that he does not kill Madame Cheron directly, as Emily supposes he has done. It is true that he expedites Madame Cheron's death, but he is not involved in her death directly. Indeed, Emily suspects Montoni to be involved in many more atrocities than he has actually committed (as in the case with Laurentini). Similarly, many of Radcliffe's villains are responsible for cruel deeds but direct torture and murder are not one of them. This is also true in *A Sicilian Romance*, where the tyrannical father locks his wife in a dungeon; he contemplates killing her but does not actually commit murder. It is a question whether direct death is not better than all the psychological torment that Madame Cheron suffers, nevertheless in the end, Madame Cheron by her death actually provides Emily with property that in the final scenes secures her happy future with Valancourt.

Madame Cheron similarly to Countess de Villefort belongs to a type of oppressive, not necessarily malicious, but somewhat spiteful aunts and stepmothers. When Emily is safely delivered from the castle of Udolpho, she encounters a storm by the shore of France, and ends up by the places she had visited with her father. In Languedoc, Emily and her company are saved and accommodated at the Chateau-le-Blanc, which came into the possession of Count De Villefort who had inherited it from Marquis De Villeroi. Here Emily encounters and befriends the daughter of Count De Villefort, Lady Blanche. Lady Blanche's story mirrors the narrative of other Gothic heroines, who are displaced by their mother-in-law in a convent. The convents in Radcliffe's narratives, instead of being a place of refuge serve as a confinement, "The introduction of Blanche, previously cloistered by her jealous stepmother, allows

Radcliffe to expose the duplicity of convents; as Blanche tells Emily, they are places where nature and religion are kept out rather than in.”<sup>72</sup>

Emily considers staying at the convent when she is disappointed by Valancourt, but no matter how tempting this option seems to Emily, there is always a feeling that the convent is a desperate option for a female heroine. At one instance Madame Cheron threatens Emily with a convent - at the very beginning of the novel, when Madame Cheron is opposed to the idea of Valancourt and Emily’s marriage, “But if I find, that I am to be further troubled with such visitors as this M. Valancourt, I shall place you in a convent at once; - so remember the alternative.” (*Udolpho* 128) Radcliffe seems to be always preoccupied, in her earlier novels as well, that the only options for a female heroine are marriage, convent and death, and somehow the two latter experiences seem to be connected.

Radcliffe’s criticism of convents and Catholicism is of course nothing unexpected, considering the tendency of the Gothic novel to criticize Catholic establishments through their characters, who, even though devout Catholics, have deeply rooted Protestant morals. Lewis in *The Monk* similarly views Catholic institutions of monastery and convents as places of vice and corruption. Lewis also explores how female rivalry can be the cause of suffering of a female heroine, just as much as parental or masculine tyranny. Aside from the main heroine Antonia, the novel relates the parallel story of Agnes and her lover Don Raymond. In all aspects Agnes is what could be considered a classic Gothic heroine, “She possessed several talents in perfection, particularly those of Music and drawing: Her character was gay, open, and good-humoured.” (*The Monk* 130) As soon as Don Raymond sets his eyes on Agnes, she charms him with her simplicity and elegance, and as a true Gothic hero, he falls in love with her immediately. When Don Raymond makes enquiry about Agnes to her aunt, Baroness Lindenberg, she replies that Agnes has been “destined to the convent from her cradle” (*The Monk* 130) by her superstitious parents.

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<sup>72</sup> Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), 126.

Agnes feels that she is not well suited for the convent due to her lively disposition and the aversion she feels for many religious ceremonies, however having no other option, complies with the wishes of her parents. The situation changes when she encounters Don Raymond, the affection she feels for him makes the thought of convent detestable to her. Much more than any of Radcliffe's heroines, Agnes eyes the idea of elopement as favourable. Agnes plans her elopement, which goes tremendously wrong, but Raymond once more seeks her out once she is in a convent in Madrid, where after losing her virginity to him, Agnes becomes pregnant. Unlike Radcliffe's flawless heroines, or Lewis's Antonia, Agnes abides by her passions and is not fully in control of her emotions or her body for that matter; and just like Elvira, Agnes is punished for it.

Agnes's punishment goes beyond what Elvira had to go through. Ambrosio finds out that Agnes is pregnant and betrays her to the prioress of her convent. The prioress using the same ploy that is used by Ambrosio to get Antonia, by administering a 'death potion', convinces everybody of Agnes's death and locks her in the dungeons underneath the convent. Agnes is left in the dungeon to suffer from deprivation, and furthermore left to bear her child alone there, who consequently dies. The episodes with Agnes's suffering in the dungeon are some of the most horrifying and sickening ones, and as McEvoy suggests, there is almost some kind of obsession with female disfigurement, "Lewis always hits a style of convincing realism when describing death or torture, and the text seems to have a Sadean fixation on female mortality, and the idea of the pure woman," and further on "It is only female bodies which suffer mutilation and corruption."<sup>73</sup> This is true in the case of Agnes and the Prioress as well, when the latter is literally torn to pieces by an angry mob<sup>74</sup>.

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<sup>73</sup> Emma McEvoy, "Introduction" to *The Monk* by Matthew Lewis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), xxv.

<sup>74</sup> The destruction of a human body by being torn apart by an angry crowd is later used and described in nauseating detail in *Melmoth the Wanderer* by Charles Robert Maturin.

The scene where Lorenzo stumbles upon Agnes in the dungeons evokes at the same time powerful and ghastly imagery:

She was half-naked: Her long dishevelled hair fell in disorder over her face, and almost entirely concealed it. 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. (*The Monk* 369)

Lorenzo does not recognize his sister, and what is more does not recognize this “creature” to be a woman. According to Heiland, Lorenzo’s revulsion and nausea stem from the fact that Agnes is “no longer recognizable as a woman”<sup>75</sup>, however to summarize Lorenzo’s horror in a fact that Agnes’s physical destruction does not permit a gender recognition, is perhaps taking the argument too far. On the other hand, Lewis does dwell on the punishment of Agnes for the sin of fornication. Most importantly, the illegitimate newborn of Agnes and Raymond dies as soon as it enters the world, and by this, it is suggested, Agnes receives penance.

