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GOTHIC JOURNEYS: IMPERIALIST DISCOURSE, THE GOTHIC NOVEL, AND THE EUROPEAN OTHER

A Dissertation Presented

by

CHARLIE M. BONDHUS

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

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English

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Approved as to style and content by:

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Joseph Bartolomeo, Chair

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Jordana Rosenberg, Member

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Banu Subramaniam, Member

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Joseph Bartolomeo, Department Head
Department of English

DEDICATION

To my parents, for always supporting my education.

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I am eternally grateful to Joseph Bartolomeo, who has supported me throughout my graduate study. Whether directing an independent study, chairing my dissertation committee, providing professional advice, giving feedback on chapters and articles, or simply having an animated discussion about the Boston Red Sox, Joe has consistently been my staunchest supporter.

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ABSTRACT

GOTHIC JOURNEYS: IMPERIALIST DISCOURSE, THE GOTHIC NOVEL, AND THE EUROPEAN OTHER

MAY 2010

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In 1790s England, an expanding empire, a growing diaspora of English settlers in foreign territories, and spreading political unrest in Ireland and on the European continent all helped to contribute to a destabilization of British national identity. With the definition of "Englishperson" in flux, Ireland, France, and Italy—nations which are prominently featured in William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794), Ann Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), and *The Italian* (1797), and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818)—could be understood, similar to England's colonies, as representing threats to the nation's cultural integrity. Because the people of these European countries were stereotypically perceived as being economically impoverished victims of political and "popish" tyranny, it would have been easy to construct them in popular and literary discourse as being both socially similar to the "primitive" indigenous populations of colonized territories and as uneasy reminders of England's own "premodern" past. Therefore, the overarching goal of this project is twofold. First, it attempts to account for the Gothic's frequent—albeit subtle—use of imperialist rhetoric, which is largely encoded within the novels' representations of sublimity, sensibility, and domesticity. Second, it claims that the novels under consideration are preoccupied with testing and reaffirming the salience of bourgeois English identity by placing English or Anglo-inflected

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characters in conflict with "monstrous" continental Others. In so doing, these novels use the

fictions of empire to contain and claim agency over a revolutionary France, an uncertainly-

positioned Ireland, and a classically-appealing but socially-problematic Italy.

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INTRODUCTION

It is undeniable that the last twenty-five or so years have seen an impressive resurgence

in critical interest in the eighteenth and nineteenth-century English Gothic. Considering the

current critical trends in academia, it should not come as a surprise that many scholars who

write on the Gothic seem to have gravitated towards historically gendered readings of the

genre.[1] And while there is no scholarship that I know of which explicitly trumpets itself as "a

psychoanalytic reading of the Gothic," there is no denying that the critical tradition of

psychoanalysis also plays a significant, though rather subtle, role in the existing academic

literature.

Admittedly, it is easy to accept the existing scholarly tradition without much resistance.

It is quite accurate to say that the Gothic can be readily viewed through the lens of gender, its

conventions, its queering, and the murky subconscious energy that powers characters' and

authors' subversive moves against the established "spheres" of maleness and femaleness. And

while I do believe that this kind of criticism is valid and useful, my interests are more focused on

the Gothic's historicity and its role in extending and reifying domestic values. Combining this

approach with the contributions that gender-based criticism have made to discourse on the

genre, it is interesting to note that female characters like those found in Walpole's *Otranto*,

Lewis's *Monk*, and Radcliffe's entire oeuvre tended to be pursued by villains within the enclosed

space of the house, the castle, or the convent, whereas male characters like Godwin's Caleb

Williams, Shelley's Frankenstein, and Maturin's Melmoth seemed to be pursued across

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[1] Some key examples might be George Haggerty's *Queer Gothic.* Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006; Donna Heiland's *Gothic & Gender.* Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004; Diane J. Hoeveler's *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontes.* Pittsburgh: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998; Eugenia C. Delamotte's *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth-Century Gothic*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990; Kate Ferguson Ellis's *The Contested Castle.* Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989; and Coral Ann Howells's "The Pleasure of the Woman's Text: Ann Radcliffe's Subtle Transgressions." *Gothic Fictions: Prohibition/Transgression.* Ed. Kenneth Graham. New York: AMS Press, 1989, 151-162.

continents. Upon closer examination though, it is has become clear to me that matters are not so black-and-white—Caleb Williams *is* persecuted and monitored by Falkland when he resides in the Squire's house; Radcliffe's heroines *are* compelled to take some remarkable cross-continental journeys; and Victor Frankenstein *does* experience a sort of "domestic violence" at the hands of the Creature.

If one reads even casually in the robust field of travel narratives and empire studies, it becomes apparent that much of what is addressed therein is relevant to the Gothic. However, precious little scholarship has been done connecting these fields.[2] Admittedly, critics appear to be at least aware of the potential of this area of inquiry: Patrick Brantlinger points out how "the monstrous, the supernatural, and the terrifying," in a word, the Gothic, "are typically linked to the foreign," exemplified most notably in Victor Frankenstein's European travels and in Ann Radcliffe's Italy (153). Although he is writing about gothic texts produced in the Victoria Era—i.e. Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), Marsh's *The Beetle* (1897), and Stoker's *Dracula* (1897)—Johan Höglund rightly claims that "the Imperial Gothic contains a host of ghostly and monstrous figures that not only frighten the reader, but also demonstrate the latent fears and desires of imperialist discourse" (245). Further, Elizabeth Napier writes in *The Failure of the Gothic* that romance and travel narratives share kinship in the sense that novelists could, and frequently did, draw on their own travels or readings of travel narratives (93). And Dr. Johnson himself, in his typical acerbic manner, commented that

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[2] To my knowledge, there are no published monographs that examine the eighteenth-century Gothic through the lens of postcolonial theory/empire studies. The closest is Andrew Smith and *Gothic Studies* editor William Hughes's *Empire and the Gothic: The Politics of Genre.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, which is a compendium of essays on the subject. Also, Laura Doyle's *Freedom's Empire: Race and the Rise of the Novel in Atlantic Modernity, 1640-1940.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2008, has a chapter on Walpole and Lewis. Finally, Johan Höglund has published an article on the discourses of Victorian Gothic and where it intersects with current American Imperialism, entitled "Gothic Haunting Empire" in *Memory, Haunting, Discourse*, Eds. Maria Holmgren Troy and Elisabeth Wenno, Karlstad: Karlstad University Press, 2005.

[t]he fictions of the Gothick romances were not so remote from credibility as they are now thought…Whatever is imaged in the wildest tale, if giants, dragons, and enchantment be excepted, would be felt by him, who, wandering in the mountains without a guide, or upon the sea without a pilot, should be carried amidst his terror and uncertainty, to the hospitality and elegance of *Raasay* or *Dunvegan.* (77)

Considering the number of scholars who have alluded to a contact zone between the discourses of the Gothic and the discourses of travel and empire, it is rather surprising to me that no one has produced a lengthy study on these connections.

Perhaps part of the reason why scholars have shied away from focusing their research on empire and the Gothic is because the connections appear, on the surface at least, to be self-evident. Late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Gothic is frequently characterized by Enlightenment characters' encounters with obscurity and the terrifying Other; colonial journeys to such locations as Africa and India were represented as adventures into the exotic unknown. The Gothic is preoccupied with producing a "good" middle-class English domesticity while dwelling in the midst of familial darkness and dysfunction; the colonial project—especially in the 1790s and after—was partly justified by its mission to Christianize and "civilize" "dark" and "godless" native peoples.[3] The Gothic thrives on a simple opposition between "good" characters and "evil" characters who can all be readily identified as such by their demeanors and physiognomies; imperialist discourse creates a binary of white, moral colonizer and dark-skinned, heathen colonized. The Gothic represents the triumph of Enlightenment morality and "pure, natural" religion over clandestine superstitions; the imperial project constructs the triumph of western rationality and technology over eastern savagery. Höglund is quite right to conclude that "the Gothic often becomes a repository for imperialist discourse precisely because it tends to describe reality in the same reductive way" (253).

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[3] Saree Makdisi writes that "the decades around 1800" saw a movement from outright conquest to a "moral" empire and more culturally-based imperialism (77).

Granted, this catalogue of observations is cursory at best. To further map the current critical discussion, I would like to point out that most studies done on the language and discourses that empire opened up are focused mainly on how this language shaped and justified the colonial project *itself* and colonizers' perceptions of the nations that fell beneath their immediate purview.[4] However, I am unacquainted with any scholarship that is actively preoccupied with the question of how this language shaped and informed Britain's popular perception of Ireland and continental Europe; and I am certain that there is no such study that takes up the Gothic's intervention in this question. Essentially, I believe that the Gothic, with its romantic intra-European journeys and preoccupations with "good" vs. "bad" domesticity effectively symptomatizes English writers' and travelers' tendency to claim proprietorship over and pass judgment on the people and politics of other European nations. Similar to Ansgar Nünning in his "Metaphors the British Thought Felt and Ruled By," I am mainly interested in "not the geographical or political extensions of the real British empire but the role of language and literature in discursively constructing that mental realm which was called 'the empire' or the 'imperial idea,' which was arguably largely an empire 'of the mind' or the imagination" (103). However, where Nünning is focused on the empire during the Victorian period, and his primary agenda is to argue that cultural metaphors deserve more critical attention in historical studies, I am interested in what I believe to be a neglected area of critical inquiry: the appearance of colonialist discourse in literature *and* how it colors perceptions of other, predominantly Catholic, European cultures. Indeed, Collin Haydon is correct to say that "the main contribution of anti-

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[4] The biggest examples include George Dekker's *The Fictions of Romantic Tourism: Radcliffe, Scott, and Mary Shelley.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005, David Spurr's *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration.* Durham: Duke University Press, 1993, and Mary-Louise Pratt's seminal *Imperial Eyes: Studies in Travel Writing and Transculturation.* New York: Routledge, 1992. My project is greatly indebted to all three of these works.

catholicism to [English] national identity in the Georgian era was to construct the European continent as fundamentally alien" (33).

One of my central claims is that colonialist discourse made its way into Gothic fiction via a calculated deployment of several overlapping historical discourses, most notably those of sensibility, sublimity, domesticity, travel, and foreignness, all of which are also closely tied to the rhetoric of empire. The fact that these particular discourses are mainstays in both the Gothic and the rhetoric of empire drastically increases what is at stake in the genre, as it implies that imperialist ideology pervaded texts that were largely seen as apolitical "thrillers" in their own time and psychosexual allegories in ours. Therefore, a large part of my task must be to examine these texts through the lens of these discourses and the imperialist "baggage" that these discourses are associated with in an attempt to uncover a narrative of domestic unrest brought about by expansion.

Of course, such a claim implies that the discourses of imperialism were readily available to writers and commentators at this time. To support my assumptions, I would first direct the reader to Saree Makdisi's claim that "Britain's national identity and national culture—Britain's sense of itself and of its very modernity—were by the end of the eighteenth century comprehensively shaped by the discourses of imperialism and by Britain's changing image of and relations with its cultural others" (62). In terms of transmission, Kathleen Wilson has related how most British newspapers had sections dedicated to imperial matters. There papers generally presented the imperial project in self-serving terms, focusing on trade and accumulation in the colonies (241-242). Imperialist rhetoric could also be found in the theatre, as many plays that were popular in the period featured stereotyped images of other Europeans and their defeat at the hands of rugged English heroes (242). Ultimately, according to Wilson, "the discourses of imperialism embedded normative definitions of class, gender, and nation in

English culture that shaped men and women's perception of Britain's place within the world and their own place within the polity" (238-239). To add to Makdisi's and Wilson's claims, I would like to hypothesize that the increase in British travel at this point in history—when the colonial project had achieved a high level of visibility and public acceptance—necessarily implies a level of proprietorship over the "foreign" on behalf of the "scenic tourist." This kind of "citizen-level" proprietorship is well-documented, and one can find it most readily in the scenic tourist's use of the Claude Glass when viewing a landscape, and in the *ostensibly* apolitical art practices of William Gilpin, who theorized on the picturesque and painted landscapes which actively excluded that which he deemed distasteful, such as images of poverty (Dekker 36). Essentially, I am in agreement with David Spurr and George Dekker in contending that the discourses of the civilian's "Romantic tourism" are informed by the discourses of the administrator's colonial enterprise. Hence, I think it is acceptable to assume that the authors I am engaging—all of whom were politically informed, albeit to different extents—had ready access to the discourses of empire.

On a side note, one could even say the Gothic's existence alone is evidence that colonialist discourse pervaded the minds of English writers, since the setting of the genre's texts in fanciful pasts at such easily romanticized locations as Italy,[5] France, Spain, and Switzerland is reminiscent of Orientalism (when one thinks of it this way, the classification of Beckford's *Vathek* as a "gothic" novel seems to make a lot more sense). The Gothic, it would then seem, intensifies the more "sensational" aspects of imperial expansion—such as encounters with foreignness in the form of ethnic (though certainly not just racial) difference and "alien" cultural practice, and colonizers' moral impact on indigenous peoples—while at the same time maintaining a firmly Eurocentric perspective and thus obscuring the fraught nature of colonizer-

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[5] Kenneth Churchill writes "Gothic Italy was essentially an imaginary Italy" in *Italy and English Literature: 1764-1930*. Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble, 1980, 5.

colonized dynamics.[6] Therefore the Gothic is an ideal place to begin an inquiry considering this new approach to the intersection of literary and empire studies.

More to the point, I have four primary reasons for engaging British attitudes towards the Continent vis a vis textual analysis of the Gothic. First of all, as I just discussed, I believe that the Gothic represents a coming together of a variety of discourses that were also used to justify empire. Second, the texts that I have chosen to close read—William Godwin's *Caleb Williams*, Ann Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest, The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and *The Italian*, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*—are all, to a greater or lesser extent, concerned with travel, particularly intra-European travel. Third, as discussed above, I believe that the field of Gothic studies has been somewhat narrow in terms of its theoretical focus. It is my hope that this treatment encourages more scholarly discourse not only on the Gothic's discursive relationship to empire, but also on how the discourses of empire shaped Britain's perception of other European nations during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Finally, I feel that current scholarship's figuration of the Gothic's role in British identity-formation in the face of rising modernity has made some provocative claims that would be productive to examine against my readings. James Watt, for example, writes that the late eighteenth-century's mania for gothic/medievalist texts "served to focus on different aspects of *a pre-modern [English] heritage that was both strange and native, distant and familiar*" (120, my italics).

This set of seeming contradictions, "strange and native, distant and familiar," not only employs the language of colonialism, but also sounds like the uncanny, a thematic mainstay of the Gothic. Watt's application of the uncanny to Britain's national heritage raises some interesting questions about the politics of the Gothic. How is England situated in relation to its feudal past? As England develops its interests in India and elsewhere, how does it perceive other

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[6] An exception to this might be *Frankenstein*, in that it takes the rare approach of allowing the "colonized" a first-person voice in the form of the Creature's narration.

European nations culturally? How do these perceptions affect the way England perceives itself? And where does the Gothic fit in? I would suggest that the Gothic's tendency to conjure up a "pre-modern heritage" makes it an ideal mode in which to represent the European Other because nations like Ireland, Italy, and France possess a *racial* and *cultural* similarity to England that would not be found in India or Africa, yet the discrete differences that were perceived as existing between these nations could be seen as a reminder of England's feudal, Catholic past— its former state of pre-modern "primitivism." Put simply, I would propose that "less progressive" European nations could be read as uncanny doubles of England, and that this issue is raised as a result of Britain's need to reevaluate its identity in the face of a rapidly expanding empire. Furthermore, if we consider that Gothic plots are typically set in a pre-modern Europe, yet the genre's "good" characters are distinctly eighteenth-century Englishpersons, then we can suggest that part of the Gothic's *raison d'etre* is to explore the ways by which British modernity can triumph over the backwardness of the "Old World"—sort of like the way Western technology triumphs over Eastern "magic" one hundred years later in Victorian Gothic texts like *Dracula* or *The Beetle* (Höglund 246). Similar to the Bleeding Nun or the armor-clad specter of Alfonso the Good, the "past" of late eighteenth-century Continental Europe haunts the "present" of "Enlightened" England.

Considering the tendency of much Gothic criticism to read the genre's texts—at least to an extent—as psychosexual allegories, and considering the increasing application of psychoanalytic criticism to empire studies, I feel that an examination of the role that anomaly plays both in the Gothic and in empire ought to be addressed in this study. Again, I do not wish to discredit or downplay the important and oftentimes fascinating readings of the Gothic that scholars have proposed along psychoanalytic axes; rather, I wish to resituate this kind of reading into the historical and discursive contexts of imperialism. Accordingly, I have selected the term

"anomaly" because this concept implies a type of challenge to established categories that is less stringent than Victor Turner's narrowly-defined "liminality"[7] and "marginality,"[8] yet is not as amorphous or as strictly psychoanalytic as Julia Kristeva's "abjection." Indeed, while anomaly can be thought of as a psychological state, it can also be applied, as Mary Douglas has demonstrated, in an anthropological—and thus more measurable—context. Therefore, I propose that the psychoanalytic dimensions of the Gothic can be read not just in and of themselves, but also as mediators for questions of imperialism and imperialism's shift from outright domination to moral reform. More specifically, it is within the realm of so-called "moral reform" that we can most readily recognize empire's contribution to the production of individual anomaly, as the imposition of foreign values destabilizes the cohesion of the self and calls into question the location—and perhaps even the existence—of the borders that separate the self from the Other.

By way of definition, Mary Douglas defines anomaly in *Purity and Danger* (1966), as "an element which does not fit a given set or series" (38); like "uncleanness" it is "matter out of place" (41). More usefully, Douglas describes the anomalous—and the related concept of "ambiguity"—in terms of Sartre's viscosity: "[i]t is like a cross-section in a process of change. It is unstable, but it does not flow…it attacks the boundary between myself and it. Long columns falling off my fingers suggest my own substance flowing into the pool of stickiness…to touch

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[7] In *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New York: Walter de Gruyter Inc., 1969), 95, Turner characterizes "liminars" as being "neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremony." Though I would agree that English subjects who have engaged/are engaging the colonial or European Other are "betwixt and between" ethnic poles, the fact that liminars, as Turner explains in *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 233, have a "cultural assurance of a final stable resolution of their ambiguity" renders such a reading problematic, as not all of the figures I am engaging—historical or literary—
are fortunate enough to attain such a stable resolution.
[8] In *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors*, 233, Turner describes "marginals" as those "who are simultaneously (by ascription, optation, self-definition, or achievement) of two or more groups whose definitions and cultural norms are distinct from, and often even opposed to, one another." In some sense, it can be said that English subjects who have engaged/are engaging the colonial or European Other fit into this category since these individuals struggle to balance the "cultural norms" of Englishness with the norms of other ethnic groups. However, to classify these individuals as being members of two or more ethnic groups would require a bit of reaching and an overreliance on metaphor.

stickiness is to risk diluting myself into viscosity" (39). The viscous substance is clearly separate

from the "I," yet when one touches this substance, the boundary between the self and the alien

material blurs. Indeed, it does not take much of a leap to claim that an encounter with the

colonial Other is similarly constructed; the colonizing subject may identify him/herself as

"English" while the colonized individual is recognized as "not English"—the "I" and "you" are

assumed to be separate. However, engagement with the colonized "object" causes one to get

one's hands dirty, so to speak, as the border between "I" and "you," English self and foreign

Other, blurs, thus rendering the "tainted" English subject, in a word, anomalous.

     The same can also be said of England's engagement with Catholic European countries

since, as we will see, encounters with Italian, Irish, and French Others could be and often were

constructed as a denationalizing process. Likewise, all of the novels that this study considers

feature characters who might be characterized as "anomalous" insofar that their performance

calls into question the assumptions underlying their ethnic markers. Falkland is a member of the

English squirearchy, yet his actions are governed by the (archaic) chivalric code of Italy; Caleb

Williams is quite aware of his English identity and all that it implies, yet he deracinates himself

repeatedly in the text while attempting to elude Falkland's persecution; Ann Radcliffe's heroines

are nominally French and Italian, yet their sense of morality is grounded in an eighteenth-

century English tradition of female virtue; and *Frankenstein* is infamous for contesting the

"man/monster" binary. Hence, "outlandish, foreign-made English[men]" (Godwin 20), Anglo-

Irish Protestants, Frenchified aristocrats, "Jew-Christians" (263), and Gothic heroines who are

described as southern European but who behave like ideal Englishwomen are "matter out of

place," "unstable," "diluted," and apparently in danger of being absorbed into the Other.

Therefore, this study emphasizes the destabilizing, border-violating aspects of anomaly, the

Gothic's tendency to take up English concerns about national purity and situate its characters at

the uneasy nexus of "the civilized and the savage"; it accepts "anomaly" as a handy term for denoting this border state without committing to an explicitly psychoanalytic critical narrative.

To return to more historically-based scholarship, one critical text that has in many ways helped to shape the assumptions underlying this study is George Dekker's *The Fictions of Romantic Tourism* (2005), in which he claims that the Romantic-era tourist is an "alienated individual" who is seeking and being denied "authenticity and wholeness." Victor Frankenstein is a key example for Dekker, since the Genevese natural philosopher attempts to move past his dissatisfied domesticity by traveling, both literally and metaphorically (17). I am taking Dekker's argument a step further by suggesting that this dissatisfaction with the domestic stems from domesticity's fractured nature, a split that can be attributed to the expanding boundaries of empire. To use *Frankenstein* as an example, I believe that Victor's creation of the Monster—the basic cause of his subsequent alienation—is indicative of British guilt, the gnawing sense that the nation itself has destabilized the domestic sphere via its extensive engagement with the colonial Other. Along these lines, David Spurr suggests that a central problem of empire is the threat of the English subject collapsing into the foreign object (78)—the British nation's fear of losing its identity through colonial enterprise and (largely imagined) continental influence. While I wouldn't read Victor's educational trip to Ingolstadt itself as a colonial journey, I would suggest that his subsequent creation of the Monster echoes the imperial process, since it is characterized as a "train of progress" and the end result is the corruption and "nativization" of the traveler, thus rendering him, like the Monster, "truly" borderless, neither man nor monster, a mix between privileged European male and dreadful Other.[9]

Ironically, the cause of Victor's destabilization is his refusal to see the self in the redacted Other. He does not pity the Monster; he does not want to create the female monster

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[9] The same also holds true for the titular, deracinated protagonist in *Caleb Williams* and his "Italian-ated" persecutor, Falkland—an issue I will discuss in much depth later on.

out of fear that the two creatures' "joint wickedness" will destroy the world (128); and, more obliquely, he cannot conceive of working on the female monster at home in Geneva (134) but rather must travel to Ireland, the realm of the "almost-civilized" to create his "almost-human" creature. Since by middle-class standards the basic production of humanity—reproduction and impregnation—occurs within the domestic sphere, this latter move can be seen as a refusal to fit the Monster and his potential bride within a domestic framework—a move that could either efface threats of alterity or subvert the home. Similarly, the Monster's desire for a sort of wild domesticity in South America with his mate (130) can be read as an insulting parody of proper home life, or an ideal example of the domesticated foreigner. However, by focusing on the uncanny and subversive possibilities of the Monster's desired assimilation, rather than on its civilizing potential, Victor forces the Monster to remain as a dangerous Other. As we see in the text, this failure to defuse threats of alterity is what leads to the destruction of Victor's own household and, ultimately, his self.

Domesticity's role in travel, empire, and the Gothic is further complicated when one considers that Gothic novels—especially those that feature journeys—seem to be preoccupied above all, with a quest for stability and closure, a desire to either establish or reestablish a home-based certainty, which itself has been threatened by the intervention of the "foreign." Elizabeth Napier addresses this notion in her introduction to *The Failure of the Gothic*, and William Hughes makes a similar claim in *Empire and the Gothic*, when he suggests that the romantic journey usually begins with destabilization and ends with a return to domestic stability (94). The idea that travel—both in fiction and in reality—is a sort of quest for domestic constancy gains credence when one considers popular conceptions of travel and tourism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in conjunction with the various concerns that English subjects had about the expanding colonial empire's impact on middle-class domestic

lifestyles and moral values. It is no secret that England's middle-class was concerned about the

empire's ability to import vices and diseases, along with goods and colonial wealth, into the

private sphere. In fact, it was a common concern that the nation had "absorbed" its colonial

territory and thus the horrible foreigner was no longer "other" but an unassimilated part of the

whole (Demata 28).

