

Estranged by a Veil: The Gothic Other and the Uncanny Sublime (Article)

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The Gothic mode deals with the supernatural that is suppressed within the mind, to be felt when one's imagination is allowed too much freedom. Characters in these texts must contend with the supernatural loosed from within, so authors of the Gothic bind up all the uncanniness of the mind into a single physical form, a stranger, an Other, that can be expelled from the ordinary world. The Other-as-Villain is a quixote who envisions an idealized future at odds with the parameters of Enlightenment realism. I contend that this Other, acting as both a quixote and an embodiment of terror, allows the supernatural to breach the confines of modernity, providing the protagonists with a corporeal villain to either defeat for the preservation of one's rational mind or fall victim to as an exile from modernity.

The Gothic was created in response to the Enlightenment and, in many ways, showcases the very opposite of an "enlightened" society. Gothic texts took on "a kind of toxic side effect" of the Enlightenment—the uncanny, which Terry Castle defines as "a new human experience of strangeness, anxiety, bafflement, and intellectual impasse."¹ The Gothic is founded upon this idea of the uncanny, and Gothic authors incorporate an Other to act as a driving force for the uncanny within their texts. The Gothic Other is a symbol of alienation and is constructed out of one's first and second nature. Georg Lukács defines first nature as "a set of laws for pure cognition . . . as the bringer of comfort to pure feeling, [a nature which] is nothing other than the historico-philosophical objectivation of man's alienation from his own constructs."² Lukács defines second nature as "the nature of man-made structures," or societal constructs.³ One might also refer to first nature as interiority and to second nature as exteriority. The Gothic occurs when both first and second nature point to man's own alienation. When a person's thoughts lack comfort, depression sinks in, and imagination unrestrained by reason convinces man of his alienation. This person begins to see a certain strangeness in his societal world, which no longer encourages reason, or rather interiority within the individual. Therefore, alienated on both fronts, the Gothic Other finds himself in a crisis, which allows the elements of the Gothic to take root.

The relationship between the Gothic Other and the supernatural enables an exploration of how those endowed with reason so easily succumb to what even they consider to be a backwards and archaic notion of what is "real." For this exploration, I will delve into several key aspects of Gothic novels, particularly quixotism, temporal displacement and the Enlightenment, the influence of Catholicism on Gothic literature, and finally, the monstrosity of the Gothic Other. Through these key points, I will map out the nature, cause, and role of the Other as a quixotic villain, using three primary texts: Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797), and Matthew Gregory Lewis's *The Monk* (1796). As the first novel written in the Gothic mode, *The Castle of Otranto* lacks the

1. Terry Castle, *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth-Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 8, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uh/detail.action?docID=272922>.

2. Georg Lukács, "From *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*," in *Theory of the Novel: A Historical Approach*, ed. Michael McKeon (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2000), 185–218; 190, <https://doi.org/10.56021/9780801876509>.

3. Lukács, "From *The Theory of the Novel*," 191.

fully realized Gothic Other seen in later works. The identity of the true Gothic Other is not immediately apparent but rather becomes clear by way of the supernatural. This ambiguity makes Walpole's novel a rather uneasy fit for the purposes of this essay; however, *The Castle of Otranto* still has much to say on the formation of the Gothic Other, and it is these formative elements whereupon my analysis of Walpole and his Gothic novel will focus. *The Italian* and *The Monk* showcase the Gothic Other in its most developed iteration, but they do so with different approaches. Radcliffe presents a psychological, terror-focused version of the Gothic novel, while Lewis writes a horror-driven, sensationalist Gothic novel. Although these two novels come from different subgenres of the Gothic, their representation of the Gothic Other is much the same. For example, Radcliffe and Lewis both rely heavily on the use of physical, not just metaphorical, veils in their novels. The veils in these texts help to depict the monstrosity of the Gothic Other as a villainous quixote and the danger posed to the protagonists of Enlightened realism. The first half of this essay will examine a few of the key elements of what separates Gothic literature from other texts, and the second half will delve into how veils shape and alter characters, particularly the Gothic Others.

Temporal Displacement: The Enlightenment

Many novels entertain a degree of temporal displacement between the reader and the characters; this occurrence is not exclusive to the Gothic or even to all historical genres. However, temporal displacement in the Gothic is heightened by the tension between the premodern narrative form of the romance and the rationalist requirements of Enlightenment realism. Scott Black identifies reading as “an activity of temporal displacement as much as historical placement, [where] reading may short-circuit the progress assumed by modernity, producing eddies in time or introducing pockets of the past into the present.”⁴ Literature is not always meant to represent the modern era of the author; sometimes, it transports the reader to a place imitating what once was. In these instances, the romance narrative resurfaces even in “modern” literature. Black further notes that “foundational romances present themselves as secondary, belated, and critical adaptations of strange, archaic, or foreign narratives.”⁵ In Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605), the protagonist idealizes the “real” by taking chivalric romance seriously; prioritizing romance over realism sets up the strange and archaic scenes that the novel's ambiguous parody displays. Yet the Gothic Other is the counterpart to Don Quixote—equally focused on an aspirational vision of the world and yet entirely self-interested in the use of premodern enchantment. The Gothic Other as a quixotic villain represents the threatening possibility of a resurgence of the world of ghosts, magic, divine will, superstition, and irrational omnipotence.

These transports are linked to a temporal displacement that takes readers away from the Age of Reason. The Enlightenment laid the groundwork for our modern era, bringing with it a designation of reason as one's central mode for understanding and also requiring a rejection of the belief in ghosts and apparitions as unreasonable.⁶ Yet, while dismissing the

4. Scott Black, “Introduction: Romance and the Turbulence of Literary History,” in *Without the Novel: Romance and the History of Prose Fiction* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press: 2019), 1, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvkrkkcd.4>.

5. Black, “Introduction,” 1.

6. See Terry Castle, “The Gothic Novel,” in *The Cambridge History on English Literature, 1660–1780*, ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), <https://doi.org/10.1017/chol9780521781442.028>. In this essay, Castle provides a detailed explanation for how the Enlightenment acted as a catalyst for the rise of the Gothic. The Enlightenment essentially deprived people of the sensuality they were accustomed to feeling in their everyday lives. The Gothic attempts to restore this sense of feeling that the Age of Reason displaces. Its setting in the past brings the audience back to a time when ghosts and goblins were not only believed in but were also feared, inducing in the reader a sense of terror for the characters who may unexpectedly fall into some alarming scene. In this way, the Gothic acts as a temporary

supernatural with science and reason, “rationalists did not so much negate the traditional spirit world as displace it into the realm of psychology.”⁷ Rationalists created a new world of Enlightenment in which ghosts and apparitions could only exist in an irrational mind. This process, where “mental phantoms [take] on an uncanny ‘life’ in the mind,”⁸ is what Terry Castle calls spectralization: “by relocating the world of ghosts in the closed space of the imagination, one ended up supernaturalizing the mind itself.”⁹ The Gothic Other is this spectralization given human form.

