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## Representations Of The Catholic Inquisition In Two Eighteenth-century Gothic Novels: Punishment And Rehabilitation In Matthew Lewis' The Monk and Ann Radcliffe's The Italian

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REPRESENTATIONS OF THE CATHOLIC INQUISITION IN TWO  
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY GOTHIC NOVELS: PUNISHMENT AND  
REHABILITATION IN MATTHEW LEWIS' THE MONK AND ANN  
RADCLIFFE'S THE ITALIAN

by

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B.A. Florida International University, 2001

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts  
in the Department of English  
in the College of Arts and Humanities  
at the University of Central Florida  
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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to determine how guilt and shame act as engines of social control in two Gothic narratives of the 1790s, how they tie into the terror and horror modes of the genre, and how they give rise to two distinct narrative models, one centered on punishment and the other on rehabilitation. The premise of the paper is that both Matthew G. Lewis's The Monk and Ann Radcliffe's The Italian harness radically different emotional responses, one that demands the punishment of the aberrant individual and the other that reveres the reformatory power of domestic felicity. The purposes of both responses are to civilize readers and their respective representations of the Holy Office of the Inquisition are central to this process.

I examine the role of the Inquisition in The Monk and contrast it with the depiction of the same institution in The Italian. Lewis's book subordinates the ecclesiastical world to the authority of the aristocracy and uses graphic scenes of torture to support conservative forms of social control based on shame. The Italian, on the other hand, depicted the Inquisition as a conspiratorial body that causes Radcliffe's protagonists, and by extension her readers, to question their complicity in oppressive systems of social control and look for alternative means to punishment. The result is a push toward rehabilitation that is socially progressive but questions the English Enlightenment's promotion of the carceral.

To my daughter, Carmen Indira Fennell

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

If I neglect to mention anyone who contributed to this project and is now reading this, I offer you my sincere apologies. If I forget to credit you here, let me assure you that it is by accident, not design.

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I would also like to thank my mother and stepfather for providing encouragement, financial support and, most important of all, free babysitting while I completed this project. I love you both.

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## INTRODUCTION

“If the affection be well conveyed, it will work its effect without any clear idea, often without any idea at all of the thing which has originally given rise to it.”<sup>1</sup> Edmund Burke refers to the realm of passions as distinct from that of ideas in his 1758 treatise, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Burke’s multi-volume essay on aesthetics not only applied to the emerging Gothic movement in literature, it in fact helped to define it. This seminal work marked a transition in English literature, from the Neoclassical age to the Romantic, and it gave rise to the gloriously irrational narratives of such Gothic novelists as Horace Walpole, Clara Reeve, Ann Radcliffe, and Matthew Lewis. Yet, as Burke’s quote intimates, many readers of Gothic novels lacked a clear understanding of the sociopolitical impulses behind these tales of ghosts and ruined crypts, though the “affections” of the Gothic authors, that is, the passions that these authors imbedded within their narratives, often expressed radically divergent cultural and sociopolitical values.

Scholars consider the 1790s the height of the original wave of Gothic literature in England, and no two contemporary Gothic novelists in England were as popular as Ann Radcliffe and Matthew “Monk” Lewis. Although these two authors wrote about similar subjects and employed similar Gothic tropes and conventions, they possessed radically different styles, approaches, and “affections.” Rarely is this difference more evident than in Lewis’s *The Monk* (1796) and Radcliffe’s response, *The Italian* (1797). With similar characters, plots, and devices, the minor divergences between these two works reveal profound differences in the cultural and political affections of the two authors. As an entry point into these differences, this thesis

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpted from *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, Part V.7, “How Words Influence the Passions”. <http://www.bartleby.com/24/2/507.html>.

focuses on the treatment of a central feature of both novels, the Holy Office of the Spanish Inquisition, a religious and political institution established in 1478 by Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile that continued to inflict terror and torture until 1808, when Napoleon officially abolished it. Although the Inquisition did not directly affect England or its citizens, this continental and Catholic form of sociopolitical power nonetheless resonated in the English imagination, as an incarnation of torture, tyranny, and oppression.

Two parallel passages from the novels reveal each author's stance on the Inquisition. This passage from *The Monk* shows Lewis's take on the Inquisition's work:

In these trials neither the accusation is mentioned, nor the name of the accuser. The prisoners are only asked, whether they will confess. If they reply, that, having no crime, they can make no confession, they are put to the torture without delay. This is repeated at intervals, either till the suspected avow themselves culpable, or the perseverance of the examiners is worn out and exhausted: but without a direct acknowledgment of their guilt, the Inquisition never pronounces the final doom of its prisoners. (349)

The inquisitors never apprise the prisoners of their crimes, and prisoners are tortured when they "make no confession." Nevertheless, this passage from *The Monk* ends on an approving note, as "the Inquisition never pronounces the final doom on its prisoners," unless the prisoners themselves first pronounce their own guilt. The innocent presumably go free, while the guilty suffer for their crimes. On the other hand, Radcliffe's assessment of the Inquisition's methods, in *The Italian*, drips with scorn:

Vivaldi conjectured, that in this chamber they were preparing for him the instruments, which were to extort a confession; and though he knew little of the regular proceedings of

this tribunal, he had always understood, that the torture was inflicted upon the accused person, till he made confession of the crime, of which he was suspected. By such a mode of proceeding, the innocent were certain of suffering longer than the guilty; for, as they had nothing to confess, the Inquisitor, mistaking innocence for obstinacy, persevered in his inflictions, and it frequently happened that he compelled the innocent to become criminal, and assert a falsehood, that they might be released from anguish, which they could no longer sustain. (232-33)

Here, confessions are extorted, and tortures inflicted in order to induce confessions, truthful or not. Even if the guilty will be punished, the innocent will suffer more. This is a direct challenge to Lewis's vision.

In addition, Lewis's passage relates the Inquisition's methods in the third-person omniscient, the tone of a detached observer who is impartially judging the institution and its methods. The narrator equates confession with guilt, and lauds the Inquisition for not condemning those who suffer torture yet refuse to accept culpability. This passage from *The Monk* evaluates the institutional power of the Inquisition and concludes with a defense of it, with seeming impartiality. Radcliffe, instead, writes from perspective of her character Vivaldi, an innocent man whom a mysterious accuser condemns to the dungeons of the Inquisition. Her treatment focuses on the suffering of the accused, the injustice of a trial resolved without evidence, public charges, or a known accuser, and the likelihood of a blameless victim perjuring himself under such circumstances. In the authors' opposed treatments of the Inquisition and the role that each reserves for this institution within the novel, I will show that two coexisting and

competing models of confession, justice, and punishment exist in England and in the English Gothic novel.

The narrative model that emerges in The Monk is a punishment model, one in which a societal abnormality or transgression occurs, which must then be corrected through the imposition of external force or power. This punishment model concerns itself with questions of legitimate authority, the psychological and moral defects of the aberrant individual, the relationship between institutional discipline and the criminal, and the public acknowledgement of culpability. In contrast, The Italian manifests a rehabilitative narrative model, one that validates the struggle of the individual against moral corruption. The rehabilitative model is concerned most with individual freedom and responsibility, the causes of personal and institutional corruption, the jurisdiction of competing sources of power, and absolution from internal social constraints. Although the style, values, and ideology of the two novels are distinct and competing, both narrative models are part of an ongoing project of analysis that authors of Gothic literature engaged in through the favored subjects of Gothic literature—passionate excess, irrationality, and transgression against natural and moral laws.

In this introduction, I provide the historical and literary contexts in which these models emerged in late eighteenth-century England, examining how tension between these competing modes reflected a crisis of faith in Enlightenment progress among English intellectuals. Then, I analyze Lewis and Radcliffe's respective attachments to the horror and terror styles of Gothic literature, demonstrating how Lewis transformed the Gothic's reliance on the sublime into a portrayal of the uncanny. I explore how these attachments stemmed from each author's adherence to one of the aforementioned cultural models of punishment and rehabilitation, which,

in turn, relate to shame and guilt culture. Finally, in the chapters that follow, I assess how Lewis's affection for the punishment mode and Radcliffe's preference for the rehabilitative mode manifest in The Monk and The Italian respectively.

### Historical and Literary Contexts

The Gothic movement in literature is a return to romance. Horace Walpole, in his Preface to the Second Edition of The Castle of Otranto, says that his book was, "an attempt to blend the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern" (65). Though Walpole announces that his characters would act in a more probable fashion than the heroes of the ancients did, he would leave "the powers of fancy at liberty to expatiate through the boundless realms of invention" (ibid). While the Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries took the revival of classical learning from the Renaissance and applied it to scientific and liberal political endeavors, the revolutionary period of the last half of the eighteenth century provoked a conservative reaction that generated nostalgia for the Middle Ages. Either readers of Gothic romances looked to the past out of longing for a simpler time, or to appreciate the progress western civilization had made since the Dark Ages.

These romances were important to the English reader, as the English people still struggled to invent a cultural identity distinct from that of traditional Catholic Christendom on the European Continent.<sup>2</sup> This drive to create a national identity aligned with moderate

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<sup>2</sup> J.C.D. Clark suggests that the topics of religion and the Church have been neglected in progressive historical assessments of this period, which choose instead to emphasize the role of "new men" in history, those who eschew religious matters for entrepreneurial and scientific concerns (42). In a progressive assessment of the literature of the period, one that emphasizes industry, commerce and empiricism, it is easy to dismiss the literature of the Gothic. Yet the medieval trappings of monasteries and inquisitors, monks and nobles, the supernatural and the satanic still exercised a powerful hold on the imaginations of those who read these novels, regardless of whether they were "new men" or not. The shade of the past haunted the eighteenth century and, like the Bleeding Nun in Lewis's tale, insisted that either its union with the present be honored, or that a proper burial be held.

Protestantism had its roots in Henry VIII's separation from the Church of Rome in 1531, even though religious conflict under the Tudors and Stuarts and issues of Stuart succession impeded progress toward this Protestant cultural identity. Henry VIII's break with Rome and his establishment of the Anglican Church continued to incite religious and political turmoil for the next two centuries. Henry and successive English monarchs faced religious discontent from Catholics and Dissenters alike, aggravated and intensified by class-related issues, and the position of the Church of England continually lurched between the two religious extremes of Catholicism and radical Dissent. Religious divisions continued to plague English politics well into the eighteenth century. In 1714, the Whigs chose the German George I of the House of Hanover, the nearest Protestant relative of Queen Anne, over the objections of the Tories, who argued for a native Catholic (Stuart) monarch. Despite the Hanoverian succession, repeated attempts were made to restore the Stuarts to the throne of Great Britain, with full-scale invasions in 1708, 1715, and 1745-46.

From 1531, when Henry VIII declared himself Supreme Head of the Church of England, until The Monk was published in 1796, anti-Catholic sentiment became ingrained into the fabric of English culture. The process began with Henry VIII's dissolution of the English monasteries. During the dissolution, the crown offered aristocrats lands and duties once belonging to the Church of Rome. While the King gave the peers of the realm wealth and property, the King's ministers used propaganda to persuade the middle and lower stations that the existing ecclesiastical hierarchy was in dire need of reform. The King had his commissioners, under his representative Thomas Cromwell, visit the monasteries and send back written reports of their

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value. Included in these records were accounts of scandalous activity, much of it undoubtedly fabricated, such as stories of sexual deviancy, drunkenness, and other moral transgressions. Starting with the smallest monasteries, several waves of confiscation followed until all the abbeys were liquidated. The reports of Cromwell's visits continued to color the English people's memory of the monastic system and fueled anti-Catholic sentiment in ensuing centuries. Other events in English history further aggravated religious divisions. The religious persecution of Protestants under the Catholic Queen Mary, the attempt by Catholic insurgents to blow up Parliament in 1605, and the repeated military threats from James Stuart, the "Old Pretender," and his son, Bonnie Prince Charles, the "Young Pretender," in their attempts to assume kingship over Great Britain, all contributed to internecine religious violence.

England's long-running antagonism with Catholic Spain complicated its attitude toward Catholicism. Over two centuries, from 1585 to 1783, England fought five wars directly against the Spanish Crown and participated in three additional major conflicts in the early eighteenth century alone. With the invention of the printing press, Protestant resistance against the Spanish took the form of a war of propaganda that resulted in what scholars have called the Black Legend, a term coined in 1912 by the Spanish journalist Julian Juderias (Rawlings 4). The historian Edward Peters described the Black Legend as

An image of Spain circulated through late sixteenth-century Europe, borne by means of political and religious propaganda that blackened the character of Spaniards and their ruler to such an extent that Spain became the symbol of all the forces of repression, brutality, religious and political intolerance, and intellectual and artistic backwardness for the next four centuries. (131)

Spain was also the birthplace of the Inquisition. The Holy Office of the Inquisition reached the height of its power in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It is the contention of historians Edward Peters and Henry Kamen that the Inquisition began as an institution devoted to enforcing doctrinal and racial purity, but Protestant writers transformed it into a propaganda tool during the Counter-Reformation and Enlightenment. During the fourteenth century, the Inquisition's primary targets were Jewish and Muslim *conversos*; in the fifteenth century, Protestants became the primary victims (Peters 122), provoking a reaction from Northern Protestants. To English minds, Spain was the antithesis of England in its tyranny, torture, and Catholicism, and it allowed a model against which English cultural identity could be fashioned. English Gothic authors drew an implicit contrast between the darkness of medieval institutions such as the Inquisition and the enlightened justice of the growing British Empire. In addition, despite the fact that during the last few decades of the eighteenth century the Spanish Inquisition's power had dwindled, English writers seized on the image of the Inquisition for polemical purposes (Peters 189). It is in this revolutionary and reactionary climate that the first wave of English literary Gothicism reaches its height.

English Gothic literature of the 1790s engages with issues of authority and justice, most often depicted through the institution of the Inquisition, but concerned equally with revolutionary France and the conservative reactions against it both on the continent and in England itself. Most English intellectuals, such as William Godwin, Thomas Holcroft, Thomas Paine, Dr. Richard Price, Mary Wollstonecraft, and William Wordsworth, initially subscribed to radical, pro-revolutionary agendas, and they championed reform in both their political writings and their fiction. However, for them, the ubiquitous agent of the state was not Parliament or the King,

whose impact on the everyday life of their subjects was minimal, but the Church of England, and every English man and woman felt its influence. Therefore, the favored target of English radicals during the eighteenth century was the religious establishment and the attribution “reformer” was often synonymous with “freethinker” or “deist” (J.C.D. Clark 277).