#### **2.4. Negative Gothic Heroines in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and in *The Monk***

In her suffering and victimization by the religious institution Agnes is linked to Antonia, and just as Antonia’s fate is foreshadowed, so is Agnes’s downfall, though by different means. Agnes’s narrative, in fact, correlates with the vile character of the Bleeding Nun. The first time the story of the Bleeding Nun is told, is in fact by Agnes herself, who believing it to be a silly legend, decides to use it as a plot to elope. The Bleeding Nun is an apparition that haunts the castle of Lindenberg, and appears once in five years, she leaves the castle for an hour and then comes back. Agnes decides to dress as the Bleeding Nun and since no one would dare to stop her, she would exit the castle where Raymond would be waiting for

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<sup>75</sup> Donna Heiland, *Gothic and Gender: An Introduction* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 40.

her. The elopement goes according to plan, until Raymond realizes that the person sitting in the carriage with him is not Agnes, but indeed the Bleeding Nun.

The Bleeding Nun haunts Raymond who is sick and paralysed in his bed, in a small town, far away from the Castle of Lindenberg. The Bleeding Nun comes to haunt Raymond for an hour each night, and no one sees her except him. Raymond is finally able to rid himself of her by the help of a stranger, a character of the wandering Jew. In fact, it is no coincidence that the Bleeding Nun haunts specifically Raymond, since it turns out that she is his great-grand aunt, Beatrice de las Cisternas. Beatrice de las Cisternas had to take the veil at an early age against her wishes, but she eloped from the convent with Baron Lindenberg, with whom she lived as his lover. Consequently she fell in love with the Baron's younger brother, and with his encouragement she killed the Baron, but the brother fearing her, in turn killed Beatrice, and there she was left to haunt the castle, until her a relative comes to bury her bones in the family vault and has masses read for her person.

The Bleeding Nun's character parallels Agnes's story and describes how repressed sexuality can go wrong, "She is an example of how female desire, first unnaturally cloistered and then completely unrestrained becomes murderous."<sup>76</sup> Agnes suffers for her decisions, for following her passions, however she is still virtuous and is able to escape the haunted life of the Bleeding Nun. In fact, the Bleeding Nun stands as a parallel to Agnes's aunt, but also to the Baroness, Agnes's aunt, who dies of a surfeit of passion. The Baroness can be linked to Julia's step-mother in *A Sicilian Romance*, Maria de Vellorno, who just like the Baroness falls for the lover of her young charge. The character that the Bleeding Nun is mostly reflected in, however, is Laurentini in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Both women represent the murderous effects of unregulated passion, and their consequent haunted lives.

One of the reasons for over indulgent passions of the Bleeding Nun is the cloistered life in the convent, where all feelings are suppressed and restrained, and once she feels the

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<sup>76</sup> Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 157 – 158.



taste of freedom and passion, she is not able to judge between right and wrong. Similarly it is with Ambrosio, the point being that the convents and the seclusion that comes with it breed dangerous feelings, but in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, it is rather the lack of education and learning self-control that causes these excesses. “The book [*The Mysteries of Udolpho*] begins by stressing the importance of St Aubert’s education of Emily, her culture of the self, which enables her to regulate her passions; it ends with Laurentini’s contrasting story where a lack of education leaves the passions unregulated, resulting in madness, the dissolution of selfhood.”<sup>77</sup> Laurentini’s passion causes her to lead a decadent life, and throw everything away for the man she loved, but as it happens all her sensuousness and the crime that she later commits for him, makes him reject her.

Laurentini is introduced several times throughout the novel, and Emily believes Montoni to have murdered her, but as it turns out, she is one of the sisters in the convent in Languedoc, and the one haunting the nearby forest with her music. The man she fell in love with was Marquis de Villeroi, who has married the Marchioness who is in fact Emily’s aunt. Together with Laurentini, the Marquis poisons his wife, but later feels such remorse and horror at his actions that he leaves the Chateau-le-Blanc and later dies. Laurentini is portrayed as a woman of passion but not necessarily of calculated evil, her greatest failing is the fact that she was never taught to regulate her emotions, “It was the first misfortune of her life, and that which led to all her succeeding misery, that the friends, who ought to have restrained her strong passions, and mildly instructed her in the art of governing them, nurtured them by early indulgence.” (*Udolpho* 655) After receiving contempt and abhorrence from a man for whose sake she has committed the gruesome deed, there is nothing left to her than to leave to the near-by convent, and live a half-dead life. Even though Laurentini, unlike the Bleeding Nun, is able to repose to the other world, there is still some kind of overwhelming feeling that she will be haunted by her deeds in the next life as well. Her strong feelings cause misfortune not

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<sup>77</sup> Robert Miles, *Gothic Writing: 1750 – 1820, A Genealogy* (London: Routledge, 1993), 76.

only to those around her, but mainly to herself, she becomes a victim of her own unrestrained passion.

There is no need for Laurentini to be punished by others because in the end she becomes her own judge and executioner. Laurentini explores and reaches her limit, and when she crosses the invisible line, there is no going back. There is no doubt that her excess of independence and not abiding by social rules leads her to suffering, in this aspect she is not only similar to the Bleeding Nun but also to Matilda, perhaps the most interesting Lewis's character, since she is one character that is truly evil and feels no remorse to the very end, "Where Lewis portrays a resourceful woman as the devil incarnate, however, Radcliffe sees her [Laurentini] in a far more complex way – as utterly human, and damaging not only to the society around her, but also to herself."<sup>78</sup> While Laurentini crosses the socially accepted norms and behaviour, she is still a sensitive and vulnerable woman; on the other hand the changes in Matilda's character represent a different kind of person. Matilda's love and passion for Ambrosio causes her to commit atrocious deeds as well, but she is a much more active perpetrator than Laurentini is, and while the rejection by her lover drives Laurentini to insanity, it only makes Matilda more active.

Matilda is in some respects connected to the character of Laurentini from *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, to the Bleeding Nun in *The Monk*, and other female characters, but on the other hand Matilda represents a being that does not fit any particular conventions. The most prominent representation of this is perhaps Matilda's ability to transform herself physically as well as mentally:

The disruptive power of Matilda, the protagonist's chief tempter, derives from her unsettling ability to take on both masculine and feminine identities in her relationship with Ambrosio and even to become androgynous, especially in her disguise as a young male novice of

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<sup>78</sup> Donna Heiland, *Gothic and Gender: An Introduction* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 72.