This romantic resurgence of the supernatural in Enlightenment realism links quixotism to the Gothic. According to Amelia Dale, “quixotism is involved in the gap between reader and text, it paints the preconceptions that mark the reader’s view.”¹⁰ The quixotism of Gothic literature is due to its foundational reliance on the supposed temporal distance between the supernatural and the world of reason. Because the Gothic supernaturalizes the mind, the emergence of the supernatural becomes more about perception and feeling than actual physical experience. This occurrence is especially true of later Gothic works, such as *The Italian*, where the perception of the supernatural is more a product of the mind than a physical experience. Yet the first Gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto*, relies heavily on supernatural occurrences rather than on mere mental fictions. Gothic works moved away from Walpole’s approach to the supernatural since imaginary ghosts could be more easily dispelled and the return to modernity more readily secured. Yet echoes of these physical apparitions still exist in later works: Ambrosio’s death at the Devil’s hand in *The Monk* shows how supernatural entities can bring about very real and physical consequences.

The characters’ perception of the supernatural in the world around them stems largely from the supernaturalized state of their own mentalities. Anxiety about ghostly apparitions stems from repressed notions of the supernatural, a worry that is recalled by an excess of imagination and which the Gothic presents as sublime because imagination is “by nature unrepresentable.”¹¹ Because of the Enlightenment, the supernatural is confined solely to the human unconscious, where mankind has yet to dispel it. The Gothic Other is, then, rooted in the mind, and the audience is left to wonder if modernity can ever be truly free of a romance that inhabits the subterranean realms of Enlightenment realism.

Catholicism and the Gothic

Catholicism’s influence on the Gothic arises out of early modern disputes between Protestants and Catholics in both social and political spheres that are far too complex to explore in this essay. It must be noted, however, that Gothic authors situate their novels in a past that is riddled with religious, social, and political conflict, specifically one that is anxious about the Roman Catholic Church reasserting its pre-Reformation power.¹² Diane Hoeveler

cure to the “languor, listlessness, or want of resolution” that the modern reader might fall into when their reason removed every passionate feeling that one’s personal ambition required to function (698).

7. Castle, *Female Thermometer*, 161.

8. Castle, *Female Thermometer*, 181.

9. Castle, *Female Thermometer*, 161.

10. Amelia Dale, “The Quixotic Eighteenth Century,” *Literature Compass* 19, no. 5 (2022): 1–13; 4, <https://doi.org/10.1111/lic3.12660>.

11. Ed Cameron, “Ironie Escapism in the Symbolic Spread of Gothic Materialist Meaning,” *Gothic Studies* 10, no. 2 (2008): 18–34; 19, <https://doi.org/10.7227/GS.10.2.3>.

12. Gothic texts were largely used to promote Whiggish interests in eighteenth-century England and are thus infused with an array of political and historical contexts. Diane Long Hoeveler states, “The Gothic chapbook and novel . . . caution[ed] the lower classes against the liberal policies of the Church of England and wag[ed] something of a propaganda war against the passage of a number of bills that eventually gave Catholics emancipation in 1829” (*The Gothic Ideology: Religious Hysteria and Anti-Catholicism in British Popular Fiction, 1780–1880* [Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2014], 9). Gothic texts thus tacitly commented on English politics and supported the Protestant, Whiggish interests. Gothic texts tell of how the supernatural is

identifies a “Gothic ideology” that she defines as “a reification and representation of the hystericized nun, the murderous and shape-shifting monk, the ominous Inquisition scenario and the haunted ruined abbey.”¹³ These Gothic tropes represent the strong anti-Catholic sentiments that were widespread in England during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁴ Anti-Catholic sentiments arise in the Gothic as a result of Catholicism’s “uncomfortably uncanny tendency to resurrect itself as a continuing dynastic and political threat, [such that] the British Protestant imaginary sought to sooth its anxieties by battling the lingering forces of Catholicism by way of proxy”: the Gothic story.¹⁵

As mentioned above, Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* is a rather uneasy fit in this essay due to the underdevelopment or even lack of several key elements seen in later Gothic novels, one being the strength of its anti-Catholic sentiment. Where are the evil monks and corrupt abbesses; the ruinous, ghastly abbeys; and the feared Inquisition? Here, the representative of the Church, Friar Jerome, is a noble, if ultimately ineffective, antagonist to the Gothic villain, the quixotic usurper of political legitimacy, Manfred. Ultimately, it is the supernatural itself acting like a divine power that forces into motion the chain of events that reveals the stranger, Theodore, to be the true and virtuous heir. Manfred, the novel’s quixotic villain, *tries* to manipulate the power of the Church for the harm of the good Princess Hippolita and the virtuous Lady Isabella, but ultimately it becomes clear that his legitimacy is based on a misreading of a historical text (a forged will) much like Don Quixote’s pursuit of chivalric ideals based on romance novels. But if there is any ambiguity about the power of the Church in the novel itself, Walpole (or rather, the fictive translator) gives the reader a key in the preface.

In his preface to the first edition of *The Castle of Otranto*, Walpole pairs Catholicism with superstitions and falsehoods and every manner of thing “believed in the darkest ages of Christianity.”¹⁶ He uses the Catholic Church as a vehicle with which to bring the past to the present, and in so doing, Walpole creates a terror of the mind where Catholicism becomes part of that terror. Furthermore, Walpole was acutely aware of the generic boundaries he was crossing. In the preface to the second edition, he mentions the arduous task of merging the ancient romance of the ostensibly original text with a modern style of romance more fit to his audience.¹⁷ The way in which Walpole connects Catholicism to ancient romance and its unrealities reveals an anti-Catholic anxiety before the story even begins.

Later Gothic works, such as *The Italian* and *The Monk*, establish stronger anti-Catholic sentiments where “Catholicism becomes the ‘other’ against which the English, Protestant ‘self’ is defined.”¹⁸ This disequilibrium urges the protagonists to defeat the Gothic Other, who is often a representative of the Catholic Church, such as Father Schedoni (*The Italian*) and Ambrosio (*The Monk*). Thus, the walls of this old institution are torn down in a way that allows “religion itself [to remain] untouched, even strengthened,” thereby

problematic to modern society and showcase an effort to remove the supernatural from that society. The fact that these novels harbor anti-Catholic sentiments projects the idea that Catholicism also ought to be removed. The proposal of Gothic texts (i.e., the supernatural is not real and only what is real should be allowed to remain in modern society because that society is rooted in realism, which is itself a construct created by modern society) reveals the persistent propaganda of the Whig party to uproot Catholicism’s political power.