On the Continent, the new French Republic proposed to eliminate the widespread ecclesiastical bureaucracy and replace it with a secular apparatus, an act that English reformers initially applauded. However, as public institutions in France encroached further into the domestic sphere, after the September Massacres of 1792, and as Robespierre initiated the Reign of Terror, even the most outspoken English radicals grew increasingly agitated with the direction the Revolution was taking. Poets like Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey backed away from or recanted their earlier enthusiasm for the French Revolution (Prickett 110-111) while William Godwin was put into the awkward position of explaining that tyranny and massacres were part of the natural process of a revolution (Prickett 114-115).

No public figure in England railed against the French Revolution with greater venom than Edmund Burke did. Burke, who had championed the cause of the American colonists in Parliament years before, surprised many of his former allies by opposing them on rapprochement with Revolutionary France.<sup>3</sup> Burke, once the political enemy of King George III for his support of the American colonies and the principles of representative government, predicted that the Revolution would end in disaster and occasioned a split within his own Whig party. Although Burke’s opposition was inexplicable to his former allies at first, many of his dire predictions about the course of the revolution came true.

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<sup>3</sup> Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France* was the English reactionaries’ rallying cry.

By February 1793, France was at war with England, and the opinion of the English people toward their newly liberated neighbors to the south had become wholly antagonistic. The Pitt government enacted powerful counterrevolutionary measures that included the suspension of *habeas corpus*, the trial of progressive leaders, the Treason Law, and the Combination Laws prohibiting organized labor. The response from the intellectual community was mixed, but uneasy, as the English saw long-held rights eroded in the conservative backlash.

The English Gothic novels of the 1790s, particularly in The Monk and The Italian, reveal both this unease and the mixed intellectual responses. In its valediction of the Inquisition and horrific scenes of mob violence associated with revolutionary excess, the punishment narrative model of The Monk conforms to the historical anti-revolutionary sentiment of the Council of Castille and to the conservative reaction of the Pitt government to revolutionary sedition. In The Monk, the Inquisition serves as a powerful instrument for protecting the innocent against the destructive power of Matilda's witchcraft, just as new measures by the Pitt Administration and the Council of Castille clamped down on pro-revolutionary literature after the fall of the Bastille.

The Monk identifies legitimate authority with the Spanish crown, and Daniel Watkins has described how the text punishes the villains (as well as the heroes) for rebelling against the aristocratic social order, in addition to their other crimes. Lewis sets The Monk in seventeenth-century Spain, clearly invoking the Black Legend, as the novel perpetuates the myth that Catholicism in general is superstitious and backwards. The book depicts the Inquisition in a distinctly different light however, and the narrative approves the torture of the antagonists and the public spectacle of the *auto da fé* as a means of maintaining social order. In part, the punishment model of The Monk questions the politics of the more liberal wing of the Whig party

and through its recall of Inquisitorial practice, the narrative explores traditional models of authority. The politics associated with The Monk's punishment model are still Parliamentary and aristocratic, as opposed to the purely pro-Royalist Tories, but they are allied more with the conservative Edmund Burke than with Charles Fox. The Monk deals with Antonia, a common girl courted by a nobleman, and the presumption of ecclesiastical ministers that dominate the superstitious aristocracy (as with Agnes and Lorenzo's father), both of which threaten strictly demarcated class boundaries. The revolutionary trend that succeeds the Enlightenment, following Burke, leads to rampant criminality.

The Monk helped to resurrect anti-Catholicism at this precise moment to cast the abuses of the *ancien regime*, the ruling class that the revolutionaries were systematically destroying in France, in a better light. While earlier Gothic works like Otranto featured evil noblemen as their villains, The Monk shifted the blame for medieval repression away from the aristocracy of England's old adversary, Spain, and attributed it to the Catholic Church. In essence, the novel blames the aristocracy less than the Catholic clergy. Most English sources maligned both monasticism and ecclesiastical tribunals employing torture as the legacy of the Roman Papacy. A gap exists however, in the way The Monk treats monasticism and the Inquisition, as the English reader would view monasticism as the source of evil and the Inquisition as its corrective. This allows Lewis to use the Catholic clergy as literary scapegoat for all societal ills, while still allowing him to retain a respectful attitude towards institutional authority, aristocratic hegemony, and patriarchal power.

Undoubtedly, Lewis's use of the Inquisition as a cultural artifact in The Monk influenced the parallel and critical production of Radcliffe's The Italian, which may be classified as both a

Gothic novel and a novel of sentiment. Like the Gothic novel, the novel of sentiment grew out of a renewed interest in romantic literature, and the quality of sensibility was heavily associated with the feminine mind, with an emphasis on passion and sensitivity over reason and analysis. Gothic writers like Charlotte Smith and Ann Radcliffe belong to the sentimental tradition, as their novels frequently feature a female protagonist who must come to terms with the outside world and must temper her natural empathy with a deeper understanding of human nature. As a refinement of Enlightenment thought, the sentimental novel ultimately questioned traditional power structures that remained from past ages and equalized power disparities between the sexes by elevating feminine traits.

Part of the legacy of the novel of sentiment, female Gothic writers such as Charlotte Smith and Anne Radcliffe had aligned themselves with the radical project of promoting sensibility over cold analysis, by depicting male characters who exhibited sensible traits and female protagonists who lionized the well-crafted emotional response. The tenor of the English debate over sensibility changed with the outbreak of revolution on the Continent, and many attributed the fanaticism of the Terror to the increasing indulgence of sensibility. Radical writers of both sexes acknowledged that popular opinion was turning against their ideas and retreated from the culture of sentiment, even though Radcliffe continued to promote progressive ideology and the valorization of sentiment.

Radcliffe sets The Italian in Italy in the 1750s. Two centuries of Spanish domination of Italy resulted in a country that was almost uniformly Catholic, but the majority of The Italian takes place in the Kingdom of Naples, which after 1713 and the Peace of Utrecht, passed from the Spanish to the Austrian Hapsburgs. The policies of the more progressive and religiously

tolerant Austrians, while still Catholic, created a marked difference between southern and central Italy. Radcliffe's story recognizes this division when her protagonist Vincentio Vivaldi, a noble of Naples who marries the lower-class Ellena di Rosalba, is captured by Inquisitors and jailed in Rome. The Italian model is rehabilitative, and it views competing sources of national, institutional, and domestic order through the lens of middle-class individualism. Unlike The Monk, the demarcation of political and class boundaries are mutable and fleeting, as powerful characters in Naples are thrown into the dungeons of Rome and a strange revelation can catapult a monk or an ill-fated orphan into the ranks of the nobility. The rehabilitative narrative model of The Italian shows a long and difficult reform process that is not without its violent upheavals.

In addition, while The Monk casts the monastery as the source of evil, The Italian contains some positive portrayals of nuns and reserves its sharpest critique for the Inquisition. If the monasteries in The Italian are the frayed remnants of the once great Catholic Church, the Inquisition is like a giant black spider, constantly spinning, trying to keep the fragments together and now and again catching the unwary in its webs. The qualities of the Inquisition in The Italian, its mysterious procedures, brutal tactics, and great secrecy, are reminiscent of the Pitt administration's heavy-handedness in dealing with English radicals during the 1790s. The Italian invokes the infamous reputation of the Inquisition to condemn both the Catholic Church and any other institution or social system that engages in abuses of power and privilege, including patriarchy. The Italian does not depict the kind of riot that appears at the end of The Monk, and attributes social decay—most notably in the Eternal City of Rome—to institutional stagnation, not to the degeneracy or barbarity of individuals.

In the 1790s, the Inquisition loomed large in the English imagination as the most repressive of Catholic administrations, during a period that witnessed disintegration of traditional English rural family life and widespread migration to urban centers; literary depictions of the Inquisition in English Gothic novels, then, also concern themselves with issues of domesticity and private life. By examining the role of the Inquisition in The Monk and The Italian, one can see the value eighteenth-century English readers put on individualism and their fear of encroachment into private life, as exemplified by the peculiar terror inspired by the Inquisition in these two novels. In discussing Gothic literature's fierce defense of domesticity, I make use of Norbert Elias' "civilizing process," the drive toward increased privatization. According to Elias, spaces in earlier periods were public and communal. The historical drive is toward labeling certain behaviors as shameful and relegating them to the private sphere. Kate Ferguson Ellis and scholars in the tradition of Norbert Elias have argued persuasively that this relegation is often lopsided when it comes to gender, as men increasingly preclude women from public life and encourage them to maintain the sanctity of the domestic sphere.

While the Inquisition of The Monk probes exclusively into the affairs of monastic officials, the Inquisition of The Italian interferes in the private affairs of the family when it arrests Vincentio di Vivaldi for marrying a nun. In the Anglican Church, Edward VI had eliminated clerical celibacy in the mid-sixteenth century, and so the charge of blasphemy against Vincentio would have been archaic to Radcliffe's readers while the interruption of the couple's marriage ceremony would have rankled. The celibacy of ecclesiastics was a shibboleth of the Catholics, but the institution of marriage held sacred significance. The specter of the Catholic

Inquisition suggests a threat to traditional English conceptions of the domestic sphere and the imposition of a new order in which the private sphere faces greater regulation.

One of the themes of both The Monk and The Italian is that the monasteries and convents of the Catholic Church are oppressive and hold themselves apart and above secular law. The Monk posits that the corruption of figures such as Ambrosio and the prioress of St. Clare's are due to their cloistered virtue, the artificial nature of their civilizing and education. It also portrays the Inquisition as an agent of the Church that lays bare the abuses of these corrupt authorities to the light of day and punishes the guilty. The Italian presents a contrary vision of the institution, that the prisons and processes of the Inquisition are just one more jail.

Both novels are particularly concerned with the scope and potency of competing sources of authority. The Monk legitimates the power of authoritarian institutions like the Inquisition that counteract the subversive activity of the monasteries, and the punishment narrative model of the novel castigates the regulation of habit and drive to conform to a particular rule that is characteristic of the monastic lifestyle. In contrast, The Italian rebels against broad institutional constraints and the rehabilitative model vindicates a reform of dominant institutions that perpetuate traditional and oppressive class and gender roles. The Italian tends to exclude the family from the sort of investigation and judgment leveled at the Catholic Church, as Vincentio's mother, a source of strife and oppression that originates entirely within the domestic sphere, dies offstage and is never confronted.

### Sublime Terror and Uncanny Horror

Historians traditionally characterize the latter half of the eighteenth century in England as an era of technological and political revolution. The engine driving these revolutions was the

Enlightenment's emphasis on science, progress, and the individual. The construction of new epistemological paradigms, such as Locke's inquiries into the mind and Rousseau's examinations of human nature and civilization, challenged the monopoly that religious authorities held over metaphysical matters, while emerging technologies and political theories challenged traditional social roles that remained from feudalism.

De Boileau's translation of Longinus toward the end of the previous century provoked a number of essays on the sublime, of which the most famous and influential was Edmund Burke's *Enquiry*. Burke contrasted the beautiful with the sublime, describing the beautiful as small, smooth, delicate, clear, and symmetrical, and the sublime as vast, rough, obscure, and awe-inspiring (Part III, Section 27). This assessment challenged neoclassical assessments such as that of Lord Kames in his Elements of Criticism, in which he gloried at the sight of Gothic ruins, but found the appearance of Grecian ruins to be melancholy (430). The dichotomy between the beautiful and sublime effectively enabled two standards by which to evaluate a work of art, architecture, or literature. Authors such as Richard Hurd excited interest in the English romantic heritage.<sup>4</sup>

The Gothic novel engages in the debate over the relative merits of the sublime and the beautiful, and fosters an appreciation for the beautiful by excessive engagement with the sublime. An appreciation for the beautiful appears often in Gothic novels by women, as the beautiful, identified with the heroine and domesticity, ultimately subdues the sublime, associated with the villain and with events that inspire awe, fear, and terror. As noted earlier, female writers of the Gothic tradition were an exception from the general retreat from the culture of

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<sup>4</sup> In *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762), Hurd attacked neoclassical bias regarding taste and cited highly regarded work by Shakespeare and Spenser that drew on medieval romances for their material.

sentiment during the 1790s, as they continued to promote sensibility due to its valorization of the feminine. The female Gothic aligns the beautiful and the feminine with the sentimental. In contrast, emerging male Gothic authors such as Matthew Lewis capitalized on the reactions against sensibility, against faith in the progress of the Enlightenment, and against the resulting revolutionary upheaval that they heard about abroad. The volatile scenes of horror depicted in these novels, against which these Gothic authors, both male and female, were ostensibly preaching, caused reactionaries such as T.J. Matthias in his book *The Pursuits of Literature* (1796) to accuse them of seeking to undermine traditional values and spread revolutionary or “terrorist” ideas to England (Botting 80).

Gothic novels often externalized English fears and anxieties regarding the decay or corruption of traditional institutions. The Gothic plot revolved around the undermining of these institutions, their near or actual dissolution, and their eventual reassertion or reformation. In Radcliffe’s books, these traditional institutions are modified to reflect the English middle station’s greater share of power. In *The Monk*, and *The Castle of Otranto*, not only are traditional institutions restored exactly as they were, but historical challenges to this order that occur even prior to the events of the novel (e.g. Ambrosio and Antonia’s birth, the seizure of Otranto by Manfred) are corrected or punished. In early Gothic novels, these traditional institutions, characterized by their vast influence and unlimited power, were represented by the sublime.

The sublime in *The Monk* is uniformly supernatural in nature. The Bleeding Nun, the Wandering Jew, and the Devil all represent the sublime. The Bleeding Nun is both the unquiet ancestor of Raymond and his spiritual wife, once Raymond inadvertently promises himself to her body and soul. When she first appears, Raymond mistakes her for his lover Agnes, but after a

near-fatal crash, she returns to him night after night and drains him of all vitality. She inspires horror in particular because her reasons for attaching herself to Raymond are inscrutable, until the Wandering Jew explains her history and that her bones must be put to rest, after which her spirit becomes quiescent. Because of her blood relation with Raymond, their necromantic union is not only sacrilegious, but vaguely incestuous as well. She represents all the horrors inherent in the family and the domestic sphere.

The Wandering Jew is also an object of the sublime, due to the mark put upon him by God, which inspires revulsion and terror in all who see it (163). The Jew himself is characterized as an individual without family, country, or permanent home, forced to wander friendless and never sleep in the same place twice. He is also the source of forbidden and occult knowledge that, while helpful, also marks him as an outcast. In The Monk, he is the ultimate foreigner. While both the Bleeding Nun and the Wandering Jew are alien in nature, the appearance of the Devil is exceedingly protean and strange.