Ambrosio's monastery. For Matilda, gender is performative, and she refuses to be limited to a fixed gender identity in either her physical appearance or her behaviour.<sup>79</sup>

The first encounter with Matilda takes place in the monastery garden where Ambrosio retires after he has exposed Agnes's secret pregnancy to the Prioress. In the garden he meets the young novice Rosario, who reveals to Ambrosio that he is in fact Matilda, a woman in love with Ambrosio who entered the convent to be near her beloved.

Ambrosio is appalled by this discovery and threatens to disclose her secret and have her evicted from the monastery, but Matilda convinces him that there is no threat coming from her side. By flattery she soothes him, and argues that there is no temptation coming from her side, "Temptation, say you? Forget, that I am a Woman, and it no longer exists." (*The Monk* 63) Matilda flatters Ambrosio's vanity and convinces him that he is above all human emotions and feelings. When she sees that Ambrosio is still resolved on her quitting the monastery, Matilda threatens to stab herself, but as she does so, she tears open her habit and exposes herself. As Ambrosio sees her womanly charms, he is unable to make up his mind on what he should do, and he quits the garden.

It is a particular characteristic of Lewis to dwell on different attires, Agnes wearing the Bloody Nun's costume, the whole change of clothing in Matilda, the veil that Antonia is wearing at the very beginning of the novel. Interestingly enough, whereas Antonia's veil represents her chastity and modesty, and the removal of this veil by Lorenzo causes him to fall in love with her, the action from Antonia is not voluntary. Matilda using the same device as Antonia, though perhaps to a greater degree, uses it consciously. She is aware of her body much more than any other previous Gothic character. While in Radcliffe's novels or in Walpole, the female body also serves as an inducement, where the heroine blushes or sighs which makes her more attractive, or while fainting the hero gets a glimpse of the extremely

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<sup>79</sup> William D. Brewer, "Transgendering in Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*" (*Gothic Studies* 6.2 (2004): 192-207. EBSCOhost. Web. 23 Sept. 2009), pp. 192 – 193.

white bosom, it is all done involuntarily. Matilda is the only character to use all these elements of femininity to her advantage, even her attempt to stab herself is almost a parody on the expression of passion in other characters, “one of the most perverse aspects of *The Monk* is that it makes both ‘shameless harlotry’ (Matilda) and ‘trembling innocence’ (Antonia) vehicles of the most voluptuous images.”<sup>80</sup> The danger here is that in the character of Matilda what is seen as the trait of traditionally romantic and good characters, becomes twisted and abused. Her threat to kill herself, or later the decision to sacrifice herself instead of Ambrosio when he is bitten by a serpent, is a mockery of other characters feelings, take for instance, Raymond dying because he believes Agnes to be murdered.

Matilda’s external changes are accompanied by perhaps even more accentuated internal changes. From a modest and self-effacing woman, Matilda becomes a powerful and brash woman who scolds Ambrosio for his meekness, “But a few days had past, since She appeared the mildest and softest of her sex, devoted to his will, and looking up to him as to a superior Being. Now She assumed a sort of courage and manliness in her manners and discourse but ill calculated to please him.” (*The Monk* 231) As Matilda becomes a dominant and aggressive, essentially masculine female, she loses her appeal to Ambrosio. At the same time, as Matilda changes, so does Ambrosio, his resolutions and his strong will and determination that he prided himself in vanish, “The sudden external changes of sex signals the beginning not only of a breakdown in the conventional distinction between the strong and aggressive male and the weak and submissive female but a generalized blurring of gender and temperament.”<sup>81</sup> The most important distinction here is that it is the conventional distinctions that are being broken down. Matilda in her fervour and love for Ambrosio stays the same, and Ambrosio’s infatuation with a mild and sensitive Antonia, and his wish to gain power over

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<sup>80</sup> Emma McEvoy, “Introduction” to *The Monk* by Matthew Lewis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), xxiv.

<sup>81</sup> Robert Kiely, *The Romantic Novel in England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 116.

Antonia mirrors the emotions he has felt for Matilda in the beginning. Therefore, as has been already noted, it is much more a struggle for power and domination than gender conflict.

The distinctions for traditionally, and it must be stressed, Gothic qualities of male and female characters are somewhat diminished in the interplay of Matilda and Ambrosio; however it seems that Lewis is constantly going back to the stereotypical character division. Note, all the expressions that Ambrosio uses when he scolds Matilda for her behaviour, “that impious language is horrible in every mouth, but most so in a woman’s” (*The Monk* 270) and later when Matilda shows no remorse towards Agnes, “Pity is a sentiment so natural, so appropriate to the female character that it is scarcely a merit for a woman to possess it, but to be without it is a grievous crime.” (*The Monk* 232) Ambrosio is no longer interested in Matilda, but his passions being stirred he is unable to control himself, and finds an object of his desires in Antonia, “He believes that women should submit to, rather than initiate, sexual intercourse, and that Antonia’s innocent ‘prattle’ is a more appropriate form of feminine discourse than Matilda’s hard and ‘impious’ logic.”<sup>82</sup> Antonia embodies all the qualities that according to Ambrosio a woman should have; she is innocent, compliant and meek.

Matilda’s transformations are complete when it is revealed that she is in fact a devil in disguise. When Ambrosio is discovered in the vaults where he has raped and killed Antonia, together with Matilda he is delivered to the inquisition. After being tortured and locked up in his cell, Matilda appears in his cell and informs him that she is free, and has attained it by selling her soul to the devil. It is a matter of debate whether Matilda is a Faustian character or whether she is from the very beginning a devil’s servant put in Ambrosio’s way. Some critics such as Brewer and Kiely argue that Matilda is not necessary a devil in disguise, “Whatever Matilda really is – a witch of Satan, a figment of Ambrosio’s imagination, a woman possessed

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<sup>82</sup> William D. Brewer, "Transgendering in Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*" (*Gothic Studies* 6.2 (2004): 192-207. EBSCOhost. Web. 23 Sept. 2009), 200.

by lust – art can only hint at and we can only guess,”<sup>83</sup> and “Overall, the novel presents Matilda as a human, as a free agent rather than the Devil’s passive instrument.”<sup>84</sup> If one regards Matilda indeed as a human being, then it suggests that much more than before a female character is able to triumph over moral and social expectations. While Matilda’s character is negative and vile, her empowerment still suggests some kind of autonomy, independence, and strength and it is a question whether it is a good thing that in order to be an emancipated and powerful person a female character has to be associated with humanity’s fiend.