13. Hoeveler, *Gothic Ideology*, 19.

14. See the first chapter of Diane Hoeveler’s *Gothic Ideology* for an in-depth exploration of the events, both political and social, that stimulated an anti-Catholic atmosphere.

15. Hoeveler, *Gothic Ideology*, 29–30.

16. Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story*, ed. Nick Groom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 5.

17. Walpole, *Castle of Otranto*, 9–10.

18. David Salter, “‘This Demon in the Garb of a Monk’: Shakespeare, the Gothic and the Discourse of Anti-Catholicism,” *Shakespeare* 5, no. 1 (2009): 52–67; 57, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450910902764298>.

supporting the Protestant cause.¹⁹ The Gothic Other, with the supernatural past he brings to modern reality, must be expelled in order to dispel the corruption in religion and to return reason to realism.

Quixotism in the Gothic

In her essay “The Quixotic Eighteenth Century,” Amelia Dale notes that “quixotism persistently seems to involve an opposition between two poles . . . These poles . . . [shift] with different readers and contexts . . . [and] situate themselves within transcultural and epistemological questions about nation, identity, gender, print, and the novel.”²⁰ She specifically lists nine quixotic dichotomies with one being interiority versus exteriority,²¹ and this particular quixotic dichotomy brings us to Georg Lukács and his concept of two natures. As mentioned previously, Lukács defines first nature as “a set of laws for pure cognition” (interiority) and second nature as “a complex of senses—meanings—which has become rigid and strange” and as a set “of man-made structures” (exteriority).²² The Gothic situates a battle between interiority and exteriority in the person of the quixote who struggles to find a balance between the two and who consequently risks becoming (and often does become) a villain.

Dale’s dualistic concept of quixotism entails a meeting of “enchanted reading and disenchanting realism,” which she terms the “beveled edge.”²³ The Gothic novel is built upon repressed notions of the supernatural recalled by an excess of imagination, the occurrence of which is presented with themes of the sublime and the uncanny. Edmund Burke asserts, “A mode of terror or pain is always the cause of the sublime.”²⁴ The Gothic, as a mode of writing that incites terror, is endowed with a plethora of sublime moments, and it pairs that theme with the uncanny via the recurring appearance or fear of ghostly apparitions. This uncanny sublime of the Gothic brings the disenchanting realism of the protagonists and also the audience to a meeting with an enchanted reading of the protagonists’ dire situations. The Gothic is an intrinsically quixotic text, one that positions the Gothic Other as a quixote because of his relationship with the supernatural and his placement in a society based on realism that is no match, on its own, for the sublime. The Gothic Other raises a terrifying possibility: What if Don Quixote were powerful and malevolent? Would Enlightenment realism have the resources to defeat such an adversary?

The Gothic Other

The Enlightenment denigrated superstition by relegating it to the unenlightened past, yet Gothic sublimity challenges this relegation. As such, “the most sublime moments of Gothic fiction occur when something that should have remained in the past, something that should have remained dead and buried, has returned in the present, creating

19. Judith Wilt, *Ghosts of the Gothic: Austen, Eliot, and Lawrence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 32, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400857500>.

20. Dale, “Quixotic Eighteenth Century,” 2–3.

21. Dale, “Quixotic Eighteenth Century,” 6. The dichotomies that Dale lists are the following: the world as it should be versus the world as it is, representation versus reality, romance versus realism, the (ideal) type versus the individual, exceptional versus typical, quest for sameness versus quest for difference, aristocratic feudalism versus mercantile capitalism, dogmatism versus skepticism, and interiority versus exteriority (6).

22. Lukács, “From *The Theory of the Novel*,” 190–91.

23. Dale, “Quixotic Eighteenth Century,” 6.

24. Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful: With an Introductory Discourse Concerning Taste*, ed. Abraham Mills (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1863), 169, https://www.google.com/books/edition/A_Philosophical_Enquiry_Into_the_Origin/G_28Q73B2GcC?hl=en&gbpv=1.

disequilibrium.”²⁵ This return of the past threatens self-preservation; when the past returns to haunt the subject, it arouses passions which are at once the most powerful but also the most representative of the sublime.²⁶ The Gothic uses the sublime to depict the supernatural, or more specifically, the uncanny. “The Gothic sublime,” or the uncanny sublime as Cameron often calls it, “reveals that which is immanent and inaccessible, that which has been repressed” and, most importantly, “the inherent inconsistency and incompleteness of the newly emergent immanent-oriented view of the world.”²⁷ The uncanny sublime critiques modernity by calling into question this repression of the supernatural. Repression creates a monster or villain that the enlightened protagonist must confront.²⁸

These Gothic monsters are essential because in order for our heroes to expel the uncanny from their reality, the uncanny must be constructed into something material; thus, the Gothic Other is born. No man can hope to dispel the darkness of night nor prove its eeriness truly unreasonable, but one can contend with another man and banish him from the land. The protagonist is given a physical being to defeat or exile, thus ridding the land of its uncanny sublimity and restoring reality to its enlightened state. This physical being is characterized as a stranger whose exotic nationality and culture shroud him in horrific mystery and whose demonization “enforce[s] a strict notion of group sameness.”²⁹ When Theodore is first mentioned in *The Castle of Otranto*, he is immediately ostracized by Manfred as the harbinger of evil that has slain his son. The servants and guests follow their lord without question and Theodore is imprisoned.³⁰ Manfred is the true source of terror in *The Castle of Otranto*, but he chooses to blame Theodore as the one who has brought terror to his doorstep in order to disguise the fulfillment of the prophecy and ultimately the way Manfred others himself. Here, we see the half-formed Gothic Other that will be fully realized in later Gothic novels:³¹ Theodore the stranger is not at all terrifying, and Manfred the domestic patriarch is the terrifying quixote of the novel. Theodore initially is associated with obscurity and, potentially, terror, but it is Manfred who is ultimately revealed to be the true, terrifying usurper of domestic authority.