The Devil appears before the reader twice in the narrative, once when Matilda summons him to present Ambrosio with the myrtle and again when Ambrosio contemplates selling his soul to escape the clutches of the Inquisition. In the first instance, the Devil appears as a beautiful, androgynous youth who is still marked by the sublime, as Ambrosio notes that there is “wildness in the daemon’s eyes, and a mysterious melancholy...inspiring the spectators with secret awe” (244). In the second instance, all traces of the beautiful are gone:

His blasted limbs still bore marks of the Almighty’s thunder. A swarthy darkness spread itself over his gigantic form: his hands and feet were armed with long talons. Fury glared in his eyes, which might have struck the bravest heart with terror. Over his huge

shoulders waved two enormous sable wings: and his hair was supplied by living snakes, which twined themselves round his brows with frightful hissings. (356)

The appearance of the Devil is analogous with the twisted nature of Ambrosio himself, the forceful resurgence of his repressed pride, lust and inhumanity, just as they appear emblazoned on the forehead of the unknown monstrosity in Lorenzo's dream (55). This dream, in which Lorenzo imagines himself to be back in the church of the Capuchins while preparing to marry Antonia, approaches the experience of the uncanny as Sigmund Freud would later describe it<sup>5</sup>. Lorenzo knows that he has seen the monster before (and he has just witnessed Ambrosio's sermon), but he cannot recognize it. Just as Raymond thinks that the Bleeding Nun is Agnes, Lorenzo recognizes that monsters lurk beneath the veneer of everyday life, but will not know them for what they are until it is too late. Ambrosio also experiences this dissonance, as he feels a strange affinity for Antonia that develops into sexual attraction, and both Antonia's comments about Ambrosio and the confession scene between them lead the reader to believe that these feelings were the stirrings of fraternal affection.

In contrast, Radcliffe's use of the sublime is non-supernatural, restricted to Nature and architectural structures. The two objects in The Italian that represent the sublime are the mountains that Vincentio, Ellena, and Paolo stop to contemplate outside the town of Celano and the prisons of the Inquisition in the midst of the ruins of Rome. The mountains are described in terms of the territories they divide such as "the gigantic Velino in the north, a barrier mountain, between the territories of Rome and Naples" or by their character, such as the Monte-Corno that "stands like a ruffian, huge, scared, threatening, and horrid!" (185). Paolo breaks in with a

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<sup>5</sup> One can find the full text of Freud's essay, "The Uncanny" (1919) at <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~amtower/uncanny.html>.

patriotically inspired ode to Mount Vesuvius, until Vincentio reminds him that the volcano is both awe-inspiring and dangerous (186). The appearance of the sublime in The Italian also marks the point at which mortal danger replaces the relatively innocuous travails of the protagonists; the thugs of Schedoni capture Ellena and transport Vincentio to the dungeons of the Inquisition.

The ruins of Rome and the fortress of the Inquisition will be discussed at length in the chapter on The Italian, but at this point it will suffice to say that both, though the product of artifice rather than nature, are sources of the sublime. While the mountains of the Apennines are vital and majestic, the ruins of Rome are awe-inspiring in the same fashion that the ruins of a Gothic cathedral or monastery would be, as a tremendous waste of incalculable power. “Even Vivaldi could not behold with indifference the grandeur of these reliques, as the rays fell upon the hoary walls and columns, or pass among these scenes of ancient story, without feeling a melancholy awe, a sacred enthusiasm, that withdrew him from himself (227).”

The only signs of habitation are the bells and torches of the Inquisition, and the fortress that Vivaldi enters appears to have drained the surrounding city of its former glory and transformed it into a foreboding gloom. “These walls, of immense height, and strengthened by innumerable massy bulwarks, exhibited neither window or grate, but a vast and dreary blank; a small round tower only, perched here and there upon the summit, breaking their monotony (227);” this fortress of the Inquisition, with no windows and thick, dark walls, is bereft of personality and inhabited by an oppressive spirit.

The architectural presence of the Inquisition is a source of sublime terror in The Italian, yet in The Monk neither the institution itself nor the building that houses it is sublime. Both Radcliffe and Lewis rely upon the sublime as defined by Burke to evoke fear in the reader, but

Lewis alters the focus of the reader's awe and terror away from the sublime and towards the uncanny. While many Gothic authors, including Radcliffe, identify the source of fear and terror as existing outside the self and involve a critique of institutional power, Lewis portrays the self as something unclean, an object of horror. Historical and economic forces create Radcliffe's villains, whereas Lewis's evil is psychological.

The Monk identifies the Inquisition as a source of fear to those who have sinned, but in the same breath accepts its role as an agent of social control, favoring it over other traditional Catholic institutions. The Italian suggests that the culture of sentiment could serve to humanize oppressive patriarchal institutions, transforming men from the inside out. The humanism of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment emphasized the reformation of the spirit over the control of the body and informed the novel of sentiment. With The Monk, however, the Gothic took a turn away from sentimentalism and emphasized the return of the repressed, as well advocating active institutional suppression of deviant or unorthodox behavior. In a period in which the English crown was struggling with the collapse of the old order on the Continent and rebellion among its own colonies, readers took comfort from stories that featured characters like themselves who grappled with horrors beyond their understanding and banished them through persistence and virtue.

Although the popularity of the Gothic novel did not wane for over two decades, literary critics took them less seriously as cheap Gothic chapbooks and bluebooks featuring increasingly outrageous plots and situations proliferated (Frank 433). The Gothic became ripe for parody, most famously by Jane Austen in Northanger Abbey. Any ideological weight that Ann Radcliffe and Charlotte Smith might have accrued for the genre was squandered by their heirs. Female

writers like Charlotte Dacre may have exaggerated hyperbolic feminine traits for purposes of parodying public stereotypes of sentiment, but this was lost on an English middle station that began placing greater ideological importance on the repression of the emotions.<sup>6</sup>

The explained supernatural favored by Clara Reeve and Ann Radcliffe gave way to a preference for the ghosts, demons, black magic, and the abominations popularized by Matthew Lewis. Consequently, the sublime, characterized most often by external, natural objects that provoked wonder and terror, gave way to the uncanny, strange figments that were analogous to internal anxieties. The punishment model of The Monk is the forerunner of modern horror, and the fountainhead of the uncanny. Thus, in the Gothic novels of the 1790s, and, in particular, in Lewis's The Monk and Radcliffe's The Italian, the reader experiences the sublime through either terror or horror.

Ann Radcliffe first made the distinction between the horror and terror modes in Gothic literature in her essay, "On the Supernatural in Poetry."<sup>7</sup> Scholars of the Gothic often identify the work of Lewis as a prime example of the early horror tradition and the novels of Ann Radcliffe as employing the terror mode. Both horror and terror tie into Edmund Burke's conception of the sublime and the sentimental tradition in literature.

The horror mode in Gothic literature features the supernatural, aims at the expulsion or elimination of infection by evil forces, and emphasizes short, sharp shocks, grotesques, and explicit violence, as opposed to prolonged suspense. The terror mode, on the other hand, attempts to explain away seemingly supernatural phenomena by providing a mundane cause,

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<sup>6</sup> This is implied in Diane Long Hoeveler's chapter "Hyperbolic Femininity", from her book Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës.

<sup>7</sup> The essay appeared as a dialogue in her posthumously published novel, Glaston de Blondeville.

seeks to reconcile or absorb disruptive forces in the narrative to the status quo, and makes an effort to draw out the emotional *frisson* brought on by stressful circumstances instead of going for the cheap thrill. Both modes draw upon the incomprehensible grandeur and awestruck fear attributed to the sublime, rather than evoke the symmetrical satisfaction inherent in the beautiful. In The Monk, the sublime seems to reside in powerful malevolent forces that border on the uncanny; in The Italian, geographical extremes evoke the pleasures of the sublime in her readers and Gothic ruins hint at a historical sublime, the vast weight of years.

The fear inspired by horror is that of the macabre, the graphic, and the monstrous. Horrific images, whether violent, perverse, or otherwise offensive to contemporary sensibility, inspire the reader to turn away or otherwise reject them. An apologist for The Monk argues that such scenes dissuade readers from the criminal behavior depicted in the novel.<sup>8</sup> This justification is similar to contemporary arguments for capital punishment and can be compared to what Michel Foucault has called “the spectacle of the scaffold” or “monarchical punishment”.<sup>9</sup> Like public execution, the horror in The Monk performs a questionable pedagogical function, as the criminal behavior of the narrative’s villains is repaid in kind by those authorities responsible for discipline.

While the source of horror is the obvious, the origin of terror is in the obscure. Mysterious, potent figures torment the innocent, and instead of forcing the reader (or the protagonists) to retreat from these objects of fear, the narrative of The Italian invites further investigation. Since the culmination of the investigation must fully explain the mystery in order to provide satisfaction, the terror mode goes hand in hand with the explained supernatural.

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<sup>8</sup> “An Apology for the Monk” appeared in the *Monthly Mirror* in April 1797.

<sup>9</sup> Described in To Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.

Consequently, material rather than psychological desires motivate the villains of novels like The Italian, and they represent societal rather than personal corruption. The terror mode of The Italian ruminates on Schedoni's greed and ambition, and leaves the yearning of the Bleeding Nun to be buried in her ancestral home to The Monk.

By the end of the novel, The Monk punishes all the characters for their transgressions, and avenges the victims. In contrast, The Italian redeems its villains in some fashion by allowing them to confess their complicity in the plot against Vincentio and Ellena, while it frees the protagonists from the traditional constraints of family and class so that they can find happiness together. The movement toward investigation in the novel is also an incitement to confession, as the probing of the main characters finally backs the villains into a corner and forces them to give up their secrets. The dissolution of traditional disciplinary power structures in The Italian in favor of middle-station normalization for the villains suggests that observation and discourse can be used to discipline and reform.

### Torture and Confession

To talk about the broad social and cultural differences between Lewis and Radcliffe's treatment of the Inquisition and most especially to throw light on the differing attitudes toward punishment and rehabilitation as they appear in the two novels, I employ the terms shame and guilt. These emotions are the driving force behind each respective model and related to what Michel Foucault calls the "dark twins" of confession and torture (59).<sup>10</sup> The punishment model portrays torture as a means to humiliate individuals through abject pain and a forced confession,

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<sup>10</sup> Michel Foucault, in his *History of Sexuality, volume I, page 59* describes torture as the "dark twin" of confession, and suggests that confession has superseded torture as a device of social discipline. I adopt the terminology "punishment" and "rehabilitative" narrative models, as well as shame and guilt, because they denote two coexisting and competitive systems of social control, rather than successive stages of social organization.

while the rehabilitation model describes individuals who confesses their sins in order to expiate their guilt.

As Foucault relates, torture and confession are two methods of social discipline that legal authorities have used in conjunction, but after the Protestant Reformation, the two practices begin to diverge and develop a distinct culture around them. In a guilt culture, a person who violates the social code can seek expiation through confession of his or her sins, while an individual in a shame culture would have nothing to gain and everything to lose from exposure. One of the preoccupations of the eighteenth-century novel is confession. Free and compulsive confession is often portrayed as having therapeutic qualities, while at the same time the mandatory nature of the Catholic confessional and the forced confessions extracted by the Inquisition are repugnant to English individualism. The Madrid that Lewis creates as the backdrop for The Monk is a classic shame culture, and at the center of the book is Ambrosio's role as a confessor and paradoxical inability to reveal his true nature to the public and his consequent degeneration.

Within this thesis, shame culture values are associated with the punishment narrative model of The Monk while guilt culture values are identified with the rehabilitative narrative model of The Italian. In the former, confession is followed by pain or violent death. After Raymond's note is discovered, Agnes confesses her pregnancy and begs for Ambrosio's mercy, anticipating her incarceration. Ambrosio becomes Elvira's confessor, and ultimately murders her. Ambrosio's final deal with the Devil is tantamount to an acknowledgement of his own wickedness and is immediately followed by his horrific death. The Italian, on the other hand, presents uncoerced confession as a means of absolution or escape, as first Spalatro and then

Schedoni expiate their crimes by admitting their guilt. While both Spalatro and Schedoni die following their confessions, their confession is depicted as an act of grace that rehabilitates them prior to their dissolution. But both shame and guilt cultures invite discourse on taboo subjects that are then judged by an observer, and confession is ultimately a tool of discipline in each novel.

The horror mode of Lewis and the terror mode of Radcliffe, the existence of shame in The Monk and moments of guilt in The Italian—all dovetail to account for the representation of the Inquisition in each novel. This representation is constructed through each author’s perception of how power is defined by the civilizing process into a dominant public and subordinate private sphere; how an age of revolution has thrown these power relationships into turmoil; how transgression (ultimately made public) exposes these imbalances and redefines the boundaries between public and private; and which sphere each author privileges as generating the civilizing force. In The Monk, it becomes clear by the end of the novel that the dominant social order must enforce rigid gender and class roles and punish deviancy harshly. The Italian, on the other hand, indicates that a moderate balance between “masculine” and “feminine” impulses is best constructed in the domestic sphere and that this balance will eventually stabilize the contentious political sphere.

Lewis’s horror deals with the eruption of the private and repressed into the public sphere, while Radcliffe’s emphasis on terror grapples with the oppression of the weak by faceless and powerful foes. These books each reflect a bias for either dominant or subordinate parties, but their emphasis on transgression and expression of uncivilized or perhaps even anti-civilizing forces makes them incendiary fodder in a decade of revolution. The ambiguous depiction of the

Inquisition could, in either novel, be taken as a representation of the excesses of the French *sans-culottes* or for the repressive tactics of the Pitt government. Therein lays both their appeal to readers and the primary reason for their vilification by all manner of critics.

While the narratives of these Gothic novels lack perspicuity, they still convey their affections quite well. The action of the Gothic novel inspires little reflection, but an abundance of emotion. There is nothing beautiful about the images in The Monk and much that is ugly in it, and its readers want to see its malefactors punished. The sublime crouches within the sentiments that Matthew Lewis expresses and in the plight of Ann Radcliffe's heroes. The dangers of a fallen world threaten the domestic happiness of the few, and in the end, sympathetic readers of The Italian will feel as much pity as hate for the villains. Few readers, during the authors' lifetimes or now, could witness their creations and remain unaffected by them.

**MATTHEW LEWIS' *THE MONK*:  
THE MONASTIC LABYRINTH, THE EVIL WITHIN, AND THE FIRES  
OF THE INQUISITION**

Of all the horrors featured in Matthew Lewis' The Monk, the greatest is not supernatural in nature, but human-made—the institution of the Inquisition. Ambrosio, the villain of the novel and a horror in his own right, fears punishment by the Inquisition more than punishment in the fires of hell. Although an artifact reminiscent of medieval Spain, the Inquisition in Lewis's book represents the Enlightenment shift from a belief in a supernatural afterlife wherein earthly sins will be punished, to a reliance on human institutions to punish and discipline transgressions. This cultural change is reflected in The Monk in the effectiveness of the Inquisition over monasticism as a force for social discipline and in the particular attributes of the Inquisition that make it more amenable to the aristocracy when compared to ecclesiastical institutions.