While the argument to the true nature of Matilda is possible, Lewis suggests that she is simply devil’s instrument. Ambrosio after hours of anguished hesitation finally writes his soul off to the devil. The devil reveals to Ambrosio the full extent of his atrocities – that by killing Elvira he has killed his own mother, and by raping Antonia also committed incest – but also that Matilda was put in his way by him, “I had a subordinate but crafty spirit assume a similar form [to Madonna’s picture], and you eagerly yielded to the blandishments of Matilda.” (*The Monk* 440) It is another cynical statement from Lewis, perhaps best worded by Kilgour, “The distinction between the sexes disturbed by the discovery that Rosario is a woman is reaffirmed by the discovery that the woman who has autonomy, reason, and authority is in reality a demon.”<sup>85</sup> If the reader takes into consideration that a powerful and logical female character is in fact a devil’s servant then ironically it is almost re-assuring, since it does not disturb the Gothic platform where even the cruellest of female characters are haunted by their own conscience, and the one that is devoid of pity and any sign of penitence and regret, is in fact a devil in a female form.

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<sup>83</sup> Robert Kiely, *The Romantic Novel in England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 109.

<sup>84</sup> William D. Brewer, "Transgendering in Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*" (*Gothic Studies* 6.2 (2004): 192-207. *EBSCOhost*. Web. 23 Sept. 2009), 196.

<sup>85</sup> Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), 152.

We still see the Gothic heroines entrapped in a world of conventions and moral ambiguity, where chastity equals obedience and compliance. More often than not this virtue is exaggerated to the point of absurdity, in Walpole unintentionally, in Lewis deliberately. Lewis does not moralize, and as has been mentioned before, it is unclear whether he mocks or sympathizes with the heroines locked in their own world where the line between chastity and complete ignorance is indiscernible. It is amusing that while Lewis was paying homage to Radcliffe's writing, his novel twists all of her surmises, to the point where all of the actions and motivations appear as mirror images of each other. Radcliffe reacts to *The Monk* with another novel, *The Italian*, but how much she is able to testify her previous notions is disputable. Nevertheless, already in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Monk* we see the emergence of a new kind of heroine, more ambiguous than the previous Gothic heroines, and therefore more believable and engaging.

## CONCLUSION

The Gothic novel is a fascinating phenomenon in the English literature due to the unorthodox way it ties the past with the present. The Gothic writers often turned to their predecessors for inspiration - Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, chivalric epic tradition, and even English folklore. At the same time, the novels reflected the turbulent times they were written in, when due to the French revolution an atmosphere of general instability reigned in Europe. Placing the setting of the Gothic novel in a distant time and place, allowed the authors to project their anxiety but at the same time keep it isolated from the present. In all of these ambiguities a Gothic heroine is born and she reflects all these contrasting elements of literary and contemporary transitions.

One of the questions that come up when reading the Gothic novel is what a reader acquires from reading the Gothic novel. Many claim that the Gothic novel was simply escapist reading, a way to lose oneself in a different world. In a way, Radcliffe's understanding of the sublime, as something that transports the reader and induces the feeling of awe and wonder, but without having a damaging effect, in itself offers this possibility of escape into the more spiritual world. Sir Walter Scott famously compared Radcliffe's writing to opiates, "baneful, when habitually and constantly resorted to, but of the most blessed power in those moments of pain and languor, when the whole head is sore, and the whole heart sick."<sup>86</sup> It is perhaps the view that most of the readers had of the Gothic novel in the time of its publications. However, I am trying to show in my thesis that in the twentieth century, this perception of the Gothic novel has changed radically. Much more than analyzing the novel as a distracting fantasy, it is very much a product of its time, and it reflects the anxieties and issues that existed then.

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<sup>86</sup> Sir Walter Scott *Lives of Eminent Novelists* as quoted in Terry Castle, "Introduction" to *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Ann Radcliffe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), xxv.



In fact, the Gothic novel reveals the horrors that were unthought-of but actually were to some extent present in the society. The new Cambridge publication of Ruth Perry's *Novel Relations* deals precisely with how the fictional world reflects the actual problems and changes that were taking place at the time. The notorious incestuous relationships in the Gothic novels are paralleled with the real stories of victims of incest, that at the time had no possibility of defending themselves. While this thesis does not cover these socio-cultural areas and strictly focuses on the texts themselves and on character analysis, what it tries to do, is map out the female heroines and the problematic elements in them. Unlike Scott, I believe, that the Gothic novel was not escapist, at least not for the female readership, indeed it was the exact opposite. And that there was much more truth in the unrealistic Gothic novel than expected.

This thesis is trying to trace the beginnings of a heroine that will be later re-introduced over and over again in different forms. Take for instance the study of Gilbert and Gubar *The Madwoman in the Attic*, which concentrates on the mad and displaced characters in the English literature of the most influential female authors such as Austen, the Brontës, Shelley, and others, mapping out the madwomen of the nineteenth century. Gilbert and Gubar concentrate on the conflicting dichotomy in the female heroine and the female writer, where they can be either angels or demons but nothing in between. While this is a work of feminist literary criticism and can at times be seen as outdated because of its overstated arguments, their work nevertheless re-evaluates some of the traditional notions about English literature. All these concerns that are raised in the literary criticism of the eighteenth-and-nineteenth century literature, can be already found in the Gothic novel, at least when it comes to the Gothic heroine.

The Gothic novel or its heroines never truly disappear from English literature, they diffuse into more developed and realistic characters. Due to the somewhat stereotypical tendency of the Gothic novel these patterns are easier to trace, beginning with the absolutely

selfless, completely altruistic heroines of Walpole, to the more distinct heroines of Radcliffe. In Radcliffe, for the first time the readers encounter the division between the good and evil female heroines. The question arises what is a heroine to do when the rest of the world is not as perfect as she is. In Walpole, it is clear that when the heroine is torn between self preservation and moral chastity, or more precisely the social construct of chastity that Walpole offers, the proper choice is the latter. Radcliffe seems to question this stance, and in her later novel tries to warn her heroines and perhaps the reader about the outside world and prepare her for possible dangers awaiting her.