The Castle of Otranto shows some initial ambiguity about who the Gothic Other truly is, which Radcliffe and Lewis later expound on and help to clarify. While Walpole crafts

25. Cameron, “Ironie Escapism,” 19.

26. In *Philosophical Enquiry*, Burke notes that “ideas of *pain*, *sickness*, and *death*” incite horror and passions concerning self-preservation, which “are the most powerful of all passions” because the way that they “turn chiefly on *pain* and *danger*” leaves lasting impressions upon the mind (51). These impressions, not physical experiences, are caused by the sublime, which Burke defines as any idea that excites the emotions with pain and danger distanced enough from the viewer so as to create a tingling, guilty delight rather than actual trepidation (66).

27. Cameron, “Ironie Escapism,” 19.

28. See Sigmund Freud, “Second Lecture,” in *Five Lectures On Psycho-Analysis*, ed. James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1977), 21–28. While repression returns the subject to a state of happiness, “the repressed wishful impulse continues to exist in the unconscious” (27; emphasis removed). Although a resistance is established to prevent its return, what was repressed eventually “succeeds in sending into consciousness a disguised and unrecognizable *substitute* for what had been repressed, and to this there soon become attached the same feelings of unpleasure which it was hoped had been saved by the repression” (27). In the Gothic, this substitute is the Other who is embodied with the repressed supernatural that breaks through modernity’s resistance bringing with it the unpleasure of doubts concerning what is reasonable that echoes the pre-Enlightened era.

29. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, “Monster Culture (Seven Theses),” in *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 3–25; 15, <https://doi.org/10.5749/j.ctttsq4d.4>.

30. Walpole, *Castle of Otranto*, 20–21.

31. This semi formed version of the Gothic Other is to be expected from *The Castle of Otranto* since Walpole developed a new genre with this novel. Later Gothic authors like Radcliffe and Lewis would expand on his blueprint for the Gothic novel and perfect his iteration of the Gothic Other.

Theodore as both stranger and hero who must contend with the villain Manfred, the strangers in *The Italian* and *The Monk* (i.e., Schedoni and Ambrosio, respectively) are the monstrous villains. The Gothic Other, thus, becomes both stranger and monster; he becomes the villain instead of the hero. The combination of these archetypes created a doubly powerful villain who was not only a greater source of terror but who also incidentally pulled the story further away from the Enlightenment realism that was developing in the eighteenth century, all of which would have been considered problematic by some readers.

Enlightenment realism developed alongside the rise of the middle class and domestic fiction, in which more developed mental faculties, specifically interiority, became desirable for women.³² Yet the interiority informed by private reading may lead to dangerous quixotic impulses, and so a woman's virtue could be threatened by having her fancy drawn in all the wrong directions by the wrong unenlightened kind of fiction. The Gothic story, then, is not only about "awaken[ing] . . . the pleasures of the body" (i.e., "the simple and fleeting joys of being frightened" and "the experience of mortality and corporality")³³ but also about a particular kind of journey of self-discovery: Can the reader resist the sublime Other, or will she indulge the quixotic pursuit of the very desires that Enlightenment realism rejects as taboo?

The Gothic Other penetrates the mind of the audience with every shadowy glimpse of his hidden countenance, which incites the consciousness into an excess of imagination. Walpole names terror as his "principal engine" in *The Castle of Otranto*, the use of which "prevents the story from ever languishing" and incites pity to such a degree "that the mind is kept up in a constant vicissitude of interesting passions."³⁴ As such, the Gothic was considered, at least in part, dangerous to the minds of young men and, especially, women, a sentiment which eventually culminated in Radcliffe's "explained supernatural," abruptly putting an end to the quixotism of her stories in their denouements. The irrational events occasioned by the Other's pursuit of his unrealistic, idealized future is perfectly explained in the final chapters of Radcliffe's novels as a way of returning to normalized society, where practicality and abiding by societal expectations reign supreme.

Radcliffe's explained supernatural abruptly dispelled the audience's reverie, which was considered a powerful force, one that could capture all control of the mind, so much so that reverie was believed to "[have] the power to lead one out of oneself into madness."³⁵ Too much reverie was thought to be dangerous for young women because it would lead them into "continuous internal rebellion."³⁶ Conduct books were intended to help restrain the minds of young women since many people recognized that an excess of imagination could be irrevocably damaging. "Quixotes," for example, "are concerned with reading's power to mark the mind and shape the reader's character."³⁷ The pairing of quixotism with the Gothic produces a doubly powerful and concerning reading experience on the unguarded

32. See Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). In her introduction, Armstrong examines this discipline of interiority that emerged with the middle class in Europe. Armstrong regards the middle class as those who willingly subjugated themselves to this proper social conduct as a means of uplifting and distinguishing themselves from the working poor. This resistance, especially to an excessive imagination, was considered essential for a person to maintain their virtue. The way to becoming a strong and mature woman was to develop this interiority. This restraint of imagination and the subsequent development of interiority was sustained in conduct books, where audiences, especially women, were taught not only to value these characteristics but also to develop them in their own everyday habits.

33. Cohen, "Monster Culture," 17.

34. Walpole, *Castle of Otranto*, 6.

35. Castle, *Female Thermometer*, 165.

36. Cannon Schmitt, "Techniques of Terror, Technologies of Nationality: Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian*," *ELH* 61, no. 4 (1994): 853–76; 863, <https://doi.org/10.1353/elh.1994.0040>.

37. Dale, "Quixotic Eighteenth Century," 7–8.

imagination. An excess of imagination or even curiosity might lead to anxiety and paranoia, yet a controlled amount of imagination, anxiety, and paranoia was still considered beneficial. Necessary for the restraining of this constant “internal rebellion” in women was “an attitude of paranoia and a habit of surveillance,” which would keep them on their guard against such unrespectable thoughts.³⁸ The Gothic, especially its quixotism, preys upon this mental engine, inciting the audience’s imagination and increasing their anxiety to the point that paranoia threatens to take root.

Because of this paranoia, the Gothic is bound up in contending with the Other, who not only disrupts normal life but threatens its continuation; this monster must be dealt with not merely as a threat to the internal self but also to society. The Enlightenment forced the uncanny into the recesses of the mind; however, by so doing, modernity created a new monster, one who is both ghostly and human, one who represents the supernatural yet is also modern. The Gothic Other is the voice of everything that has been repressed by the Enlightenment, where “what is repressed is not something fearful, but rather anxiety itself.”³⁹ In this way, “the uncanny . . . is actually a product of modernity” rather than a mere echo of the pre-Enlightened world.⁴⁰ The displacement of the supernatural from the world by modernity inadvertently entombed the supernatural within the subconscious of the mind rather than dispelling it completely, and the Gothic reawakens these ideas of the supernatural by bringing them to the forefront of the mind. The ghostly apparitions in *The Castle of Otranto* are not a hallucination of Manfred’s despite his paranoia; however, later Gothic authors rely more on the supernatural as it exists in the mind rather than as a physical entity. Manfred attempts to remove the supernatural from the space he intends his descendants to rule forever by using a stranger as a scapegoat to hide the fact that his illegitimate rule, representative of modernity, calls forth supernatural intervention. In *The Castle of Otranto*, the stranger—a representation of the past since Theodore is the true heir whom Manfred and his ancestors had displaced—is forced into the role of the apparent Gothic Other, while Walpole points to modernity, or Manfred, the usurper and suppresser, as the source of the uncanny.