The chief foils of the Inquisition in The Monk, the institutions against which the book defines the Inquisition, are the monasteries of St. Francis and St. Clare. The Monk considers the differences in approach toward human development and criminal punishment between the monasteries of Madrid and the Inquisition. One aspect is the jurisdiction each institution holds over the private lives of the citizens of Madrid, while another is the source of societal corruption—whether it is something that originates from external sources, such as worldly anger and greed for riches, or from the individual passions. The book contemplates the issue of monastic repression versus inquisitorial correction, examines the public's reaction to criminal behavior, and suggests that the state has an obligation to accommodate the public's desire for retribution.

As with many Gothic novels of the eighteenth century, The Monk indicts the monastic system as a home for deviants and fools. One can attribute part of this to the anti-clericalism of

the eighteenth century and continuing English hostility toward monks, the legacy of a wave of monastic suppression that swept Northern Europe in the late sixteenth century. Another aspect of this rejection is cultural, however, and forms a critique of a way of life that offered an alternative to the secular realm. The Monk depicts monasticism as an alien lifestyle, the breeding ground for villains and anathema to the sphere of healthy, civically engaged human endeavor. The Monk describes the monasteries as undermining civic virtue and thus contributing to the erosion of the public good.

One of the most promoted aspects of English civic life was the institution of marriage. While Catholicism had promoted the value of chastity and presented marriage as an evil necessary for procreation and to regulate lustful impulses, Reformation theology reversed this trend, making marriage a positive duty and portraying enforced chastity as unnatural. “The married state now became the ethical norm for the virtuous Christian...The sanctification of marriage—‘holy matrimony’—was a constant theme of Protestant sermons of the sixteenth century” (Stone 100-101). Even Anglican ministers were encouraged to marry and raise children.

In addition, for the average acolyte, entering into monastic life not only meant giving up the world, but also surrendering one’s individuality by dissolving the bonds of commerce and family—two extremely important elements of eighteenth-century English society. Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall emphasize the importance and interrelationship of business and family in their book Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850. They argue that middle-class men achieve maturity through economic enterprise: “To become adult men within their own terms they must provide a livelihood which made possible a domestic establishment where they and their dependants could live a rational and morally sanctioned life”

(229). Furthermore, Davidoff and Hall suggest that improvements in the technology of travel and communication enabled the nuclear family to enlarge its network of both business and familial relationships (321-22). Isolation from public life in the service of religion became an outmoded ideal.

The Monk goes beyond portraying Ambrosio as a romantic figure out of the past and places social limits on the character, limits alien to its English readers that spoil the character's potential. While Horace Walpole's Manfred from *Otranto* is a medieval brute of a man, the isolated, passionate, and brooding Ambrosio is closer to what will become the Byronic ideal because of his hobbled ambitions. While the early Gothic movement featured worldly men motivated by greed or lust, such as Manfred or Montoni, Ambrosio anticipates the more cerebral Gothic villains of the next century like Victor Frankenstein and Melmoth, characters inhuman due to their removal from society rather than ones corrupted due to their extensive involvement in the world. While earlier Gothic novels, especially the early novels of Ann Radcliffe, attributed the villainy of their antagonists to the desire for material wealth or personal rivalries, Ambrosio's villainy appears internally motivated. A slight exposure to the outside world and the opposite sex allows satanic desires, long repressed but abiding since his birth, to swell to the surface and transform Ambrosio into a raging madman who obsesses over rape and murder.

### Patriarchy and the Criminal

One of the tragedies of the character is that Ambrosio does not feel compelled to determine his parentage. He even considers his foundling status as a source of pride, evidence that his fellow monks are the only family he has ever known. Don Christoval tells Leonella and Antonia that the monks "have not hesitated to publish, that he [Ambrosio] is a present to them

from the Virgin” (47) and indicates that Ambrosio has spent thirty years in seclusion. Merely by describing Ambrosio as a present from the Virgin, the monks celebrate the fact that he is a *tabula rasa*, a hunk of unadulterated clay upon which they will write their doctrine. The logic of the narrative implies that if his peers had not emphasized the value of his purity and discontinuity with his heritage so much, Ambrosio might have investigated his lineage and avoided incest and matricide. The horror in The Monk emerges from a past long hidden from Ambrosio himself, an inheritance from the parents he has never known.

The Monk may be here applying an early theory of evolution, like that regarding plant metamorphism advanced by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, to criminology, and anticipating the ideas of biological determinists such as Cesare Lombroso. Although there is no definite link to The Monk, scholars have established that Lewis was deeply familiar with Goethe’s work (Conger) and it is provocative that the German poet’s *Metamorphosis of Plants* (1790) discusses plant morphology in general through a discussion of abnormal development in flowers. Might The Monk have a similar grand ambition, attempting to explain personal human development through the examination of an abnormal specimen? Parentage and deviancy are subjects to which the book continuously returns.

A frequent theme of The Monk is the misfortune that characters suffer when they neglect the wishes of their ancestors. One example is Elvira’s husband Gonzalvo, who flees the disapproval of his father, the old Marquis, and suffers exile followed by death. Another is when Agnes mocks the superstitions of her own father, only to have the Bleeding Nun rob her of her fiancée. Finally, Raymond is compelled to bury the same apparition when he discovers that he is

descended from her, lest he suffer her odious embraces each night. Those characters who ignore their ancestry suffer, while those who honor their forbearers escape supernatural punishment.

While the cloister serves as an orphanage for Ambrosio and his story highlights its insufficiency as such, other characters retreat from worldly sorrow only to find themselves trapped by their monastic vows. Don Gaston, Agnes' father, promises her to the convent at a very young age. Although she is manifestly unsuited for the religious life, Agnes decides to abide by her father's wishes once she believes Raymond has abandoned her. Yet when she seeks release from her vows, the prioress of her nunnery first obstructs Lorenzo's efforts to contact his sister and then fakes her death to immure her in the crypt beneath the graveyard. Agnes' imprisonment in the dungeon is, in the context of The Monk, only an extreme form of the isolation from friends, family, and her own natural inclinations that she was subject to in the nunnery.

The Bleeding Nun, born Beatrice de las Cisternas, is another example of a character of "warm and voluptuous character" that is forced by her parents to take the veil and enter a nunnery. The nunnery fails to reform her, and instead presents "many obstacles which only added new force to her desires (182)." At the first opportunity, she escapes the convent with a German baron from Lindenberg and flees the country. Once in Bavaria, she becomes the baron's concubine, professes that she is an atheist, carries on an affair with the baron's younger brother and, with him, plots to murder the baron. Once she stabs the baron to death, her lover betrays her and leaves her bones to rot in a cave. The Monk expresses a slippery slope in which Beatrice is first divorced from her family and enters the monastery, then abandons her country and her religion, and finally turns on her lover.

The competition between secular and monastic worlds that The Monk presents to its readers plays out in the fight between Raymond and the prioress over Agnes. The book describes the prioress as if she regards the convent of St. Clare as her own medieval fiefdom, and in her language treats Agnes like a disloyal vassal. At the conclusion of his long tale, Raymond relates to Lorenzo the advice of the cardinal-duke of Lerma, that they should rescue Agnes from the convent by stealth, because the prioress would be “much incensed by losing a person of such high rank from her society, and consider the renunciation of Agnes as an insult to her house” (178-79). When the Mother St. Ursula relates the story of the prioress’ poisoning of Agnes, she describes the prioress justifying her lack of mercy. In the story, the prioress explains to Agnes that her resistance has sparked a rebellion on her behalf among the elder nuns: “[Agnes] sued for life...[the prioress] told her, that at first she meant to have spared her life, and that if she had altered her intention, she had to thank the opposition of her friends” (300). In the Prioress of St. Clare, The Monk creates the pale shadow of a feudal monarch.

While readers might consider Ambrosio a victim of the monastic system, the depiction of the Prioress of St. Clare strikes at the heart of monasticism itself. Like a petty bureaucrat in a novel from a later age, the prioress is obsessed with retaining absolute power over her limited sphere of influence and enforcing a rule of conduct that runs contrary to natural human inclination. She resists first Raymond’s requests to see his lover, then Lorenzo’s efforts to see his sister, and then ignores the wishes of the Mother St. Ursula, a mother figure to Agnes who represents the moderate elements of St. Clare. Finally, Agnes’ entreaties to basic human decency fall on deaf ears as the prioress seals her away in an underground tomb with her unborn

baby. The prioress's punishment of Agnes offends not only the social order, but also the natural order, and in the end the bacchanal crowd tears her apart for it.

The Monk not only vilifies the monastic leadership, it also illustrates how limited the education of the rank-and-file nuns are in the scene in which Raymond's servant Theodore attempts to gain intelligence regarding Agnes's fate. Theodore dons the same ridiculous disguise that Raymond used to gain entry to the nunnery earlier (172), a black eye patch, and then passes himself off as a beggar. The nuns are entirely taken in by his flattery and timidity, while some of the younger nuns, such as Sister Helena and Rachael, evince a barely veiled sexual interest in the handsome youth (250). All of the nuns, even the elder porteress, take his stories of misshapen savages and green-skinned Danes seriously (251-2). Their leader, the prioress, is both greedy and superficial, since after asking his opinion of monastic life and receiving lip service, she declares that, "her recommendation would not permit his poverty to be an obstacle" to becoming a monk (250), suggesting that a preference for the wealthy is the norm.

Two stories that Theodore tells to the nuns reveal a playful contempt for their credulity and the exaggerated innocence, even ignorance, of the society. When asked how he lost the sight in his left eye, Theodore explains that he peeked at a statue of the Virgin as monks were changing the statue's clothes and God struck him blind in that eye. The gasps and prayers of the nuns are a testament to their superstition and fear of even the representation of the naked female form, although all of the sisters seem to understand Theodore's curiosity and, to some degree, share it. Theodore follows this story with the Ballad of the Water-King, a song about a woman who marries a spirit of the sea and is then drowned (253-55). The tale mocks his audience's

status as “brides of Christ,” married to the Holy Spirit, a notion that English readers would see as distinctly pagan.

The monasteries of The Monk are like labyrinths of dogma and superstition, and those who become a part of them become lost to the natural world. In contrast, the Inquisition in The Monk works in concert with basic human nature and operates as part of the social and natural order established in the novel, not apart from it. Rather than providing an alternative to the secular world that suppresses natural human desire as with the monasteries, the Inquisition deters excessive desire and enforces laws against breaches of decency. At the same time, the Inquisition is safely subordinate to the state. Since Ambrosio appears in the novel as the archetype of the abnormal criminal, the Inquisition features most prominently in the passages dealing with him, even though the name of the institution is invoked several times to restore order when a character threatens to transgress against codes of civility.

Ambrosio considers the Inquisition while he contemplates committing acts that will cause him to spiral deeper into his personal labyrinth of lust and madness. After first sleeping with Matilda, Ambrosio worries that he might expose himself to public censure and the accompanying punishment:

A trifling indiscretion on his part, or on Matilda’s, would overturn the very fabric of reputation which it had cost him thirty years to erect, and render him the abhorrence of that people of whom he was then the idol. Conscience painted to him in glaring colours his perjury and weakness; apprehension magnified to him the horrors of punishment, and he already fancied himself in the prisons of the Inquisition. (206)

Ambrosio's awareness of the discrepancy between his public persona and his private character become more difficult for him to reconcile as the narrative progresses. Even before they put him to the question, fear of the Inquisition threatens Ambrosio's peace of mind. At any moment, the barrier between the monk's private and public worlds may collapse. The Inquisition appears in the novel frequently as an institution that either threatens or preserves the boundaries of the domestic sphere.

When Raymond tracks down Agnes in the convent of St. Clare, he entreats a kindly old gardener to allow them to meet in the garden. On one of these visits, Raymond impregnates Agnes. When he again asks the gardener to admit him to the garden, the man protests that if the prioress of St. Clare, the Mother St. Agatha, learned of his role in the matter, she would denounce him to the Inquisition. The gardener is unaware of how far Raymond and Agnes's romantic relationship has progressed, but he is terrified of the Mother St. Agatha discovering Raymond's presence in the garden. While Raymond seeks to meet Agnes outside the convent walls and she seems hopeful about his plans to liberate her, the gardener winks at their violation of the convent's strict isolation from the outside world. Now that Agnes has withdrawn her consent from the arrangement however, civility demands that the gardener refuse Raymond entrance and the name of the Inquisition appears to enforce the rules of civility.

Lastly, Raymond and Lorenzo call upon Don Ramirez and the Inquisition to arrest the prioress once the Mother St. Ursula sends her assurances that she will testify against her superior. As the inquisitors are the guardians of propriety and civilization, The Monk states that alerting the Grand Inquisitor is "a ceremony not to be neglected when a member of the church was to be arrested publicly." (293) The Inquisition allows the aristocracy to regulate

ecclesiastical institutions and prosecute clergy that normally hold themselves apart from and immune to secular law.

Although the institution is not physically present in the scene, the nobles use the sanction of the Inquisition as a means of keeping the peace during the arrest. When Don Ramirez attempts to arrest the prioress, archers protect him from the crowd's indignation, but he feels compelled to invoke the Inquisition as well, and "at that dreaded word every arm fell, every sword shrunk back into its scabbard. The prioress herself turned pale, and trembled" (297). Once St. Ursula reveals the prioress's crimes however, invoking the Inquisition seems to lose its power and a riot ensues (301-02). In addition to accusing the prioress, the Mother St. Ursula has called the credibility of the Inquisition as a security against disorder into question. The social order collapses, and the state must reassert its power to restore the public good.

The contrast between Madrid's monasteries and the Inquisition in The Monk suggests an English debate over the separation of Church and State rather than a reflection upon the realities of these institutions in medieval Spain.<sup>11</sup> Both in theory and in practice, the monastic system in the novel holds itself apart and co-equal with civil authorities. It purports to civilize and regulate those citizens who are subject to its rule in a fashion that is superior in all ways to the fallen secular world. When the jurisdiction of monks and prioresses overlaps with the nobility, or even other ecclesiastical authorities, such as the cardinal-duke of Lerma, the former aggressively press their claim upon their constituents both directly and through various forms of subterfuge. In

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<sup>11</sup> Traditional Protestant dissenters and nonconformists, seeking freedom of religious practice were supported by Rational Dissenters such as John Locke, Joseph Priestly, and Richard Price, who agitated for a more formal separation of church and state (Acosta 31).

contrast, rather than subvert secular authorities, the Inquisition reinforces the power of these authorities.