The Gothic novel in fact explores what happens when the ideal world of the heroine clashes with the gruesome Gothic reality. Radcliffe allows the heroine's chastity to become her weapon and rewards courage and moral firmness. The more problematic novel of Lewis does not allow a happy ending to his female heroines, it seems that no matter what they do, either act out of social norms or keeping themselves chaste, they all come to a bad end. It is a question whether Lewis is perhaps mocking all the attempts of the heroines to escape their tragic fate, or whether his tone is more sympathetic. Whichever the case, what Lewis does, even more so than Radcliffe, is that he alerts the readers to the problems that are inherent in society, even in the close knit family circles.

It is a complicated issue of family relations, where the family functions almost as Emily's double chamber in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*; where on one hand it is the only place the heroines seek refuge, but on the other, nothing inflicts more damage upon them than their families. Another disconcerting element of the family's functionality is the missing, submissive, or damaging mothers and mother-figures. In the first chapter of the thesis the argument is such that a part of the heroine's personality is formed through the identification with her mother, and problems arise when this identification is either not possible, or dysfunctional from the very beginning. In the second chapter, the analysis concentrates more on the effect that the parental education has on the fate of the heroines.

Starting with Radcliffe, and developed further by Lewis is also the question of female rivalry and jealousy and what happens when female heroines turn upon each other. And another more disturbing aspect, what happens when their own passions and obsessions function as self destructing elements, be it Laurentini who loses her sanity, the Bleeding Nun bound to the haunting of the castle and her relative, or Matilda selling her soul to the devil. In fact, no matter how graphic Lewis' description of physical torture might be, the psychological anguish is presented as equally if not more excruciating. Therefore what we see here, is perhaps an early transition from the outside world into the inner one, the transition from the plot based Gothic novel, to a more psychological one of the later novels.

In the acknowledgments to her book *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* Maggie Kilgour starts out with the sentence: "Like Mary Shelley, I am often asked what a nice girl like me is doing with a bunch of ghouls like this."<sup>87</sup> It is a question that could be applied to most of the readers of the Gothic novels, at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries or now. What is so fascinating to this day about the Gothic novel? The fascination is based on the fact that underneath all the fragments and layers there lies some of the most intriguing and distressing elements that can be found in all of English literature.

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<sup>87</sup> Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), vii.

## SUMMARY

Ve své parodii na gotický román *Northangerské opatství* (*Northanger Abbey*, 1818) Jane Austenová úsměvně líčí počínání své hrdinky Catherine Morlandové, která je posedlá četbou gotických románů. Toto dílo Austenové se nese v poněkud ironickém tónu, ale i přesto odhaluje skutečnost, že gotický román byl na přelomu osmnáctého a devatenáctého století v Anglii jedním z nejčtenějších a nejpopulárnějších žánrů. Navíc byl tento žánr ve své době většinou spojován s ženským obecnstvem, což je překvapující vzhledem k tomu, že často popisuje násilné a kruté počínání, vypráví příběhy incestu, vražd apod. Obzvláště znepokojivý je fakt, že postavami, které jsou v románech vystaveny těmto hrůzám, jsou ženské hrdinky. Důvodem popularity tohoto žánru u ženských čtenářek může být to, že navzdory všemu gotické hrdinky překonají všechny překážky a nesnáze a na konci románu jsou odměněny za svoji odvahu a bezúhonnost.

Anglický gotický román vděčí za svůj vznik siru Horaci Walpolovi, který v roce 1764 vydal román *Otrantský zámek* (*The Castle of Otranto*), jehož druhé vydání rok poté již nese podtitul „Gotický příběh“. Po téměř dvou desetiletích stagnace se gotického románu ujímá Clara Reevová a posléze i Ann Radcliffová, v jejichž rukou gotický román vrcholí. Tento žánr nadále rozvíjejí a šíří autoři jako Mary Shelley, Matthew Lewis, William Godwin, Charles Robert Maturin a další, a to až do roku 1820, kdy gotický román jako žánr v podstatě zaniká, ale zanechává stopy v uznávaných dílech anglických autorů jako jsou sestry Brontëovy, Dickens, Wilde a další.

Vliv gotické literatury je nepopíratelný, nicméně jeho postavení v literární kritice bylo a je rozpolcené. I v době svého vrcholu byl gotický román předmětem parodie, viz již citovaný román Jane Austenové. Žánr gotického románu byl mimo jiné často považován za „nízký“, a podle Roberta Milese je tomu tak právě z důvodu spojení s ženským čtenářstvem. Je to poněkud odvážné tvrzení, jelikož gotický román se svými stereotypními postavami,

chátrajícím zámek, ztracenými rukopisy a naivní hrdinkou v nesnázích se stává snadným terčem posměchu.

Bez ohledu na negativní kritiku byl gotický román na konci osmnáctého a počátkem devatenáctého století velmi rozšířeným fenoménem. Navazoval na tradici anglického sentimentalismu, kde byl kladen velký důraz na individualismus a na vnitřní procesy hlavní hrdinky, zejména tedy na rozpor mezi společenskými normami a vnitřním hlasem svědomí.

Název předložené diplomové práce „Ženské postavy v anglickém gotickém románu“ je poněkud ambiciózní, jelikož není možné sem zahrnout celou širokou škálu anglické gotiky. Dílo Horace Walpola jakožto průkopníka gotického románu je pro mě stěžejní a domnívám se, že jeho postavy mohou představovat jakousi šablonu tohoto žánru, kterou pak využívali další autoři. První kapitola je zaměřena nejen na toto dílo, ale analyzuje i jeden z dřívějších románů Ann Radcliffové *Sicilský román (A Sicilian Romance, 1790)*. Vzhledem k významu rozsáhlé tvorby Radcliffové nelze nezahrnout alespoň ještě jedno její další dílo. Její snad nejznámější a nejpropracovanější román *Záhady Udolfa (The Mysteries of Udolpho, 1794)* je analyzován v druhé kapitole společně s kontroverzním dílem Matthewa Lewise, *Mnich (The Monk, 1796)*.