The uncanny is the repressed that must be contended with and resuppressed, and it threatens to reemerge whenever the imagination is allowed in excess to loosen the chains of the unreasonable or inexplicable. The Gothic Other, acting as modernity’s own construct, threatens its achievements by drawing the characters and the audience to that time in the past when the supernatural reigned supreme. As such, the Gothic Other temporarily displaces modernity for the remembrance of what was and casts a monster as the actor of that displacement. The embodiment of terror into a single figure, the monster and displacer of modernity, grants the characters a single object with which to engage Gothic terror. Theodore is neither terrifying nor the villain. But terror is displaced onto him by Manfred, the true villain, whose monstrous narrative of political dominance, enabled by his vision of a new dynasty forcibly birthed by Isabella, repulses the audience. His romantic desire is considered incestuous by Isabella and the audience. Here, we see that the Gothic does not portray the quixotic good man but rather the quixotic evil one, a man whose unrealistic romantic desires are not chivalrous but criminal and uncanny.

The terror Manfred incites in his pursuit of this idealized future begins to draw him, the usurper, away from his true nature. The estrangement of Manfred from what Lukács calls first nature (“a set of laws for pure cognition”), what we might call interiority, incites the formation of the Gothic and leads Manfred to view his “self-made environment as a prison”

38. Schmitt, “Techniques of Terror,” 871.

39. Cameron, “Ironie Escapism,” 24.

40. Cameron, “Ironie Escapism,” 28.

and also causes Theodore to suffer actual imprisonment.⁴¹ The terror Manfred incites shapes him into a monster (from the Latin word *monstrum*, which etymologically translates to “that which reveals” or “that which warns”).⁴² These Gothic monsters are warnings against imaginative excess which simultaneously serve as revelations of the repressed supernatural and the dangers of such suppression. In this way, the Gothic Other is *monstrum ex machina*, the one who suddenly appears without explanation and whose nature and presence creates the conflict that must be resolved, often abruptly, before the novel can conclude.

Sometimes this conflict is resolved by a resistance to the uncanny. At the novel’s conclusion, Manfred realizes the error of his ways but not until after he has murdered his own daughter by mistake. While he is to some extent redeemed, having conceded the principality of Otranto, Manfred must still remove himself from the world, resigning himself to a nearby monastery for the rest of his life in penance for his crime. The Gothic Other must be removed from the protagonists’ reality in some way, either through a retirement from public life or through death.

Yet while the protagonists must dispel the Gothic Other, there is a danger that they may come to desire what this Other possesses. In *The Italian*, Ellena at first believes Schedoni designs to murder her, but upon learning of their familial relation, albeit an inaccurate one, she quickly shows signs of tenderness toward him.⁴³ In *The Castle of Otranto*, however, the stranger and the Other are split between two characters, where the desire is toward Theodore rather than Manfred. Before she even knows his name, Isabella addresses Theodore as “courteous stranger,” “generous youth,” and “Sir,” as if he were a nobleman and not the peasant the audience believes him to be.⁴⁴ Matilda, too, quickly comes to admire and even love Theodore, a stranger. Both girls form an admiration for this young man before they even lay eyes on him due to their encounters with him, which are always marked by obscurity—for Isabella it is the darkness of the tunnel, and for Matilda it is the separation of differing apartments, where she can only hear Theodore. Their desire, then, arises out of the stranger’s obscurity. In later Gothic works, this obscurity presents a danger since the stranger is the Gothic Other who tempts characters (and readers) down the dark path of the uncanny and supernatural.

The blending of the stranger and the Gothic Other into a single character by later Gothic authors creates an antagonist plagued by internal conflict or, at the very least, who is two-sided in nature. In order to better recognize how Walpole’s successors altered his Gothic mode by reconciling the stranger and the Other into a single role, we must look to the height of its development. The next section of this essay will explore Lewis’s *The Monk* and Radcliffe’s *The Italian*, both of which confuse the audience as to the source of the uncanny by using the element of the veil. The veil obscures the Gothic Other, allowing him to act out ill-will in pursuit of the future only he desires under the guise of virtue and good intention. The veil is an essential vehicle within the Gothic because its obscuring of the “real” enables the masking of both identities and motivations as well as a troubling of the boundaries between the Other, the protagonists’ own inner darkness, and the realism of virtuous, normalized society.

41. Lukács, “From *The Theory of the Novel*,” 191.

42. Cohen, “Monster Culture,” 4.

43. Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian*, ed. Frederick Garber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 224–25.

44. Walpole, *Castle of Otranto*, 28.

The Shroud of the Veil

Radcliffe and Lewis use veils in a variety of ways.⁴⁵ The veil often “appears in the form of words such as ‘reveal,’ ‘obscure,’ ‘shroud,’ and ‘conceal.’”⁴⁶ Most significant of these is “the verb ‘to reveal’ (‘re-veil’) [which] has a double meaning: (1) it may mean to cover again with a veil in the sense of, once again, drawing the veil over yourself, or (2) it may mean to pull back the veil in the sense of unveiling your features or of revealing yourself.”⁴⁷ The double meaning of the word “reveal” is important in the plot of *The Italian*, for it signifies the sudden appearances and disappearances of the stranger who proclaims the terrifying warning to Vivaldi at the novel’s beginning. When Vivaldi first sees Ellena, he sets his heart on marrying her, but his mother strongly opposes the match and beseeches the monk, Father Schedoni, to prevent their nuptials. Schedoni kidnaps Ellena and takes her to a convent. After Vivaldi rescues Ellena, their nuptials are again prevented by Schedoni who sends the Inquisition to arrest Vivaldi on false charges. Ellena is again kidnapped by Schedoni who now designs to murder her, but when he is about to commit the fatal act, he suddenly suspects a familial connection, and believing her to be his daughter (though she is later revealed to be his niece), Schedoni makes plans to secure her protection and future happiness. Schedoni is brought before the Inquisition to shed light on their interrogation of Vivaldi. The truth of Schedoni’s murderous past is revealed, and he is sentenced to death. Throughout the story as Vivaldi seeks to bring the identity of his shrouded opponent to light and as Schedoni endeavors to keep his murderous past a secret, Schedoni is constantly pushed back and forth between Vivaldi’s attempts to unveil him and his own attempts to re-veil himself.