## Reform and Punishment

The Monk identifies the monasteries of Madrid with progressive institutions that seek the reform of society, and associates the Inquisition with reactionary forces. The former threaten the established social order, threatening anarchy and destruction, while the forces of reaction stand ready to oppose any form of defiance, and do not distinguish too finely between the criminal and the reformative. Even if the two are distinguishable to its English readers, the punishment model of The Monk suggests a symbiotic relationship. The defiance of the monasteries promotes the success of criminals like Ambrosio.

However, the state reserves the right to punish wrongdoing, and so the monasteries propose an alternative to punishment that is incompatible with the project of the state: The monastic aim in The Monk is not so much rehabilitative as it is pre-emptive. The Monk attacks this role. The Monk depicts the Inquisition, on the other hand, as subordinate to the state, and the book bases the fictional representation on the reality of the historic Spanish Inquisition. The Holy Office's primary responsibility was to instruct relapsed heretics in the fundamentals of moral doctrine, albeit with the proverbial Sword of Damocles always at the ready, and only if reform proved impossible, to remand them to the civil authorities for execution.

There is also evidence that various Spanish monarchs employed the Inquisition to political ends (Kamen 168-70). Although the historical Inquisition often warred with other institutions both ecclesiastical and secular over jurisdiction, the Inquisition of The Monk has an untroubled, subordinate, even complementary relationship with secular authorities. In a strange

reversal of popular wisdom, the monasteries of The Monk are hothouses of intrigue, fanaticism, and abuse, while the inquisitors are humble servants of the state. The argument here is that any institution with a claim upon the conscience of the population works best when the Spanish (or English) aristocracy presides over it.

The Monk considers the proper jurisdiction of those institutions charged with civilizing and regulating the populace, and in addition presents the individual psyche as the source of uncivilized impulses. Both Ambrosio and Antonia demonstrate the delicacy and danger of the human mind when raised in isolation, away from the ministrations of a strong disciplinary authority and worldly consequence. In the case of Antonia, she does not mature in the monastery, but the overprotective attentions of her mother are tantamount to the same thing. Antonia remains ignorant of the differences between men and women, as her mother excises those parts of her personal Bible that dwell on sin and evil, and the subtle hints of Ambrosio as he works to seduce her completely escape her. She is a *tabula rasa* when it comes to human nature, and her mother's protection leaves her completely unprotected. Ambrosio, on the other hand, inherits ferocious appetites from birth, and at the prompting of Matilda his true nature completely overwhelms his constructed social identity.

Ambrosio's upbringing at the monastery appears to instill a strong sense of discipline, but in the end Ambrosio's ambitions and appetites are depicted as too immense to be understood, much less managed, by counselors who themselves have retreated from the temporal world. Even before Ambrosio is tempted by Matilda and while he is ignorant of both worldly accomplishments and sexual pleasure, he prays to a painting of the Virgin Mary and stops to admire his mastery of his passions. His contemplation of the painting borders on the erotic.

Ambrosio exclaims, “Who else has subdued the violence of strong passions and an impetuous temperament,” and while contemplating the painting, then a brief time later murmurs, “were I permitted to twine round my fingers those golden ringlets, and press with my lips the treasures of that snowy bosom!” (65). The monk acknowledges that he was born with potent desires, but his control over them is a patent delusion and his pride is hypocritical.

According to The Monk, this indoctrination without real temptations to temper his character only suppresses Ambrosio’s natural passions and turns him into a criminal powder keg, just waiting for the spark to set him off. Lewis’s explanation of Ambrosio’s stunted potential make him sound like a frustrated Julius Caesar whose monastic upbringing has precipitated his later reign of terror:

Had his youth been passed in the world, he would have shown himself possessed of many brilliant and manly qualities. He was naturally enterprising, firm, and fearless: he had a warrior’s heart, and he might have shone with splendour at the head of an army. There was no want of generosity in his nature: the wretched never failed to find in him a compassionate auditor: his abilities were quick and shining, and his judgment vast, solid, and decisive. With such qualifications he would have been an ornament to his country.

(213)

The implication is that Ambrosio the Monk was not an asset to the community of Madrid and that, with his transformation into a vicious criminal, the monks have deprived Spain of a fine soldier. One can assume that Ambrosio inherited his unrefined appetites from Elvira’s side of the family, as the grandson of “as honest a pains-taking shoe-maker as any in Cordova” (44), and his violent tendencies from his noble grandfather. The Monk suggests that if Ambrosio were

exposed to the rigors of the world, society would have found a use for these proclivities, but that his instructors at the monastery encouraged him to pursue a monastic ideal and threatened him with supernatural punishments if he failed to measure up to their expectations (214). The consequence of this is that Ambrosio not only becomes less tolerant of the failings of others, but becomes exceptionally good at counterfeiting perfection and obfuscating his own faults as well.

This criticism in The Monk, that contrary to expectations isolation and severe moral conditioning make the criminal more apt to dissemble and more dangerous to society at large, anticipates later critiques of the carceral. Once he has indulged his criminal nature, Ambrosio knows exactly what guise to adopt when seducing Antonia-- that of her mother's confessor. Ambrosio offers Elvira the pretext that she should remain silent because his visits would appear unseemly, a directive she readily accepts (222). The Capuchin monks, accustomed to the veneer of sanctity, either do not recognize or choose to overlook any change in Ambrosio's character.

Because of Ambrosio's rank in Madrid's society Elvira does not accuse him openly after he sexually assaults her daughter, but is content to bar him from her home (233-34). Even when Don Ramirez and his men find Ambrosio near the corpse of Antonia, with her blood on his robe, The Monk states that "the faculties of the spectators were chained up in surprise and scarcely could they persuade themselves that what they saw was no vision" (328). Finally, the Devil suggests that the Inquisition was about to extend Ambrosio a pardon when he escaped (362). Even though Ambrosio's crimes are monstrous, and the evidence against him is damning, his ability to act the part of the holy man makes it difficult for anyone to condemn him.

In this, The Monk suggests a weakness in both the carceral and in the practice of confession. Both the carceral and the confessional are designed to force the criminal to reflect

upon his crimes and reform his behavior. Yet nothing, neither prolonged isolation nor supernatural threats, can assure honest reflection or honest confession. Thirty years of isolation from the opposite sex does not dim Ambrosio's sexual drives, and thirty years of removal from worldly strife does not dull his capacity for violence. After three decades of Ambrosio's conformance to societal expectations, it is more difficult for the state to detect and punish Ambrosio's wrong-doing, as his civilized demeanor remains unchanged even after the internal checks on his behavior have broken down. Ambrosio's exalted status in society makes it even more unlikely that he will admit to error and curb his desires, since he has so much to lose by revealing his faults. In the final assessment, the monastery facilitates Ambrosio's criminal career, the Inquisition avenges his victims and forces a genuine confession, while the Devil himself acts as the ironic agent of Heaven's justice.

This brings us to the respective technologies employed by the monastic orders and the Holy Office, both in terms of effectiveness and in terms of whom the institution ultimately serves. In the case of the monastery, The Monk depicts instances of religious confession as its favored mode of discipline. Ambrosio confesses to a painting of the Virgin, Rosario confesses to his identity as Matilda before Ambrosio, and Elvira and Antonia confess to Ambrosio. In a sense, the Mother St. Ursula confesses the sins of her convent to the mob gathered for the festival of St. Clare. All of these confessions have terrible results, as they dissolve the social partitions between the public and the private that divide individuals, provoke some sort of uncivilized response from either confessed or confessor, and erode the monolithic power of the state to keep the peace.

The earliest instance of confession is when Ambrosio addresses the picture of the Madonna in his cell that he has contemplated for two years. Even though Ambrosio indicates that

he bases his attraction for the painting's beauty upon regard for the artist's skill and the divinity that the image represents (65-66), The Monk makes it clear that this is simple prevarication, as a moment earlier the monk considered aloud abandoning his ascetism if he found the same image in the flesh. It is this very moment that the Devil later says that he decided to send Matilda, in the shape of the image, to tempt Ambrosio (361). Syndy Conger in her electronic article "Confessors and Penitents in M. G. Lewis's *The Monk*" observes that Matilda and other female penitents sexualize religion, and Matilda's seduction of Ambrosio utilizes confession:

Rosario/Matilda casts him/herself in the role of a penitent and her seductive disclosures in the mold of the confession just enough to catch the confessor each time he seriously contemplates banishing the novice or fleeing from his/her sight.

Once Ambrosio openly expresses his emotion, even in the supposed privacy of his cell, it becomes open to exploitation by an outside force. In The Monk, the expression of desire through confession appears to call a more provocative and forbidden desire into being. Ambrosio's desire for the picture calls forth Matilda, while in turn his sexual relationship with Matilda whets Ambrosio's appetite to seduce Antonia. Ambrosio's confession results in Matilda's offer to help Ambrosio gratify his desire for Antonia. Clearly, confession in The Monk is a slippery slope to damnation, as Ambrosio arraigns his public and private personas against each other. Bristling with pride before the painting of the Madonna after his sermon, Ambrosio anticipates his growing fame and joyfully exclaims, "They shall know what you are!" (66) The statement turns out to be prophetic, although the self that Ambrosio reveals to the public at the end of the narrative turns out to be completely at odds with the one he knows at the beginning.

While Ambrosio's private confession anticipates his personal disintegration, Rosario's confession of his identity as Matilda implies the dissolution of gender difference and professional reserve. Rosario's mere hint that he carries a deep secret that might undermine his friendship with Ambrosio sparks the older monk's interest (68) and encourages him to spy on him later (73). Rosario's slow revelation of his "sister's" dilemma tears down the bounds of propriety between the two monks and predisposes Ambrosio toward Matilda when she finally reveals herself. From this point on, the social constraints imposed by Ambrosio's monastic vows do more to excite his desires than diminish them. The Monk presents the intimacy occasioned by the confessional as a dangerous threat to eighteenth-century English sexual mores, as Ambrosio has sex with the dual-gendered Rosario / Matilda, a fellow monk, and a pupil as well.

The confessions of Elvira, Antonia, and the Mother St. Ursula demonstrate a further disintegration of society. Ambrosio's role as confessor allows him to penetrate the sanctity of their homes, and Ambrosio's seemingly innocent questions about Antonia's love life, as well as her confused confession of her feelings about the opposite sex, appears to him an invitation to sexual intimacy (231-233). Again, the tradition of the confessional appears to threaten English mores, in this case a regard for the sanctity of the home and the virginity of young women of quality. If the prior instances of confession in The Monk suggest a slide toward anarchy, the confession of the Mother St. Ursula illustrates the total breakdown of society. The book characterizes the prioress's destructive impulses as infectious. The crimes that the Mother St. Ursula reveals causes the people of Madrid to overrun the Church's lands, burning its buildings and putting its representatives to the sword, an image reminiscent of the French Revolution. The narrative argues that the technique of confession benefits disparate centrifugal forces and tears

apart the foundations of society-- including solid notions of self-identity, gender and occupation, the family, and public order.

While the confessional is associated with monasticism, the preferred method of the Inquisition is its “dark twin” torture. The technical differences between the two are that the first is private, or is at the very least performed within a select community, it is freely expressed, and it is in essence an incitement to further discourse on the subject, as the confessed is expected to further explore his or her thoughts and feelings. Monastic confession centers on and constructs the confessing subject. Torture, on the other hand, is a matter of public record, the torturers coerce the confession, and the acknowledgement of guilt is the final objective of the process, not the starting point. Actual guilt or innocence is irrelevant to the tortured individual, as the victim’s degradation serves to reinforce the power of the state rather than reassert his or her status in society.

Before putting on trial and torturing a prisoner, the Inquisition normally already possessed evidence of his or her guilt and would place upon the prisoner the onus of proving his or her innocence by disproving the evidence and/or discrediting his or her accuser. Both accuser and evidence remained secret, however, so that often a defendant would confess to crimes for which the Inquisition had not arrested him or her, or would attempt to defend against an imagined charge that had no bearing on the evidence against them. While the Inquisition often tried defendants as relapsed Jewish or Muslim *conversos* or for heresy, contrary to popular belief and to The Monk, the Spanish Inquisition rarely tried individuals for witchcraft or sorcery.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Henry Kamen’s exhaustive revisionist study of the Spanish Inquisition examines both the origins and the methods of the tribunal in detail. In Chapter 9, Kamen discusses the difficulties that defendants encountered in securing legal counsel and mounting a proper defense. Kamen also argues that prosecution of sorcery or witchcraft was generally

The description of the Inquisition's methods in The Monk follows the historical account in most particulars, although it seems unlikely that the Holy Office would try Ambrosio for "rape and murder" as well as the "crime of sorcery" (349), since the Inquisition would have remanded those accused of these charges to a secular court. Trial by the Inquisition is effective within the context of the novel, as The Monk is calling into question the efficacy of free confession, as opposed to the methods of coercion applied by the Inquisition. The first paragraph of Chapter Twelve sums up the political implications of the trial, as the citizens of Madrid are stunned by rumors of Ambrosio's crimes, his monastery attempts to disavow the charges, and eventually debate over his guilt is filled with "the utmost acrimony" (347). The Inquisition decides to speed up Ambrosio's trial in order to hold an *auto da fé* (349). One can assume that the authorities of Madrid wish to settle the matter in order to avoid a riot such as the one that followed the public accusation of the prioress of St. Clare.

In addition to the Inquisition ensuring a speedy trial, The Monk also depicts the Inquisition as doing service to the state by satisfying the public's desire for revenge. The Monk does not explicitly condemn the mob's attack on the prioress, and Lorenzo's brooding mental state prior to confronting the prioress, during which time he mulls over the "artifices of the monks" and longs for "the moment destined to unmask the hypocrites" (294) anticipates the murderous rage of the mob later. In fact, the mob appears to express the anger and desire for justice experienced by Raymond and Lorenzo, although Lorenzo and his companions later "beheld it with the utmost horror" and upon learning of the attack on the convent "resolved to defend it if possible" (302). The torture of the Inquisition appears to provide a solution, as it

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left to the secular courts and the Inquisition was loathe to involve itself in trying those charges since superstition, sorcery, and astrology "were ill-defined areas in which many learned men and clergy themselves dabbled." (269)

serves as a pressure valve for the rage and sorrow of the community, expressing its need for savage punishment without wreaking havoc. In much the same way, the narrative of The Monk satisfies the antisocial, perhaps even anti-civilized, urges of its readership in a contained and safe fashion.