Mary-Louise Pratt's findings in *Imperial Eyes* support this notion. "'Europe,'" she writes,

"was also constructing itself from the outside in, out of materials infiltrated, donated, absorbed,

appropriated, and imposed from contact zones all over the planet" (137). "Surely," she

continues, "Europe was as much influenced by as an influence on the tensions which in the

1780s produced the Indian uprising in the Andes, revolts in South Africa, the Tivadentes'

rebellion in Brazil, the revolution that overthrew white rule in Santo Domingo, and other such

events in the contact zones" (138, 140). Rather than allowing the British self to collapse into the

foreign object through passive consumption of foreign goods, I argue, some of the Kingdom's

citizens travel and utilize the rhetoric of appropriation to reverse the process so that the foreign

collapses into the British, thus maintaining "appropriate" power relations. Once difference has

been effaced, one can then engage in the process of sentimental assimilation by which the

Other is subsumed into the English identity, a move that Victor Frankenstein resists, Radcliffe's

heroines embrace, and Caleb Williams wrestles.

Another interesting "real world" example of this might be the East India Company's

sponsorship of the first English translation of *The Bhagavad-Gita* in 1785. In his introduction to

the first edition, Warren Hastings explains the Company's interest in promoting this translation;

essentially it is important for the sake of smooth colonial management to develop mastery over

the culture of the colonized, as such mastery "attracts and conciliates distant affections; it

lessens the weight of the chain by which the natives are held in subjection; and it imprints on

the heart of our own countrymen the sense and obligation of benevolence" (12-13). Makdisi's

reading of Hastings's words brings into relief the notion of borderlessness that I am developing,

since he sees the *Gita*'s introduction and the ideology it implies as "a matter of almost absorbing

oneself into the other, of almost becoming other in order to fuse power and knowledge

together at the site of contact with subject peoples; it was, in effect, a way to selectively bridge

the gap—even while otherwise maintaining it—between colonizer and colonized" (67). I find

this to be a very Gothic moment since there seems to be an uneasy current of ethnic

destabilization moving beneath the apparent question of "How much must one identify with the

Other in order to preserve hegemony in a foreign environment?" Indeed, the question that

resides within this question must be "How much is too much?" There's a certain level of

dramatic irony here in that we know that Hastings was not long afterward brought under

scrutiny, largely because of his perceived "nativism." The essential danger of projects like the

translation of the *Gita* and Sir William Jones's *Asiatick Society of Calcutta* (established in 1784

with Hastings's approval and encouragement) is that the acknowledgement of another culture's

contributions to knowledge implicitly challenges Britain's cultural purity and superiority.[10] Like

Caleb Williams paradoxically dressing up in Irish and Jewish "drag" in an attempt to preserve the

liberty his Englishness entitles him to, or a Radcliffe heroine subconsciously identifying erotically

with her persecutor (Howells 156), or Dr. Frankenstein claiming that *he* is the murderer of

Clerval (Shelley 153) Britain's intervention in the affairs and culture of the foreign raises the

specter of "ethnic impurity" and threatens to break down the binary between colonizer and

colonized.

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[10] Britain responded to these threats in 1793 not just with the trial of Warren Hastings, but also with proposed changes to the East India Charter. By 1813, English laws were the only laws of India, Christian missionaries were allowed into the country to evangelize, and Indian-blooded colonial administrators were used as puppets of the imperial apparatus to enforce English interests (Makdisi 70-71).

When the carefully constructed English self is threatened by the colonial Other, it seems oddly logical that it should travel in an attempt to rediscover and reassert itself. Moving a step beyond Dekker's "scenic tourism," Nigel Llewellyn writes that cultural tourism gave the British an opportunity to confirm their prejudices about other nations and a chance to display abroad Great Britain's superiority as a "cleaner," "more rational," and "more democratic" nation, an impulse that Llewellyn attributes partially to the influence of Hume's belief that residence in a democratic society cultivates taste and allows for impartial judgments (75). More in the context of the period, Mary Shelley herself wrote that the ego was "alien to itself" and characterized the heart and soul as "undiscovered countries" (qtd. in Schor 237). In fact, for Shelley, the telos of the journey is the "discovery of the self within the other" (241), an impetus which I would like to impute both to travel and to the utilization of colonialist discourses in the gothic/romantic novel.

In *The Rhetoric of Empire*, Spurr identifies eleven overlapping discourses of imperialism, one of which he names "appropriation," a process by which the "Other" world is reconfigured according to the colonizers' desires and contexts. Colonizers have a "desire to recreate, in these unconquered territories or in these unsubdued hearts and minds, one's own image, and to reunite the pieces of a cultural identity divided from itself" (42). Another discourse, "insubstantialization" sees the "Other" world as a backdrop for the Westerner's inner drama; history is excluded and the environment is seen as "an immaterial counterpart to the dissolving consciousness of the subject" (142). My work—especially where it engages Radcliffe—is concerned with these conflicts, since I plan to examine how the aforementioned discourses are deployed in literary Gothic texts that feature English (or English-ified) characters who make this inner "journey of discovery" by re-inscribing foreign landscapes and individuals with their own

values and aesthetics—much like the scenic tourist with his Claude Glass, or Britain's 1793 reforms to the East India Charter.

Furthermore, the fact that the protagonists of these novels tend to represent late eighteenth/early nineteenth-century British domestic values makes their connection to English travelers and colonizers all the more apparent. One might also add that there is a certain level of irony here, as the Gothic was generally castigated as a "foreign" Germanic style of writing (Napier vii-viii), and yet at the same time it can also be understood as a nationalistic movement that was likely reacting against both real and perceived threats of foreign cultural intervention. The romantic medievalism of Radcliffe, the emphasis on outmoded feudal systems in Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron* (and, to an extent, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*) take up the spirit of MacPhearson's Ossian poems and celebrate British/Celtic heritage as a contrast to the "French-ified" manners of classical formalism and its uncritical esteem of all things Roman—not to mention the farther-flung but still frightening "decadence" of the Far East. While I wouldn't go so far as to say that the Gothic is an out-and-out *negation* of Neoclassicism[11] I would suggest that it seems to have grown, in part, out of disenchantment with the Augustan Era's unfulfilled promises—the Grand Tour had become a trumped-up party for young aristocrats; Italy itself was coming to be understood as a fractured collection of city-states, filled with impoverished Catholic peasants; and France was of course in the throes of a revolution which threatened to consume England (ideologically, anyway).

The Gothic novel as a genre can therefore be understood as a useful lens for examining issues of empire and colonization as they relate to Britain's relationship with southern Europe, since the Gothic is in many ways the *enfant terrible* of Neoclassicism—by validating xenophobic

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[11] By "Neoclassicism" I mean an artistic, literary, and philosophical preoccupation with formalism, Greco-Roman aesthetics, and all that implies in terms of what socially qualifies as "appropriate" behavior and representation.

perceptions of places like Italy while at the same time lionizing English virtue, it encourages

proprietorship. By this I mean that the Gothic novel shows the "dark side" of southern Europe—

thus invalidating classical ideals to an extent—while simultaneously demonstrating how

confident ownership of an essentially English history and virtue, rather than uncritical

conformity to the standards of ancient civilizations, can allow the British to obtain the ideals of

civilization that were upheld by the likes of Steele and Addison.

It is especially interesting, and potentially problematic, that in the novels themselves,

particularly Radcliffe's, the English-mannered characters tend to be nominally southern

European. I account for this potential hurdle by reading Radcliffe's racialization of her characters

as a somewhat passive-aggressive attempt on her part to exemplify the "universality" of British

values; if colonized people of color can adopt the culture of their colonizers in the real world,

Radcliffe seems to be suggesting that the same sort of intervention can occur in southern

Europe. And it is no accident that this "cultural revolution" is rooted in the efforts of women,

whose role in the period is to reform the manners of men through example. I discuss this

dynamic in much more depth in the chapter on Radcliffe.

In short then, the Gothic can perhaps be seen as representing a shift in tactic, a

rewriting of England's relationship to the Continent that accommodates both the changing

realities of mainland Europe and the risks to national purity that an expanding empire poses.

It seems self-evident to me that to speak about the foreign in the context of late

eighteenth and early nineteenth century Britain is also to speak about colonialism. And if we are

to agree with Edward Said's bold statement that "imperialism and the novel fortified each other

to such a degree that it is impossible…to read one without in some way dealing with the other"

(71), then we can conclude that to speak of colonialism is to speak of fiction. When I say that

Godwin, Radcliffe, and Shelley are engaged in acts of "discursive colonialism," I am saying that

they are writing on the foreignness of the Continent and Ireland, geographic spaces where

England did not have *literal* colonies, but which are characterized, in the period's literature, as

posing the same social dangers that literal colonies supposedly posed. The obvious risk for this

project would be for me to accept this assumption uncritically and to treat Italy, France, and

Ireland (the three countries I believe are most relevant) as actually representing identical

threats. While it is true that all three of these countries represented in the imagination what

England *might become*, and to an extent, what it once was, Italy, Ireland, and France are all

situated in relation to England in different ways. In the following pages I will highlight these

differences, relate how Britain's approach to these nations was informed by the discourses of

imperialism, and provide the reader with a framework which can be used to contextualize the

textual arguments that I will be making in later chapters.

The Best and Worst of Italy

Italy's classical heritage made it an appealing destination for English tourists throughout

the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. James Boswell quoted Dr. Johnson as having

once said "[a] man who has not been in Italy, is always conscious of an inferiority, from his not

having seen what it is expected a man should see. The Grand object of travelling is to see the

shores of the Mediterranean" (742). While there, tourists performed a kind of cultural labor that

reflects the processes of "insubstantialization" and "appropriation" that Spurr identifies as

central discourses of empire. By way of evidence, Shearer West's summation of northern

Europe's attitude towards Italy is worth quoting at some length:

> In historical terms, Italy was stereotyped as the seat of ancient Roman civilization and
> the Renaissance, while in travel literature it was condemned for its backwardness,
> poverty and papal domination. These competing tropes were never really reconciled,
> but led visitors to find ways of appropriating aspects of Italy's cultural past and
> internalising or nationalising them…with the hegemony of classical ideas, northern
> European cultural identities at the end of the eighteenth century were frequently
> interwoven with the classical past in national cultural and historical narratives, *but that*

cultural past had to be decoupled from its associations with Italy and reinvested in the concerns of other nations. (15, 16, my italics)

Essentially, English tourists used travel narratives and fiction to "appropriate" Italy's past and to "insubstantialize" its present condition. For example, in November 1785, famed traveler Hester Thrale Piozzi wrote of the artist Piranesi—who painted what Horace Walpole referred to as "sublime" images of Rome (Llewellyn 91)—that he "judiciously leads one's attention away from the disgusting sight of that Wretchedness and dirt, which is here every where mingled with Monuments of ancient Magnificence" (171). When viewed in this light, Piranesi's work recalls Gilpin's edited landscapes, and the general British tendency to selectively dehistoricize Italy anticipates James Stuart Mills's far more outrageous claim in *The History of British India* (1817-36) that India's lack of written records means it has no history and therefore must be given one by the British occupiers (Makdisi 1-2). My goal here is not so much to draw a perfect parallel between India and Italy, separated by a straight axis of "discursive colonialism" vs. "literal colonialism"—that would of course be a fool's errand—but to draw attention to the fact that the discourses deployed in the "frontlines" of the empire *did* have relevance, whether consciously recognized or not, to the ways by which English travelers configured Italy. To further clarify the difference here, I ought to remind readers that Mills's claim, Hastings's introduction to the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and Makdisi's reading of Hastings's words present a clear picture of dehistoricizing a nation *for the sake of preserving imperial hegemony*. By the same token, I must emphasize that the English traveler's dehistoricization of Italy does not carry the same kind of overt political charge. Essentially, where Britain's designs on India's history were intended to streamline *direct colonial governance* and maximize the *material spoils* of empire, the traveler's cultural labor in Italy was intended to glean *symbolic spoils* in the form of cultural capital. It would be incorrect to read my argument as a claim that Italy was a sort of "India in the West" simply because on a larger scale, India's situation in relation to Britain was drastically different

from Italy's. Again, I must reemphasize that my intent is to see how certain *discourses* of the British Empire were applied to similar yet still very different ends in England's engagement with other European nations.

To return to the matter at hand, Grand Tourists in particular "configured" contemporary Italy as full of "poverty, corruption, and an extremely underdeveloped intellectual life" and bemoaned this contrast to its classical heritage and wonders (Agorni 105-106). As a result, privileged travelers saw their sojourn in Italy as an opportunity to compare the burgeoning British Empire with the ancient Roman one, to claim ownership of classical Italy's lost heritage, and to vow that Britain would never experience a similar deterioration (Buzard 40).[12] Naturally, Italy's fall from its classical past was generally blamed on its so-called lack of political freedom (Agorni 106-107) and its Catholicism. Indeed, visitors as early as Addison in 1701 used their time in Italy to renew their appreciation of England (106), and Chloe Chard maintains that Grand Tourists in Italy were seeking the familiar in their exploration of classical ruins, and the foreign in their viewing of the contemporary culture (82).

It is also commonly recognized that northern Europeans saw Italy, particularly anything south of Naples, as a "wild" place dominated by backward-looking honor codes, bloodthirsty banditti, hired assassins, and misguided notions of chivalry. Hester Thrale Piozzi characterized the Italian territories[13] as a place where one cannot become truly subjective, "where wit and beauty are considered as useless without a long pedigree; and virtue, talents, wealth, and wisdom, are thought of only as medals to hang upon the genealogical tree, as we tie trinkets to a watch in England" (50). Creuze de Lesser wrote while travelling in 1801 and 1802 that

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[12] The idea that London was the new Rome dates back at least to the beginning of the century. John Toland wrote in 1700 that London is "a New Rome in the West" that deserved "like the old one, to becom [sic] the soverain Mistress of the Universe" (qtd. in Eglin 101).

[13] The truth of the matter is that the notion of "Italy" as a unified whole is definitely an outsider concept. The geographical land mass that is referred to as "Italy" was actually a collection of provinces, some of which were directly controlled by colonial powerhouses like Spain. Sicily itself was highly Gothicized as a mysterious island overrun by banditti (Agorni 108).

"L'Europe finit á Naples…La Calabre, la Sicile, tout le reste est de l'Afrique" (qtd. in Chaney 102). The Baroque ornamentation of certain varieties of Italian art and architecture—particularly those which were found in the southern city of Lecce—was pejoratively labeled "Gothick" by various English critics, including Grand Tourist Colen Campbell in 1715. Edward Chaney goes so far as to say that the term "Gothic" was deployed by the English in the eighteenth century to describe any "rule-breaking" aesthetic, particularly the Baroque (318). Clearly, the notion of a "Gothic Italy" maintained credence throughout the century, as Walpole set *The Castle of Otranto* there in 1764, thus setting off a deluge of "Italian Gothic" texts. Roderick Marshall writes that "Walpole's shining example made it almost impossible that the terror novel, once it became widely practised, should not gravitate to Italy for its ruined castles, torture chambers, ruthless assassins, insistent ghosts, and beleaguered virgins" (246).

Essentially then, Britain imagined Italy, particularly its southern regions, as an exotic place whose glorious past had been effaced by the intervention of aggressive Catholicism, poverty, passion, superstition, and political despotism. It was England's job to reclaim the classical heritage of Ancient Rome and make it its own. Indeed, England's internal conflict over Italy was a profound one, since to the rest of Europe Italy represented taste and artistic achievement, and while Britain wished to claim its share in the European circle, it also wanted to preserve its emerging, modernist identity, not to mention its cultural authority. Therefore, it was necessary that England embrace Italy's "glorious" *heritage* while at the same time roundly condemning its "degeneration" to its current state. One of the more recognizable sites of this conflict can be seen in the English Royal Academy, founded in 1768.

I contend that the Royal Academy represents a key example of British cultural imperialism over Italy, since England essentially used the Academy to claim Italian art practices and theory as its own while gradually developing a policy of exclusion for Italian scholars and

artists. Considering the Academy's eventual exclusion of Italians, it is ironic that even the

architectural design of the physical Academy was Italianate (West 125). The truth of the matter

was that the English Royal Academy had been based on both French and Italian academies, and

"the English, whether they liked it or not, were dependent upon Italy for models of art theory

and practice" (119), not to mention faculty: at its inception, the Royal Academy was largely

staffed by Italian artists who had travelled to England. While Italian artists *were* drawn to the

ever-modernizing, commercially dominant Great Britain in search of audiences and patrons,

they were marginalized by public opinion first for "perceived superiority to English artists and

later for their superfluousness" (117). Threatened by the perceived dominance of its Italian

members—its founders included Francesco Bartolozzi, Agostino Carlini, Giovanni Cipriani, and

Francesco Zuccarelli—the English heads of the Royal Academy—including first president Sir

Joshua Reynolds—began to refuse to appoint foreigners to its cabinet in the late 1780s, even

preferring to leave key positions vacant for years (136).

  While I wouldn't go so far as to say that they are *corollaries*, I can't help but note a

parallel—in spirit at least—between the Royal Academy and Sir William Jones's Calcutta-based

Asiatick Society. In addition to promoting Oriental literature and culture for its own value and

bringing it back to Europe as an intellectual commodity, Jones started publishing *Asiatick*

Researches in 1788 (Makdisi 67-68). As we saw earlier, Jones's Society and Hastings's translation

of the *Bhagavad-Gita* can be read as subtle attempts to achieve dominance over a culture—

indeed, Orientalist literature in the eighteenth century started as idle entertainment, but it

quickly became politicized. When the English translation of Beckford's *Vathek* appeared in 1786

as an unauthored translation of a genuine Arabic manuscript, translator Reverend Samuel

Henley included a preface and notes on "Oriental culture." Makdisi claims that this and

subsequent examples of "annotated" Orientalist literature essentially allowed the European

reader to see himself as being knowledgeable about—and therefore having authority over—the

Orient. For Makdisi, this marked a shift in how the British approached Eastern cultures—rather

than simply a fantasy world of sexy Arabian Nights (although it was still that, too), "knowledge"

of the East gave English readers another opportunity to define themselves as different from

(and, of course, better than) Easterners. Essentially, Orientalism became a tool meant to

improve cultural mastery and thus streamline imperial governance (65-66). While the British

assimilation of Italian art theory and practices proceeded through a different channel, I contend

that the process and its ultimate goals were similar. I will examine this and other aspects of the

Anglo-Italian relationship and its representation in my readings of Godwin's *Caleb Williams* in

chapter 2 and Ann Radcliffe's novels in chapter 3.

Ireland—the Privileged "Colony"

In 1720, Philip Yorke, later Lord Hardwicke, gave a speech in the English House of

Commons on the state of the Irish nation. In it, he essentially states that "The subjects of Ireland

were to be considered in two respects, as English and Irish, that the Irish were a conquested

people, and the English a colony transplanted hither and as a colony subject to the law of the

mother country" (Killeen 9). Sixty years later, the English traveler Arthur Young wrote in his *A

Tour of Ireland with General Observations on the Present State of that Kingdom* that

> [t]he age has improved so much in humanity, that even the poor Irish have experienced
> its influence, and are every day treated better and better. But still the remnant of the
> old manners, the abominable distinction of religion, united with the oppressive conduct
> of the little country gentlemen, or rather vermin of the kingdom…subject them to
> situations more mortifying than we ever behold in England. (181)

Yorke's comments near the beginning of the century and Young's near the end sketch an

interesting picture of Ireland as it was understood by the English in the 1700s. Where Italy and

its heritage represented both the best and the worst of what Britain could potentially become,

Ireland was perhaps recognized as a sort of "gothic double" for England: a modernizing kingdom

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that could be seen as a sort of quasi-colony; a place where one traveler can observe that the houses "had much useful furniture, and some even superfluous…in short most of the articles found in a middling English cottage" (180) while at the same time claiming that "the landlord of a Irish estate, inhabited by Roman Catholics, is a sort of despot who yields obedience, in whatever concerns the poor, to no law but that of his own will" (181). In the British imagination then, the Irish at this time were "becoming English," or "English, but not quite."

Indeed, Ireland's pseudo-colonial status was articulated as early as 1698, when William Molyneux published *The case of Ireland's being bound by acts of parliament in England*. While the point of this book was to argue that Ireland was *not* "a dependent colony like the English territories in America, but a self-contained political entity, united to England only by a shared allegiance to the crown" (McBride 243), the fact that Molyneux felt the need to address this—in a text that was reprinted *nine times* between 1706 and 1782—implies that Ireland's political status relative to England was murky at best throughout the century. Even today Ireland's position in relation to the colonial project is difficult to calculate and often overlooked by scholars. Joanne Tompkins notes that "Ireland's complex location as England's oldest colony, meanwhile, frequently means that it is forgotten in assessments of (post)coloniality" (504).

Young's judgments of the Irish are quite generous when compared to those made by George Cooper in *Letters on the Irish Nation Written During a Visit to that Kingdom in Autumn of the Year 1799*. His summation is worth quoting at some length:

> The native of that country, the descendants, as it seems probably, of its aborigines, still remain the same rude barbarians that our earliest accounts describe them. I shall have little difficulty in describing this character, as it may be depictured in the same few words with that of all nations who have been seen in a state of ignorance and barbarity. If we study the manners of the ancient Germans, in Tacitus; or of the Tartar tribes, as described by the French missionaries and travellers [sic]; or of the modern American Indians, as they have been often seen by our colonists in the North and our

circumnavigators in the South; *it is impossible that we should not be struck with the resemblance which they bear to each other.* (189, my italics)[14]

Cooper's acerbic comparison of the Irish to the Tartars and the American Indians is quite

telling—like Britain's perception of southern Italy, Ireland and its people are practically identical

to the "savages" of Tartaric Germany and North America. I say "practically," because Cooper

quickly qualifies his statements by situating Irish society within the ill-defined, off-the-cuff

categorization "semi-barbarism" (190). In this, we see not only an example of colonialist

discourse used to characterize and judge the European Other, but also an uncomfortable

attempt to position the Irish person as the "barbaric" aboriginal who nevertheless has the

potential to become the "civilized" Briton. Although "[t]he polished minority of the [Irish] nation

is one hundred years behind England in refinement, and the rude majority of it is at least five"

(193), Cooper claims to "not know of any country where the character of the people is more

fitted by nature, than is that of the Irish, for the highest attainments in moral or intellectual

excellence" (194), a claim that he bolsters by citing the existence of such Anglified Irishmen as

Swift, Sterne, Congreve, and Burke. However, the figure of the Anglified Irishman is far from

synonymous with the figure of the native Englishman; in fact, the Anglo-Irish occupied a very

problematic spectrum of positions.

Linda Colley has famously and contentiously stated that "Protestantism was the

foundation that made the invention of Great Britain possible" (54). As for the "Protestant

ascendancy" of Ireland, they were quite ready and willing to see themselves as a minority,

embattled by the sheer numbers of Catholic Irish and the strength of the existing traditions. Ian

McBride writes that

> [w]hile the Britons of the larger island defined themselves against the despotic
> monarchies of the continent, however, their Irish brethren were more concerned with

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[14] Cooper's and Young's letter appear in John Harrington's *The English Traveller in Ireland: Accounts of Ireland and the Irish Through Five Centuries.* Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1991.

the internal threat represented by the native Irish population, obdurately attached to a bloodthirsty creed which had apparently inspired a series of conspiracies, rebellions and massacres. A protestant sense of chosenness thus interacted with memories of the religious and ethnic conflicts of the seventeenth century to form a distinctive garrison mentality. (238)

McBride also argues that while "Irish protestants had all the makings of fully-fledged Britons" (241), this stubborn attachment to an English identity was more characteristic of that early wave of Anglos who had immigrated to Ireland in the seventeenth century. And yet, even the so-called "New English" of the 1680s were still seen by native Britons as politically suspect and ethnically impure because of their Catholicism, Irish mannerisms, and tendency to support Charles I (and later James II) (Barnard 207).