Lewis similarly employs this trope of repetitious veiling and unveiling but in a literal sense rather than Radcliffe’s preferred metaphorical means. Throughout the novel, Matilda unveils and re-veils herself, withdrawing her veil in the presence of Ambrosio to act as the woman she is and replacing the veil to hide her femininity and act as the man Rosario in the presence of others. While Ambrosio’s temptation to villainy continually increases after Rosario reveals himself as a woman and seduces him, the cross-dressing Matilda proves much more villainous. However, as the novel’s focus is the fall of Ambrosio from salvation to damnation, he is cast as the primary villain with Matilda acting as his seducer and the catalyst to his fall. Matilda aids Ambrosio in his endeavors to rape Antonia, who Don Lorenzo is simultaneously attempting to court, but Don Lorenzo is interrupted by Don Raymond’s troubles. After being set upon robbers, Don Raymond falls in love with Agnes, who is Don Lorenzo’s sister and the niece of the Baroness whom Don Raymond saved from the robbers. His plot to elope with Agnes goes terribly wrong, and she (believing Don Raymond to be lost to her forever) willingly takes the nun’s veil. Don Lorenzo and Don Raymond’s endeavors to rescue Agnes from the abbey that has locked her away ultimately entwine with Ambrosio’s plot to rape Antonia. Ambrosio’s fatal descent to Hell’s gates at the novel’s end is instigated by the veiling and unveiling of his seducer. The veiling of Matilda allows her to obscure the true terror she produces as a worker of evil, and Ambrosio’s own terror is veiled until his first act of fornication, at which point his veil begins to slip off with each passing crime, slowly bringing to light his blood-stained faults. While the veiled Nicola

45. See Elizabeth Broadwell, “The Veil Image in Ann Radcliffe’s ‘The Italian,’” *South Atlantic Bulletin* 40, no. 4 (1975): 76–87, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3199122>. Broadwell provides a detailed analysis of the many kinds of veils and the ways in which Radcliffe employs them. These veils include the literal, metaphorical, social, psychological, natural, temporal, and veils of the sublime and of sensibility as well as those relating to one’s vocation (e.g., the Church acting as a veil for Schedoni and Olivia and also retirement, being a lack of vocation, acting as a veil for Signora Bianchi who sees no one because of her retired seclusion).

46. Broadwell, “Veil Image,” 77.

47. Broadwell, “Veil Image,” 77.

(*The Italian*) and Matilda (*The Monk*) are suspected of wrongdoing—of which they are, in fact, guilty—they are not guilty of the crimes upon which these novels' plots rest. They are not the antagonists of their stories; they point to villains in their process of becoming othered through the wearing of veils. Here, we begin to see the Gothic Other take shape: characters who rely on veils are objectified and become othered and regarded, at least in some respect, as villainous.

Other characters wear veils too, but they do not become the Other; however, they are still objectified to an extent, acting as surfaces, like the veils they wear, to be marked, colored, and molded into shape.⁴⁸ There is an exchange of characteristics that occurs between the veil and the wearer. The veil seeks to muddle the wearer's identity as a way of preventing its comprehension and, as a result, confuses its own identity with that of its wearer. For example, the veils of women are sexually charged, for "the veil that conceals and inhibits sexuality comes by the same gesture to represent it."⁴⁹ Radcliffe describes a woman's veil as one "which gives dignity to their air and softness to their features," highlighting "every grace that ought to adorn the female character."⁵⁰ These veils receive the characteristics of the surface they veil, and while they conceal identity, they may incidentally draw greater attention to certain characteristics of the wearer. When Antonia is first introduced in *The Monk*, her face is "hidden by a thick veil," but its slight dishevelment allows two young onlookers "to discover a neck" comparable to a goddess and in possession "of the most dazzling whiteness."⁵¹ The whiteness of her skin and her white dress become confused because the fabric highlights Antonia's most striking features despite her best efforts. That "her bosom was carefully veiled" only seems to draw more attention to it, just as the little glimpses of her skin leads the onlookers to notice her "delicate proportions" even down to her little feet.⁵² Antonia becomes conflated with the veil that mimics her features, a mere object as if she were some statue on display for others' pleasure, like the Venus de' Medici to which she is compared.⁵³ There is a certain sublimity among veiled women, whose bodies become sexual landscapes for men to behold with the utmost awe and admiration.

When worn by men, especially criminals, veils often inspire an uncanny sublimity, where an excess of imagination—estrangement from first nature and a lack of interiority—reveals what has been repressed: an inclination toward lust, seduction, and murder. For Marguerite (*The Monk*), "it was not till after [her] Seducer's death" when the veil of his false character had fallen "that [she] discovered his hands to have been stained with the blood of innocence."⁵⁴ In the same way that Lewis confuses Antonia's white garments with the "dazzling whiteness" of her skin, the veil can inscribe its own attributes onto its wearer, for these characters are mere surfaces, objects to be inscribed upon, burdening these characters with the terror of the Gothic. Even Ambrosio views himself as "the *object* of universal execration" when he realizes that he has become "stained with the most loathed and monstrous sins."⁵⁵ The hands of criminals are surfaces to be stained like the way that blood stains a veil.

48. See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "The Character in the Veil: Imagery of the Surface in the Gothic Novel," *PMLA* 96, no. 2 (1981): 255–70, <https://doi.org/10.2307/461992>. Sedgwick provides an analysis of how the attributes of both the veil and the characters who wear them, characters which she calls surfaces, are contagious, meaning that attributes of the veil are imputed to the wearer and vice versa.