Considering The Monk's hostility toward criminal reform and the English government's hardening attitude toward republican ideas, as well as Lewis's membership in Parliament, the powerful argument for retributive punishment in The Monk was likely a reaction to the utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham. One of the major influences on Bentham's utilitarianism was Cesare Bonesana's, the Marquis Beccaria, study of penology *On Crimes and Punishments* (1764). Beccaria was an Italian jurist and legal reformer who condemned both torture and the death penalty and argued that punishment should serve as a deterrent, scaled to dissuade criminals, and not take the form of severe retribution (Bonesana, Chapter 12; *Of the Intent of Punishments*). The Monk, in its scenes of graphic torture and the lurid detail in which it describes the punishments of the guilty, reaffirms the right of the state or other disciplinary body to torture an individual suspected of a crime and categorically rejects the idea of deterrence as the primary function of punishment. When one considers the popularity of the "hanging fairs" at Tyburn, the proliferation of public executions following the Waltham Black Act of 1723, part of the "Bloody Code", and the fact that death by burning in Britain was outlawed as late as 1790, it is easy to believe that such a stance on torture and punishment expressed mainstream opinion.

Most of all The Monk, and much of Gothic literature in general, questions the Enlightenment's assumption that men and women are fundamentally rational beings. James Whitlark has commented that the British often characterized themselves as introverted and

rational, as opposed to the perceived passion and extroversion of Southern Europe; “Catholic social control is through confession and other external ceremonies, supposedly making Catholic countries extroverted, Protestant ones introverted” (Whitlark). In drawing up the plans for his Panopticon, Bentham predicated his surveillance technique to deter crime and reform the criminal on Protestant introversion, on the English criminal’s ability to reflect upon his or her actions.

By internalizing the shame that comes of others observing the criminal in the act of wrongdoing and thus generating something approaching a guilty conscience, Bentham assumes that the criminal, once freed, will then recognize right action from wrong and select the right. The Monk associates the monastery with a Panopticon-like place of reflection, where every action, every thought, is scrutinized. The book’s test subject fails, however, as Ambrosio’s irrational desires are too much to dissuade him from wrong action. The experiment fails, and a strong authoritarian force is required (the Inquisition) in order to keep the “infection” of the monk’s passion from spreading.

The effect of the Inquisition within the narrative is salutary, even though neither it nor the monasteries are perfectly analogous to their medieval counterparts. Instead, they represent a traditional view of crime, as opposed to radical theories of penological reform. Daniel Watkins, in his article on the social hierarchy within The Monk, has argued convincingly that while the protagonists of the book appear in many respects to have all the characteristics of English “new men” of the middle class, the authorities viciously punish those characters that marry across class boundaries (e.g. Elvira, Antonia) or flaunt tradition (e.g. Agnes). Characters from the upper classes, even though they suffer, in the end are still allowed to marry within their class, as with

Lorenzo and Virginia, or live happily ever after despite past incontinence. In a like manner, the punishment narrative of The Monk features traditional approaches toward punishment and crime, although its arguments react to the influence of progressives like Bentham and attack rationalism from a psychological, rather than a religious or aristocratic perspective.

The Monk promulgates what Michael McKeon has described as “conservative ideology,” a reaction to the “progressive ideology” promoted in the Gothic literature produced by writers like Ann Radcliffe. McKeon describes the two ideologies as deriving from a seventeenth-century social crisis after the breakdown of the old aristocratic order’s association between personal worth and social class. The growing influence of the middle class toward the end of the seventeenth century threw the prior social hierarchy based on birth into chaos, as middle class entrepreneurs began to acquire title and influence through economic power. The “progressive ideology” behind novels such as *Pamela* by Samuel Richardson promoted the acquired nobility of its protagonist through virtuous activity. The “conservative ideology” produced by writers like Henry Fielding attacked the opportunism of the middle class by creating aristocratic characters who become the victims of “new men” (McKeon 389-399).

The Monk follows this pattern, as Ambrosio, Elvira, and Antonia carry the airs and affectations of the gentry, without actually being a part of it. Ambrosio’s breeding proves to be unequal to the lofty role he has achieved as abbot, and further problems occur when he and the prioress asserts their power over members of the gentry such as Agnes. Ultimately, The Monk is reactionary, although it champions conservative middle class values, rather than aristocratic ones. As such, it sets the tone for the mainstream horror fiction of the following two centuries,

even though it faces the occasional challenge from the likes of an author writing in the tradition of Ann Radcliffe.

## ANN RADCLIFFE'S *THE ITALIAN*: THE SPECTER OF THE INQUISITION AND THE SALVATION OF THE FAMILY

Sir Walter Scott described Ann Radcliffe in glowing tones in 1826, calling her ability to make remote landscapes and peoples come alive the work of the “first poetess of romantic fiction” (Williams 103). To others, Radcliffe was “the Great Enchantress” (McIntyre 49). Even though one of her major biographers, Clara Frances McIntyre, denies that she intended The Italian to rebut the horrors of The Monk, enough parallels exist between the plot and characters of the two works to support the idea that Radcliffe sets out to transform Lewis’s carnal, German-influenced *schauerroman*. In her hands, the Gothic genre promotes a progressive agenda that is feminist and associated with the virtue of sensibility.

The Italian follows the fortunes of Vincentio di Vivaldi and Ellena Rosalba, the son of a noble family of Venice and a young woman of the middle station. When Vincentio expresses a romantic interest in Ellena, his mother enlists the aid of her confessor Schedoni to save the honor of the Vivaldi family. After failing to frighten Vincentio away from his courtship, Schedoni dispatches his men to capture Ellena and force her into a convent. Vincentio rescues her, but on the eve of their elopement, agents of Schedoni once again capture Ellena and turn Vincentio over to the Inquisition. At the point of murdering Ellena, Schedoni discovers she may be his long-lost daughter, and begins to reverse his previous plans to separate the two lovers. Schedoni’s agents, however, reacting to his frequent betrayals, conspire to destroy him. Even though the Inquisition captures and tortures Schedoni, the sinister monk eventually helps reunite Ellena and Vincentio, as well as Vincentio and his father.

Just as Clara Reeve had done nearly twenty years earlier when she rewrote Horace Walpole’s The Castle of Otranto as The Old English Baron, Radcliffe takes the supernatural

incidents of The Monk and provides comparable yet explicable phenomena, grounding her plot in a more realistic setting and breathing an internal life into Lewis's flat characters. The changes are not cosmetic, but profoundly organic; characters that exist in The Monk as the feckless victims of supernatural horrors take center stage in The Italian. The Italian reveals the sensational phenomena upon which Lewis's plot turned as nothing more than smoke and mirrors. Further, Radcliffe's narrative questions the effectiveness of powerful patriarchal institutions like the Inquisition and credits healthy human relationships, centered on a non-hierarchical family structure, with maintaining social order and progress.

### The Sensational and the Sentimental

Sydney M. Conger describes how Lewis's tale challenges Radcliffean romances like The Mysteries of Udolpho and how the discourse between these two authors, and of the horror and terror Gothic traditions in general, serve periodically to revitalize the genre. Conger claims that Lewis's and Radcliffe's ideas intersect in the novel of sentiment and represent a discontinuity in the term "sentiment" itself, with Lewis adopting a materialistic interpretation of sensibility (sensationalism) and Radcliffe taking on an opposing idealism (sentimentalism). One might look at the discourse between Lewis and Radcliffe as originating from distinct positions in the emerging middle-class ideology of separate spheres. Lewis writes from the perspective of the privileged aristocracy, and he grounds his novel in the public sphere, a superstructure built on a keen awareness of public scrutiny and civic duty, whereas Radcliffe's book dwells on issues of family and the home, representing an acquaintance with a domestic world rife with familial anxieties.

Opposed to the sensationalism of The Monk, the sentimental in The Italian is associated with the terror mode of Radcliffe and reinforces the rehabilitative model. Even though it does so to a lesser extent than in Radcliffe's previous novels, the principal characters of The Italian have rich internal voices. Whereas the book obscures Schedoni's internal monologue during the first half of the novel, his personal narrative comes to dominate the second half of the book as the reader learns his secrets and the unraveling of his plans culminates in a confession. The character of Ellena remains constant throughout the novel, but both Vincentio and Schedoni undergo an internal revolution that alters their fundamental understanding of the world. The possibility of such a personal "awakening" is the cornerstone of rehabilitation as a system of social control.

This ideology of public and domestic spheres, which is associated respectively with the dominance of the horror and terror modes in each novel, replaces the old dichotomy of sacred and secular worlds that existed in the imagination of English authors as the dominant axis of their Catholic historical past. In my chapter on Lewis, I argued that The Monk portrays the monastery as both oppressive and conspiratorial, while the Inquisition faithfully and in an open manner enforces religious orthodoxy for the public good. This is in contrast to The Italian, in which the family is depicted as the only true retreat from the viciousness of the patriarchal order in which ecclesiastical authorities are recognized as serving either as pawns of patriarchy or jail-keepers of its outcasts.

The Monk regards the Inquisition as the final line of defense in the service of public order against the seething return of desires repressed by generations of Catholic upbringing. In The Italian, the Inquisition is a shadowy organization that suppresses the truth and punishes innocent people who defy those in power. The Italian argues that only those like Vincentio, who assert

their reason and their humanity in the face of oppression, will bring these entrenched and secretive power structures to light and prevent their abuses.

To replace the status quo, The Italian envisions an alternative order in which the operations of spiritual and hitherto reactionary institutions, charged with the administration of justice and education and with the regulation of domestic happiness, become the responsibility of an enlightened government. The estate of the happily married couple and their servant represent such an enlightened institution. Vincentio, Ellena, and Paolo form a community that the book depicts as essentially familial, and civilizing incentives originate from within the individual and family rather than from the state. While The Monk sustains religion as a tool to keep the rabble in line, The Italian proposes making spirituality a matter of individual conscience alone, untainted by politics, and suggests secularizing organized religion's institutional functions.

The exemplary religious figures in The Italian, such as the superior of the *Santa Della Pieta*, are those who do not cleave to dogma and are not beholden to the aristocracy. The conclusion of The Italian, depicting a secular refuge from the violence of the patriarchal order rather than a revolutionary new order, recognizes that England is not France. The Italian, written by a female writer who does not enjoy the voice of privilege, realizes that fundamental cultural change will not occur overnight and that England is not ready for radical reform. However, the shocks that the book induces by writing in the terror mode slowly remold the sensibilities of its readers to make them receptive to a more egalitarian domestic arrangement. While the fear inspired by the horror mode is meant to terrify those not empowered by the existing status quo into submission and reinvigorate existing power structures, the disquiet of the terror mode, and

the skepticism inspired in Radcliffe's main characters when faced with a hostile conspiracy determined to oppress them, directs her readers to question traditional sources of authority.

Radcliffe establishes in her prologue that The Italian is a tale that touches upon the confessional in ways that will surprise her English readers, sheltered as they are from the excesses of the Continent. Readers share the amazement of the titular Englishman in the book's introductory tale as he questions why authorities allow a known murderer to roam free. The simple answer his host gives him is that the murderer "has sought sanctuary" in the church, that "he could find shelter no where else," and that he survives because, "there are always people willing to assist those, who cannot assist themselves" (6). The Italian host presents his English guest with a copy of the manuscript for The Italian, to explain the practice of and purpose behind the confessional.

Unlike the riot that follows the "murder" of Agnes in The Monk, the crime of the assassin does not inspire a riot, nor does it require an *auto da fé* to heal the disruption of the peace. Nor does The Italian suggest that the murderer remain at liberty. To the contrary, the assassin remains in seclusion, and concerned Italian citizens maintain him. Rather than an aberration, the Italian host suggests that "if we were to shew no mercy to such unfortunate persons, our cities would be half depopulated" (7). Criminal behavior is not a fluke, but a fact of everyday life. The criminal is "unfortunate" and worthy of "mercy," for the perpetuation of crime is the result of institutional practice rather than individual deviance. The book makes clear that its critique of the Catholic faith goes beyond criticizing the monastic system. It intends to lay bare the corruption and abuses inherent in a Catholic Church that has its roots in patriarchy and will convince readers that this oppression is as alive as it ever was.

## Power and Corruption

Unlike Ambrosio in The Monk, Schedoni is not solely responsible for his crimes and his criminal behavior does not spring simply from bad blood. Instead, The Italian sets out to convince its readers that criminal behavior derives from a desire for power and property. Schedoni, as the Count di Bruno, murders his brother to lay claim to his title, lands, wealth, and wife. When he flees from justice and assumes the identity of a black monk, Schedoni's desire for advancement motivates his villainous deeds in the service of the Marchesa. Even when Schedoni first discovers that Ellena may be his daughter, his first thought is that once he secures her marriage to Vincentio and reveals that he is her father, he will be able to enjoy her newfound wealth. Until Schedoni is dying, his concerns are ruthlessly venal and opportunistic, but his bad traits stem from his familiarity with wealth and ambition, not his insulation from the world.

Further, The Italian implies that immoral people are likely to turn the tools of the powerful, especially heavier-handed institutions like the Inquisition, to criminal ends than establishments associated with rehabilitation. Schedoni's original plan to conceal Ellena within the Carmelite convent fails because generous souls such as the nun Olivia inhabit the institution. The very nature of the convent, as an institution of women devoted to a life of selflessness and spirituality, ensures that it cannot be completely devoid of worthy people. The Inquisition cannot claim the same status. The Inquisition's methods require that its agents remain anonymous and its preference for torture requires that the same agents feel no mercy for those they examine. Its secrecy and callousness make the Inquisition ripe for manipulation.

While the punishment model of The Monk relies on sensationalism, with scenes of violence that cause aversion, the rehabilitative model creates the looming threat of violence to

generate sympathy for its victims. Antonia's rape, Agnes's imprisonment, and Ambrosio's messy death all de-humanize their subjects in The Monk. In contrast, Ellena's imprisonment in the convent and with Schedoni's henchman Spalatro, as well as Vincentio's imprisonment first at the ruined monastery in Naples and then in the dungeons in the Inquisition, force The Italian's readers to share their travails. The tortures in The Monk, even when inflicted on the innocent, feel like punishment. The threats encountered by characters in The Italian cause readers to invest hope in the character's eventual happiness. This threat of violence reaches its pinnacle in Radcliffe's descriptions of the Inquisition.

The anti-Inquisition stance of The Italian resembles that of other Inquisition narratives, such as those written by Simon Berington or Philippus van Limborch (Thompson), in that, by setting the narrative in Italy, Radcliffe constructs a national "Other" to contrast with England. While English sources often depicted imperial Spain as simultaneously authoritarian, decadent, and hysterical, they could not say the same of the fragmented Italian states, which were associated with republicanism and the first flowering of the Renaissance.