While subsequent generations of "New English" largely rejected their Jacobite roots and gained political power as Irish parliamentarians and hierarchical figures in the newly established Church of Ireland, it is impossible to see the "Protestant Ascendancy" as in possession of unlimited privilege, especially when they are situated in the larger context of Great Britain as a whole. Toby Barnard maintains that "all but the grandest and most anglicized Irish protestants were recognizable and comic to smart Londoners" (216), a statement that is exemplified in Richard Lovell Edgeworth's (1744-1817) memoirs, where he recounts the hardships and prejudice he encountered in England for his tendency to speak with a brogue (I., 47-50, 62-63). Similarly, Samuel Madden (1686-1765) wittily commented that the Anglo-Irish were "envied as Englishmen in Ireland, and maligned as Irish in England" (96). Furthermore, McBride maintains that "by the 1770s," both Irish-Protestant converts and Anglo-Irishmen were "moving towards a more insular definition of an Irish nation which played down denominational divisions," and that "traditional stereotypes of the Irish as bellicose and bibulous were expanded to include the protestant gentry in the first half of the eighteenth century" (242, 246).

In light of all of this, I would suggest that the Anglo-Irish class provides an intriguing example of anomalousness in the sense that it represents a creolized culture brought about by the union of the dominant civilization with an aboriginal "Other." This claim is a key component of my reading of *Caleb Williams* in chapter two, since I consider the titular character's Irish disguise as an ethnicized metaphor for his larger sense of ethnic anomaly and persecution. While it is true that his disguise as an Irish *beggar* who walks with a "shuffling, clownish gait" identifies him more immediately with the figure of the "purebred" Irish-Catholic peasant, his literal status as an Englishman who has been "ethnically demoted" begs a provocative comparison to the Anglo-Irish gentry, who as I have demonstrated above, were quite often— and for good reason— suspected of being more Irish than Anglo.

To return to Young and Cooper, while it would be unfair to draw definite conclusions about the Anglo opinion of the Irish peasantry in the late eighteenth century based on the reports of two travelers, one must bear in mind three things. First, in his introduction to Cooper's *Letters*, John Harrington writes that "Cooper's opinions are distinctly of their time…for their enlightened emphases on the Irish as simply behind the English on some Platonic scale of progress and on the paternal role English improvers must perforce adopt to protect the Irish from their own nature" (185); essentially, Cooper's opinions are an accurate barometer for measuring the political viewpoint of the "enlightened" Englishman. Secondly, one must recall that the problematically situated yet politically empowered Irish-Protestants saw the "spread of pure Christianity" as "inextricably linked to the progress of civility, and for Irish protestants civility signified the language, learning, customs and common law of their mother country" (McBride 240), a claim that McBride has culled from the 1698 text, *An essay for the conversion of the Irish*. McBride also cites other Anglicization efforts in Ireland, most notably the 1733

founding of the Charter School movement and Samuel Madden's 1738 text *Reflections and resolutions proper for the gentlemen of Ireland* (240-241).

Finally, one must also acknowledge that Cooper's perspective and the implications I have outlined were more or less institutionalized by this point. The development of an independent Irish Legislature in 1782 problematized relations between Ireland and England, and the Irish regency crisis of 1788-9 shook England's faith in Ireland's capacity for self-government (Geoghegan 1-3); in 1793, Ireland's political situation inspired the second Earl Camden—who would become the lord lieutenant of Ireland in 1795— to declare in a letter that "Ireland must be our province if she will not be persuaded to a union, and if she would, she ought and would enjoy complete and reciprocal benefits with this country" (*Castlereagh correspondence* i, 156). King George III and Prime Minister William Pitt's solution to the Irish problem was to push for union, a concept that was politically favored in England throughout the 1790s.

The Act of Union (eventually passed in 1800) was conceived partly as a way to involve Ireland in the empire; however the power dynamics inherent in this movement are rather murky. Although it is true that "Ireland's diminishing status from kingdom to colony was obvious to observers [and] the union was to be the vehicle for reversing this dependency," the Union can also be understood as a way to reverse "the dangerous notions of independence, to give both Ireland and Britain a harmony of interest within the empire" (Geoghegan 7). Historians acknowledge how problematic and ultimately unknowable England's motives were. Declan Kiberd notes that unification was seen by contemporaries as either "a benign offer of membership in one of the greatest organizations in human history" or "the most insidious of all oppressive tactics" (251). On one side, Patrick O'Farrell wrote in the 1970s that the union was "an urgent and naked assertion of British power," (67) a claim that he shared with Erich Strauss, who believed it "was designed to perpetuate Irish subjugation" (65). But more recently, Patrick

Geoghegan contests the notion that the Union was about British hegemony over the Irish; rather, he maintains that it was intended "to create a united kingdom that would be at the heart of the empire. Ireland was to be elevated from being a dependent periphery country to become a component of the dominant center" (7). I am in agreement with Geoghegan in that I read England's clamor towards unification as a desire to consolidate its power base and strengthen the imperial center. But at the same time, I believe that English policy-makers also proposed the Union with the intent to establish firm control over its neighboring isle. Geoghegan's language, that Ireland "was to be elevated…to become *a component* of the dominant center," implies that Ireland's position would be similar to that of a vassal state, or perhaps a privileged colony. This reading is borne out by Geoghegan's later claim that "Pitt's proud design for the Irish people was to raise their status within the empire after humbling them first by destroying their parliament" (8), a move that was effectively the reverse of Pitt's equally arrogant contention in 1784 that "We may keep the parliament but lose the people." And considering Pitt's power and influence, it is difficult to dismiss these claims as empty braggadocio: Lord Hawkesbury declared in 1794 that "Mr. Pitt has hitherto been absolute, and other members [of the cabinet] have had no more to do than to give their opinions and submit to his, unless Lord Grenville chooses to make a stand" (156); James Harris, the first Earl of Malmesbury, wrote in his diary in 1801 that Pitt had "*absolute* power," brought about by years of having not "*a single check of adversity*" (iv, 35, italics reflect original emphasis).[15]

To return to the main point of this chapter, my purpose in relating all of this history is to demonstrate how Ireland was *discursively situated*, both politically (through the machinations of Pitt and company) and culturally (through the figurations of travelers like Young and Cooper) as a pseudo-colony in the 1790s and earlier. The fact that Ireland is afforded some level of privilege

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[15] The Hawkesbury and Malmesbury sources are quoted in Geoghegan, Patrick M. *The Irish Act of Union: A Study in High Politics 1798-1801*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999, 8.

in that it was most likely configured as a potential "component" of the imperial center has

important ramifications for my discussion of *Caleb Williams* in the next chapter.

As a final note, there are two pertinent aspects of the Anglo-Irish relationship that I

have not yet discussed. The first is Cooper's tendency in his travel letters to associate Ireland's

"degeneracy" with aristocratic malfeasance and what he perceives to be a subscription to the

old codes of chivalry. This will be discussed in the next chapter, when it is more immediately

relevant. The second is the fact that part of the impetus for unification was the outbreak of the

French Revolution and the war between England and France that started in 1793.

The Gothicization of France[16]

Because the uprisings in France destroyed the tyrannical and aristocratic Ancien Regime,

the British's initial response to the outbreak of the Revolution in 1789 was largely positive. The

general sentiment is well-represented in the following remarks, made on July 28, 1789 by

Samuel Romilly, a member of the Society of Constitutional Information, to his friend Etienne

Dumont in Geneva:

> I think myself happy that [the Revolution] has happened when I am of an age at which I
> may reasonably hope to live to see some of the consequences produced. It will perhaps
> surprise you, but it is certainly true, that the Revolution has produced a very sincere and
> very general joy here. It is the subject of all conversations; and even all the newspapers,
> without one exception, though they are not conducted by the most liberal or most
> philosophical of men, join in sounding forth the praises of the Parisians, and in rejoicing
> at an event so important for mankind. (1: 356)

Although most English radicals and moderates found themselves caught up in the

glorious promises of the Revolution, conservatives were far more skeptical. Where the liberal

poet and English national Helen Maria Williams referred to 1790's Festival of the Federation in

Paris as "the most sublime spectacle, which, perhaps, was ever represented on the theatre of

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[16] I am indebted to Deborah Kennedy's *Helen Maria Williams and the Age of Revolution*, Lewisburg:
Bucknell University Press, 2002, for many of the primary sources that I cite in this section.

this earth" (1.1.2), Burke described the same event in his famous *Reflections on the Revolution*

in France in far less flattering terms:

> Several English were the stupefied and indignant spectators of that triumph. It was
> (unless we have been strangely deceived) a spectacle more resembling a procession of
> American savages, entering into Onondaga, after some of their murders called victories,
> and leading into hovels hung around with scalps, their captives, overpowered with the
> scoffs and buffets of women as ferocious as themselves, much more than it resembled
> the triumphal pomp of a civilized martial nation. (159)

Burke's explicit comparison of the exultant French to North American "savages" is of course

similar to the comparison that George Cooper would later draw between Native Americans and

the Irish in 1799. Also reminiscent of Cooper is Burke's initial claim that "[s]everal English were

the stupefied and indignant spectators of that triumph." Here we again have a stock image of

the colonialist gentleman acting as a sort of voyeur, shocked at (and perhaps a bit tantalized

by?) the native people's breach in propriety.

Historically, it is commonly understood that much of the reason for Britain's

conservative reaction to the Revolution can be attributed to the fear that England could sink

into the same revolutionary quagmire that the French had. The fact that England had

experienced its own revolution almost exactly one hundred years prior played a large role in

maintaining these fears. In 1795, the *Annual Register* responded to the clash between Burke's

Reflections on the Revolution in France and Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*, stating:

> These two famous performances revived, as it were, the royal and republican parties
> that had divided this nation in the last century, and that had lain dormant since the
> Revolution in 1688. They now returned to the charge with a rage and animosity equal to
> that which characterized our ancestors during the civil wars in the reign of King Charles
> the First; and it remained a long time in suspense, whether this renewed contest would
> not be attended with the same calamities: so eager were the partizans of the respected
> tenets contained in those performances, to assert them with unbounded vehemence.
> (267)

Commemorative and progressive organizations like the London Revolution Society, and populist

radical groups such as the London Correspondence Society (LCS) and its provincial corollaries,

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while initially not thought of as particularly problematic, came to represent a threat to the

English government as the 1790s progressed. These groups "identified themselves with France"

in the sense that the liberties they were requesting and being denied in Britain were seemingly

being made available to the revolutionary masses on the other side of the channel (Royle 14).

However, it is important to note that the majority of radical or Jacobin societies were not

interested in perpetuating violence or advocating the destruction of the monarchy; rather they

supported parliamentary reform and universal suffrage for adult men—regardless of property—

in the hopes of better popular representation (Woodcock 25). And yet, the fact that these

popular societies generally represented themselves and were represented by the government as

upholders of "French ideas and the extremist views expressed in the second part to Paine's

Rights of Man" (Royle 15), it should come as no surprise that they were singled out as threats. In

light of these popular societies' leftist sympathies and the corresponding ways they were

perceived, *combined with their self-professed political ties to 1688, and with the* Annual

Register's *above-cited invocation of the Glorious Revolution in relation to popular debate in the*

1790s, I would suggest that England's own revolutionary past had a hand in the governmental

and loyalist fearmongering that took place throughout the decade. By this I simply mean that

commemorative groups' tendencies towards radicalism helped to conflate the ideologies of

1688 with the ideologies of 1789 in the minds of English policymakers.

Indeed, such societies were rendered increasingly suspect as the Revolution continued

and tensions—both internal and with France—grew. Popular uprisings brought about by food

shortages and resultant high bread prices were common in eighteenth-century England, as were

riots against new technologies that threatened job security (11). During the time frame of the

French Revolution alone, bread riots occurred in 1794, 1799, 1801, and were generally

indicative of other internal problems such as popular opposition to the war with France (Emsley

47, 52). When two men were tried and convicted for conspiring to assassinate King George III in 1794's "Popgun Plot," radical groups lost many members (46), presumably out of fear of governmental persecution.[17] William Pitt and the loyalists were likely eager to blame the nation's problems on the so-called "British Jacobins,"— and this would have surely reinforced the (largely harmless) radicals' tendency to characterize the generational, aristocratic lords and policymakers as tyrants—a sentiment that Godwin would articulate in the character of Falkland in 1794's *Caleb Williams*.

While the mere existence of active Jacobin societies seemingly validated governmental fears of French corruption and potential revolution in Britain, less *overtly* political Francophilia also played a significant role in the British construction of France as a cultural threat. Robin Eagles has written that, in the years leading up to the French Revolution, "much that was adopted by the English élite as their own was continental in origin, and its subsequent aping by the middling sorts meant that English culture as a whole was coloured by the attitudes, fashions, and opinions of France" (4), and even more provocatively "aristocratic Francophilia both directly and indirectly filtered through to those who wished to ape them, or provoked those who could not support such an attitude, *and made France the touchstone against which English culture could be defined*" (12-13, my italics). However, the perceived Francophilia of the aristocracy had far reaching implications not only for Anglo-French relations and how Britain perceived itself but also for the imperial project. Kathleen Wilson has written that "the aristocratic state was identified with 'French influence' and corruption at home, and timidity, effeminacy, and ignominy abroad" (250). This argument is most succinctly supported, she maintains—both in her "The Good, the Bad, and the Impotent" and in *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and*

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[17] While it is undeniable that governmental persecution played a role in the weakening of groups like the LCS, it is important to note that the breakdown of these societies also owes much to infighting over matters like religion (Emsley 49).

Imperialism in England—through a reading of Reverend John Brown of Newcastle's *Estimate of*

the Manners and Principles of the Time, published in either 1757 or 1758:

> 'The internal strength of a Nation will always depend chiefly on the Manners and
> Principles of its leading Members,' Brown argued, the 'luxurious and effeminate
> Manners in the higher Ranks, together with a general defect of *Principle*...operate
> powerfully, and fatally' in national conduct and affairs, producing a 'general Incapacity'
> in 'the national Spirit of Defence' that 'seems to have fitted us for a Prey to the Insults
> and Invasions of our most powerful Enemies.' An effeminate nation is 'a Nation which
> *resembles Women,*' Brown concluded, devoid of courage, liberty, principle and
> endurance, opposed to public-spiritedness and martial valor, and destined for
> international ignominy and derision. (*Sense* 187)

While Brown's opinions were controversial at the time, Wilson also cites "a variety of observers,

from almanac writers and journalists to playwrights, philanthropists and village shopkeepers

[who] decried the nation's corrupted and 'effeminate' spirit, which...resulted in displays of

national 'impotency' abroad and ignominious imperial decline like that evinced in 1754-7"

(188).[18] Interestingly, empire could be seen as a cure to this aristocratic "cultural treason,"

partly because the valor of middle class colonial militias—as in the Seven Years' War—was an

exemplar of national character ("The Good" 250). Therefore, the "Frenchification" of the British

polity could be perceived as a threat to the maintenance and expansion of empire, yet it could

also be seen as further justification for the imperial project and its role in maintaining English

identity in the face of the foreign "Other." Indeed, Wilson has convincingly argued that

discourses of patriotism were inextricably linked with those of empire, since "empire" was a

place where the middle class labored "to becom[e] more independent and self-contained as a

nation, rejecting 'foreign' influences, circumscribing degeneracy, and introducing English virtue

wherever the latter dared to tread" (254-55).

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[18] Specifically, Wilson cites John Shebbeare, *Letters to the People of England*, passim, esp. *First Letter, Fourth Letter* and *Fifth Letter; Newcastle General Magazine*, 9 (1756), 484-94; Bernard Capp, *English Almanacs, 1500-1800*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979, 253-4, 260-1; [Henry Dell], *Minorca: A Tragedy in Three Acts*, 2nd ed., London, 1756; *The Fall of Public Spirit: A Dramatic Satire, in Two Acts*, London, 1757; *The Diary of Thomas Turner, 1754-1765*, Ed. David Vaisey, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984, 124-5; Edward Gibbon, *A Memoir* New York, 1990, 123-4.

Earlier I stated that Italy, Ireland, and France, though positioned in drastically different ways, can be seen, to a certain extent, as uncanny doubles of England. When Louis XVI was executed in 1793, for example, Bishop Samuel Horsley connected the French king's death to Charles I's, stating to the House of Lords on the anniversary of King Charles's death: "This foul murther, and these barbarities, have filled the measure of the guilt and infamy of France. O my Country! read the horror of thy own deed in this recent heightened imitation! lament and weep, that this black French treason should have found its example, in the crime of thy unnatural sons!" (144) While it was certainly all too easy to represent France as "Other" after 1793's *levée-en-masse* and the rise of the Terror, 1789-1792 represent an interesting period when the Revolutionary France could be seen as unsettlingly similar yet blasphemously different from Britain, particularly in the French revolutionaries' figuration of liberty. Royle relates how English liberties could be connected to the concrete—"roast beef, white bread, and no wooden shoes at the most basic; Magna Carta and trial by jury at a more elevated level"—while the Jeffersonian ideals that the French were after appeared to be more "abstract" (153). Among the English loyalists, Burke is of course the most remembered opponent of so-called "natural rights." When noted Revolution sympathizer Dr. Richard Price addressed the London Revolution Society in 1789, he honored the memory of 1688 and invoked three specific aspects of the Glorious Revolution as particularly praiseworthy:

> First; The right to liberty of conscience in religious matters.
> Secondly, the right to resist power when abused. And,
> Thirdly; The right to choose our own governors; to cashier them for misconduct;
> and to frame a government for ourselves. (qtd. in Cobban 61)

Burke vehemently disagreed with Price's summation of 1688 in his *Reflections*, claiming that the Glorious Revolution had not created any of the governmental reforms cited in Price's third point. He argued instead that the Revolution of 1688 had proven that "political structures rest on natural order rather than on natural rights, and that the Glorious Revolution had in fact been

a conservative act which sustained the traditions of the English people by creating a balanced structure of king, lords, and commons and thus giving a political expression to natural order" (Woodcock 21). Most notably however, Burke used Price's claims as a basis for his own arguments against what he perceived to be "meaningless" abstract rights, and went on to "insist that that such rights as existed for man in society were inherited and embodied in constitutional precedent…In Burke's opinion the English Constitution had evolved and mellowed over centuries; it contained no notions of abstract or natural rights, it needed no drastic reformation and certainly no innovation" (Emsley 34).

Ultimately then, I would suggest that a big part of the reason why the French call for "liberté, égalité, et fraternité" was so dangerous to the British élite was because the radicals were able to rhetorically frame (however inaccurately) the French Revolution as kith and kin to the Glorious Revolution. Such rhetoric not only situated England uncomfortably close to France in terms of history and politics, but also could potentially serve to validate the radical opinions of English Jacobins. Indeed, in the early days of the Revolution, "most of those who did take an interest in events in France viewed them as weakening the old enemy and, possibly, *leading the French to enjoy constitutional benefits similar to those enjoyed in Britain for a century*" (Emsley 33, my italics). By way of example, Helen Maria Williams defended her embattled patriotism by claiming that she was merely celebrating a spread of liberty that was similar to Britain's own (Kennedy 77), and Deborah Kennedy suggests that the Reverend Dr. Price's early support of the Revolution was inspired in part by its similarity to the Glorious Revolution (55). Therefore, the radicals' early enthusiasm for the Revolution, brought about by its ostensible comparability to English notions of liberty, is key to understanding the anti-French sentiment that swept England in 1793 and beyond. By carrying out a Revolution in the name of Enlightenment principles, and then "allowing" those very principles to get twisted into something as violent as the Terror, or as

parodic and bizarre as the Cult of Reason, France became on a certain level a warped, chaotic

image of England and its ideals, an "Other" that could ostensibly consume its alleged progenitor.

These concerns were certainly not entirely unfounded, as British radical societies existed (albeit

marginally and generally peacefully) throughout the 1790s, the number of French exiles to

Britain climbed in 1792 (Royle 16-17), France declared war on England in 1793, Irish patriots

were encouraged by the French Revolution to clamor for a more representative parliament and

religious freedom (21), and some members of the United Irishmen hoped to see French troops

land on their shores as potential allies.

     Therefore, French liberty needed to be characterized as monstrous. The famous political

cartoon *The Contrast* (1792), for example, depicts "a dignified picture of a matron-like woman as

the allegorical figure of British Liberty, placed next to a horrific image of a blood-thirsty and

muscular hag representing French Liberty" (Kennedy 105). The text of the cartoon offers British

liberty as "Religion, Morality, Loyalty, Obedience to the Laws, Independance [sic], Personal

Security, Justice, Inheritance, Protection of Property, Industry, National Prosperity, and

Happiness" while French liberty is represented as "Atheism, Perjury, Rebelion [sic], Treason,

Anarchy, Murder, Equality, Madness, Cruelty, Injustice, Treachery, Ingratitude, Idleness, Famine,

Nation & Private Ruin, and Misery." Relatedly, Burke's xenophobic response to the Festival of

the Federation can be read as a resisting of the radicals' eager tendency to conflate English

liberty with the new French liberty. Similar to how travelers like Cooper and Yorke used the

discourses of foreignness to distance Britain from the slowly modernizing Ireland, or the way

that Addison and the Grand Tourists castigated Italy's poverty and Catholicism while at the same

time reappropriating its classical heritage, Burke and his ilk represented England's southern

neighbor as monstrous and savage, a "heathen" nation masquerading as a western civilization.

However, whereas Italy could be seen as both the best and the worst of what the British Empire

could become, and Ireland could be read as an embarrassing reminder of England's premodern heritage that nevertheless had potential to become a "component" of Britain, France became a warped parody of English ideals that threatened to replace the "genuine article"—much like the fictive fear of a Gothic doppelganger murdering and taking the place of the original individual.

In this vein, it is interesting to read the French Revolution as a metonym for England's growing disenchantment with the dashed ideals of classical civilization. Like Neoclassicism, the Revolution was based on "Enlightenment" principles such as freedom, equality, and personal liberty, but also like Neoclassicism the Revolution terminated in a failure of ideology, the broken promises of an idealistic dogma, and the replacement of those promises with horror, violence, and fear of encroaching savagery. It is impossible to miss the increasing "Gothiciziation" of English discourse about France as the latter moved into the Terror. Kennedy relates how in the very first letter of the third volume of her correspondence from France, the normally Francophilic Williams writes of Robespierre's "countenance of such dark aspect" and the fact that he "regulates the most ferocious designs with the most calm and temperate prudence" (1.3.7). Similarly, John Moore noted that "[f]ew Men however can *look* fiercer than Robespierre; in countenance he has a striking resemblance to a cat-tiger" (Kennedy 101, original italics).

These dramatic depictions would perhaps be most at home in one of Ann Radcliffe's novels! Consider Radcliffe's description of the villainous Montoni in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, who is partly characterized by the "fire and keenness of his eye, its proud exultation, its bold fierceness, its sullen watchfulness" (157), or the appearance of Schedoni in *The Italian*, whose "figure was striking, but not so from grace…His was not the melancholy of a sensible and wounded heart, but apparently that of a gloomy and ferocious disposition…his eyes were so piercing that they seemed to penetrate, at a single glance, into the hearts of men" (43). I am not alone in this assessment either, as Kennedy refers to "the persistent evocation of the monstrous

to describe Robespierre's supporters and their work," (113) and Elizabeth Bohls describes

Williams's diction as similar to the "discourse of Gothic" in how it represents the "savage,

subhuman quality" of Robespierre's agents (130).