Posledních několik desetiletí znamenalo vzestup publikací o gotických románech, zejména z hlediska genderu. Tady stojí za zmínku práce Diane Hoevelerové *Gothic Feminism (1998)* a Donny Heilandové *Gothic and Gender (2004)*. Navzdory tomu, že jsou tyto publikace velice zajímavé a svým způsobem revoluční, jejich argumentace je poněkud svérázná a ne vždy důkladně domyšlena. Své mnohdy radikální teorie dle mého názoru neopírají o dostatečně citlivou a průkaznou analýzu samotného literárního textu. Dále se zabývám pracemi jako je *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* Maggie Kilgourové, *The Literature of Terror* od Davida Puntera, *Gothic Writing 1750 – 1820: a Genealogy* od Roberta Milese a dalšími, o kterých si myslím, že hodně přispěly k podrobné analýze jednotlivých postav gotických románů.

Otázka charakterizace ženských postav v gotickém románu může být obtížná, jelikož tyto postavy se zdají být pouhými šiframi, stíny jiných postav, které pasivně reagují na podněty okolí. Ženy v gotickém románu jsou pohádkově naivní a poslušné, jsou nerealistické, a to z důvodu, že se jejich chování a přemýšlení neshoduje s časovým a prostorovým prostředím, do kterého je zasažen děj příběhu. Přestože se děj gotického románu většinou odehrává v exotickém katolickém prostředí z pozdního středověku, do postojů žen k okolnímu světu se promítá anglická protestantská morálka přelomu osmnáctého a devatenáctého století. Tato rozporuplnost tak přidává jakousi další mimoliterární vrstvu, která překračuje hranice fikce a kde jednotlivé postavy hodně odrážejí názory autora. Z toho můžeme vyvodit, že postavy gotických románů nám ukazují způsob přemýšlení a uvažování spisovatele své doby.

Ženské postavy v gotickém románu nejsou odrazem skutečného života nebo lidí; nicméně na druhou stranu hodně napovídají o směru, kterým by se „správná“ hrdinka měla vydat, případně dávají návod, jak by se měla „správná“ hrdinka v té či oné situaci zachovat. Když Walpole tvrdí, že jeho příběh je odrazem toho, jak by normální muž a žena měli jednat v mimořádných situacích, tak spíše popisuje, jak by se měli chovat dle jeho osobních představ. Domnívám se, že se jedná o hodně zajímavou strukturu, kdy se v literatuře střetává fantazijní a nemožné s etikou a morálními zásadami. Jako mimořádně názorný příklad může posloužit příběh Isabelly, hrdinky *Otrantského zámku*, která prchá před tyranem Manfrédem a jejíž zachránce Theodore objeví jeskyni, kde se mohou ukrýt. Isabella, které hrozí nucené provdání za Manfreda, znásilnění a v nejhorším případě i smrt, namítá, že by nebylo důstojné, kdyby ji objevili v jeskyni samotnou s cizím mužem. Tato přehnaná starost o etiketu je až komická, na druhou stranu však poukazuje na skutečnost, že zachování „neposkvrněné“ pověsti bylo hodně důležité, ne-li důležitější než například fyzická újma. Spisovatel se tím pádem potácí na hranici mezi preskriptivní příručkou pro slušné chování a vyprávěním hrůzostrašného příběhu.

Další dilema, se kterým se hrdinky gotických románů mohou potkat, je výběr mezi poslušností a podřízením se vůli otce a svým právem být se svou pravou láskou. Tyran Manfred plánuje provdat svoji dceru Matildu za Frederika, otce Isabelly, a vypomoci si při záchraně zámku. Následně si však sám chce vzít dceru Frederika, Isabellu. Této perverzní výměně dcer je zabráněno nadpřirozenými silami; samy hrdinky nemají možnost se bránit. Ani matka Matildy není schopná tomu zabránit, dokonce se ani nesnaží této tragédii předejít. Pro gotický román jsou chybějící matky notoricky příznačné. V případech že jsou přítomné, jde většinou o bezmocná, pokorná stvoření bez vlastní vůle a odhodlání. Pasivita a poddajnost matek podporuje a zesiluje krutost otce tyrana. Paradoxně pasivní chování Matildiny matky Hippolity je myšleno dobře, kdy se matka svojí obětavostí snaží odčinit hříchy ostatních. Bohužel to má přesně opačný vliv. Svým chováním Hippolita nejen že podněcuje neštěstí své dcery, ale zároveň i urychluje morální pád svého manžela.

Radcliffová, věrná následovnice Walpola, vytváří podobně pasivní a vznešené postavy, ale na rozdíl od Walpola u ní v boji mezi podrobením se vůli otce a vlastním svědomím vždy vítězí hrdinčiny sentimentální pocity. Hrdinka Radcliffové *Sicilského románu* se rozhodne pro útěk se svojí láskou v okamžiku, kdy ji otec chce provdat proti její vůli. Oproti Walpolovi je tento krok vlastně skoro revoluční; Isabella z *Otrantského zámku* utíká od manželství s Manfrédem, otcem jejího ženicha, hlavně z důvodu že případné manželství by bylo nemravné. Oproti tomu v *Sicilském románu* Julia utíká za jiným nápadníkem; její osobní potřeba je nadřazená rozkazům terorizujícího otce.

V tomto románu je také poprvé vyjádřen negativní postoj vůči církevním institucím, respektive katolické církvi a klášterům. Zatímco ve Walpolově románu je klášter ještě pořád útočištěm pro bezmocné a slabé, v románech Radcliffové se toto pojetí radikálně mění. Představený kláštera, kam se hlavní hrdinka uchýlí před násilnickým otcem, se neukáže být o nic lepší než předtím tyranský otec. Zavřený za zdmi kláštera zneužívá páter své moci a postavení, aby terorizoval hrdinku. Tento postoj vůči katolické církvi se objeví později i

v dalších románech Radcliffové a u jiných gotických autorů. Váhavý přístup Radcliffové k neomezené patriarchální moci a absolutní moci obecně odráží anglické protestantské dogma a je pozoruhodné, že ženské postavy v jejích románech jsou nejšťastnější, když jsou samy izolovány na zámku.