Some have argued that The Monk, in its depiction of Spain, exploits a familiar dyad that denigrates the Catholic superstition of a Spanish nationalistic "Other" to exalt English rationalism (Whitlark). This reading of The Monk suggests that the narrative is implicitly criticizing the sentimental as somehow akin to Catholic superstition. The narrative of The Italian rebuts this by expounding on the virtue of English sentimentalism against a male-dominated world that is at once rationalistic and cruel. Catholic Italy becomes a symbol of oppressive masculinity, rather than decadent sentimentalism.

In her past novels, Radcliffe featured characters such as Emily St. Aubert, who often suffered from an excess of sensibility. These characters were, at times, extremely superstitious and were given to radical flights of fancy but, in The Italian, Radcliffe focuses primarily on sensibility's salutary effects, both for society and for the individual. Rather than depict the masculine public world as the seat of rationality and strength of mind, The Italian suggests that it is aggressive, duplicitous, disparate, and cruel.

The Monk subscribes to what Michael McKeon calls a "conservative ideology," a critical reaction that responds to the "progressive ideology" of works that support social mobility between the middle station and the gentry. This "conservative ideology" frequent portrays social climbers as opportunistic and avaricious (McKeon 389-99). The Monk is, for the most part, a conservative reaction to the Gothic sentimentalism of Ann Radcliffe, one that defends the aristocratic social order and traditional English systems of punishment.

The Italian is a rebuttal of The Monk, though the basis of its rebuttal is both feminist and class-based. The noble Vivaldi and Schedoni himself appear even more greedy and opportunistic in maintaining and expanding their inherited prestige and wealth, while the humble industry of Ellena, the needlework she sells to the local convent, endears her to Vincentio. Ellena herself is opposed to a match with Vincentio, as long as it does not meet with the approbation of his relations. Both her feminine sensibility to the feelings of others and to the well-ordered felicity of her middle station home actually serve as an example to the contentious and hard-hearted Vivaldi household.

In The Italian, the sources of morality and strength are family loyalties that transcend political or commercial considerations. As the wife of a journalist and editor of the *English*

*Chronicle*, Radcliffe opposed the Pitt Administration's censorship of the press. In writing a subversive book, even called by some a "terrorist text" (Chaplin 177), Radcliffe was expressing familial solidarity. This focus on the integrity of the domestic in the face of state oppression forms a crucial theme of The Italian, as the strengths of Vincentio and Ellena, and of Paolo reside in their family ties.

### The Man of Feeling

The Monk identifies the monastery, insofar as it is an institution devoted to spiritually perfecting its subjects, with the culture of sensibility. As a result, the novel depicts Ambrosio, who has no proper family but the other monks of the monastery, as a feminized man formed by sentimental values that are alien to his natural masculine instincts. The Italian attempts to salvage the sentimental man through Vincentio. Through the evolution of Vincentio's character, the novel illustrates how patriarchy in both society and in the home can progress to become more feminine, more moderate, and achieve greater equality. This transformation of Vincentio culminates in his examination before the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Rome, and it is precisely because of his status as a "man of feeling" that he is able to navigate the treachery and deceit of the patriarchal order.

While Schedoni may serve as the villainous analogue to Ambrosio, Radcliffe's male protagonist acts as a true counterpoint to her antagonist in a way that Lorenzo and Raymond did not for Ambrosio in The Monk. While Schedoni uses his experiences as a confessor and his understanding of human nature to manipulate others, Vincentio's growing knowledge of the world makes him more sympathetic to the sufferings of others, and his knowledge and sympathy compels him to fight against greed and injustice.

G.J. Barker-Benfield argues that in England during the 1790s, the debate over sensibility had evolved from the sensational system of psychology advanced by Thomas Willis and John Locke a century before and theorized that men and women perceived the world in different ways. Men perceived the world in a rational, logical and abstract fashion, whereas women regarded the world in a manner altogether more empathetic, more sensitive, and more emotional. Male proponents of the new science of the mind during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries generated this new duality in part to reinforce patriarchal dominance, but also to establish a difference between the new age of rationalism and the age of faith that preceded it. The new duality also separated those rational minds equipped to engage productively in the sphere of public affairs from those “weak” minds that at best required reformation and at worst needed to be locked away. As Barker-Benfield relates in *The Culture of Sensibility*:

Many women had long been ambivalent over sensibility because of its materialist underpinnings in the nerve paradigm. On one hand, they claimed an improved education on the basis of this sensational, environmental psychology; on the other, they held that women should maintain a Christian unworldliness as creatures above the mere expression of sense. They warned that godless men- rakes- treated women as yet more consumer objects of sense, capitalizing on women’s own new pursuit of pleasure. This position was expressed in the eighteenth century’s “feminization of religion.” (xxvii)

Ambrosio, the anti-hero of Lewis’s novel, sinks to the depths he does due to an education that neglected worldly matters and left him too vulnerable to its sensual temptations. Unaccustomed to sensual pleasure for thirty years, once Ambrosio experiences it, he becomes addicted to it. His ignorance of sex is equal only to that of Antonia, whose unworldliness the novel contrasts with

the well-educated and sexually-informed Agnes. As a result, Antonia becomes a victim of the sensual appetites of others, whereas Ambrosio is unable to resist his sexual appetites. Raymond is closer to what an eighteenth-century reader would identify as a rake in need of reform, but his experiences in public life condition his appetites and he does not become a murderer or rapist as Ambrosio does. Within a narrative that is unrelentingly critical of sensibility, Ambrosio occupies a feminized position in the narrative, as first Matilda / Rosario seduces him, and then he becomes further corrupted as his awareness of the outside world grows. The excessive sensibility of sheltered characters in The Monk always works to their detriment.

The implication seems to be that a shame culture, as depicted in The Monk Madrid, depends heavily on a strict social division based on gender. Though Kate Ferguson Ellis argues that The Monk reveals the danger of this ideology by depicting Ambrosio's exclusion from the domestic sphere and his descent into madness, Lewis's book does more to reinforce the ideology of separate spheres than Ellis credits. After all, Ambrosio does not become a monster because he is a man deprived of the pleasures of domesticity, but because he is caught in a role that prohibits the full expression of his masculine virtues. Without an education that differentiates between and prescribes roles for both sexes, The Monk argues that Ambrosio is lost once he enters a gendered world, as his immature rationality is overwhelming by his disproportionate sensibility.

The Italian equals The Monk in its condemnation of monastic seclusion, but Ellena from The Italian has more in common with the reclusive and demure Antonia than with the canny Agnes. She is by far the most sentimental character in the novel, spending her time in relative seclusion and taking care of her ailing aunt Bianchi. When Ellena learns that Vincentio's family might disapprove a match, she twice reprimands him for his advances, revealing that, "Her mind

was not yet strong enough, or her views sufficiently enlarged, to teach her...to glory in the dignity of virtuous independence (13).”

Despite Ellena’s passivity and her overly solicitous nature, her ability to “read” Schedoni and appeal to his humanity when he is about to kill her on the beach is precisely what saves her from being murdered. Schedoni, “who had hitherto been insensible to every tender feeling...even he could not now look upon the innocent, the wretched Ellena, without yielding to momentary weakness, as he termed it, of compassion (259),” cannot bring himself to drown her. In other instances, such as when the Abbess of San Stefano imprisons her and commands her to take the veil, Ellena’s empathy gives her the ability to understand the inconsistencies in the arguments of others. When the Superior demands that Ellena follow her commands, Ellena responds by saying, “The sanctuary is profaned...it has become a prison. It is only when the Superior ceases her respect of the precepts of that holy religion, the precepts that teach her justice and benevolence, that she herself is no longer respected (100).” Her understanding allows her to resist intimidation and to win the sympathy of allies like Olivia. She shares this trait with Schedoni, but in his case, his fellow monks “observed that he seldom perceived the truth when it lay on the surface; he could follow it through all the labyrinths of disquisition, but overlooked it, when it was undisguised before him. In fact he cared not for truth...but loved to exert the wily cunning of his nature in hunting through artificial perplexities (43).”

Schedoni is able to understand human motives and fallibility, but material concerns motivate him, rather than a desire for mutual happiness. In other words, he has a rational understanding of human emotions, but his understanding is divorced from actual empathy or compassion. Ellena displays both rationality and sympathy. She uses her empathy to quell the

disputes between Vincentio and Jeronimo during their escape (164), and to secure the assistance of the friar in the underground chamber (166-68). She models this trait for the benefit of Vincentio and later Schedoni, and to an extent male characters later emulate her sympathy to positive effect.

While The Monk is a cautionary tale that reinforces gender roles, The Italian pulls in the opposite direction, toward the dissolution of these differences. Although The Italian makes use of the debate over rationality versus sentiment, characters that display both traits in moderation thrive. Those who tend to favor one or the other are redeemed through balance and moderation. When Schedoni first appears in the narrative, the book depicts him as being rational without intuition or sensitivity, a man who “cared not for truth, nor sought it by bold and broad argument, but loved to exert the wily cunning of his nature in hunting it through artificial perplexities” (43). When Schedoni discovers that Ellena is his daughter prior to murdering her, his guilt awakens within him a flicker of human feeling, and he becomes more sensitive, not just to her plight, but to the danger of Vincentio, whom he has had imprisoned by the Inquisition.

Paul Langford argues, “The sentimental tradition in France was associated with secularism in contrast to evangelized England, where sentiment became a tool of piety” (467). A caricature of a French Jacobin popular in England during the 1790s (perhaps originating with Edmund Burke) depicts this eponymous figure as cheering on the beheading of nobles, but weeping over the body of a dead bird. Coming from a Dissenting background, perhaps Radcliffe did not approve of the Anglican Church as a male tool of reformation and believed that this transformation was the office of the wife, and best engineered through the institution of marriage. She is, in essence, an adherent to the secular and political sentimental tradition and a

critic of the trend toward spirituality in English sentimentalism. The Italian reflects a distrust of those institutions and officers that might intercede in private family affairs.

Schedoni's role as the Vivaldi family's confessor represents a usurpation of familial roles by Church officials, as Schedoni employs his "artifice" on behalf of Vincentio's mother, the *Marchesa* di Vivaldi. When the *Marchesa* first suspects that Vincentio is intent on leaving one of her parties early to visit a love interest, she first asks him to arrange the music to delay his departure. She then directs Schedoni to dispatch his companion monk Nicola to stand watch on the road to Ellena's home, Villa Altieri, and Nicola frightens Vincentio by appearing as a specter and utters a cryptic warning about Vincentio being watched (14-17). Nicola appears before Vincentio several times and imprisons him in an underground cell while other agents of Schedoni kidnap Ellena. On his deathbed, Schedoni also later reveals that he had Nicola visit Vincentio's father, the *Marchese*, and impugn Ellena's honor.

While Schedoni serves the interests of the *Marchesa* during this time, this service is generally in opposition to the wishes or perceived sympathies of the rest of the family. Later, when Vivaldi liberates Ellena from the nunnery of San Stefano, Schedoni prompts the *Marchesa* to sanction Ellena's murder. He plans, without the *Marchesa's* knowledge, to avenge himself against Vincentio by having the young noble arrested and placed within the dungeons of the Inquisition. Although he poses as the *Marchesa's* agent, Vivaldi's agenda comes to supersede hers. In addition to pitting Vivaldi against his mother and father, Schedoni's agents literally violate the sanctity of Vincentio and Ellena's marriage vows when they interrupt the couple's wedding service at the chapel of San Sebastian (214-217). Not only Schedoni's methods and loyalty are corrupt; as readers learn more about his history, the story reveals that Schedoni is a

warped father figure, a cancerous figure transplanted to the Vivaldi family after destroying his own. Schedoni's desire for power requires that he punish his enemies in order to validate his own authority over the family. His ideology matches that exhibited by the punishment model.

After the scene in which Schedoni discovers that Ellena may be his daughter, The Italian discusses his past as the Count di Bruno. Like Ambrosio, Schedoni is the descendant of nobility who has lost his identity and adopted a new one as a monk. While Ambrosio is a victim of his ignoble birth and the resentment of his grandfather, The Italian describes Schedoni as a prodigal son who wasted his inheritance, murdered his brother, and then married his brother's wife to secure his noble title. Schedoni is a rake posing as a virginal *tabula rasa*, not a repressed criminal who runs amok at the first temptation like Ambrosio. When he suspects his wife has been unfaithful, Schedoni stabs her and, believing he has killed her, he escapes and takes shelter in a monastery. Still, entering the monastery does not dampen Schedoni's ambition, and once he becomes confessor to the *Marchesa* he hatches fresh plans to advance within the ranks of the Catholic Church. Radcliffe makes clear that any pretense of sanctity or morality on Schedoni's part is pure affectation. Even when he discovers that Ellena may be his daughter, Schedoni is first concerned with reversing his schemes for his own benefit. While Ambrosio from The Monk is able to emulate sanctity due to his upbringing in the cloister, The Italian argues that Schedoni, who has spent so much time in the world, is a superior dissembler. "Schedoni, ever ambitious of distinction, adapted his manners to the views and prejudices of the society with whom he resided, and became one of the most exact observers of their outward forms, and almost a prodigy for self-denial and severe discipline (263)."

Yet the influence of Ellena slowly transforms Schedoni. He first hesitates to murder her on the beach out of pity and squabbles with his servant Spalatro over who will do the deed (266). Later, he thinks of Ellena's, "innocent looks, her affectionate thanks," and these, "inflicted an anguish, which was scarcely endurable" (287). Once Schedoni decides to rescue Ellena, he endeavors to conceal from her his original designs on her life and winces at reminders of his plot, such as the village play that he witnesses (318). As the monk travels with her, he is forced into serving as a father to her, both protector and guide, and feels obliged to prevent his servant Spalatro from betraying them by fatally wounding him. Even on his deathbed, Schedoni attempts to persuade Nicola to admit his role in defaming Ellena to the *Marchese di Vivaldi*. Schedoni no longer wishes to make his own fortune, but hopes to ensure Ellena's future happiness (451-2). Schedoni goes from a false spiritual father, feigning concern for the Vivaldi while pursuing his own ambitions, to taking responsibility for Ellena as her biological father. While Schedoni's ecclesiastical career is a sham, his family connection to Ellena saves her life and restores some of his humanity.

Schedoni is at first a figure associated with the punishment model and with patriarchy, both within the home and in organized religion. He is a character who destroys threats to the established social order, but at the same time is corrosive to the domestic sphere. This evil is a consequence of the power Schedoni enjoyed as part of being an institutional patriarch--literally, "Father Schedoni"; he is redeemed as Ellena's natural father (even though it later turns out that he is not) when he renounces his power and admits his errors. The rehabilitative model emphasizes that Schedoni redeems himself through his personal obligations as a father, rather than through his institutional power.