Again, what I am ultimately trying to do here is account for France's political condition

and England's perceptions of it in the late eighteenth century. What is of most importance for

our purposes is the fact that British critics of Revolutionary France often deployed both the

discourses of the Gothic and the discourses of empire when discussing that nation, in an

attempt to distance England ideologically from France and its failed attempt at restructuring the

country based on a "twisted" interpretation of liberty.

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The next chapter will be focused on *Caleb Williams*, and the way that Godwin uses the

prevailing discourses on Italy, Ireland, and the imperial project to make a case for the corrupting

influence of the foreignized English aristocracy on British domesticity. It would seem that much

of my argument here will be grounded in the *seemingly* oppositional politics of radical and

conservative writers, whose feelings about domesticity were largely influenced by both imperial

expansion and the French Revolution. I find it interesting that radicals and anti-Jacobins alike

both valued domesticity and both simultaneously valued and castigated sensibility, yet did so for

different reasons. I have decided that it will be fruitful to frame my readings of the texts and my

readings of empire within this opposition. Specifically, I understand the anti-Jacobins as seeing

domesticity as an extension of Burke's universal law—for this camp, good private behavior

breeds good public behavior (Johnson 184). Godwin, on the other hand, saw domesticity as the

only place where people could interact rationally, since they would be away from the ubiquity of

authority figures in the public space—"because the public sphere, unlike the hearth, is imagined

as continuous with the marketplace in which the citizen as consumer, immersed in the practice

of monadic, hedonistic subjectivity, indulges in the pleasures of demagogic solicitation and group identification" (McCann 65-66). In terms of colonialism, I believe this implies that the conservative mainstream regarded Britain's "benevolent" empire as embarking on the "noble" project of legislating morality and promoting the universal law to the universe. The danger, of course, would be that which was seen in India—corruption breaking out overseas and finding its way back home. Godwin would undoubtedly have opposed this venture since it would wed public, authoritarian law to the private, subjective home on an international scale. Burke's call for a "sympathetic identification" with India attests to his (somewhat) anti-colonial attitude and bespeaks his well-reasoned opposition to the enterprises of the East India Company. While such a sentiment may have perhaps appealed to Godwin's sense of "universal benevolence," I believe he also readily recognized Burke's sympathy as a sort of "Trojan horse" which concealed the call for a common morality. Therefore, I would claim that Godwin attacked Burke's notion of sympathy through *Caleb Williams*, in which Falkland's "sympathetic identification" with Italy leads to his loss of a virtuous English identity, which in turn causes the violent domestic disruption that is central to the novel's conflict.

The third chapter will be concerned with how the heroines of Ann Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest, The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and *The Italian* seek to dispel the creolized self and restabilize the primacy and purity of English domestic values while traveling within Europe. I maintain in this chapter that, because the protagonists of these novels are eighteenth-century middle-class folk in their behaviors and attitudes, yet nominally southern European, that they are essentially occupying a diaspora. They are forcibly brought into this diaspora by recognizably "foreign" villains, and yet they seize upon these opportunities to promote a conservative model of English domesticity while abroad. The "corrupting influences" of Paris

and Italy play a large role here, as do the discourses of the sublime, sensibility, travel, and of course domesticity.

The fourth chapter will detail how *Frankenstein* highlights the tension between gentrifying the colonized Other to preserve national integrity and leaving it in an anomalous state that threatens to turn around and render the English subject himself ethnically destabilized. Travel, particularly intra-European travel, plays a large role here, as do domesticity and the sublime. By tracing these varying approaches to the question of foreignness and domesticity, I hope to contribute to the slowly growing body of scholarship on the Gothic's nationalistic implications and its level of engagement with the foreign.

CHAPTER I

PRODUCING OTHERNESS AT HOME: MALFEASANCE AND DERACINATION IN *CALEB WILLIAMS*

If the law is in the Other, my fate is neither power nor desire, it is the fate of an estranged

person: my fate is death.

-Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*

In his summation of "The Impact of the French Revolution on British Politics and

Society," Clive Emsley explains that "what the 1790s did was to demonstrate the legal powers

available to the British government to maintain itself, and *the limits on the boasted rights of*

Englishmen when the government and the ruling élite perceived itself under threat" (58, my

italics). William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* or *Things as They Are* (1794) provides an interesting

fictional reflection of this statement in the sense that it presents the reader with several

scenarios in which a member of the "ruling élite perceive[s] [him]self under threat" and

responds hegemonically.

Admittedly, very little scholarship has been performed on many of the moments in

Caleb Williams that I want to examine—no one seems to have done a close reading of Caleb's

sojourn in the robbers' den, for example, the dynamics of which form a key pivot for my

arguments. This is not to say, of course, that there is any lack of scholarly interest in Godwin's

most well-known novel; many critics have recently published provocative studies on *Caleb*

Williams.[19] Truthfully, this work tends to defy genre categorizations; Monika Fludernik has

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[19] For example, Nicolle Jordan has written on the problem of public opinion in "The Promise and Frustration of Plebeian Public Opinion in *Caleb Williams*" in *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 19.3 (2007): 243-66. Ingrid Horrocks performs a Bahktinian reading by considering the dialogic narratives of *Caleb Williams* in "More than a Gravestone: *Caleb Williams*, *Udolpho*, and the Politics of the Gothic" in *Studies in the Novel* 39.1 (2007): 31-47. Daniela Garofalo addresses the intersection of violence, power, and sensibility-encoded-as-"male weakness" in "'A Left-Handed Way': Modern Masters in William Godwin's *Caleb Williams*" in *European Romantic Review* 17.2 (2006): 237-44. Elaine Ayers considers Caleb Williams's failure to obtain an independent self against the more traditionally Gothic narrative of Emily Melvile in "Repeating 'A Half-Told and Mangled Tale': Reading *Caleb Williams* Through Emily Melville" in *English Language Notes* 42.4 (2005): 24-43.

commented that it has been read as an "English Jacobin novel," canonized as a "Romantic

novel," remarked on as the first "spy novel," considered in relation to the "Gothic novel," (857)

and has even been called "one of the first fictional studies of abnormal psychology" (Bode 96,

qtd. in Fludernik 857). However, none of the extant scholarly literature directly engages the

notions of domesticity, nationhood, and deracination that I am considering. It is particularly

surprising that no one has produced a work examining the roles and representations of

domesticity in *Caleb Williams*, and the lack of scholarship on the complicated question of race in

this novel is baffling. Furthermore, Caroline Reitz's "Bad Cop/Good Cop: Godwin, Mill and the

Imperial Origins of the English Detective" (2000), which has helped me in many ways to situate

my arguments, is the only study I know of that performs a lengthy analysis of the novel through

the lens of imperialism. Some works consider the sublime in *Caleb Williams*[20] and these are

engaged below when appropriate.

While part of the goal of this study is to explore how the discourses raised by the

imperial project affected English representations of the European continent, it is just as—if not

more—important to consider how the values of the European continent were perceived as

infiltrating England itself. This dialectic has already been sketched in historical terms in the

previous chapter, so the current task is to consider how these relationships are represented in

the literature of the 1790s.

While this study is not the first to consider *Caleb Williams* through a Burkean lens,[21] it is,

to the best of my knowledge, the first to pair a reading of Godwin's novel specifically with

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[20] Most notable among these are prolific critic Monika Fludernik's "William Godwin's *Caleb Williams*: The Tarnishing of the Sublime" in *ELH* 68.4 (2001): 857-97, and "Spectacle, Theatre, and Sympathy in *Caleb Williams*" in *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 14.1 (2001): 1-30, as well as David Hogsette's "Textual Surveillance, Social Codes, and Sublime Voices: The Tyranny of Narrative in *Caleb Williams* and *Wieland*" in *Romanticism on the Net* (2005): 38-39.
[21] Marilyn Butler and Gavin Edwards, for example, have read *Caleb Williams* at least partly in relation to Burke's *Reflections*, while Monika Fludernik and Robert Kaufman have read Godwin's novel against

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Burke's India policies. Fludernik is mostly correct to claim that critical readings of *Caleb Williams*

tend to be either "political interpretations which try to reveal the arguments of *Political Justice*

(1793) in the novel…or analyses that focus on Caleb's psychology, his narrative unreliability, and

his relationship to Falkland" (857). While both of these approaches are certainly valuable in their

own ways, they are also certainly not mutually exclusive, and this study invokes both traditions.

In my reading, *politically* we see Godwin extending Burke's claims about colonial

mismanagement in India to make a point about aristocratic hegemony in England. To make this

argument, Godwin situates Caleb's antagonist, Squire Falkland, at an interesting philosophical

nexus, positioning him somewhere between the English man of virtue and the Italian man of

chivalric honor. Where Burke claims that the managers of the East India Company are corrupted

by avarice during their time abroad and that they bring that corruption back home to England's

domestic sphere, Godwin claims through Falkland that the English aristocracy are corrupted by

their time in Italy on the Tour, and that they bring archaic notions of honor and status back to

England and use these values to justify impinging on the "free and natural rights" of the

common people. However, this move also has psychological implications in that it essentially

forces Falkland to occupy an ethnic position without clear boundaries, a place where the threat

of the English self telescoping into the Italian Other is ever present—and it is because of this

anomalousness that Falkland persecutes Caleb, and it is because of this persecution that Caleb

himself becomes ethnically destabilized. Furthermore, certain actions that these characters

perform as a result of their murky status—Caleb's prosecuting Falkland in open court at the end

of the novel, for example—perform a political function in that they destabilize commonly-held

notions of class and power relations.

Burke's *Enquiry*. Furthermore, Fludernik cites "Boulton, Butler, McCracken and Storch [as] hav[ing] all
suggested [that] Falkland is a close counterpart of Edmund Burke" (858).

The question of sublimity is not as pressing in *Caleb Williams* as it is in the works of

Radcliffe and Shelley. "Sublimity in the novel," according to Monika Fludernik, is "directly

associated not with landscape but with *moral indications of divinity*: virtue, and particularly

benevolence and magnanimity. It is also, though ambivalently, linked with greatness as

instanced in great men, particularly Alexander the Great" (867, my italics). This, along with the

fact that sublimity consistently works *against* the "unvirtuous" Caleb (unlike Victor Frankenstein

or Radcliffe's heroines) leads me to suggest that Falkland's sublimity can be read as a tool that

he uses to maintain his position in the social hierarchy. It would be belaboring a rather obvious

point to account for all of the moments in *Caleb Williams* when Falkland is coded as sublime, as

these moments on their own do not accomplish much more than a reinforcement of Falkland's

status as an overwhelming power. Hence, this chapter will not be engaging this particular

discourse's intersection with imperialism simply because there is no substantive connection.

All of this matters for Caleb since it is Falkland's Italianate sense of honor that causes

him to persecute his former ward, who possesses a damning secret that could destroy the

Squire's reputation. The textual evidence overwhelmingly suggests that it is *as a direct result of*

Falkland's sublime, seemingly omnipotent surveillance that Caleb is forced to travel indefinitely

through a sinister England where every person could be a spy for his persecutor, and it is *as a*

direct result of Falkland's sustained maltreatment that Caleb must deracinate himself through

disguise, first as an Irish beggar and then as a Jewish merchant. In the words of James

Thompson, "Great Britain becomes one huge Panopticon" (239).Therefore, this chapter argues

that the aristocracy's reliance on misplaced values, brought about by identification with the

continent, transforms Britain into an unrecognizably foreign place—more like "tumultuous"

Europe than the unique bastion of virtue and civilization that it had constructed itself as—and

undercuts the "natural rights of Englishmen" like Caleb to the point where it is questionable as to whether or not they are even still Englishmen.

Finally, this chapter also argues that it is not just English liberty that is threatened here, but also the very notion of English civilization itself. The key "loss of civilization" moment for Caleb Williams occurs near the end of the novel, when he states that all of his "benevolence" (read "sentiment") has "turned to gall" as a result of Falkland's harassment (350). I claim this in light of Katherine Hill-Miller's provocative assertion that sympathy is "the essential civilizing ingredient" (70), a statement she makes in her monograph on the work and father-daughter dynamic of Mary Shelley and William Godwin.[22] Even before Caleb's "gall" though, we see multiple examples of the destruction of sympathy, since almost every single person he encounters, whether stranger or former friend, sees Caleb as an irredeemable villain unworthy of benevolence. This plays out most significantly in the interlude between Caleb and Laura, the Welsh woman who appears as not just a mother figure for the embattled protagonist, but also as a chance to escape his nightmare by retiring to a realm of pastoral domesticity, as Caleb at one point fantasizes about marrying her eldest daughter. Laura's violent rejection of Caleb—for whom she once had sympathy—when she is exposed to Falkland's lies destroys any potential for domestic bliss, which in turn signifies a closing off of the fundamental unit of middle-class society. Hence, the intervention of the foreign in the formation of the ruling élite's value system sparks a complex series of decivilizing events, ultimately terminating in the undoing of both the individual and the society.

In sum, this chapter is largely framed by a political-historical narrative, exemplified by Burke's concerns about the importation of foreign corruption and Godwin's redeployment of that dynamic. Essentially, this chapter considers a historical nexus where Burke's well-informed

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[22] This is not a new idea. Though critical of its "demasculinizing" potential, Adam Smith acknowledged in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* that "delicate sensibility [is] required in civilized nations" (209).

arguments about colonial mismanagement in India are taken up by Godwin, who in turn extends

them to criticize the local aristocracy for the perceived destruction of "English values," a move

that he makes by troping Italy as the source of malfeasance rather than, say, hereditary

privilege. The real heart of Godwin's concerns, though, lies not with the aristocracy, but with

their subjects, as the primary focus of the novel is on how the gentry's oppression of the lower

classes effaces English identity and virtue. To elaborate on the nature of Godwin's extension, I

would say that on a *national* scale, the Hastings debacle destabilized England's identity as a

virtuous empire and raised questions about its alleged moral superiority; Godwin could then

readily shift such concerns about England's virtue onto members of the aristocracy, whose

political and material benefit from an increasingly corrupt colonial enterprise—along with their

perceived lavishness and decadence—made them easy to construct as foreignized Others, the

internal source of corruption, dynamically similar to the "boys" returning from India. However,

the aristocracy's members' clear ethnic status as Englishmen problematizes any attempts to

paint the *ancien regime* as inexorably Other, thus casting them into an anomalous position.

Caleb Williams, this chapter contends, takes notice of the upper class's ethnic/behavioral schism

and extends it to the middle class, demonstrating how the unstable position of the aristocracy

can be readily transmitted to the "common people" via abuse of power. Perhaps most

importantly, this divide between nationality and performance takes the overt form of

deracination, as seen in Falkland's Italianation and Caleb's subsequent adoption of Irish and

Jewish disguises. It is these moments of deracination that most clearly make the case for

empire's discursive role in the perceived decay of English virtue and national character.

Finally, before delving into the many texts that concern us, it would be best to

remember Godwin's own words in his unpublished essay "Of History and Romance":

> The writer of romance then is to be considered as the writer of real history; while he
> who was formerly called the historian, must be contented to step down into the place of

his rival, with this disadvantage, that he is a romance writer, without the arduous, the enthusiastic, and the sublime license of imagination, that belong to that species of composition. *True history consists in a delineation of consistent, human character*, in a display of the manner in which such a character acts under successive circumstances, in showing how character increases and assimilates new substances to its own, and how it decays, together with the catastrophe into which by its own gravity it naturally declines. (372, my italics)

George Haggerty reads this statement quite accurately as an exciting and radical challenge to "the accepted view of history" (109). I have cited it here because it provides a useful frame for the current analysis. If Godwin could read "romance" as not just a mediation of history, but as history itself, then the many historical currents which run through and inform the narrative and discursive elements of *Caleb Williams* are that much less distinguishable from the elements themselves. Indeed, this perspective informs not just the current chapter but, to an extent, this study as a whole.

Burke, Godwin, and the Discourses of Corruption

According to Caroline Reitz, *Caleb Williams* demonstrates "that the way of coping with the domestic disruption posed by the rise of an organized police force was to explore the character of English authority in the colonies" (175). Basically, this means that Godwin's novel helped pave the way for James Stuart Mill's later arguments in the *History of British India* (1821), that an organized police force was necessary in England's "lawless" colony. In essence, India was to be the place where Britain could experiment with a police force before introducing such an institution to skeptical Londoners who feared the loss of their freedoms at the hands of law enforcement officials; Godwin, according to Reitz, "uses the colonies to imagine a new—and newly acceptable—kind of English authority" (176). While arguments over the nature of law enforcement may not appear to be immediately relevant to our purposes, what is most important here is Godwin's criticism of the nature of "English authority," and how such debates "generated the logic that what was wrong within England became visible only when one looked

outside of England" (176). The former point highlights *Caleb Williams*'s status as a critique of the

ruling élite, and the latter point validates my contention that English authors were aware of a

discursive relationship between colonial and domestic problems and were ready to address this

correspondence in fiction. Again, as evidenced by Mary-Louise Pratt's and others' dialogic

readings of Britain and its empire, it is more or less impossible to talk about the home in this

period without talking about the colonies, or vice versa.[23]

In terms of colonialism, it is rather difficult to pinpoint Godwin's position on the imperial

project—as if *anyone's* perspective on the situation was fixed and unproblematic at this (or any)

time. As a leading proponent of natural rights, it seems likely that Godwin would have

recognized the injustice of subjugating a people under colonial rule; and yet, his perspective on

the wider world was certainly naïve and Eurocentric in 1789 when, as a member of the

Revolution Society, he congratulated the French and advised "that, as the world's leading

countries, France and Britain should work together and promote the cause of freedom

worldwide" (Woodcock 15). Furthermore, Reitz relates how the impeachment of Warren

Hastings struck a powerful chord in Godwin, who, along with James Mill, was concerned about

"England's precarious claims to civilization" (177-178), an attitude which I believe expresses a

deeper concern for the maintenance of England's constructed supremacy than it does for the

rights and dignity of indigenous peoples. This reading is borne out in the novel itself. At one

point Caleb expresses his disapproval of aristocratic excess and its connection to the colonial

project, stating that "provinces are ransacked for the gratification of [man's] appetite, and the

whole world traversed to supply him with apparel and furniture. Thus vast is his expenditure,

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[23] Mirella Agorni, for example, writes that "Foreign and domestic are inescapably linked to each other in the eighteenth century" (94) in *Translating Italy for the Eighteenth Century* (2002). Caroline Reitz claims that in both Godwin and James Mill, "criticism of imperial policy is at heart a critique of domestic policy that any argument against colonial mismanagement is bound to become a recipe for better domestic governance" in "Bad Cop/Good Cop: Godwin, Mill and the Imperial Origins of the English Detective." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*. 33.2 (2000): 184.

and the purchase slavery. He is dependent on a thousand accidents for tranquility and health, and his body and soul are at the devotion of whoever will satisfy his imperious cravings" (187).[24]

This passage is reminiscent of the oft-cited perceived correlation between imperial spoil and indolence/effeminacy. However, Godwin subtly moves this rather unremarkable discourse in a fresh direction by employing the rhetoric of freedom. Those who claim a share of imperial spoil without actually laboring in the colonies—note the use of passive voice: "provinces *are ransacked* for the gratification of his appetite"—are "enslaved" not only by their gains but also by the providers of these spoils, those who "will satisfy [their] imperious cravings." In support of this, Kathleen Wilson writes that *direct* participation in the empire was understood as a cure to aristocratic "cultural treason" and effeminacy, a perspective that gained currency in the wake of Britain's American wars with the French, during which colonial militias had served with honor and distinction (250). Essentially, the empire came to be constructed as a place where the virtuous middle class worked on "becoming more independent and self-contained as a nation, rejecting 'foreign' influences, circumscribing degeneracy, and introducing English virtue wherever the latter dared to tread" (255). Hence, it seems that Godwin, like many of his contemporaries, was primarily concerned with empire insofar as how international relations impacted England and its primacy. More specifically, his concern seems to have been with how foreign enterprises further corrupted the ruling élite, which, as we shall see, contributed to impede the progress of an ideology of individual liberties.

In many ways though, it was Caroline Reitz's reading of the justice system in *Caleb Williams* that inspired my examination of this novel's connection to empire. In her work, she has

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[24] A somewhat parallel passage appears in *Political Justice*. Addressing himself to an imagined "manorial serf" or "Creolian negro," Godwin writes "Doomed by the law of your birth to wait at the gates of the palace you must never enter, to sleep under a ruined weather-beaten roof, while your master sleeps under canopies of state, to feed on putrefied offals *while the world is ransacked for delicacies for his table*" (2.5.12, my italics).

effectively mapped out a link between the novel and a historical concern that is connected with the empire, most succinctly summarized in her claim that "*Caleb Williams* is littered with the 'structure of attitude and reference' toward empire that Edward Said considers part of the culture of imperialism" (180). She supports this statement by citing Falkland's plantation interests, the "clear imperialist implications" of his obsession with reputation, and Falkland and Caleb's heated discussion about Alexander the Great. However, though she effectively deconstructs the ideological parallel between corruption in England and corruption in India, she fails to account for the role that class politics plays in the creation and maintenance of hegemony. Considering the facts that Godwin represents the justice system as a puppet for Squire Falkland, and that Falkland's wrongful behavior is often and consistently imputed to his "Italian" traits, it is just as important to consider the following: aristocratic malfeasance was a component of systemic injustice, the aristocracy itself was linked ethically and behaviorally to "the foreign European," and discourses of "the foreign European" were in turn enabled and made relevant by the problems of empire.

  To further support this contention, it is important for us to trace how the discursive link I am identifying grows rhetorically out of the discussion that Burke and others were having about the problems in India. It is worthwhile, therefore, to cite a rather lengthy excerpt from Burke's "Speech on Fox's East India Bill":

> There is nothing in the boys we send to India worse than in the boys whom we are whipping at school, or that we see trailing a pike or bending over a desk at home. But as English youth in India drink the intoxicating draught of authority and dominion before their heads are able to bear it, and as they are full grown in fortune long before they are ripe in principle, neither Nature nor reason have any opportunity to exert themselves for remedy of the excesses of their premature power…Their prey is lodged in England; and the cries of India are given to seas and winds, to be blown about, in every breaking up of the monsoon, over a remote and unhearing ocean. In India all the vices operate by which sudden fortune is acquired: in England are often displayed, by the same persons, the virtues which dispense hereditary wealth. Arrived in England, the destroyers of the nobility and gentry of a whole kingdom will find the best company in this nation at a board of elegance and hospitality… They marry into your families; they enter into your

senate; they ease your estates by loans; they raise their value by demand; they cherish and protect your relations which lie heavy on your patronage; and there is scarcely an house in the kingdom that does not feel some concern and interest that makes all reform of our Eastern government appear officious and disgusting, and, on the whole, a most discouraging attempt. (209)

Burke's invective against the East India Company's managers demonstrates the clear and present danger these men and their imbibement of "the intoxicating draught of authority" supposedly represent to the nation; the acute paranoia of the last sentence of this excerpt is a particularly striking example of concerns about foreign-bred malfeasance infiltrating the domestic and thus corrupting not only the marketplace, but also systems of transmission and inheritance.

In the realm of England and *Caleb Williams*, political radicals who were critical of Burke's infamous *Reflections on the Revolution in France* still applauded his impeachment of Hastings (Reitz 177), Godwin himself characterizing the governor-general of India as "a despotic and imperious veteran," leader of a "memorable band of East Indian culprits" (Marken 22, 24). Of Burke and the impeachment itself, Godwin wrote "he closes this long and splendid career with a great public prosecution, the example of which may wash away the stains of Britain, and ensure security and peace to generations yet unborn" (20). Writing on James Stuart Mill's *History of British India*, Reitz comments that Mill's recounting of the Hastings trial, particularly where Nuncomar's execution was brought to light, "sounds like a *Caleb Williams* plot summary: servant accuses master thereby becoming the accused." She even spends approximately half a page reading Hastings for Falkland in order to claim that "the single crime of Hastings/Falkland is to obstruct the spirit of inquiry through a strategy of preemptive criminalization" (186). Though introducing such a "neat" correlation between history and fiction is risky for all but the most hard line Marxist scholars—and I do think that Reitz pushes the envelope here—I am less interested in her ultimate claim than the fact that it helps to support the contention that the

discursive elements of the India problem could conceivably be translated into a work of fiction

that was concerned, above all else, with the political situation in England. Considering this, and

his enthusiastic approval of the impeachment proceedings, it is not much of a leap to claim that

Godwin *would* subtly use the same kind of arguments as Burke in his writing of *Caleb Williams* in

order to highlight the crimes and shortcomings of the *local* aristocracy. Furthermore, Godwin

also notably argued that an English spirit of *curiosity* would help to cure malfeasance in India in

the sense that a movement towards open, detective-style inquiry would go a long way towards

helping to check the East India Company's abuses of power (180). This notion, of course, is

fictively explored in Caleb Williams's dogged pursuit of the truth regarding Falkland's guilt or

innocence in the murder of Tyrrel, and lends further credence to the idea that the social justice

themes of *Caleb Williams* are deeply inflected by the India situation.