Podstata postavy matky v *Sicilském románu* spočívá v její absenci. Na konci románu se ukáže, že matka, o které se všichni domnívali, že je mrtvá, byla celou dobu uvězněná v hradním sklepení. Hrdinky v podstatě stráví převážnou část románu přibližováním se k místu jejího věznění a oddalováním se od něj, což dělají mimoděk. Někteří kritici vidí v tomto posouvání podvědomé hledání chybějící matky a tím pádem i své vlastní identity. Hrdinka není celostní bytostí, dokud nenajde svojí matku nebo se s ní nějakým způsobem neidentifikuje. V *Sicilském románu* hlavní hrdinka, tím že pomůže zachránit svou matku před otcem, který se jí chystá zabít, zastaví kolotoč týraných hrdinek a tím pádem je schopna naplnit i svůj osud, který se liší od osudu její matky.

V době nepřítomnosti své matky jsou hrdinky románu vychovávány „náhradnicí“ – dlouholetou přítelkyní zesnulé matky – a jejich výchova spočívá pouze v rozšiřování jejich umění v literatuře a hudbě, na rozdíl od dalšího románu Radcliffové *Záhady Udolfa*, kde je kladen mnohem větší důraz na vzdělání, a to jak z hlediska teoretického, tak i praktického. Otec hlavní hrdinky románu Emily v její výchově dbá převážně na to, aby jeho dcera byla schopna kontrolovat svoje emoce.

Přestože Radcliffová ve svých románech vychází z tradice rousseauovského sentimentalismu, v přehnané citovosti vidí určité nebezpečí. Otec Emily varuje, že náchyllost k silným emocím může být pro mladou ženu nebezpečná, a kvůli tomu je celé její vzdělání úzce zaměřeno na schopnost ovládat svoje emoce. Vzdělaný a starostlivý St Aubert také dbá na zajištění své dcery nejen z hlediska citového, ale i materiálního. Jeho poslední slova před smrtí ji varují, aby se ujistila, že její dědictví po něm zůstane pod její kontrolou i v případném



manželství. Později se ukáže, že výchova otce nezůstala nazmar a Emily přes všechny potíže a úskalí vyjde vítězně.

Důležitým posunem u Radcliffové oproti předešlým románům je to, že i přes rousseauovskou víru v přirozenou dobrotu lidské duše je Emily připravena čelit nástrahám a to i v případech, kdy tato víra selže.

Absolutně jiný přístup k výchově je patrný z románu *Mnich* Matthewa Lewise. Naivní Antonie je vychovávána svojí matkou v naprostém nevědomí o světě a životě. Model tohoto vzdělávání je jakousi rouškou cudnosti a morální bezúhonnosti. V tomto pojetí se cudnost vlastně rovná nevědomosti a později se ukáže, že přesně tato nevědomost způsobí zkázu a tragédii Antonie. Navíc tato její neposkvrněnost působí jako lákadlo pro zkaženého mnicha Ambrosia. Mravní výchova Antonie je dotažena do extrému, takže to, co jí mělo bránit, nakonec naopak zvrhlým způsobem funguje jako svůdný podnět.

Přísná výchova Antonie pramení z vlastní negativní zkušenosti její matky Elviry, jejíž rozhodnutí utéci s otcem Antonie proti vůli rodičů způsobí neštěstí všech. Je otázkou, co se hrdinkám v Lewisově románu nabízí jako správná volba. Elvira, která se rozhoduje samostatně a na základě svých pocitů, se vzbouří proti společenským normám a nakonec je potrestána kvůli svému rozhodnutí, ale její dceru, která je vychovávána přesně tak, aby unikla osudu své matky, potká ještě mnohem horší konec.

Cudnost a morální bezúhonnost v románech Radcliffové působí jako štít a nadřazenost vůči ostatním postavám; naproti tomu Lewis používá tyto vlastnosti jako vábidlo. Odpověď na to, co je správná volba – podřídít se společenským pravidlům, nebo se rozhodovat na základě vlastních pocitů – možná nabízí právě román *Záhady Udolfa*. Balancování mezi city a důstojností je zde centrálním motivem. Odkázaná sama na sebe po smrti svých rodičů, Emily spoléhá na svoje city, intuici, ale především na své logické uvažování. Když je Emily postavena před podobný problém jako Elvira, to znamená před možnost útěku s Valancourtem, nebo následování své poněkud pošetilé tety do Itálie, rozhodujícím

okamžikem je myšlenka, že svým činem možná učiní nešťastnou nejen sebe, ale i svého nápadníka.

Je pozoruhodné, že u obou autorů, i když jsou jejich ženské hrdinky citlivé a slabé, jsou to v první fázi námluv vlastně ony, kdo je zodpovědný za důležitá rozhodnutí. Mužské postavy jsou zmítané emocemi a je na uvážení hrdinek, zda je i sebe svým rozhodnutím učiní šťastnými či nikoliv. Pro mužské postavy jsou společenské normy a osobní přání navzájem neslučitelné, a proto je zodpovědností ženských hrdinek najít rovnováhu mezi těmito zdánlivými protipóly.

V románu Radcliffové musí hrdinka čelit dvojímu nebezpečí; jednak je to strach o sebe samotnou a jednak o své jmění. Nejen že se musí bát o svou neposkvrněnost a vyhnout se nežádoucí pozorností ze strany odpudivých nápadníků, ale zároveň se musí starat o svůj majetek, který jí právem náleží. V Lewisově podání je moc spojená se sexuálním ovládním, u Radcliffové je moc v mnohem větší míře spojená s majetkem a vlivem, který s sebou přináší. U Lewise je záporná postava mnicha posedlá touhou ovládat Antonii, u Radcliffové jsou záporní hrdinové mnohem víc posedlí touhou po majetku a postavení.

Znepokojujícím elementem v gotickém románu je fakt, že ženské postavy jsou většinou terorizovány v rámci své vlastní rodiny. Postava již zmíněného otce tyrana je jednou z nich, ale i ženské postavy jsou schopny krutého zacházení. V *Záhadách Udolfa* je jednou z takových postav teta Emily, Madame Cheron. Tato bláhová a povrchní žena je schopna provdat svou neteř proti její vůli, když vidí, že to pro ni bude mít nějakou výhodu. Tento postoj je pro Radcliffovou překvapivě temný; odráží mimo jiné názor Samuela Richardsona, že příbuzenstvo nezaručuje bezpečí ani jistotu. Vzápětí se však ukáže, že pravda a dobro zvítězí, když se Madame Cheron stane obětí své vlastní ješitnosti. Totéž je možné aplikovat na ostatní záporné postavy – většinou se potrestají samy, a to svými vlastními hříchy.