49. Sedgwick, "Character in the Veil," 256.

50. Radcliffe, *The Italian*, 90.

51. Matthew Lewis, *The Monk*, ed. Howard Anderson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 9.

52. Lewis, *The Monk*, 9.

53. Lewis, *The Monk*, 9.

54. Lewis, *The Monk*, 123.

55. Lewis, *The Monk*, 421; emphasis added.

Like the strangers who are the embodied uncanny, the protagonists and virtuous characters are also treated as objects whenever they don the veil. In *The Monk*, Agnes's drawing of the ghost of the Bleeding Nun portrays the nun with a veiled face and "her dress . . . stained with the blood which trickled from a wound upon her bosom."⁵⁶ Her veiled attire becomes bloodied by her wounded body, a fatal injury which her veil highlights by hiding her face, thus, drawing the audience's attention away from the identity of the figure and toward the blood-seeping wound. This ghostly nun's identity is lost in fabric; she becomes the clothing—a mere agent for its motion—and the fabric becomes her, absorbing her blood as if it were its own. Even her face assumes the white color of her veil,⁵⁷ for as a corpse she possessed all "the paleness of death."⁵⁸ Although Agnes's scheme to escape her fate of *taking the veil* (ironically by veiling herself as the ghost of the Bleeding Nun) utterly fails, she "is turned by her family and the convent" of her imprisonment "into something like this spectre."⁵⁹ By the time Don Lorenzo finds her in the underground cavern, she had become "a Creature . . . so wretched, so emaciated, so pale, that He doubted to think her Woman."⁶⁰ In this way, the Gothic Other is not the only character to be objectified by the veil. Every character who wears a veil, if only briefly, is subject to objectification; they risk being stained by the uncanny when they wear its disguise.

While the veil holds the power of transformation, characters do not assume a veiled guise with the expectation of undergoing change. Their intent is to mask their features. Vivaldi uses the evening to "conceal his steps" when he visits Altieri to catch a glimpse of Ellena,⁶¹ and even when he makes the mistake of "disturb[ing] the clematis that surrounded the lattice" beside which he watches and listens to Ellena, he is undiscovered because he is "entirely concealed by the foliage."⁶² No transformation occurs in this veiled concealment, because natural veils are perhaps the least invasive of all the kinds of veils. The Gothic Other is always transformed the most by veils, yet even Vivaldi, a character not affiliated with the otherness of the Gothic, is still objectified; he is presented as an object to be hidden. In a similar way that Schedoni keeps a "dagger concealed beneath his Monk's habit; as he had also an assassin's heart shrouded by his garments,"⁶³ Vivaldi is hidden in anticipation of the perfect moment to strike—Vivaldi to woo, the dagger to slay. He is mistaken for what hides him, concealed by his body's confusion with the foliage. While veils can be used to temporarily hide one's entire person and presence, veils most often serve to mask one's identity in order for characters to move about freely. The religious vestments associated with the Catholic Church, including the veil, lend themselves to this pursuit.

While the buildings of the Catholic Church were meant to act as sanctuaries for the wearied and the troubled, the manipulative use of religious vestments often associates the Catholic Church with malign power in the Gothic. Every aspect of the Church (whether it be a monastery, a convent, or even the Holy Inquisition) "can be regarded as a kind of veil."⁶⁴ The Church protects Olivia from Schedoni's wrath by concealing her identity from the world, Schedoni's murderous past is veiled by his vocation under the holy Church, and convents serve as temporary safe spaces for young women like Isabella and Ellena, or retrospectively, as a prison, which establishes (along with Schedoni's and Ambrosio's false purity) a fear of the Church. When Ann Radcliffe published *The Italian* in 1797, she wrote a few lines of

56. Lewis, *The Monk*, 138.

57. Lewis, *The Monk*, 155.

58. Lewis, *The Monk*, 160.

59. Sedgwick, "Character in the Veil," 258.

60. Lewis, *The Monk*, 369.

61. Radcliffe, *The Italian*, 11.

62. Radcliffe, *The Italian*, 13.

63. Radcliffe, *The Italian*, 213.

64. Broadwell, "Veil Image," 78.

poetry for the novel's title page, which set a precedent for anti-Catholic sentiments in the story:

He, wrapt in clouds of mystery and silence,
Broods o'er his passions, bodies them in deeds,
And sends them forth on wings of Fate to others:
Like the invisible Will, that guides us,
Unheard, unknown, unsearchable!⁶⁵

Radcliffe compares Schedoni or, more generally, the corrupt members of the Catholic Church to the God they serve. Judith Wilt sees both the Gothic antihero—for so she labels Schedoni—and the perception of God that emerged during the Enlightenment as being “distinguished primarily for an obsessive, hidden, tyrannous, ambiguous will.”⁶⁶ This “terrible dilemma” means that the evil father and the good Holy Father are not so easily distinguished, for they are both unheard, unknown, and unsearchable.⁶⁷

Attention is drawn several times in the novel to the inhuman nature of Schedoni. Bonarmo describes the veiled Schedoni as being “more than human” because of the way that “he glided past [him] with a strange facility.”⁶⁸ He moves through the night, not walking or running but gliding across the earth without any sound of footfalls; he moves unheard. Schedoni is described as if he were some supernatural being whose apparent ability to defy the normal laws of nature bathes his features in a ghastly light. His appearance incites terror, evincing the exact opposite effect as that of the Christian God, despite sharing the qualities of being unheard, unknown, and unsearchable. Later, at the moment when his destruction is set in stone by his own poison, “Schedoni uttered a sound so strange and horrible, so convulsed, yet so loud, so exulting, yet so unlike any human voice, that every person in the chamber, except those who were assisting Nicola, struck with irresistible terror, endeavoured to make their way out of it.”⁶⁹ Schedoni's inhuman qualities terrify people and depict him as some anti-God, some demon who opposes the holy Creator. Along with the monk's determination to oppose him, these supernatural qualities lead Vivaldi to name Schedoni his very own “evil genius.”⁷⁰ There is a sense here of the monk's unexpected, terrible power. Schedoni's ability to mask his emotions—to lie, to scheme, to feign feelings that are not his own—prevents Vivaldi from discovering his origins and true intentions. “The monk Schedoni,” says Wilt, “is of an unknown, in fact unsearchable, past; he eludes every inquiry.”⁷¹ Only by persons from his past, people with secret knowledge of his origin, is Schedoni undone in the end; if not for them, Schedoni's will—obsessive, hidden, tyrannical, and ambiguous—would never be subordinated to the power of Enlightenment realism.