However, it must be emphasized that *Caleb Williams* is *not* somehow secretly a novel

about India. It is unquestionably a novel about England—but an England that Burke and his

peers perceive as being in decay largely as a result of the degeneracy of the privileged younger

sons returning from India. Yet, rather than directly engaging the problems stemming from the

East India Company, *Caleb Williams* extends Burke's concerns to make an original claim about

the injustice perpetuated by the ruling elite. Essentially, Godwin borrows from a politically

charged situation to advance his own radical agenda. And since he is focusing his criticism on the

aristocracy, it makes sense that he should choose Italy, the ideological source of aristocratic

privilege, as the originating site of corruption in *Caleb Williams.* By concluding that Falkland's

behavior is the result of his absorption into Italian culture, Godwin is using popular—albeit

stereotypical—perceptions of Italy and what it represents to England to make a compelling

point about domestic injustices: not only is the aristocracy corrupt, it is corrupt to the point that

its members no longer have the right to claim the marker "Englishman" because, in Godwin's

view, "Englishman" is synonymous with "personal liberty."

In order to make more sense of Godwin's motives, it is important to consider the

historical extent of the aristocracy's influence on the lower classes. Previously, we saw Robin

Eagles's contention that the English élite had adopted "continental," particularly French,

"attitudes, fashions and opinions," and that this continentalism was "ap[ed] by the middling

sorts" (4). Kathleen Wilson addresses a kindred notion when she writes that empire

> could serve as a potent symbol of the innate superiority of the national character in
> which all social classes could share…the Others generated by the imperial project were
> never limited to those outside the national boundaries. Empire mediated notions of
> class that were articulated in and through conceptualizations of the dangerous and
> hostile forces lurking in the domestic polity. Aristocratic 'effeminacy' and corruption, for
> example, presented a distinctive threat to a virtuous polity, *for they seeped into the
> body politic from above, through social and cultural patronage and political power,
> corroding both national manners and martial might.* (255, my italics)

For Wilson then, literal empire created a discourse through which "dangerous and hostile forces

lurking in the domestic polity" could be articulated, and it is through "social and cultural

patronage and political power" that the aristocracy rained corruption on the middling classes.

Relatedly, Ingrid Horrocks has identified Godwin's purpose as being "to show how power is

enforced through the threat of violence *and how the law and every level of society are

implicated in that violence*" (41, my italics). In the context of the period, Godwin himself

commented in the highly political Preface to *Caleb Williams* that "[i]t is now known to

philosophers that the spirit and character of the government intrudes itself into every rank of

society" (1), and Caleb closes out the first chapter by commenting that "[m]y heart bleeds at the

recollection of [Falkland's] misfortunes as if they were my own. How can it fail to do so? *To his

story the whole fortune of my life was linked; because he was miserable, my happiness, my

name, and my existence have been irretrievably blasted*" (10, my italics). Therefore, Godwin

focused his critique primarily on the aristocracy because he recognized its prominent role in

systemic injustice—at best, it acted as a bad moral example to the "middling classes"; at worst, it actively oppressed its dependents. And by configuring the aristocracy as an Italian-inflected institution, Godwin was able to mobilize popular stereotypes of Italy to drive home the point that the ruling classes were contributing to the effacement of England's national character and virtue—a move that was enabled by Burke's discourse on the dangers of exposing England's sons to the degenerate culture of the East India Company.

As for the actual effect that the gentry's malfeasance had on its dependents, one ought to consider the epigraph that opened this chapter, Kristeva's assessment of law and abjection: "if the law is in the Other, my fate is neither power nor desire, it is the fate of an estranged person: my fate is death" (87). She makes this statement in response to the Oedipus story, referring to the king's slippage from monarch to subject as he violates the "incest prohibition." Along these lines then, I read Caleb Williams's "fall" from Englishman to deracinated subject and his subsequent "estrangement" from his society—all of which is brought about by the intervention of Falkland and his alliance with the Law—as a multilayered, abjectifying move. Since Falkland and his world essentially control the law, Caleb's "fate" can only be one of loss and alienation, a fate that plays out in his isolation from civilizing "sympathy" and his deracinated, destabilized identity.

"Different Species of Aristocracy": Falkland and Tyrell

Before discussing Caleb and his persecution, we must first develop a better, narrower sense of Falkland and the dialogic nature of his "Italianate" and "English aristocratic" markers. Indeed, the novel makes much of his "Italianation," and much of it is expressed in the language of colonial conquest's fallout. After his narration of Falkland's life in volume one, the old servant Collins blames his master's dejection on the "idle and groundless romances of chivalry" and editorializes the difference between false and true honor—romantic knight-errantry versus

one's refusing to "expose you or myself to unnecessary evil" (98). Much like a colonizer, Falkland

accepts and rejects aspects of the Italian, chivalric honor code as he sees fit (10), yet Collins still

notes that "perhaps no Englishman was ever in an equal degree idolised by the inhabitants of

Italy" (10-11), a statement that, by virtue of the verb "idolised," situates Falkland as somehow

"god-like" among the "lesser" Italians. Indeed, the fact that Falkland's "undaunted spirit and

resolute temper gave him a decisive advantage" when encountering a certain species of

arrogant Italian who "regard[s] almost the whole species as their inferiors" (11) bears out the

notion that Falkland's British resourcefulness grants him the authority to "manage" the natives

successfully.

Of more immediate interest, he performs cultural labor while in Italy, teaching the

beautiful young Lucretia English so that she can better appreciate British poetry (12), and later

placating her jealous lover Malvesi with rational discourse. The true brilliance of the Malvesi

episode, though, lies in its avoidance of mapping Falkland and Malvesi along clear axes of

"Englishness" and "Italianness." After calming his assailant, Falkland tells Malvesi:

> I feel the utmost pleasure in having thus by peaceful means disarmed your resentment, and effected your happiness. But I must confess you put me to a severe trial. *My temper is not less impetuous and fiery than your own, and it is not at all times that I should have been thus able to subdue it.* But I considered that in reality the original blame was mine. Though your suspicion was groundless, it was not absurd. (15, my italics) [25]

For the most part, this is the language of self-possession, rationality, in a word, "Englishness."

The first sentence is quaintly polite to the point of being ridiculous, while the last two sentences

are dominated by reason and a "mature" willingness to share the blame in what was clearly a

misunderstanding. However, the italicized portion of Falkland's monologue betrays a streak of

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[25] The "fiery and impetuous temper" to which Falkland alludes is not his inborn temperament, as a casual reading of the above passage might suggest, but one that has been constructed by his immersion in chivalry. Collins relates to Caleb how Falkland "was once the gayest of the gay...[and his gaiety was] chastened with reflexion [sic] and sensibility, and never lost sight either of good taste or humanity...[yet his] youth, distinguished from its outset by the most unusual promise, is tarnished. His sensibility is shrunk up and withered by events the most disgustful to his feelings. His mind was fraught with all the rhapsodies of visionary honour" (9).

"wildness," a foreshadowing of his darker, "uncivilized" nature that casts doubt upon his character. This is borne out in the second paragraph of Falkland's harangue, as he confesses that he would have accepted Malvesi's challenge to a duel if the challenge had been issued publicly because "the laws of honour are in the utmost degree rigid…if the challenge had been public, the proofs I had formerly given of courage would not have excused my present moderation; and, though desirous to have avoided the combat, it would not have been in my power" (15-16). Here, Falkland betrays a sense of honor that is centered on status and reputation; a sense of honor that was instilled in him by the "heroic poets of Italy," the reading of whom caused him to "[believe] that nothing was so well calculated to make men delicate, gallant and humane, as a temper perpetually alive to the sentiments of birth and honour" (10). Nevertheless, Falkland just as quickly shifts his rhetoric into a rational context by dictating the "moral" of his and Malvesi's near-encounter: passion and a sense of honor trump reason and free will when one is faced with an immediate threat to reputation; therefore, Malvesi should learn a lesson about the dangers of precipitancy (16)—the "colonizer" imparts his wisdom to the "colonized" and appropriate power relations are apparently maintained. However, although he has averted a literal duel here, I would say that Falkland has also betrayed the presence of a duel in his own breast—a duel between "rational English" and "chivalric Italian" ideologies. Indeed, this episode is one of the clearest indicators of Falkland's ethnic destabilization.

It is likely not a coincidence that Falkland's troubles begin in earnest almost immediately upon his return from the Tour. His neighbor, the brutish Squire Tyrrel, instantly despises him as an "outlandish, foreign-made Englishman," who he hyperbolically believes "would have [humanity] exchange those robust exercises which made us joyous in the performance and vigorous in the consequences, for the wise labour of scratching our heads for a rhyme and counting our fingers for a verse" (20). While this characterization of Falkland does not *overtly*

invoke Italian stereotypes—though referring to Falkland as an "outlandish, foreign-made

Englishman" can only refer to his Italian influence since Italy is the only foreign country that

seems to have had any impact on his character—it most definitely labels him as effeminate,

especially in comparison to the robust and athletic Tyrrel. Indeed, Tyrrel is quick to draw the

familiar connection between effeminacy and national weakness; we are told that the Squire

thought

> [m]onkeys were as good men as these. A nation of such animals would have no chance
> with a single regiment of the old English votaries of beef and pudding. He never saw any
> thing come of learning but to make people foppish and impertinent; and a sensible man
> would not wish a worse calamity to the enemies of his nation than to see them run mad
> after such pernicious absurdities. (20)

Since Tyrrel apparently believes that Falkland would somehow impose his values on others, this

episode recalls Wilson's scholarship on Rev. Brown's and others' fears that aristocratic

effeteness would spread to the underclasses and endanger England's naval—and therefore

colonial—dominance ("Patriotic" 187-188). In terms of the current question, Tyrrel's perception

of Falkland is significant for a number of reasons.

First, Godwin's tying these fears to the conduct of a landed gentleman who is not even a

member of the "high" aristocracy brings the problem closer to the middle class. Second, the

particular set of fears that it invokes—effeminacy equals national weakness—had its genesis

much earlier in the century, with Reverend Brown writing *Estimate of the Manners and*

Principles of the Time in the late 1750s when concerns about national wellbeing were tied to the

deteriorating situation in North America. For Godwin to raise these concerns in 1794, long after

Britain had lost the North American colonies, and while it was at war with France, and Burke was

hotly contesting the rightness of England's actions in India, is to place Falkland and his

weaknesses in the same context as the imperial failure and political turmoil that threatened and

threatens to destabilize England's constructed image of primacy and virtue. And finally, the fact

that Falkland's foibles are implicitly linked to his Italian conduct shifts this entire discourse into the milieu of continentally-generated corruption.

While it is true that this opinion is held by the highly unsympathetic Squire Tyrrel, this is not particularly problematic if one eschews questions of the (un)reliability of character in favor of focusing on the discursive situation. Indeed, this is the better approach to take because the accuracy or inaccuracy of Tyrrel's assessment is less important than the fact that such an assessment can realistically be made and, as a result, raise the issues enumerated in the previous paragraph. Concerns about character can be even more strongly dismissed if one considers that Tyrrel himself is as much a caricature of aristocratic monstrosity as Falkland is later, albeit of quite an opposite temper. Though he "might have passed for a true model of the English squire" (16), Tyrrel was raised by an overly indulgent single mother, and as a result, grew up with very little formal education. His substantial physical vigor is described in suspiciously monstrous terms, as he is alternately characterized as a "whelp-lion" (17), "that hero of antiquity, whose prowess consisted in felling an ox with his fist, and devouring him at a meal" (17), "a tyger" (18) a "rural Antaeus" (18), a "wild beast" (19), and one whose "courtship was like the pawings of an elephant" (21). The bestial extremity of Tyrrel's character becomes particularly relevant if one jumps ahead in the text for a moment, and considers Daniela Garofalo's assessment that

> [t]he murder of Tyrrel functions on a historically significant level as the shift from an overtly patriarchal culture to a more modern and superficially benign power. Modern patriarchal figures abjure public violence and present themselves as the impartial and just administrators of a universal law, while founding their power on a violence that remains hidden, yet suspected. (238-239)

Along these lines, I would therefore suggest that Tyrrel, like Falkland in book three, is more of a type than a three-dimensional character—though admittedly Falkland's breakdown in the courtroom in the published ending does somewhat bring him back from the flat role of

"omnipotent tyrant"—and as such recognizes Falkland as a new kind of patriarch. In this

reading, we do not see two rival squires so much as we see two rival systems of oppression, and

ultimately the replacement of the overt one with the covert one.

This is not to say, however, that Godwin somehow "prefers" Tyrrel to Falkland. Indeed,

he placed all members of the wealthy, landed class into the broad category of "aristocracy" in

Political Justice, dismissively writing that "[i]t is not necessary to enter into a methodical

disquisition of the different species of aristocracy, since, if the above reasonings have any force,

they are equally cogent against them all" (2.5.15) Though Tyrrel's physical strength and

tendency towards gruffness characterize him as a "beef and pudding Englishman," he cannot be

looked upon as some sort of model of Englishness because he is clearly not virtuous. From the

moment the brutish Squire is introduced, Godwin paints him as "insupportably arrogant,

tyrannical to his inferiors, and insolent to his equals" (17). When Tyrrel quarrels with his

dependent, Hawkins, and the latter prepares to take legal action against the Squire, Godwin

bemoans Hawkins's inevitable failure, commenting that "[w]ealth and despotism easily know

how to engage those laws as the coadjutors of their oppression which were perhaps at first

intended [witless and miserable precaution!] for the safeguards of the poor" (72). Furthermore,

Tyrrel's imprisonment of his cousin Emily Melville because she refuses to marry the coarse

Grimes is a page directly out of the Gothic playbook; indeed, Emily Melville's fortitude

anticipates Radcliffe's Emily St. Aubert, and Tyrrel's astonished yet gruff response to Miss

Melville's firmness (54-55) calls to mind a Montoni or a Montalt.

At first glance, the decidedly "un-Frenchified" Tyrrel's crimes may appear to

problematize our current reading of the novel since, through Tyrrel, Godwin prevents the reader

from seeing the problem of aristocracy as being reducable exclusively to continental influence.

However, the point of this chapter is certainly not to claim that Godwin is trying to make the

case that continentally-inflected corruption is *the* sole cause of malfeasance. Rather, the point is to support the notion that Godwin deploys discourses of foreign influence to help highlight his main points about social injustice and class's role in it. Considering Garofalo's troping of Tyrrel and Falkland, I would suggest that Godwin is saying that the problem of aristocratic hegemony has always existed—indeed, Book V, chapters 10-13 of *Political Justice* suggest this, especially since Godwin sees fit to compare the aristocracy to the much more historied monarchy at the opening of chapter 13 (II. 14)—but the *current* aristocratical character is that of a covert, continentally-influenced Falkland.

This reading is borne out when one considers the narrative of Emily Melville and Elaine Ayers's incisive reading of "Caleb's story [as] in large part a structural duplication of Emily's" (25)[26]. In addition to citing similarities in their upbringings—both lose their parents at an early age, both are essentially pressed into servitude to a lord because of financial insecurity, etc.— Ayers points out that both Caleb and Emily occupy a privileged position in relation to their masters, as both can be somewhat open with their employers (27). Both are also made miserable by household servants with homonymous names, with Tyrrel forcing Emily to marry Grimes and Falkland oppressing Caleb through Gines. Provocatively, Ayers notes that Gines was named "Jones" in the first edition of *Caleb Williams*, and reasonably concludes that Godwin made this revision to clarify the parallelism of the two narratives "thereby underscoring their [Grimes and Gines's] role as the gentry's agents of persecution" (27). Furthermore, Emily and Caleb are both placed in a position of alienation, and both claim to prefer death to their present oppressed conditions (27-28). Of most interest though is Ayers's problematic claim that both Caleb and Emily "encounter their masters' profound antagonism to the extent that they become

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[26] Those interested in the inevitable "gender trouble" that such a reading invokes ought to refer to the article itself. The issues of "gender queering" that Ayers raises are provocative, though not particularly relevant to this study.

prisoners in domestic employment, much like Richardson's *Pamela*" (26). While it is true that

Falkland essentially imprisons Caleb within "domestic employment" after the latter discovers

the former's secret, Caleb's forced containment within Falkland's home is only a small part of

the novel—his imprisonment in the county jail and subsequent wanderings are far more

prevalent. And Emily's being imprisoned because of her refusal to be obedient to her kinsman's

demand that she marry an odious man owes much more to *Clarissa* than it does *Pamela*.

What is significant about this reading for our purposes is what it evokes in terms of

aristocratic forms. If Emily can be associated with Pamela (or Clarissa), then Tyrrel can be

associated with overtly oppressive fictional villains, like Mr. B or the Harlowes, who were drawn

fifty years earlier (*Pamela* was published in 1740, *Clarissa* in 1748). This in turn supports

Garofalo's contention that Tyrrel represents an older, more overt form of malfeasance. As for

Falkland, even if we are to accept Ayers's elision of him with Tyrrel along the axis of *Pamela*, we

must remember that Tyrrel is ostracized by the community for his treatment of his cousin,

whereas Falkland is consistently applauded regardless of what he does, while Caleb is

demonized as a thief and an ingrate. Therefore, Godwin seems to be claiming that Falkland's

brand of aristocratic hegemony is ultimately the more destructive one, as his Italianate airs and

gallantry have bedazzled the population and obscured his true character. Indeed, this appears to

have been Godwin's intent, as he claimed in his 1832 "Account of the Composition of *Caleb*

Williams" that Falkland's murder of Tyrrel "*should be seen in some measure to have arisen out*

of his virtues themselves. It was necessary to make him, so to speak, the tenant of an

atmosphere of romance, *so that every reader should feel prompted almost to worship him for*

his high qualities. Here were ample materials for the first volume" (337, my italics). Hence,

volume one of the novel can be read as being largely about constructing Falkland as a "wolf in

sheep's clothing," so to speak—a "worshipful" character whose crimes were not only concealed

by, but also to an extent enabled by, his chivalrous virtues. In this address, Godwin implicates his readership in systemic injustice, effectively claiming that their tacit acceptance of charismatic members of the gentry like Falkland perpetuates hegemony.

This kind of reading has not escaped the attention of contemporary critics, either. Nicolle Jordan considers the problematic nature of public opinion in *Caleb Williams*, claiming that "rather than revolving around the individual, the novel emphasizes the process by which public opinion stymies individual integrity and leads to the gross miscarriage of justice" (244). Indeed, the public's overwhelmingly positive opinion of Falkland does lead "to the gross miscarriage of justice" in the sense that Caleb essentially suffers for Falkland's crimes. Public opinion, according to Jordan, is a powerful force in the novel, not only because it is public opinion that keeps Caleb in check and Falkland in power, but also because populist sympathies—at least initially—imply a "happy ending" to volume one. After Emily Melville's death, all members of society see Tyrrel as a pariah. The narration informs us that

> [i]t evidently appeared that, though wealth and hereditary elevation operate as an apology for many delinquencies, there are some which so irresistibly address themselves to the indignation of mankind, that, like death, they level all distinctions, and reduce their perpetrator to an equality with the most indigent and squalid of his species. (92)

Emily Melville's nurse advises Tyrrel that "[a]ll the world will abhor and curse you…The meanest beggar will spurn and spit at you" (91), a moment that Jordan claims "foretells how the narrative will continually strive to include the non-elite within the ranks of those who comprise public opinion" (247). The fact, then, that Tyrrel is held accountable for his actions implies that the old methods of overt hegemony and the more classically "Gothic" villains are being challenged and held accountable by an increasingly aware and empowered public. However, the Falkland's of the world continue to escape justice. Jordan writes that

> [b]ecause the novel's emotional energy initially derives, in part, from Caleb's profound admiration and sympathy for his master, the reader is compelled to respect an

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aristocratic ethos that is continually undermined by another storyline. This narrative structure creates an emblematic tension between veneration for noble sensibilities and indignation at the ways in which these sensibilities oppress the very public that sustains them. (263)

And in the case of *Caleb Williams*, Godwin unquestionably locates the source of these "noble sensibilities" within Falkland's time in Italy and his reading of Italian heroic poets. Hence, it is safe to conclude that Godwin is indeed deploying the trope of continentally-inflected corruption to impugn the current hegemonic practices of the aristocracy.

A Note on Texts and Identity Construction

In fairness, it is certainly true that Falkland is not the only character who is constructed by the texts he reads. Godwin scholars tend to be quick to point out that Caleb is also an avid reader of romances. Fludernik writes that "both Caleb and Falkland imbibe the poison (of chivalry and curiosity) from their reading of romances which celebrate the sublime genius of great men" (863), and suggests that "[t]he system of romantic inequality…corrupts and ruins both the master and the servant, the oppressor and the slave. It forces the master to exercise his power to the hilt…and it forces the oppressed to become artful in their legitimate defence, thereby corrupting their (supposedly) native innocence and truthfulness" (887). While this reading is certainly supportable, one must bear in mind that it somewhat elides the "romance of chivalry" that Falkland reads with the "stories for boys" variety of romance that Caleb reads. Essentially, Caleb's favored stories feature "feats of activity…in which corporeal ingenuity or strength are the means resorted to for supplying resources and conquering difficulties"; Caleb "panted for the unraveling of an adventure, with an anxiety, perhaps almost equal to that of the man whose future happiness or misery depended on its issue" (4). Falkland, meanwhile, is interested in "the manners depicted by these celebrated [Italian heroic] poets…[and] the sentiments of birth and honour" (10).

While Fludernik's reading situates the two characters appropriately—the knightly Falkland "exercise[s] his power to the hilt" and the plucky Caleb "become[s] artful"—she does not take into account the ethnic implications of these two very different varieties of "romance." The values that Falkland imbibes from his reading are, as I have discussed at length, clearly continental and "Other." However, the "corporeal" tales of adventure that Caleb reads seem to gesture more readily towards the independent, rugged masculinity that Michele Cohen identifies in "Manliness, Effeminacy, and the French: Gender and the Construction of National Character in Eighteenth-Century England" as a valued characteristic of eighteenth-century middle-class English manhood, since it was meant to set Englishmen apart from the perceived foppery of the French[27]. This type of "corporeal adventure" also recalls post-Restoration, pro-colonial stage dramas which, as Wilson reminds us, generally depicted rugged and manful English characters outwitting dandyish Europeans (242). Therefore, while it is true that Caleb is just as influenced by his reading as Falkland is, it is also important to remember that the two types of romance under scrutiny here also gesture towards the characters' constructed nationalities.