V Lewisově románu se čtenář také potýká s problematikou rodinných vztahů a stejně jako u Radcliffové se ukazuje, že ženy si mohou navzájem škodit. V případě Radcliffové je to

způsobeno pošetilostí, ale nikoli vražedností; u Lewise jsou však tyto konflikty vyhoceny. Ženská rivalita a ješitnost v románu *Mnich* se jeví jako jedny ze základních příčin utrpení. Stejně je to i v případě Agnes, jejíž příběh se odehrává paralelně s hlavním dějem. Agnes je vlastně obětí několikanásobně; jednak je obětí pověřivosti svých rodičů, pak žárlivosti své tety, a nakonec ješitnosti matky představené v klášteře. Román obsahuje i kritiku římskokatolické církve, která je později dotažena v románu Charlese Maturina *Poutník Melmoth (Melmoth, the Wanderer, 1820)*.

Při popisování utrpení Agnes zachází Lewis do skoro nechutných detailů, kdy se projevuje až sadistická fixace na znetvořené ženské tělo a posedlost poskvněnou ženou a jejím následným potrestáním. Toto je odraženo ve skutečnosti, že Markýz de Sade považoval práci Lewise za jedno z nejlepších děl anglické literatury. Prohřešek Agnes spočívá v tom, že se na okamžik přestane ovládat a oddá se vášni; následně je potrestána jak fyzicky tak i úmrtím svého dítěte. Příběh Agnes působí jako pojítka mezi absolutně zápornými ženskými postavami, které jsou posedlé svou vášní natolik, že jsou schopny i vraždy. Na rozdíl od záporné postavy Beatrice de las Cisternas v *Mnichovi* a Laurentini z *Udolfy* jsou nakonec hříchy Agnes vykoupěny jejím utrpením.

Záporné postavy Beatrice de las Cisternas (Bleeding Nun) a Laurentini představují ženské hrdinky, které jsou ztracené ve víru vášně a ve své posedlosti objektem touhy páli mosty a ničí všechno, co jim přijde do cesty. Jejich vášeň je nakonec to, co způsobí jejich destrukci. Excese emocí a touhy způsobí to, že nejenže ublíží lidem kolem sebe, ale nakonec zraní nejvíc sebe, protože v obou případech se objekt jejich vášně od těchto žen odvrací, vyděšen tím, čeho jsou schopné. Zde se opět dostáváme k morální zásadě Radcliffové, že ve všem musí být nějaká střídmost. Je důležité poukázat na rozdíl mezi těmito dvěma postavami. V případě Laurentini je zkažená povaha způsobená špatnou nebo spíše žádnou výchovou, bezuzdností, která nikdy nemusela být potlačovaná, až ji to vlastně přivede ke zkáze. U

Beatrice de las Cisternas je tomu přesně naopak: nepřírozené potlačování emocí způsobí, že když se dostanou na povrch, působí jako živel, který ničí vše, co se mu staví do cesty.

Jak už bylo zmíněno, záporné hrdinky stojí mimo jakousi společenskou normu, zkoumají svoje a sociální limity, ale nakonec se stanou obětí své vášně a stráví zbytek života, ať už na tomto nebo na onom světě, strašením ostatních a hlavně litováním svých činů. Zatímco předešlé dvě záporné postavy jsou stále vykreslené jako citlivé a zranitelné ženy, Lewisova hlavní antagonistka Matilda taková není. Je mnohem aktivnější a racionálnější než ostatní hrdinky a hlavně v podstatě nikdy necítí pocity lítosti ani viny. Poté co Matilda svede Ambrosia, změní se z mírné a poddajné ženy v dominantní a agresivní. Jakmile proběhne tato změna, přestane Matilda Ambrosia přitahovat. Stejně jako se Matilda změní v agresivnější bytost, tak i Ambrosio přestane být chrabrý a zásadový, za jakého se považoval. Ambrosio znechucený Matildou soustředí svoji touhu na Antonii, která naplňuje jeho představy o ženskosti, ale jeho fascinace Antonií souvisí spíše s touhou po ovládnutí a moci spíše než s erotikou, a z války pohlaví se tak naráz stává boj o moc a nadvládu.

Jak se nakonec ukáže, Matilda je vlastně přestrojený ďábel. Je stále předmětem kritických debat, zda je opravdu ďáblovým služebníkem nebo spíše postavou faustovskou. Vezmeme-li v úvahu, že Matilda je pouhou ženou posedlou chtíčem a nespoutaností, musíme přiznat, že i ženské postavy mohou překonávat morální a společenská očekávání. Na druhou stranu, pokud je Matilda opravdu jen ďáblovým poslem, je znepokojující, že žena, která má rozum, odvahu, autonomii a moc je ve skutečnosti démonem.

Tvrdit, že ženské postavy v anglickém gotickém románu nějakým způsobem vyjadřují kompletnost povahy skutečných žen, je asi přehnané, ale přesto lze dojít k závěru, že došlo k určitému posunu od více méně absolutního stereotypu k více rozvinutým osobnostem: od Walpolových hrdinek, které postrádají jakýkoli pud sebezáchovy, k více vzdělaným a bdělým hrdinkám Radcliffové. Ve svých následujících románech je Radcliffová vede i k tomu, aby byly schopné čelit nástrahám a nebezpečím okolního světa; jak moc se jim to daří, to je

samozřejmě otázkou. V Lewisově románu se setkáváme s různými modely výchovy a temperamentu, ale problémem zůstává, co je pro ženské postavy „správným“ modelem chování, protože absolutně naivní a neposkvrněné hrdinky se trápí stejně jako ty, které se vzbouří společenským normám a následují hlas svého srdce.

Anglický gotický román byl krátkým a občas zanedbávaným úsekem anglické literatury, nicméně položil určitý základ pro další spisovatele a spisovatelky. Pozdější autoři se často vracejí ke gotickým postavám, ať už proto, aby je zkritizovali a přepsali, nebo aby projevili lítost nad těmi zápornými postavami, které porušily společenské role a nakonec byly společností ostrakizovány.

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