The way Radcliffe connects Schedoni to God through a similarity of characteristics is intrinsically important, showing from the novel's onset how the veil confuses identities. Whether that is a literal veil to disguise one's features or a cognate veil, where a person's history and background are veiled from discovery, the veil makes the distinction between one man and another less defined. Veils represent exchange; they are a “locus of substitution” where people and objects are often mistaken for what they are not.⁷² Schedoni is mistaken for

65. Radcliffe, *The Italian*, 1. I have modernized all instances of the long *s*.

66. Wilt, *Ghosts of the Gothic*, 32.

67. Wilt, *Ghosts of the Gothic*, 32.

68. Radcliffe, *The Italian*, 20.

69. Radcliffe, *The Italian*, 381.

70. Radcliffe, *The Italian*, 47.

71. Wilt, *Ghosts of the Gothic*, 33.

72. Sedgwick, “Character in the Veil,” 258.

his brother and Nicola is mistaken for Schedoni. Even Virginia is substituted for Antonia as Don Lorenzo's love interest at the conclusion of *The Monk* with the veil acting as the intermediary in their substitution (Virginia wore the veil as a nun, and Antonia wore it to hide her beauty). The Gothic is grounded in substitution, one which causes the greatest of confusions and the danger of calamity to be realized. Ambrosio is unaware of his relation to Antonia, and he rapes and murders his own sister. Schedoni, too, almost kills his own niece, mistaking her for his daughter only moments before he would have followed through with the act. Gothic literature is driven by this unknown, veiled knowledge which brings confusion, danger, and calamity upon its characters. The culmination of this hidden knowledge is brought to physical representation by a stranger whose presence creates confusion, warns of danger, and incites calamity.

Thus, it is necessary for this stranger, the Gothic Other, to be defeated and expelled from the characters' reality in order for normal life to resume; protagonists must successfully remove the uncanny by banishing this stranger, or they risk becoming the Other itself. When Vivaldi is kept from Ellena by the Inquisition, his only recourse for seeing her again is to unveil Schedoni. As "a haunted lover," Vivaldi has no choice, "it seems, but to haunt the haunts of the other."⁷³ Vivaldi must reveal Schedoni's horrible past and denounce the Gothic Other. He must haunt Schedoni's own haunts (the crimes of his past) by holding Schedoni's terrible history over his head in order to free himself of Schedoni and find love with Ellena. Thus, Vivaldi confronts the uncanny in order to uproot it from his reality. Both Vivaldi and Ellena veil themselves at various moments throughout the novel. To escape the uncanny, they must engage with it and defeat it. The uncanny is only powerful if it is feared.

Ambrosio also interacts with the uncanny through Matilda, and his failure to resist her ploys leads Ambrosio to fall prey to his wicked desire; he becomes the Other. Ambrosio's ever-growing sexual desire, which Matilda plants within him, leads him into the impractical pursuit of Antonia's romantic favor, one he could never possess while serving as a monk. Similar to Schedoni, who is unable to live a happy life with his niece because of his murderous desire, Ambrosio becomes a quixotic villain for his failure to recognize the impossibility of his idealized, evil desires within the confines of his society. What eventually proves to be his downfall, Ambrosio's pride in his perfection despite his obvious flaws, is wrapped in a misogynistic undertone: his need to conquer women, either by rape or murder, stems from his own anxiety about gender.

Ambrosio had been confined to the abbey until he was thirty years old.⁷⁴ Ambrosio is sheltered by the Catholic Church like a young woman whose virtue is fragile compared to the temptations and vices of society. The Church acts as a veil to his womanish charms of naïveté and untested virtue. The unveiling of his friend Rosario as his admirer Matilda even further confuses his gender role. The roles of seducer and innocent victim are reversed as Matilda acts with all the worldly experience, cunning, and dominance associated with men, while Ambrosio has characteristics associated with the inexperienced girl in need of molding by others. His interiority, a woman's defense against the temptations of the world, proves inadequate next to his unchallenged seducer. Ambrosio's failure results from his reliance on what Lukács calls a second nature,⁷⁵ a set of societal laws, "which has become rigid and

73. Castle, *Female Thermometer*, 124.

74. Lewis, *The Monk*, 17.

75. The idea of second nature that Lukács discusses was first introduced by Burke in *Philosophical Enquiry*, where "our natural and common state is one of absolute indifference, equally prepared for pain or pleasure" (129). According to Burke, "we are always hurt" "when we are thrown out of this state, or deprived of any thing requisite to maintain us in it [and] when this change does not happen by pleasure from some mechanical cause" (129). In other words, the uncanny sublime of the Gothic disrupts second nature in such a way as to cause discomfort often by a disruption of first nature, in which our enlightened concepts are displaced, allowing the supernatural to once again resurface.

strange, and which no longer awakens interiority.”⁷⁶ Ambrosio begins to question the rules of society and, specifically, the Church because of Matilda’s willful influence. Ambrosio’s interiority, which is weakened by his confinement, cannot resist his excess of imagination and lust.

Furthermore, Ambrosio’s wrongs not only scar himself but also the Church, for the Church acts as his veil, and the attributes between the veil and the veiled are contagious. The shame Ambrosio brings upon the office of monk defames the Church as a whole; thus, just as the Catholic Church has failed to help him to develop his interiority, Ambrosio fails the Church and incites a mob against all within those holy walls. In this way, Ambrosio falls to worldly vice; he becomes the Gothic Other, beyond redemption, when he sells his soul to the Devil. The Other is banished from reality by his murder and the mob’s rage against the abbey.

Conclusion

The Gothic Other is brought to life by the elements that compose Gothic stories. Some degree of the supernatural is crucial to the creation of the Gothic Other, which is achieved by distancing the characters, and by extension the reader, from the Age of Reason. A historical setting is often employed to utilize these elements, where the appearance of ghosts was believable and not just a tall tale. But other methods can be employed to the same purpose, such as the naivety of *Northanger Abbey*’s protagonist Catherine Morland.

The Gothic Other is not only the central focus of these kinds of stories but also the reason for their existence. The Gothic is a mode by which authors can experiment with the foreign, the taboo, and, most especially, the uncanny. As a mode, the Gothic is not limited to some specific historical period because the supernatural exists in everyone’s mind; it lives on, age after age, to be dealt with in new ways by new generations, never to disappear. Similarly, the Gothic Other embodies a condition of the mind that leads the characters and the audience to view that which is foreign as terrifying because of its obscurity, to feel as if some villain rather than mere ignorance must be the source of their feeling of uncanniness. The Gothic Other is the uncanny made material so as to give the characters a physical entity to expunge from their modern reality. But the Gothic can never completely disappear. The Gothic is about resisting the uncanny: the narrative forces characters to interact with the supernatural through the strange Other whom they either defeat or are defeated by. In the defeat of the Other, the supernatural is resuppressed, to be dealt with again at another time. The uncanny Gothic Other is the threat of the irrationality of the pre-Enlightened age—its reappearance serves as a warning to guard one’s reason. The Gothic Other is the construct that allows the supernatural to reassert itself when modernity has all but expunged it. At stake in grappling with the corporeal, quixotic villain is the preservation of modernity’s own realism.

76. Lukács, “From *The Theory of the Novel*,” 191.