Finally, while one can appreciate Fludernik's (887) and Jonathan Sachs's (263) contention that both characters' are essentially undone at the end of the novel as a result of their romance-reading, I think that such an interpretation is a bit of an oversimplification—Caleb and Falkland cannot be equated with each other so neatly. Falkland's subscription to chivalry seems to be produced rather than innate, and it is essentially the root cause of many of the novel's conflicts—there would be no secret for Caleb to discover if Falkland had never murdered Tyrrel; Falkland would not have murdered Tyrrel if the latter had not violated his sense of honor by attacking him in public; and the text clearly states that Falkland's sense of honor came

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[27] Despite his interest in this type of literature, Caleb's class, innate respect for Falkland's "virtues," and enthusiastically professed love of learning situates him quite differently than Tyrrel.

directly from his reading (10). However, where Falkland's reading *produces* his innate character,

Caleb's innate character seems to inform his choice of reading. Though as a boy he was not

"particularly athletic in appearance or large in [his] dimensions" we are told that he was

"uncommonly vigorous and active. [His] joints were supple, and [he] was formed to excel in

youthful sports" (4), and it is his "excellence in these respects" that influences him to "read of

feats of activity." Furthermore, the insatiable curiosity that proves to be his downfall is *not*

instilled by his reading, but rather is what *motivates* him to read. He claims "I was desirous of

tracing the variety of effects which might be produced from given causes. *It was this* that made

me a sort of natural philosopher…*[i]n fine*, *this produced in me* an invincible attachment to

books of narrative and romance" (4, my italics). And despite the misfortune that befalls him as a

result of his curiosity, it would be difficult to claim that Caleb's curiosity is some kind of

mirroring flaw to Falkland's honor when one considers Godwin's pro-inquiry stance in *Political*

Justice. Along this line, Reitz compellingly claims that

> [b]oth Godwin and Mill argued in the aftermath of Hastings that the legitimacy of
> English civilization both at home and overseas could only be restored if the public were
> guided by "a spirit of investigation" (Godwin, Political 82), a "homebred understanding"
> (Godwin, Political 552) embodied in an "enlightened inquirer" (Mill 6: 7) who could
> "detect the artifices" of "mysterious government" (Godwin, Political 552) and perform
> the "investigation of…those complicated scenes of action" (Mill 1: xxv) which imperiled
> the English virtues of reason and truth, justice and benevolence. (178)

Hence, while Caleb's *innate* curiosity may be a fatal flaw in the context of the novel, it cannot be

compared to Falkland's decidedly *learned* honor because, in this reading, Caleb's opening of

Falkland's trunk is essentially a radical quasi-patriotic act, while Falkland's chivalrous behavior is

an aping of an outmoded and harmful system.

The English Bastille and Civilized Thieves: A Foreignized Homeland

Now that we have a decent grasp of Falkland's—and by proxy, the aristocracy's—

relationship to the imperial project, it is time to consider the Falkland-Caleb relationship in more

depth. Earlier I claimed that the ruling élite represent a threat to personal liberty because Burke

and his fellow anti-Jacobins saw individual, natural rights as dangerous. This was largely because

the idea of "natural rights" was tied to the "new French philosophy," a system that was

understood as damaging to the family because of its fixation on "self-determination and

advancement" (Johnson 181).[28] I have also stated that, for Godwin, personal liberty is

synonymous with Englishness, a claim that is most concisely exemplified in Caleb's proud

statement "I am an Englishman; and it is the privilege of an Englishman to be sole judge and

master of his own actions" (159).

It is interesting and ironic that this is spoken in response to Falkland's summons to what

turns out to be a sham trial, which ends in Caleb being imprisoned on a false charge of theft.

Since Falkland's motivation for suppressing his former servant is to preserve his own reputation,

which Caleb has the power to destroy, we can conclude that Godwin's hero's right to be "sole

judge and master of his own actions" is curtailed by the unjust machinations of a corrupt

aristocracy. Nevertheless, Caleb still maintains a sense of his independence, even when the

"trial" is revealed to be merely another snare. Similar to Radcliffean heroines' determination to

meet their tribulations with fortitude, Caleb declares, "If I am to despair of the good will of other

men, I will at least maintain the independence of my own mind" (173). Therefore, Falkland's

persecution of Caleb Williams can be read as an attempt to strip Caleb of what Godwin would

have understood as his birthright as an Englishman.

This is a central problem of *Caleb Williams*: Falkland's sense of aristocratic honor has

compromised his status as a "true" Englishman because it has caused him to value an archaic

chimera over true justice. And since Falkland's "Englishness" is damaged, then the "Englishness"

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[28] Relatedly, Robert Kaufman has written in "The Sublime as Super-Genre of the Modern, or *Hamlet* in Revolution: Caleb Williams and His Problems." *Studies in Romanticism*. 36.4 (1997): 541-74, that "in Burke's opinion, certainly, the French Revolution precisely destroys the social fabric in the name of the isolate individual" (552).

of the "middling" classes to whom he is a hero of virtue is also rendered suspect. As a result,

England itself becomes for Caleb an unfamiliar nation full of threats. In this, I see Godwin

invoking the popular view of the Italy-England dialectic that Shearer West, Mirella Agorni, and

others have catalogued,[29] that eighteenth-century Italy (and especially Rome) represented a sort

of "fallen grandeur," a fate at which England and its empire could conceivably arrive if the

aristocratic privilege and faulty honor codes that characterized the Italian territories were to

shape the law of the land and allow the oppression of the common people.

Examples of the "foreignized homeland" are numerous in *Caleb Williams*. Thomas, the

servant of Mr. Forester, who is a relative of Falkland's, is so shocked at Caleb's treatment in

prison—at this point, Caleb is bound standing upright and is even required to sleep in this

position—that he challenges England's claim to be "a Christian country" (202). Indeed, Thomas's

reaction to the condition of Caleb's prison is worth quoting at some length:

> Zounds, how I have been deceived! They told me what a fine thing it was to be an
> Englishman, and about liberty and property, and all that there; and I find it is all a flam.
> Lord, what fools we be! Things are done under our very noses, and we know nothing of
> the matter; and a parcel of fellows with grave faces swear to us that such things never
> happen but in France, and other countries the like of that. (202)

Marilyn Butler writes that *Political Justice* and *Caleb Williams* were both "designed to achieve

change and also designed to refute the case for the status quo familiarized, above all, by Burke"

(242). It is no accident that Thomas, a servant, is one of the only characters who sees "things as

they are." Considering Godwin's audience and purpose—he wrote *Caleb Williams* to make the

ideas he put forth in *Political Justice* more accessible— it is important that Thomas, a member of

a disadvantaged class who has been sold the rhetoric of English justice, realize that "liberty and

property…is all a flam." Indeed, this is more than just empty bluster on Thomas's part. When

Caleb reminds his cruel jailors that he is innocent until proven guilty, for example, he is shocked

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[29] See the Introduction of this study.

when they advise him to "keep such fudge for people who knew no better…they knew what they did, and would answer it to any court in England" (197). It is even more significant that Thomas notes that he is told that "such things never happen but in France, and other countries the like of that"—a statement that is perhaps *Caleb Williams*'s most apparent criticism of Burke and the anti-Jacobins. Hence, England has not just violated its proclaimed ideals; it has become identifiable with a France that is, at the time of Godwin's writing, in the midst of the Terror. This reading's relevance becomes even more apparent when one considers Caleb's scorn for those who claim that "England has no Bastille" (181).

Thomas, in fact, goes so far as to facilitate Caleb's escape from his prison, exclaiming as he sneaks the captive a file and a chisel "I know I am doing wrong; but, if they hang me too, I cannot help it: I cannot do no other" (203). This moment marks the beginning of an interesting inversion in the text: not only are lawmakers and enforcers criminals, but criminals themselves are just. For, after escaping from prison, Caleb is able to find shelter with a gang of robbers who follow a code of honor that resists and is represented as more authentic than Falkland's. Mr. Raymond, the de facto captain of the thieves, explains "our profession is the profession of justice…[w]e, who are thieves without a license, are at open war with another set of men, who are thieves according to law" (216).

There is an interesting pun in this passage that sheds some light on how the thieves are positioned in relation to "justice." When Raymond states that "our profession is the profession of justice" he could be deploying reflexive rhetoric ("we are an *x*, an *x* of *y*") with both "profession's" referring to the thieves' vocation; on the other hand, the second "profession" could refer to a proclaimed credo, in this case a firm belief in principles of justice. The effectiveness of this word-play lies in its ability to compound the reader's perception of the brigands' justness. If the thieves believe in justice, then that is strange enough, particularly in

light of all the injustice that has been perpetrated in the novel by their supposed "betters." Yet,

to position Mr. Raymond and his band as actual *representatives* of justice, whose very work is

tied up in the enactment and maintenance thereof, is to suggest that England's legal system has

been subverted, since it is criminals who uphold these ideals and the legislators—"thieves

according to law"—who violate them. This reading is borne out elsewhere in the text, most

notably when the brigands cry out, "if fidelity and honour be banished from thieves, where shall

they find refuge upon the face of the earth?" (224) Further, noted *Caleb Williams* scholar David

McCracken, who edited Norton's 1977 edition of the novel, comments that this passage "seems

to be the parody of a celebrated saying of John King of France, who was taken prisoner by the

Black Prince at the battle of Poitiers" (224 fn. 1) Allegedly, when visiting England in 1364, King

John stated "if truth were banished from all other mortals, it ought still to find refuge in the

breast of a king" (qtd. in McCracken 350). According to this reading then, the thieves have

appropriated the rhetoric of royalty and appointed themselves the new vanguards of justice.

Of further interest is Mr. Raymond's statement to his compatriots that "a thief is of

course a man living among his equals; I do not pretend therefore to assume any authority

among you" (216). Indeed, there is a strange sort of class leveling in the robbers' den, as Caleb

notes that some of the bandits have "the air of mere rustics, and others that of a tarnished sort

of gentry" (215). As for Mr. Raymond himself, his deportment "had in it nothing of boorishness,"

and Caleb observes that his benefactor "was thoroughly imbued with the principles of

affectionate civility" (213). Mr. Raymond does in fact turn out to be one of Caleb's only

sympathizers, and he is to such an extent that Caleb sees him as a potential father-figure

(215)—a position that Falkland had once occupied. Fludernik goes so far as to remark that Mr.

Raymond is a "focal character who shares a structural position with Falkland as object of Caleb's

admiration, but he is also comparable to Caleb himself, since they are both outcasts and heroic

fighters against the despotism of the powers that be" (859). It is particularly interesting that Mr.

Raymond's outstanding qualities are his "civility," as well as his "compassion and…fine feelings"

(216), as these qualities are synonymous with sympathy, and sympathy, we recall, can be

understood as the "primary civilizing ingredient." Therefore, even though he is a criminal, Mr.

Raymond can be understood as being more "civilized," and likely therefore more "English," than

the elevated yet deracinated Falkland. And because of his "civility" and the honorable nature of

most of his company, Raymond's den becomes, for a time, a comfortable domestic arrangement

for Caleb, who ironically notes that "the state of calamity to which my inexorable persecutor

had reduced me, had made the encounter even of a den of robbers a fortunate adventure"

(230). The fact that Caleb is by and large safer—and certainly happier—living in the den says a

lot about the state of domesticity in England. Indeed, Godwin seems to construct the robbers'

hideout as a paradise of autonomy, hidden away from the scrutiny of authority figures and

infused with the principles of political radicalism. Its denizens

> could expatiate freely wherever they thought proper. They could form plans and
> execute them. They consulted their inclinations. The did not impose upon themselves
> the task, as is too often the case in human society, of seeming tacitly to approve that
> from which they suffered most; or, which is worse, of persuading themselves that all the
> wrongs the suffered were right; but were at open war with their oppressors. (218)

Here, the thieves certainly possess the "self-determination" and desire for "advancement" that

Johnson represented as a core component of "natural rights." This is quite different from

Falkland's authoritarian home, which Caleb gothicizes as "a dungeon" and "one of those

fortresses, famed in the history of despotism, from which the wretched victim is never known to

come forth alive" (151). Crediting the scholarship of Pamela Clemit, Kenneth Graham, and

Barbara Benedict, Ingrid Horrocks has written that "Godwin found in Radcliffe's version of the

gothic a model in which the psychology of a gothicized household could be used to represent

abuses in society more generally" (33). Therefore, Falkland's established home is indicative of

injustice and abuse of authority, while the makeshift robbers' den—at least tentatively—

represents a more liberal, democratic sphere.

However, let me just as quickly point out that it would be a gross oversimplification to

read Mr. Raymond and his band simply as a foil to Falkland because they, like him and like

Caleb, occupy a notably anomalous position. Happy as he is to be free of Falkland's scrutiny,

Caleb has his doubts about his new home; on the one hand, he recognizes the den as "the seat

of merriment and hilarity," yet at the same time "their trade was terror, and their constant

object to elude the vigilance of the community." Caleb notes that, as a result of their business,

"the influence of these circumstances was visible in their character. I found among them

benevolence and kindness; they were strongly susceptible of emotions of generosity. But, as

their situation was precarious, their dispositions were proportionately fluctuating. Inured to the

animosity of their species, they were irritable and passionate" (218). Caleb reiterates his

uncertainty later in the text, claiming that "the uncommon vigour of their minds and acuteness

of their invention in the business they pursued, compared with the odiousness of that business

and their habitual depravity, awakened in me sensations too painful to be endured" (229).

What is most interesting about Caleb's reading of the thieves' is their appearance as an

uncanny corruption of the English middle-class and its values. Though they possess the positive

Protestant values of "benevolence," "kindness," and "generosity" they are also "irritable and

passionate." Though they possess "vigour" and "invention" and utilize these qualities to make

their "business" prosper, their "trade is terror."[30] This is especially significant since many of the

"brothers," Mr. Raymond in particular, have entered this "profession" as a result of aristocratic

tyranny (220). I would read this then as a specific example of the destabilization of the ruling

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[30] While I do not wish to spend too much time on an ultimately unprovable metaphorical reading, I think that the "business" of the robbers' den and Caleb's reaction to it could conceivably be read alongside a historical recounting of the East India Company's corrupt business practices and the reaction of English commentators.

classes contributing to the destabilization of the middle-class: though industrious and

compassionate, as good eighteenth-century British entrepreneurs ought to be, Caleb's hosts still

have the tempers and aims of banditti. Put simply, they defy categorization.

Considering the role of foreign influence in the production of this anomalousness, it

should not come as a surprise that Caleb's main antagonist while in the robbers' den is a woman

whose complexion is described as "swarthy, and of the consistency of parchment" (214). Upon

observing her animosity towards him, Caleb notes that "persons of her complexion seem unable

to exist without some object upon which to employ the superfluity of their gall" (219). This

woman, whose "swarthiness" and hot temper imply a Mediterranean background, attempts to

murder Caleb and, because of her "Amazonian" strength, almost succeeds (231). While I

wouldn't go so far as to read the matron as a substitute for Falkland—she certainly does not

possess his privilege, influence, history, or biological ethnicity—she is certainly an extension of

Falkland's power in the sense that she is a member of the public whose animosity towards Caleb

is produced, in part, by the machinations of Falkland and the justice system: she is only aware

that Caleb is a wanted man because of a circulating handbill that identifies him as such. Her

indirect association with Falkland and her act of physical violence also recalls Horrocks's claim

about how "power is enforced through the threat of violence and how the law and every level of

society are implicated in that violence" (41). She is further linked to Falkland in that she

reinforces the threat of the foreign lurking within the domestic polity. Not only are she and her

protégé Gines—who later acts as Falkland's spy and man hunter—disrupters of Caleb's pseudo-

domestic security within the robbers' den, but also it is her threats to turn Caleb over to the

courts that forces him to flee in haste and in deracinated disguise. Essentially, this "swarthy

sybil" (229) wields such power over the supposedly "English" Caleb Williams that he has no

choice but to disguise himself as an Irish mendicant in order to avoid detection by an unjust

justice system.

"English, but not quite": Deracination and Border States

Caleb's deracination is a centerpiece of this novel, as it is one of the clearest

demonstrations of aristocratic hegemony's destructive influence on the nationalized English

body. Having chosen to disguise himself as a foreign beggar before leaving the robbers' refuge,

Caleb describes his "costume change" in notable detail:

> I selected the worst apparel I could find, and this I reduced to a still more deplorable
> condition by rents that I purposely made in various places…I had rendered my
> appearance complete, nor would any one have suspected that I was not one of the
> fraternity to which I assumed to belong. I said, *This is the form in which tyranny and
> injustice oblige me to seek for refuge; but better, a thousand times better is it, thus to
> incur contempt with the dregs of mankind, than to trust to the tender mercies of our
> superiors!* (233-234, my italics)

I find it interesting that Caleb reminds the reader, in the portion I have italicized, that his

present state of affairs is the result of aristocratic tyranny. He also makes the same kind of

statement when he describes his adoption of a brogue, claiming that "[s]uch are the miserable

expedients and so great the studied artifice, which man, who never deserves the name of

manhood but in proportion as he is erect and independent, may find it necessary to employ for

the purpose of eluding the inexorable animosity and unfeeling tyranny of his fellow man!" (238)

I would claim that by being so didactic here, Godwin is ensuring that the link between class

slippage, deracination, and aristocratic hegemony is clearly established for the reader—Caleb's

loss of Englishness is a *direct result* of Falkland's malfeasance, a malfeasance which has its

genesis in Italian honor codes. Therefore, the aristocracy's adoption of continental values

contributes *directly* to the unraveling of national integrity, as played out by a member of a non-

elite class.

In the same way that Godwin's decision to attribute Falkland's guiding values to Italian influence was quite calculated, it is no accident that Caleb disguises himself specifically as an Irishman. As I established in the introduction, Ireland can best be understood in the 1790s not only as a "privileged" pseudo-colony, but also as an uncanny double for England—a reminder of Albion's heritage as a rural, Catholic nation. George Cooper for example, who traveled to Ireland a mere five years after the publication of *Caleb Williams*, articulated the uneasy resemblance between Ireland and premodern England by looking through a lens of papal influence. He claimed that

> the effect of Catholic superstition on the Irish is to plunge their minds in the darkness and gothic ignorance of the 13th century. *Had Great Britain still continued to the prey of papal tyranny, it is probable that it would have been at present buried in that same gloomy ignorance.* We should not have been able to boast of our Bacon, our Locke, or our Newton. (192, my italics)

Here, Cooper acknowledges England and Ireland's shared heritage, proclaims England's cultural superiority, and locates the source of that superiority in the Reformation. It is unsurprising that Ireland's Catholicism should be singled out as a primary cause of its "Otherness" and cultural inferiority—as I pointed out in the Introduction, Collin Haydon has commented that "the main contribution of anti-catholicism to national identity in the Georgian era was to construct the European continent as fundamentally alien" (33), a statement which he claims can also be applied to Ireland, though this attitude was most apparent later, in the nineteenth century (34).

However, it is even more interesting to consider how Cooper cites outmoded codes of conduct and the corruption of the Irish gentry as causes of the peasantry's poverty.[31] The excesses of chivalry are responsible for "the slack system of morality which is so observable in Ireland" (187), and it is this lack of morals among the gentry that prevents an outpouring of

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[31] Naturally, the foibles of Ireland's aristocracy are only part of the reason for widespread poverty among the peasantry. Hence, it is very telling that Cooper—an Englishman—should oversimplify matters in this way.

charity. Cooper also maintains that the moral bankruptcy of the aristocracy leads to a general

"indolence" among the Irish people, since "there is nothing which is so calculated to palsy the

arm of virtuous industry as the pride of birth" (192), and he might as well be describing Falkland

when he writes "with the rich, a relaxed system of morality is aided by the artificial varnish of

fashionable manners and those advantages which I have allowed that the laws of honour may

and do carry with them, notwithstanding their mixture of evil" (193).

     Caleb's beggar disguise obviously identifies him with a poorer class of Irishman, one that

would be recognizable as victimized by the gentry. While his clothing and bearing are obvious

indicators of this, my point is further borne out by the fact that Caleb learned how to speak with

a brogue while in prison (238), in the company of other men who were, by and large,

incarcerated merely for being "victims of suspicion" (180). Caleb's identification with the

oppressed Irish underclass is striking not only because he literally *is* a victim of the gentry but

also because his victimization is what caused him to disguise himself as a legibly oppressed

individual to begin with. I would suggest therefore that Caleb's Irish persona not only calls his

own nationality into question, but also brings Falkland's foreignness into sharp relief by

correlating the latter with the Anglo-Irish oppressors. To clarify, I would not go so far as to say

that Godwin is shifting tactics here and attempting to represent Falkland as "Irishified"—at this

point, he has put too much labor into *explicitly* connecting Falkland with Italy to make such a

move. Rather, there is an interesting subtextual dynamic going on that can be read as a

reinforcement of the novel's themes of deracination and foreignization. Essentially, Godwin is

subtly—and perhaps unintentionally—framing the Falkland-Caleb conflict within the context of

class struggle in Ireland. Whether or not this is a conscious move on the author's part isn't

particularly relevant. What does matter is that this move connects Godwin's fiction more closely

to historical concerns about how England was shaped by its colonies and dependents, and how

this influence rendered "precarious" the nation's "claims to civilization." Put plainly, Caleb's dressing himself up as a disadvantaged Irishman invites the reader to parallel English aristocratic hegemony with Irish aristocratic hegemony. Such a juxtaposition forces to the surface buried doubts about English civilization's presumed superiority to Irish civilization, and the source of these doubts lies in the behavior of an ethnically destabilized aristocracy.

The link between English and Irish oppression becomes still more apparent when one considers what Cooper omits—namely, that at this time the Irish gentry was largely Anglo-Saxon and Protestant. This omission is not too surprising in light of the fact that Ireland's Anglo-Protestant ascendancy generally defined itself as a distinct class that was neither entirely English nor entirely Irish.[32] Cooper's failure to recognize the Irish aristocracy's Anglo connections is another example of Samuel Madden's witty summation that these individuals were "envied as Englishmen in Ireland, and maligned as Irish in England" (96). As established in the introduction, the Anglo-Irish were problematically situated during the 1790s. Though they were by and large wealthy, Protestant, and politically powerful, they were still seen as somehow "less than English." While they were certainly more Anglo than Ireland's Catholic peasantry—who, as I have claimed, were represented both popularly and politically as "English, but not quite"—they were still stereotyped as "bellicose and bibulous" (McBride 246) and certainly "Other." Hence, the Anglo-Irish can perhaps be best thought of as "creolized"—a problematic unification between a dominant culture and an aboriginal group. While the Anglo-Irish would certainly provide an interesting case study for scholars examining the complicated intersections of privilege and disadvantage, I am primarily interested in considering how Godwin's invocation of this group, and the borderline status it implies, contributes to the destabilization of the novel's characters.

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[32] This statement is developed and supported at length in the Introduction of this study.

While it's true that Caleb's disguise identifies him more readily with the Irish-Catholic

peasantry in terms of class and (lack of) privilege, he is still not literally Irish, and this is key to

my reading. Even though he performs a version of "Irishness," Caleb remains an Englishman not

only in blood but also in spirit; he may speak with a brogue, but he still uses plain, "manly"

speech in an attempt to counter the power-tainted rhetoric of the public sphere that persecutes

him (McCann 75). Like Falkland, who performs "Italianness" but remains English in the literal

sense, Caleb's problematic national identity renders him borderless. Considering the largely

discursive nature of Caleb's and Falkland's border-shifting—Caleb learns to represent himself

via speech and dress as various members of oppressed ethnic minorities, and Falkland is largely

constituted by a pre-established set of "foreign" behavioral laws—it is useful to read Falkland's

Italian mannerisms and Caleb's various ethnic disguises semiotically, as a force that is

triangulated through the discourses of imperialism and is ultimately indicative of domestic—

both national and "private"—instability.