Schedoni's deathbed confession is reminiscent of the conversion of famous English rakes such as the second earl of Rochester, immortalized in Bishop Gilbert Burnet's *Some Passages of the Life and Death of Rochester*, which inspired paintings like Hogarth's series "The Rake's Progress" and literary characters like Richardson's Lovelace (Barker-Benfield 41-5). Kate Ferguson Ellis argues that unlike Ambrosio, Schedoni is an outsider who hungers for the comfort of family and domestic bliss. When Schedoni fails to win the patrimony that he feels is due him, he first covets his brother's wife and then murders and replaces his brother. Once he has fled to the monastery, Schedoni is again driven to domesticity, and insinuates himself in the Vivaldi household (Ellis 125-26).

This representation of Schedoni in his clerical profession and what appears to be an endemic hypocrisy is one the reader finds in other figures of religious authority within the novel. The Abbess of San Stefano instructs Vincentio to be an obedient son, but Vivaldi characterizes her as an enemy of domestic harmony. He describes her as one "who had conspired to tear an orphan from her home (140)." Vincentio criticizes the *Abate* of the nearby monastery for not doing enough to restore Ellena's freedom, while the *Abate* excuses his inaction by arguing that his jurisdiction does not extend to the Abbess's affairs (141). One of the crucial differences between The Monk and The Italian is that the entrenched power structures ultimately favor the protagonists of The Monk. The villains of The Italian, on the other hand, possess much more influence, and it is only when these antagonistic characters turn on each other that their power evaporates before the familial solidarity represented by characters such as Vincentio, Ellena, and Paulo. The narrative shows that the power wielded by the state as part of the punishment model

is distant and ephemeral, whereas bonds between family members are immediate, long lasting, and capable to redeeming those they touch.

The shame-based punishment model of The Monk disparages family relations at the expense of class loyalties, as demonstrated by the tragedy of the interclass marriage that produces Ambrosio and Antonia. In The Italian, those individuals who connive to protect class integrity, such as Schedoni and the *Marchesa*, die in disgrace while the strong emotional bonds between Vincentio and Ellena, and between Vincentio and his child-like servant, Paolo, prevail. Radcliffe argues that the emotional bonds of family are not only more moral than artificial loyalties based on social class or religious ideology, but that they are also stronger as well. It is a powerful statement of the power of the individual, and of the family, in the face of oppression by the state. The Italian argues that institutions such as the Inquisition that purport to enforce religious and social orthodoxy, as well as the agents of such institutions, create only the veneer of public peace and cannot penetrate into the domestic sphere, from which the true vigor of the nation derives.

Toni Wein says that nothing in The Italian “torques those firm notions of honor and virtue, of duty versus culpable complicity, prudence versus timidity, more than the Inquisition. In the popular imagination, the Inquisition stood for the marriage of political and religious tyranny” (143). She mentions an article in a 1798 issue of the *Monthly Review* that identifies the “bigotry and superstition” of the Inquisition with the reign of Cromwell in England and that frets over the possibility of a resurgence of such fanaticism, calling upon its readers to prompt the English nation to suppress what remnants of this institution still existed abroad. Finally, Wein reflects on how the Inquisition in The Italian has none of the secular controls that exist to rein in its excesses

in The Monk, and that as a result, “the Inquisition swells within the novel to represent statehood itself” (144). I would add that the moral counterweight in The Italian is the institution of the family, which Radcliffe depicts as being firmly rooted in sentiment, and which is opposed to patriarchal aggression.

### Liberation from Power through Sentiment

The character development of Vivaldi illustrates the value of familial sentiment. Whereas the novel emphasizes the impetuosity of the young nobleman of Naples early on, once the Inquisition imprisons Vincentio, he draws strength from the example of Ellena in order to negotiate for his freedom. Mary Poovey remarks on the imprisonment of Valancourt in Radcliffe’s earlier novel and his ability to redeem himself through the memory of Emily by refining his “taste” (324-25), a structure that parallels the development of Vincentio in The Italian. With the example of Ellena in mind, Vincentio does not just gain a rational understanding of the callowness and corruption of the patriarchy, he develops a deep sympathy for those victimized by it.

Vincentio often brings himself and his male companions to the brink of disaster through his desire for power over his enemies, several times pursuing the spectral monk into Paluzzi, a reckless course that eventually leads to his imprisonment (93) while ruffians carry off Ellena. Vincentio, baited by this monk’s frequent appearances, earlier accused Schedoni of poisoning his family against him (60-2), and their antagonism eventually results in Vincentio confronting Schedoni at the convent of the Spirito Santo (119-123), an embarrassment that inspires Schedoni to arrange for Vivaldi’s arrest. During his escape with Ellena from San Stefano, Vincentio’s outspoken suspicions prompt their guide Jeronimo to abandon them, and his precipitate anger

later results in the wounding of both himself and Paolo in a fight with Schedoni's agents (220). Insofar as Vincentio attempts to overpower his enemies, his efforts are defeatist and self-destructive.

Just as Valancourt's hedonism and gambling debts land that hero in prison in Udolpho, it is specifically Vincentio's temper and rivalry with Schedoni that inspire Schedoni to send the Inquisition after him, and Radcliffe's description of his passage through Rome reflects a fallen world, obsessed with its squandered imperial power. When Vivaldi and Paolo first arrive in Rome, the citizens are celebrating Carnival. The Romans that Vincentio meets do their best to ignore the officers of the Inquisition as they pass among them, but he notices that these citizens observe them surreptitiously with more than a little discomfort. Their group soon enters an abandoned area of the city that Radcliffe describes as "sacred ruins, those gigantic skeletons, which once enclosed a soul, whose energies governed a world!" (226-27). The Carnival is like the lingering glow of a mighty fire that has burned itself out, a shadow of a once imperial city that has exhausted and wasted itself in endless internecine conflict. The punishment model is concerned with the imposition of power to vindicate the authority of the state, and The Italian uses Rome to criticize this fruitless quest for power.

At the center of this aged devastation is the fortress of the Inquisition, with its "lofty walls and towers" featuring "neither window or grate, but a vast and dreary blank" and guarded by a man who Radcliffe says, quoting Milton who himself was paraphrasing Dante, is like "Grim-visaged comfortless Despair" (227-28). The impression of impending doom goes from the general to the specific, and the mode moves from terror to horror, as there seems to be a

transition from the unspoken disquiet of the citizens as these wolves of the church pass amongst them to Vincentio's recognition of the explicit horrors of the Inquisition.

Within the confines of the prisons of the Inquisition, Vincentio's senses are always muted. The origins of the sounds of torture are always uncertain and indistinct. Vincentio's fear is characteristic of the terror mode, as he is never able to identify the exact source of the threat. Rather than resign himself, Vincentio exerts his senses to discern anything that may aid him in his time of need. The guards always blindfold Vincentio when they lead him from his cell to the tribunal of the Inquisition, but Vivaldi often perceives the voice or countenance of the mysterious monk who confronted him near Paluzzi. Vivaldi hears him at his side while he is before the Inquisitor General, and later the monk appears in his cell in the dead of night. Deprived of sensory information, Vivaldi's emotions first threaten to overwhelm him, but the thought that Ellena is imprisoned somewhere within the same dungeon causes him to undergo an internal transformation:

A new view of human nature seemed to burst, at once, upon his mind, and he could not have experienced greater astonishment, if this had been the first moment, in which he had heard of the institution. But when he thought of Ellena...*His passions, thus restrained, seemed to become virtues and to display themselves in the energy of his courage and his fortitude.* His soul became stern and vigorous in despair, and his manner and countenance assumed a calm dignity, which awed, in some degree, even his guards. The pain of his wounds was no longer felt; it appeared as if the strength of his intellectual self had subdued the infirmities of the body, and, perhaps, in these moments of elevation, he could have endured the torture without shrinking. (230, emphasis mine)

The internal transformation of Vivaldi is set against the backdrop of the Inquisition, which in The Italian is a mindlessly oppressive institution designed to provide external social controls for a populace capable of governing itself. Rather than capture true villains, the Inquisition becomes a tool of the antagonists to oppress or eliminate their victims. As is evident in the interviews Vincentio has before the Inquisitorial Tribunal, the purpose of the proceedings are not to elicit a true confession in the sense of provoking the accused into providing his own narrative of his wrong doing in order to expiate his sins. Instead, the Inquisition is intent on breaking the subject's spirit and forcing a confession dictated by the tribunal in order to reinforce behavioral orthodoxy.

Vivaldi's "new view of human nature" is his understanding of the Inquisition's cruelty, not motivated by a sense of justice, but rather mobilized to enforce a patriarchal social order. By timing Vivaldi's transformation at this moment, Radcliffe signals the superiority of internal controls rooted in domestic commitments and provides the character with the discernment to evade the traps laid before and the ability to subvert the proceedings of the Inquisition, not to eliminate Schedoni as Nicola would have him do, but to uncover the truth. As is the case with Valancourt's new found "taste," Vivaldi exhibits a higher standard of morality than his previously well intentioned but unmindful aggression when he refuses to bend to Nicola's demand that he provide the Tribunal with the names of informants who will testify against Schedoni and instead investigates the identity and motives of the enigmatic monk.

Vivaldi's perspective changes once Schedoni stands accused before the Tribunal of the Inquisition. Where fear and terror once muted his senses, now Vivaldi is able to see clearly. While the judges still have faces "sculpted of dark malignity" that he cannot bear looking at for

long and black cloth covers both the hall and officers, the light in the chamber seems more diffuse and Vivaldi can identify the principals (411-2). Once Vivaldi has dispersed the emotional cloud over the tribunal, he restores rationality as well. Schedoni recognizes and faces his accusers, and opposed to the inquisitors' attempts at forcing Vivaldi to contradict or perjure himself, actual testimony is supplied which relays the background and crimes committed by Schedoni (416-19). Due to Vivaldi's resistance to Nicola di Zampari's plan that would allow him to preserve his anonymity, the Inquisition is forced to give up in this instance its practice of veiled accusation and sham hearings designed to entrap and force a particular confession in favor of a legitimate hearing. The Inquisition no longer aims at humiliating and extracting a public confession from its victims, but at uncovering the truth behind the conspiracy. Vincentio's personal transformation, inspired by his connection to Ellena, enables him to transform the public sphere.

This is also in contrast to the proceedings of the Inquisition in The Monk in which Ambrosio's confession of the crimes he is accused of and "owned not merely the crimes with which he was charged, but those of which he had never been suspected" (355) are extracted by torture. Afterwards, the Tribunal informs Ambrosio that he will perish in an *auto da fé*, but the Devil later indicates that they planned to pardon him. This is consistent with Lewis's depiction of the Inquisition as an institution devoted to public conformity. The fact of criminal guilt is less important to Lewis's institution than public submission to patriarchal authority.

In Radcliffe's novel, this particular institution of social control is not broken and in need of fixing by wise legislators such as Lewis and his ilk, but the very top-down notion of social control itself. What she provides is an alternative to a shame-based culture rocked by revolution

in The Monk, a personal revolution in which the awakening and transformation of one individual can produce a chain reaction in society and assert the sanity and humanity of the progressive middle station on the calcified apparatus of the state.

## CONCLUSION

The advent of Gothic Literature is most significant as marking a crisis of faith for English intellectuals in the progressive spirit of the Enlightenment. The stresses of the industrial revolution and the tensions of colonialism inspired nostalgia for the past and a desire for freedom from the tyranny of the rational resulted in the first flowerings of the genre under Walpole, Reeve, Beckford, Smith and Radcliffe. The Gothic reached the height of its popularity during the chaos following the French Revolution of the last decade of the eighteenth century.

In the midst of political instability in England, principles of social control dealing with the efficacy of punishment or rehabilitation in civilizing individuals and with the pre-eminence of the private or public spheres found expression in the horror and terror modes of Gothic Literature. The two greatest Gothic authors of the decade, Matthew Lewis and Ann Radcliffe, established the depiction of the Holy Office of the Inquisition as a central issue upon which opposing theories of social control revolved.

As a reaction against the symmetry and stringent logic of Neo-Classicism, Gothic authors tended to frame their discussions of power relationships in highly ambivalent but provocative terms. As part of the sentimental tradition, Gothic authors relied on the emotional appeal of the genre rather than on explicit rational arguments to make an impression on their readers. The result was that the message and sympathies of individual Gothic authors were ambiguous to their contemporary readership.

In my final analysis, The Monk relies on shame and punishment to enforce rigid gender roles, a stratified social hierarchy, and powerful controls on public behavior. The inciting circumstances for the book are frictions based on class and gender inequalities, as well as the

eighteenth-century England's notorious xenophobia and wariness about the spread of revolutionary ideas. As a result, The Monk dwells on what can go wrong within the traditional family and reinforces an entrenched aristocratic social order. In The Monk, institutions that tend to the individual's internal health and well-being are subject to societal checks and balances established by the upper class that ensure the general peace. Cultural productions that rely on the horror mode of the Gothic, with its shocks and graphic depictions of immoral behavior, trigger shame responses that are instructive to the reader. The final destruction of infectious agents at the end of the book reinforces an enthusiasm in the punishment model's reader for a return to social stability that is part of its political agenda.

Radcliffe's book, on the other hand, repudiates the enforcement of civilizing forces from outside of the family and the employment of shame as a deterrent from criminal behavior. Instead, civilization is generated through family relationships and maintained through guilt. Even individuals who come from disrupted families and suffer from excessive passions, such as Vincentio di Vivaldi in The Italian, can be civilized through the efforts of a good wife like Ellena. The terror mode of the Gothic, which builds suspense and encourages skepticism, encourages critical thinking. Many supposedly supernatural events are revealed to be flights of fancy on the part of the characters that are shared by the reader, prompting the reader to question his own prejudices and biases. The root of evil in the terror mode is often a conspiracy of the empowered, who wish to deprive the innocent of their freedom. This narrative arrangement prompts the reader to question external, often political forces and speculate as to their true aims. Guilt thrives in an environment in which authors force readers to examine their complicity in a status quo that sustains unequal power relationships.

Each novel advances its own theory of the civilizing force and attempts to repair social instability following the rise of the middle station and the revolutions of the century. The Monk subverts notions of social control and punishment to conservative ends, while The Italian attempts to salvage what progressive elements of the Gothic mode it can through the rehabilitative model. By using the patriarchal institutions of Catholic countries in past centuries, both narrative models provide a template for how the ministers of culture, reactionary or revolutionary, will use the novel of sentiment in the future to advance the civilizing process.

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