We have already considered the semiotic's role in the destabilization of national identity

in a historical context—Edgeworth's brogue's rendering him an object of derision in London and

Barnard's subsequent contention that "all but the grandest and most anglicized Irish protestants

were recognizable and comic to smart Londoners" (216) can be read as an example of symbolic

language symptomatizing anomaly. And language's role in border-crossing is also pretty clear in

Caleb Williams. Falkland, as we saw in the Malvesi episode, brings together the languages of

English reason and Italian courtliness, essentially representing his anomalous self through his

mixing of discourses and hence, ideologies. Caleb's use of disguise, which translates not just into

physical appearance but also into his speech patterns, can be read as a semiotic shift akin to

that of the historical Anglo-Irish, most notably in the sense that his inflections may change, but,

as McCann has pointed out, the content of his speaking does not. This rejection and

reconfiguration of language certainly does indicate a "dangerously" anomalous state, as it is

through their discourse performances that Falkland and Caleb are *most apparently* rendered

borderless, and it is Falkland's very borderlessness that *produces a culture* of oppression and

uncertainty in England, and Caleb's borderlessness that *exemplifies* this culture. As for the

historical Anglo-Irish, one can always recall McBride's claim that by the 1770s Anglo-Irishmen

were "moving towards a more insular definition of an Irish nation [read 'culture production']

which played down denominational divisions" (242). In essence, the Anglo-Irish became

recognizable as a creolized subculture.

More in terms of the narrative itself, it is interesting that, when preparing to flee to

Ireland, Caleb notes that "Ireland had to me the disadvantage of being a dependency of the

British government, and therefore a place of less security than most other countries which are

divided from it by the ocean. To judge from the diligence with which I seemed to be pursued in

England, it was not improbable that the zeal of my persecutors might follow me to the other

side of the channel" (239). However, the reader never discovers for certain whether or not

Ireland falls within Falkland's purview. Despite Caleb's depending on his "conscious disguise"

and "Irish brogue" "as a rock of dependence against all accidents" (240), he is arrested before

making his escape simply because his disguise causes him to be mistakenly identified as a

different wanted man. In terms of narrative, this moment is easily dismissable as a

contrivance—it is pure coincidence that two Irishmen robbed the Royal Mail while it was en

route from Edinburgh, and it is pure misfortune that Caleb supposedly resembles one of the

suspects. The bounty hunters who seize Caleb declare that his "accent, together with the

correspondence of [his] person, would be sufficient to convict [him] before any court in

England" (240), yet when he reads the description of the suspect, Caleb discovers that the

wanted man is not only shorter than him, but also of a different complexion (242). Even more

dramatically, when brought before the justice of the peace, Caleb drops his brogue and resolves to speak in his natural voice, a rhetorical move that ought to eliminate any uncertainty about his innocence in the matter at hand. Though both the magistrate and the bounty hunters quickly begin to question their assumption that Caleb is the man they are seeking, they still resolve to send him off to Warwick, where his supposed accomplice is being imprisoned, for the purposes of positive identification. Despite Caleb's expostulation spoken as usual "with an earnestness" that is mistaken for "insolence" (244), the judge remains implacable.

The seeming illogicalness of the magistrate's decision can be accounted for if one reads Caleb's circumstances as indicating a failure of boundaried categories: Caleb is not guilty of the crime that he has been accused of, but it is clear to the judge that he is not innocent either, and his lack of innocence is established through his inability to fit into demarcated groupings. The judge and the bounty hunters are unable to fathom, for example, how one who appears to be a beggar has come into legitimate possession of fifteen guineas. More provocatively, there is a disconnect between his beggarly "habiliments" and his skin, which is discovered to have "all the sleekness of a gentleman" (243). And of course there is the matter of his disappearing brogue. Given the nature and larger themes of the novel, Caleb's position as one whose markers cannot be easily read is conflated with guilt; as a being who defies categorization, he must be accused and contained.

Furthermore, Caleb's initial capture can also be linked to his anomalousness in the sense that this episode is essentially about boundary violation and containment. He is arrested while on board a ship that is preparing to launch for Ireland and, as a result, is thwarted in his attempt to flee the country. Reading this moment against his later encounter with Gines at the harbor produces some provocative results. Close to the end of the novel, Caleb again tries to flee England by ship, this time to Holland, and is intercepted by Falkland's shifty man hunter. Gines

explains that Falkland has determined that Caleb is free to wander England, Scotland, and Wales, but if he attempts to take to the sea he will be arrested immediately. In fact, Gines specifically states

> [i]t is my business now, do you see, for want of a better, to see *that you do not break out of bounds*…beware the salt seas…[y]ou are a prisoner at present…a prisoner within the rules; and the rules with which the soft-hearted squire indulges you are all England, Scotland and Wales. But you are not to go out of these climates. The squire is determined you shall never pass the reach of his disposal. (313, my italics)

At first glance, Caleb's inability to leave Great Britain seems to problematize his status as one who is borderless. Indeed, what we can conclude from these episodes is that it's one thing for Caleb to cross the *figurative* "bounds" of race, class, and ethnicity, but it is quite another for him to cross the more *literal* "bounds" of the channel. However, since Falkland (via Gines) constructs Great Britain as Caleb's "prison," and because a crossing of the channel would put Caleb beyond "the reach of [Falkland's] disposal," crossing the literal boundary of "salt water" would, presumably and somewhat paradoxically, resolve Caleb's anomaly, as there would be no further need for him to perform "Irishness," and hence he would no longer occupy an ethnically unstable position.

In support of this, I consider Joanne Tompkins's provocative challenge to Homi Bhabha and other postcolonial critics who claim, along a psychoanalytic axis, that "[a] contingent, liminal identity is, for a colonized subject, a useful tool for manipulating power relationships and relocating one's self in a subject position(s) of one's own choosing" (502). While it is true that Caleb is not a colonized subject per se, the fact that first, his identity has been repressed and constituted by the influence of a foreignized patriarch, and second, that he constructs himself as a colonized individual with his Irish disguise, positions him in a similar fashion. Indeed, Caleb's use of disguise also calls to mind Bhabha's far more famous concept of colonial mimicry, which he describes as "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that*

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is almost the same, but not quite" (122, original italics). Bhabha refers to this state as one of

"ambivalence" in which the "colonial subject" who performs the act of mimicry becomes "a

'partial' presence," meaning that the mimicking subject is both "'incomplete' and 'virtual'"

(123). Bhabha's description of colonial mimicry is certainly reminiscent of Caleb in that his

disguise renders him "virtually" Irish and, by extension, only "partially" English—"almost the

same, but not quite." Likewise, Tompkins's contention that "the latent disorderly nature of the

abject refuses both the neat, easy categorisations of colonizer/colonized and the free-flowing,

shape-shifting movement across boundaries" (506) is strikingly relevant to *Caleb Williams*,

particularly since "colonizer" Falkland is just as "abject"—to borrow Tompkins's terminology—as

"colonized" Caleb, and all of Caleb's "shape-shifting" ultimately leads to failure. Although

Tompkins is using the terms liminality and abjection rather than anomaly, her argument applies

to my own in that all of these terms are being used in their current contexts to parse out the

position of a "border" subject in relation to his movement through and across boundaried

space. I therefore cite Tompkins's findings to suggest that Caleb's status as one who is

uncategorizable does not give him "carte blanche" to cross boundaries in an attempt to

reestablish an independent subject position. Caleb's violating the boundaries of ethnicity is

acceptable in Falkland's world because it is the primary mechanism by which Caleb is kept in an

anomalous, disempowered position. As a deracinated Englishman—read "colonized subject"—it

is part of Caleb's nature to remain unsettled and perpetually in search of a satisfactorily

constructed self. However, a literal border-crossing remains out of the question, as it would

presumably free Caleb from persecution and undercut the primacy of Falkland's power. Indeed,

Judith Butler writes that "all social systems are vulnerable at their margins, and…all margins are

accordingly considered dangerous" (132). Hence, Caleb can occupy the margins of ethnicity,

since such occupation keeps him in a position of vulnerability, yet he cannot pass through the

physical margins of Falkland's sovereignty, since to do so would be to call into question his

master's "omniscience." The anomalous subject's border-crossing potential then, only applies to

the immaterial and the metaphoric—psychological borders can be crossed, yet physical

boundaries are impassable.

"He writes them all to my mind extremely fine, and yet he is no more than a Jew": Anti-

Semitism, Anomaly, and Caleb Williams

In 1805, Benjamin Silliman, an American on errand in London, observed of the Jews:

"this dispersed and despised people exhibit a living proof of the truth of prophecy…and are a

striking monument of the wrath of God; they are every where mingled with the nations, and yet

remain separate" (qtd. in Katz 293). Along similar lines, Frank Felsenstein maintains that the

eighteenth-century English image of the Jews—especially Ashkenazi peddlers—was that they

were all vagabonds; that

> [l]ike the Wandering Jew of legend, they are to be seen as perpetual aliens whose raison
> d'être may only be signalized through their difference from the host group and their
> apparent incapacity to assimilate…[t]heir outlandish garb and lowly status are to be
> seen as markers of their perpetual alienation, the fulfillment of biblical prophecy that in
> the countries to which they have been dispersed they may find no ease or rest. (64, 65)

Indeed, considering the Jewish diaspora's long history of marginalization and the controversy

surrounding Jewish readability or lack thereof—particularly when inhabiting Christian countries

like England—it is not thematically surprising that Caleb disguises himself as such. Nor,

considering the stereotypical image of the Jewish peddler as a trickster and a fence (Felsenstein

70-71), is it surprising that Caleb "learns" his Jewish disguise from one of the robber brethren.

His "talent of mimicry," which helped him to contrive a brogue earlier, now allows him to "copy

their pronunciation of the English language," and he even travels to "a quarter of the town in

which great numbers of this people reside, [to] study their complexion and countenance" (254).

It is interesting that, after he performs his "research," Caleb states that *"[i]t is unnecessary to*

describe the particulars of my new equipage. Suffice it to say, that one of my cares was to discolour my complexion, and give it the dun and sallow hue which is in most instances characteristic of the tribe to which I assumed to belong" (254-255, my italics). Here, Godwin/Caleb takes it as a given that his readers will know what a Jew's "equipage" looks like. Considering that Caleb's source on Jews consists of a robber and the occupants of a Jewish ghetto, it would likely be obvious to readers in the period that Caleb is disguising himself specifically as an Ashkenazi peddler. Todd Endelman's *Jews of Georgian England* confirms this, as the author relates that "[t]he popular image of the Sephardi Jew [from the Iberian Peninsula] was an opulent stockbroker and that of the Ashkenazi Jew [from Germany and Eastern Europe] a ragged old-clothes man," a stereotype that he attributes to the fact that there were far more Ashkenazi than Sephardi Jews in London in the eighteenth century, and thus, there were proportionally more poor Ashkenazi than there were poor Sephardi (171). Furthermore, because of their numbers and their characteristic occupation as hawkers, the lower-class Ashkenazi were more visible to native-born Englishpersons, and the (contestable) fact that most of the Jewish poor were Orthodox (189), likely made them more "legibly" Jewish.

If Godwin could assume that his audience would know what an English Ashkenazi Jew looked like, then it is likely that he could trust readers to form a mental image of an impoverished hawker, selling old clothes, cheap jewelry, or other knickknacks (180-81, 184). The "Jewish" Caleb embodies this stereotype to an extent; however, he becomes a somewhat different sort of hawker: a hawker of literature, albeit a type of literature that Garrett Sullivan characterizes as "'wares' churned out on demand and marketed by 'speculators'" (324). Caleb claims:

> I was not without a conviction that experience and practice [in writing] must pave the way to excellent production. But, though of these I was utterly destitute, my propensities had always led me in this direction; and my early thirst of knowledge had conducted me to a more intimate acquaintance with books...[i]f my literary pretensions

were slight, the demand I intended to make upon them was not great. All I asked was a subsistence…[t]he reasons that principally determined my choice, were that this employment called upon me for the least preparation, and could, as I thought, be exercised with least observation. (257)

Caleb's perception of his literary talents and the options that they afford him is strikingly reminiscent of the Ashkenazi Jews' reasons for engaging in street peddling. In the same way that Caleb is "utterly destitute" of "experience and practice," most Jewish immigrants to London were "penniless and unskilled," largely because they had scant opportunities to learn a craft in Germany[33], from which the majority came. Caleb feels that he's capable of eking out an existence as a writer primarily because of his "early thirst of knowledge" and "intimate acquaintance with books"; Jewish immigrants generally hawked because it was the only trade they or their families had known. Peddling was also attractive to newly-arrived Jews because it required very little start-up capital. Similarly, Caleb's realization that "[t]he little money with which I had escaped from the blood hunters was almost wholly expended" and that "this employment called upon me for the least preparation" (256, 257) are other factors in his decision to write for a living.

Nevertheless, readings of Caleb's Jewish disguise are complicated not only by his choice of subsistence but also, as with the Irish disguise, by the fact that he is not actually Jewish. His financial and motivational similarities to the historical Ashkenazi Jews are ultimately skin-deep, much like his contrived "discoloration." Indeed, this disconnect between racial "trappings" and actual performance is noted by Caleb's printer, who also happens to be Gines's brother: "we none of us know what to make of the writer of these articles. He writes poetry and morality and history: I am a printer and corrector of the press, and may pretend without vanity to be a tolerably good judge of these matters: he writes them all to my mind extremely fine, and yet he

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[33] This, and all other claims in this paragraph about Jewish immigrants come from Endelman, 179.

is no more than a Jew" (264). Though the last part of this passage is certainly the most provocative, the easily-overlooked first sentence is striking as a plaintive testament to Caleb's status as an anomalous figure. Caleb may "peddle" commodities like a Jew, yet the fact that his productions are "poetry and morality and history" identify him as an individual who is more educated than the average "no more than a Jew" Ashkenazi, who, as a result of poverty, lack of opportunity, and the demands of the family business, would have had very little secular education (Endelman 187-189). For the printer, this is "as strange as if [Caleb's productions] had been written by a Cherokee chieftain at the falls of the Missisippi [sic]" (264), a rhetorical move that effectively ushers Jews under the large tent of "foreign savages." 'What is one to make of such a person?' the printer seems to ask; how can one categorize an individual who does not respect socially-constructed boundaries and expectations?

The printer is not the only individual who notes Caleb's shifting ethnic boundaries. At one point, a nosy old woman notices "Jewish" Caleb leaving an inn in Southwark during the early hours of the morning. When she asks the landlady and the inn staff about "the Jew who had slept there the night before" (262), no one knows to whom she is referring, since Caleb apparently adopted his disguise after checking in. Based on the time of day that the old woman saw him leaving, the landlady concludes that it must have been Caleb, yet she can offer no explanation for his Semitic appearance. What is of most interest in this segment is the language that Godwin employs: "It was very strange," Caleb relates, "[t]hey compared notes respecting my appearance and dress. *No two things could be more dissimilar*. The *Jew-Christian*, upon any dearth of subjects of intelligence, repeatedly furnished matter for their discourse" (263, my italics). In addition to contributing generically to Caleb's ethnic borderlessness, the apparent utter "dissimilarity" between his natural appearance and his contrived one, and the uncomfortable synthesis of him as "the Jew-Christian" could, especially when taken alongside

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the printer's incredulity, be read as another example of continental "Others" infiltrating England's national borders. In this case, Caleb's synthesized appearance and synchretistic performance can be understood as representing a fusion of native Englishman with naturalized Jew. Of course, for such a claim to have any meaning or relevance, one must first attempt to sketch the position of the eighteenth century's Anglo-Jewry community.

It is of course impossible to present a simple account of how Jews were viewed by native-born Englishpersons in the late eighteenth century, as holders of both anti-Semitic and (problematically) philo-Semitic attitudes had a variety of reasons for their beliefs. While some in the latter camp were merely sympathetic to the Jews' history of maltreatment (Felsenstein 125), most others had more self-serving motives. Conversionists supported the presence of Jews in England because they believed it would facilitate the Jews' conversion to Christianity (91), while millenarians subscribed to the very Blakean notion of an "imaginative synthesis of Jerusalem and Albion" (222). As early as the Commonwealth era, some economic opportunists eschewed religious questions entirely and recognized the financial and trade expansionist benefits of hosting Jews—especially the Sephardi, because of their connections to Spain and Portugal—in England (Endelman 17-18, Katz 123). However, in order to appreciate fully the relevance of philo-Semitic positions to our reading of *Caleb Williams*, it is necessary for us first to account for anti-Semitic views and how they construct the Jew as an invasive foreigner whose influence threatens to undermine the English polity. Indeed, despite a preponderance of (very Anglocentric) philo-Semitism, negative images of Jews still comprised the dominant discourse. David Katz, for example, comments that it was "the continued public perception of a disproportionate Jewish involvement in crime that helped form attitudes to the Jewish population of London during the revolutionary period" (316), while Frank Felsenstein refers to

"the widely held belief that rich and poor Jews illicitly conspire[d] to sustain one another at the expense of the indigenous English" (216).

However, the most relevant anti-Semitic stereotype is that of the Jews as deserving vagabonds. Felsenstein cites the anonymously authored pamphlet *Look Before You Leap, or, the Fate of the Jews* (c. 1795), which states that "[t]he JEWS are held in utter and universal abomination, and are scattered up and down the earth like wandering vagabonds, for having disbelieved his Holy Word, for having crucified him, and denied his being the TRUE son of the LIVING GOD" (5-6). Similar, though somewhat less vitriolic, statements appear in the writings of messianist Henry Francis Offley, who in 1795, after making predictable "the Jews killed Christ" accusations, wrote "they were driven from society, and became vagabonds on the face of the earth" (xvii). Of even greater interest, Offley compares the diasporic nature of the Jewish people to the peddling profession, writing

> [c]ertainly the Jews almost ever since the destruction of their kingdom by Titus Vespasian, have been without a fix'd abode, and have been scattered all over the earth, neglecting the Lord their God...Even to England, if we confine ourselves alone, a Country professing the greatest humanity to strangers and foreigners—we see them wandering about the streets, particularly in the metropolis of London, in the most menial occupation, that of carrying a bag at their back, and crying old cloaths from door to door, the objects of universal ridicule and contempt. (8-9)

"Such utterances," according to Felsenstein, "reinforce the notion that the separation of the Jews is so ordained from above as a manifestation of heavenly displeasure and as a perpetual reminder of the truth of the Christian faith" (66). Indeed, the large influx of Jewish immigrants throughout the eighteenth century stirred up "pious" fears that a heavy concentration of Jews in the nation would contravene the will of a God who had intentionally scattered the descendants of "Christ's executioners" across the face of the earth. Not surprisingly, this discourse was particularly popular in 1753, when the Commons was reviewing the proposed Jew Bill (68). *A Modest Apology for the Citizens and Merchants of London, Who Petitioned the House of*

Commons against Naturalizing the Jews (1753), for example, argued that if the Jews were to "become native free-born *Englishmen* they then cease to be Vagrants, and find such a Rest, as will frustrate, so far as Man is able, the Truth of God's infallible Prophecies" (8).

Underneath these sanctimonious rationalizations, however, run the familiar fears of a destabilized English national identity. Katz reads the Aliens Act of 1793—which subjected immigrants, many of whom were Jewish at this time, to close governmental scrutiny—as a challenge to the Anglo-Jewry's loyalty. He writes that the Act "was but a symbol of the general feeling that revolution was a foreign import and as such its purveyors ought to be strictly watched" (285), a claim which implies that Jews were, at least to an extent, shuffled under the large categorical umbrella of continental foreigners. While the Aliens Act, openly anti-Semitic discourse, and the perpetuation of Jewish stereotypes were overt attempts at marginalization, it is interesting to note that so-called philo-Semites staved off fears of the English self somehow telescoping into a Jewish Other through the colonialist-inflected process of sentimental assimilation, the axes of which I have outlined in the introduction of this study. On the one hand there were the conversionists who pitied Israel's plight but still felt called to "save" their Hebrew brethren through baptism. On the other hand, there were the millenarians', whose desire to represent Britain as the New Jerusalem can be read as an attempt to claim the Chosen People's legacy. Felsenstein describes this position in particular as "characteristically one-sided." "English millenarianism," he claims, "rarely, if ever, pauses to consider the Jews as Jews. Its palliation of traditional anti-Semitic attitudes seems often more a fortuitous byproduct than ideologically central to its program" (222). Hence, while blatantly anti-Semitic discourse situated the Jews as dangerous Others and vaguely implicated them as Jacobinically-inclined, so-called "philo-Semitic" discourse effectively borrowed a page from the imperialist playbook by desperately seeking to gentrify, Christianize, and claim the spiritual heritage of the influx of

Jewish immigrants. Such approaches to London Jews suggest then that the diaspora was understood as a potential threat to English national identity.

In anticipation of those who might criticize these findings as speculative, I would like to relate briefly one particular historical moment that provocatively symptomatizes such fears. Most readers will probably be familiar with Lord George Gordon; yet while his role in the riots of 1780 that bear his name has been well-documented, less attention has been paid to his conversion to Judaism in 1787 and his life afterwards. In the same year as his conversion, he was vigorously prosecuted at both Versailles and London for libel against Marie Antoinette. Katz editorializes that this was a slight offense in comparison to 1780's riots (307), a claim which implies that Gordon's prosecutors had ulterior motives; indeed, it was the ostensible opinion of his contemporary biographer, Robert Watson, that Gordon's conversion was the real reason why the London court was so quick to prosecute him in the libel case (Watson 75). After being found guilty, Gordon fled to Holland, where his reputation as one who was "popular with the revolutionary elements" caused the Dutch to extradite him promptly back to England (Katz 307). While 1793's Aliens Act seemed to assume that all foreigners were suspect since revolution was constructed as a "foreign import," perhaps the "Judeo-fied" Gordon's well-known pro-revolutionary sentiments contributed especially to the Act's implications that the Jews had Jacobin sympathies. Furthermore, Gordon's ill-fated flight to Holland might have somewhat inspired Godwin, since Caleb twice attempts to flee to Holland and is frustrated in both attempts (270, 313).

In any case, when Gordon was rearrested, both his religion and his performance of it became a topic of prurient conversation in the London periodicals and among the British glitterati. The *Gentleman's Magazine* reported in 1787 on Gordon's "lodg[ing] in one of the dirtiest houses in Dudley street, where the Jews chiefly inhabit" (qtd. in Katz 307), while the

London Chronicle speculated that Gordon's beard was four inches long (558). More

provocatively, Horace Walpole recounted how at one particular dinner party where Gordon was

a subject of conversation, one of the guests commented on his "Mosaic beard," and that "it was

lucky when *converts* wore distinguishing marks by which they might be reconnoitred" (587-588,

original italics). This remark is of particular significance to our current discussion, as it points to a

fear of Jewish infiltration while at the same time, via the use of the conditional "when," tacitly

suggests the existence of a clandestine subculture of unreadable Englishpersons-turned-pseudo-

Jews, who need to be monitored, or "reconnoitred." Furthermore, considering the period's

concerns that the aristocracy's continentally-inflected mannerisms could and did trickle down to

the middling classes, we can conclude that someone like Gordon would have been recognizable

as a harbinger of broader social "decay."

　　Nevertheless, even though the presence of markers like Gordon's "Mosaic beard" is

desirable in that they make it easier for the majority to be aware of who is anomalous and who

is not, this does not prevent these same markers from being perceived as marks of monstrosity.

A reporter for the *London Chronicle* observed at Gordon's trial that "[h]is Lordship made a very

grotesque figure…he was wrapped up in a great coat, his hair lank as usual, his beard about

three inches long, extending under his chin and throat, from ear to ear, and differing from the

colour of his hair" (103, my italics). The reporter's choice of the word "grotesque" is particularly

striking here, as the Compact *OED*'s second definition of "grotesque" is "shockingly incongruous

or inappropriate." This "incongruity" not only invokes the uncanny nature of the anomalous

figure, but is also a synonym for "dissimilarity," the term that the gossip and the landlady

applied to Caleb Williams's contrasting physical appearances as he entered and left the inn in

Southwark. Hence, it seems likely that Godwin is situating Caleb as such a figure not just

because he disguises himself as a member of an ethnic group that is *in and of itself*

characterized as abject, but more importantly because he is, like Gordon, *an Englishman performing a Jewish identity.*

On a final note, it is a fitting testament to Gordon's uncategorizability that, after he died in Newgate Gaol, London's Jews refused to inter him, and his body was instead buried quietly in the St. James cemetery at Hamptstead Road (Katz 310-311)

Wandering Jew/Wandering Englishman: Caleb the Mythic

Simply in terms of tropes, it is not difficult to develop a comparison of Caleb Williams to the stereotypical image of a "vagabond" Anglo-Jew. In addition to his "discoloration" and "hawking" profession, Caleb has been uprooted from his home and forced to wander without rest as punishment for offending a "deity"—in this case the "sublime," seemingly "omniscient," and "god-like" Falkland. Furthermore, Caleb's repeated constructions of England as a foreignized land of which he is no longer a part, when read alongside the millenarians' and others' conflations of London with Zion, strengthens the comparison of Caleb to a Jew exiled from the Promised Land. However, tempting as it is to conclude that Godwin's protagonist is being constructed exclusively within the framework of eighteenth-century English anti-Semitic stereotypes, it is perhaps more accurate—and certainly helps to mediate this critical leap—to suggest that Caleb has as much in common with the legendary Wandering Jew as he does with the historical Anglo-Jewry. I realize that highlighting such a distinction between "fact" and "fiction"—especially when the "fact" was commonly seen as a logical outgrowth of the "fiction"—can be problematic, and is likely to bother a few Marxist scholars. Sullivan engages this issue when he writes that the sensational halfpenny pamphlet the *Most Wonderful and Surprising History, And Miraculous Adventures of Caleb Williams* "is circulated and consumed not as a fiction, but as an anonymous statement of fact" (323). This is why I am less interested here in drawing distinctions than I am in simply providing as thorough a reading as possible. The

purpose of visiting the narrative of the Wandering Jew, then, is not to say that Caleb has more

or less in common with him than he does with the Anglo-Jewry, but rather to illuminate how

Caleb's Jewish disguise is mediated by "fact," "fiction," and the uneasy fusion of the two.

Briefly, the story of the Wandering Jew is a Christian legend in which a particular Jew

struck, spat on, and/or in some other way insulted Christ while he was carrying the cross to the

place of crucifixion. In response, Christ cursed the Jew to forever wander the earth, never to

settle or die until the Second Coming. As he travels, the Jew preaches Christianity, cautions

those he encounters against blasphemy, and refuses to accept financial relief even from the

wealthy[34]. Interpretively, I agree with Felsenstein's summation that the myth of the Wandering

Jew:

> both asserts the values and beliefs of the Christian host group and at the same time
> preserves and perpetuates the alien or exo-cultural Otherness of the Jew. By constantly
> acknowledging the magnitude of his crime, the Jew affirms fundamental Christian
> verities, while also connoting the unhappy fate of those who fail or refuse to recognize
> what he now views as the true faith. (60-61)

Furthermore, the Jew's "zeal to proselytize" during his wanderings "is an essential canon of

Christian rather than Jewish teaching," while his intolerance for blasphemy and refusal to accept

alms "suggest qualities that were popularly thought to be distinctly Christian and as distinctly

un-Jewish." But, Felsenstein quickly points out, "in his purgatorial state of wandering his

inescapable Otherness as a Jew is perpetually reaffirmed" (61).

While it is not inaccurate to state that the legend of the Wandering Jew—which existed

as a European folktale even before the thirteenth century (Felsenstein 59)—was easily read in

the period alongside the current and prior conditions of the historical Jews, period

representations of the Wandering Jew differ from stereotypes of the Anglo-Jewry in two key

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[34] I am paraphrasing and redacting an account of the legend that Felsenstein quotes from an undated—
though verified as eighteenth century—copy of the prose chapbook *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, which
exists in the Solomons Collection of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.

ways, and it is this pair of dissimilarities that invites the current comparison to Caleb Williams.

First, the Wandering Jew was regarded as more sympathetic and respectable than real Jews

partly because "his long gown and flowing beard" depicted him as "one who retains

characteristics that are (at least vestigially) quasi-biblical and prophetic" whereas "the real Jew

in his physical and spiritual impoverishment manifests for the Christian world the present fallen

position of those who were once God's chosen people" (79). This contrast, though certainly

noted and common in the 1790s, was most wryly encapsulated in 1833, when Coleridge

observed that "[t]he two images farthest removed from each other which I can comprehend

under one term are, I think, Isaiah,—'Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth!'—and Levi of

Holywell Street—'Old clothes!'—both of them Jews, you'll observe'" (qtd. in Felsenstein 244-

245). Second, most versions of the legend dwell upon the Wandering Jew's "remarkable facility

with languages." "Wherever he travels," Felsenstein writes, "he is able to converse with ease in

any tongue, learned or vernacular, a talent that may be understood as miraculous confirmation

of the magnitude of his message." In contrast, the Jewish peddler was typically represented as

having only minimal knowledge of spoken English, preferring instead his "gibberish" Yiddish

(79). Because eighteenth-century Englishpersons could and did dovetail the myth with the

reality, and because of Caleb's "legendary" status among the English polity and his "talent for

mimicry," I believe that to consider Caleb Williams within the milieu of Anglo-Jewry, one must

also consider his kinship with the Wandering Jew.

Like the legendary Semite, Caleb does in fact become somewhat of a problematic folk

hero in the text. After his escape from the robber's den, for example, he overhears bar patrons

exchanging tall tales about one "Kit Williams." One man describes "Kit" as "a devilish cunning

fellow" known for "breaking prison no less than five times," while a "buxom" barmaid relates

how Kit "made his way through stone walls, as if they were so many cobwebs" (236, 237). This

same barmaid seems to harbor what could be described as a schoolgirl's crush on "Kit," as she

dwells on his reported handsomeness and cleverness, and claims that she prays for his

successful escape from his pursuers (237). Similarly, Caleb later encounters a hawker who is

selling the aforementioned sensational pamphlet which the latter describes as

> the most wonderful history, and miraculous adventures of Caleb Williams…how he first
> robbed, and then brought false accusations against his master; as also of his attempting
> divers times to break out of prison, till at last he effected his escape in the most
> wonderful and uncredible [sic] manner; as also of his travelling the kingdom in various
> disguises, and the robberies he committed with a most desperate and daring gang of
> thieves. (268)

When Caleb reads the pamphlet, he discovers that he "was equaled to the most notorious

housebreaker in the art of penetrating through walls and doors, and to the most accomplished

swindler in plausibleness, duplicity, and disguise" (269). Similar then to how an Englishperson

can sympathize with the "Biblical-looking" Wandering Jew while simultaneously castigating real

Jews, these narratives' tendency to present a heavily mythologized account of Caleb Williams

and his exploits produces both a kind of artificial sympathy and an "exo-cultural Otherness."

Essentially, these tales can cause a "star struck" barmaid and her ilk to see the largely fictitious

"Kit" Williams as a lovable scoundrel, while the circulation of these narratives places the actual

Caleb Williams in an oppressed position. The common people may get a prurient thrill out of

consuming these yellow accounts, yet the real Caleb is forced to see "a million of men, in arms

against me" (270), and his "whole species as ready, in one mode or other, to be made the

instruments of the tyrant" (277). Accepted as Caleb may be as a romantic figure, his narrative's

reliance on criminal episodes and defiance of the squirearchy still render him inexorably Other,

the same way that the Wandering Jew's sufferings can be pitied while his grievous act of

blasphemy and essential borderlessness still label him as a deserving victim. Essentially, the

Caleb Williams of popular imagination is as mythic and culturally fluent as the Wandering Jew,

yet the Caleb Williams who seeks shelter and human sympathy is suspect as a "thieving" peddler.

In sum, Godwin's decision to disguise his protagonist specifically as an Irishman and a Jew strengthens the notion that Falkland's (read "the aristocracy's") absorption of Italian culture threatens to destabilize English middle-class identity. By dressing Caleb up in these two specific ethnicities[35], Godwin engages discourses of Otherness and cultural infiltration that were germane to the period in which he lived. The final denationalizing blow, however, comes closer to the end of the novel and is signaled by the loss of domestic possibility, and with it, sympathy.

"It was this circumstance, more than all the rest, that gradually gorged my heart with abhorrence": Loss of Domesticity, Loss of Sympathy

In *Caleb Williams*—as in the "real world"—circulating texts possess a lot of currency. It was, as we have seen, Falkland's handbill that forced Caleb to flee the robbers' den, and it is Gines's pamphlet that forces him to flee London, where he imagines "almost every house of the metropolis, would be induced [by the pamphlet] to look with a suspicious eye upon every stranger, especially every solitary stranger, that fell under their observation" (270). Indeed, Caleb's paranoia is not entirely unfounded, as a mere two to three pages later he is betrayed by the elderly Mr. Spurrel, his last protector in London, who is eager to claim the promised reward of one hundred guineas (272-273). However, it is not until near the end of the novel, when Gines contrives for the damning pamphlet to end up in the hands of Caleb's friend, the Welshwoman Laura, that Caleb's "sympathy" finally decays. Before examining this moment though, it is essential that we first establish the domestic implications of Caleb's sojourn in Wales.

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[35] While Caleb does attempt a few other disguises—at one point he appears as "the son of a reputable farmer of the lower class," (253), at another he appears "twisted and deformed" (267)—none of them are ethnically-inflected and are therefore beyond the scope of this study.

While some of his motivations for residing in the countryside are simply expedient—he

hopes to remain "hidden from the world" until Falkland's death—his somewhat ulterior interest

in pursuing a life of virtuous domesticity is unmistakable. Not only has Caleb at this point

developed a "kind of disgust" for the "metropolis," since he has "spent so many hours of

artifice, sadness, and terror" in London, but also he believes that retirement to a rural setting

will allow him the opportunity to "methodise and improve the experience which had been

accumulated, cultivate the faculties I in any degree possessed, and employ the intervals of these

occupations in simple industry and the intercourse of guileless, uneducated, kind-intentioned

minds" (288). Essentially, he constructs the city as a site of artifice and the country as a place of

virtuous industry, a move that anticipates Radcliffe's presentation of Paris in *The Mysteries of

Udolpho* as a realm of corruption, and the French countryside as an idyllic utopia.

And indeed, Caleb the laborer initially thrives in Wales. In addition to assisting the

schoolmaster "who did not aspire to the sublime heights of science [Caleb] professed to

communicate" (290), he begins working on "an etymological analysis of the English language"

(294). Between these labors and the idyllic time that he spends with Laura, Caleb is "provided

with sources both of industry and recreation, the more completely to divert [his] thoughts from

the recollection of [his] past misfortunes" (295). His conduct and work ethic in this chapter

naturally positions him as a good member of the bourgeoisie,[36] and his longing to be a part of

Laura's family (292)—literally as well as figuratively, since at one point he imagines settling

down with Laura's eldest daughter (293)—only heightens his potential to win full membership in

the middle class.

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[36] For a good survey of eighteenth-century bourgeois values, consider the following studies: G.J. Barker-Benfield's *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992; Michael McKeon's *The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987; and Shawn Lisa Maurer's *Proposing Men: Dialectics of Gender and Class in the Eighteenth-Century English Periodical.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.

Thematically, Laura herself is an interesting, though generally overlooked, character. She is the daughter of "a Neapolitan nobleman" who was driven out of his country "upon suspicion of religious and political heresy," and who, we are told, fled with Laura "like Prospero in the Tempest…to one of the most obscure and uncultivated regions of the world" (290) before eventually settling in Wales. Laura's diasporic status is downplayed, however, by the fact that she was raised by a Welshman and his family since her own father (and, presumably, her unmentioned mother) died when she was an infant. As a result, her upbringing essentially precludes any acquirement of the "Italian" vices that plague Falkland. Though she successfully educates herself in areas that are "proper" for a young woman—she "taught herself to draw, to sing, and to understand the more polite European languages"—the fact that she "had no society, in this remote situation, but that of peasants" means that "she had no idea of honour or superiority to be derived from her acquisitions." Rather, she "pursued [her education] from a secret taste, and as the sources of personal enjoyment" (291), instead of as "medals to hang upon the genealogical tree," as is the case, according to Hester Thrale Piozzi, in Italy (50). This accounting of Laura's character, along with the fact that Falkland "imbibed" his values from reading rather than having been born with them, solidifies the notion that faulty ideas of "honour or superiority" are acquired rather than innate. In addition to downplaying the racist overtones of Godwin's reliance on Italian stereotypes, this move more importantly adds further support to the argument that Godwin is invoking ethnic stereotypes to criticize upper-class hegemony rather than to launch a wholesale attack on a particular culture. Though not without her flaws (as we will see momentarily), the ethnically Italian Laura is a more morally upright character than the discursively Italian Falkland.

Questions of ethnicity aside, the Laura episode performs two critical functions in the novel. First, as we have seen, Laura and her home present Caleb with a vision of and

opportunity for domestic bliss. More than that, it provides him with the chance to constitute

himself independently, as a "normative" being whose identity is not contingent upon Falkland or

his persecution. Second, the abrupt closing off of this possibility via Falkland's agency drives

home the point that aristocratic malfeasance threatens not only middle-class values, but also

the foundations of English civilization. The reader is warned fairly early that Caleb will not be

safe from Falkland's vengeance in his rural retirement, since Laura recounts, to Caleb's

astonishment, that she is aware of Mr. Falkland, having read about him in her father's letters.

Her father, it seems, knew of Falkland's encounter with Malvesi as well as other acts of

"gallantry" the squire had performed in Italy, and as a result, spoke of Falkland "in the highest

terms of panegyric." Because of this, Laura connects the idea of Falkland with "the sentiments

of unbounded esteem" (294). Therefore, it is not surprising that Caleb one day finds himself a

pariah in the small community—we later discover that the townsfolk discovered who Caleb was

because the damning pamphlet has made it into town. People suddenly begin to avoid him and

Laura herself refuses him an audience at her home. When he catches his beloved "mother" by

surprise in the fields, intent on delivering his side of the story, Laura lectures him that "[t]rue

virtue shines by its own light, and needs no art to set it off" (299) and refuses to believe that

Falkland could be anything other than "the most exalted of mortals." Caleb, in contrast, is to her

"a monster, and not a man" (300). In her analysis of the "power of narrative" in *Caleb Williams*,

Walsh essentially places the blame for Laura's actions on Falkland's abuse of reputation,

claiming that Laura "has formed her opinion of both men wholly on the basis of what she has

heard about them, not what she has experienced" (32). And though it does not refer directly to

the Laura episode, Horrocks's reading of *Caleb Williams* refers to Falkland as a purveyor of

Bakhtin's "authoritative discourse," which "demands that we acknowledge it, that we make it

our own" (Bakhtin 342) (Horrocks 37). In light of this, and the fact that Laura "had been used to

regard every little relic of her father with a sort of religious veneration" (Godwin 294) one could

claim that Falkland's—or in this case, Laura's father's—"authoritative discourse" governs her

opinion of the two men, which in turn supports the notion that the middle class is being "led" by

the corrupt aristocracy.

The significance of Falkland's role in Caleb's ostracization from the Welsh community

can be more fully appreciated if we consider it in relation to George Haggerty's claim that *Caleb*

Williams, Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*, and Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr.*

Hyde are millennial texts that "all show the ways in which apocalyptic thinking places male-male

desire at the fulcrum of cultural collapse" (128). Partially framing his analysis in Freud's case

study of Dr. Schreber,[37] in which the subject conceived himself as being in a homoerotically-

charged relationship with a judging, all-powerful God, Haggerty writes that "Schreber's

abjection before God is an attempt to fix (or transfix) himself with an identity…*the self is*

dissolved in the very attempt to fix identity. Identity itself becomes a kind of dissolution. It fails

to serve any function but the measure of loss" (111, my italics). Along this axis, Haggerty claims

Falkland is afraid that Caleb will "identify" him in relation to the "erotics" of his relationship with

Tyrrel, a move that could destroy not only life and reputation, but also

> the entire system of heteronormative culture, of which he [Falkland] has pretended to
> be a part. In this sense, the trial heralds the cataclysmic end of history, not just because
> the class system is threatened and one of the dispossessed succeeds in overwhelming
> his 'master,' but also because the erotic privacy of a man of means is revealed to his
> own detriment. This threatens the fabric of culture more than anything else that
> transpires in volumes 2 and 3. (115)

Though this discussion pays more attention to the erotics of the Falkland/Tyrrel dyad than it

does the Falkland/Caleb one, and though it does not account for Falkland's aggressive

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[37] Haggerty notes that Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has already claimed in *Between Men* that many Gothic
novels' "plots might be mapped almost point for point onto the case of Dr. Schreber: most saliently each is
about one or more males who not only is persecuted by, but considers himself transparent to and often
under the compulsion of, another male" (3).

intervention in Caleb's domestic idyll in Wales, it provides a useful lens for our current inquiry. If

we are to accept Haggerty's conclusion that "male love, properly articulated and fully identified,

can only mean the end of history," possibly because "male love offers" an "escape from

heteronormativity," (128) then we can read Caleb's forcible exclusion from domesticity as an

example of a "perverse" aristocracy blocking the flourishing of heteronormative culture in favor

of maintaining a homoerotic power struggle.[38] As Caleb seeks to resolve his anomaly by

"identifying" himself as one who is constituted heteronormatively and apart from Falkland, the

squire's "desire" for Caleb transfigures Caleb's attempts at identification into a "kind of

dissolution," as Laura's compassion for the fugitive, along with Caleb's humanistic sympathy,

evaporates under the compulsion of Falkland's oppressive influence. As a result, the possibility

of domestic settlement is blocked, and with it, the continued production of "civilization"— both

in terms of heterosexual marriage and procreation, and in terms of "civilizing" sympathy.

To support this reading further, one might consider in more depth the "queer" bond

that exists between Caleb and Falkland. The Laura episode inspires Caleb to proclaim that man

"holds, necessarily, indispensibly [sic], to his species. He is like those twin-births, that have two

heads indeed, and four hands; but, if you attempt to detach them from each other, they are

inevitably subjected to miserable and lingering destruction" (303). This passage is of particular

interest because it concludes a paragraph in which Caleb is mourning his loss of participation in

Laura's family and "how completely [he] was cut off from the whole human species" (303), and

therefore, can ostensibly be read as a simple claim about the necessity of human

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[38] While I do not wish to get sidetracked with a long discussion about the homosocial dimensions of *Caleb Williams*, I will point out that Monika Fludernik relates how Robert J. Corber "argues that Godwin presented Falkland as a 'sodomite' in order to further incriminate the conservative camp (that is, the aristocracy is tyrannical and unnatural; their tyranny is as unnatural as their morality and sexual mores), and he reads this device as a lamentable aberration on the part of a liberal Godwin who—so he argues— tried to curry favor with an unenlightened homophobic public" (858). For more information, see Corber's "Representing the Unspeakable": William Godwin and the Politics of Homophobia," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1 (1990): 85-101.

companionship. However, it is more accurate to see this image as a comment on the Falkland/Caleb dyad, since the image of a "twin-birth," with its "two heads and four hands" that cannot be safely "detached" invokes the monstrous, a term that cannot be applied to the Caleb/Laura dyad without considerable "reaching," yet can easily be used as a descriptor for Caleb/Falkland. Furthermore, it foreshadows the novel's conclusion, where Caleb's attempts to "detach" himself from Falkland end in "miserable and lingering destruction" for both men.

Essentially then, Caleb is held back from domestic fulfillment by his similarly anomalous oppressor, and "[i]t was this circumstance," he informs the reader, "more than all the rest, that gradually gorged my heart with abhorrence of Mr. Falkland" (303) (read "destruction of sympathy"). The destruction of sympathy marks the destruction of civilization, and the destruction of civilization has already been symptomatized in the foreclosure of domesticity, which itself was caused by Laura's "loss of sympathy" for Caleb. And finally, Caleb's own loss of sympathy results in his prosecution of Falkland, which, as Haggerty noted and as we shall now explore, "threatens the fabric of culture."

"I have now no character that I wish to vindicate": Abjectifying Sympathy

Finding that "the benevolence of [his] nature was in a great degree turned to gall" (317), Caleb finally decides to accuse his erstwhile patron in open court. This move is heavily in dialogue with the narrative of abjection, so it is necessary here to quote Kristeva at some length:

> When narrated identity is unbearable, when the boundary between subject and object is shaken, and when even the limit between inside and outside becomes uncertain, the narrative is what is challenged first. If it continues nevertheless, its makeup changes; its linearity is shattered, it proceeds by flashes, enigmas, short cuts, incompletion, tangles, and cuts. At a later stage, the unbearable identity of the narrator and of the surroundings that are supposed to sustain him can no longer be *narrated* but *cries out* or is *descried* with maximal stylistic intensity (language of violence, of obscenity, or of a rhetoric that relates the text to poetry). The narrative yields to a *crying out theme* that, when it tends to coincide with the incandescent states of a boundary-subjectivity that I have called abjection, is the crying-out theme of suffering-horror. In other words, the theme of suffering-horror is the ultimate evidence of such states of abjection within a narrative representation. (141, original italics)

From the moment that he opened the trunk, up until the courtroom scene, Caleb's identity has

been "narrated" by Falkland, and the result of this "narration" is a series of "incompletion[s],

[and] tangles," as he is short circuited and foiled every time he attempts to settle into a stable

situation. When Caleb finally decides he's had enough, he "cries out" via his "obscene" decision

to prosecute the respected Squire.

However, when Falkland, who has "the appearance of a corpse" (318), arrives at the

courthouse, Caleb's sympathy comes rushing back, and he is overcome with guilt. Rather than

impeaching Falkland's character, he chooses to tell a version of events that, while "a plain and

unadulterated tale," still portrays Falkland and his virtues in the best possible light. The reason

for this, according to Walsh, is that Caleb resists becoming like the "formal" justice system,

which is immune to "the sensibility of the sufferer" (33), and Falkland, as a human being, "does

not deserve the punishment and humiliation that the system metes out to guilty defendants"

(35); in the famous words of Audre Lorde, one "can't dismantle the master's house with the

master's tools." More relevant to our purposes, by focusing on Falkland's good qualities, Caleb

places the squire "in the same position as the honorable thief, Raymond, who because he has

started along the road of crime, is never free of his past actions" (Walsh 35). Raymond, Walsh

reminds us, tells Caleb that the justice system "seem[s] to have a brutal delight in confounding

the demerits of offenders. It signifies not what is the character of the individual at the hour of

trial. How changed, how spotless and how useful avails him nothing" (Godwin 227-228). This

characterization, of course, could be just as easily applied to Caleb while in his "unsympathetic"

state, yet he, unlike the justice system, is in fact affected by "the character of the individual at

the hour of trial." Still, by placing Falkland in the same position as the "honorable thief," Caleb

is, ironically, affirming Falkland's status as an anomalous figure.

Be that as it may, Caleb's decision to mitigate Falkland's crimes can also be attributed to a more sinister cause. The squire's weakness and self-effacing demeanor and Caleb's guilty response sounds suspiciously like Garofalo's reading of the "new aristocracy" and its tendency to enact "a vulnerable and beset manhood that allows them to assume the place of their victims," thus preserving "the power of the law and inspir[ing] renewed love in modern times" (238). Indeed, Garofalo writes of the ending that Godwin "represents the split between law and obscene master as complicated by the discourse of sentimentality…[h]e offers a twist on the story of modern power in which the leader becomes not only split between his public and his disavowed function but must also suffer for it, must appear to be the victim of the system that sustains his power" (240). In this reading, Falkland essentially uses his "vulnerability" to "trick" Caleb into occupying a position where the former wins a moral victory and the latter is left "in abject self-disgust…transfixed by the object of his misery and at odds with its subject" (116). Of course, a potential problem with this approach is that Falkland does not appear to be empowered by Caleb's "abject self-disgust"; he dies three days after the trial, and his accuser mournfully reports that Falkland's death has been "accompanied with the foulest disgrace" (326). However, though Caleb may have ultimately ruined Falkland's attempt to secure a legacy of virtue, one ought to note that Falkland's performance of "a vulnerable and beset manhood" has placed Caleb in such a position of guilt that it completely destroys him; now that "the guilt of Falkland [has been] established," Caleb is not liberated, but "truly miserable" (325). The squire's prophecy that "[t]he memory [of Caleb's attempts to expose him] shall survive me, when my existence is no more" (281) has been fulfilled; Caleb can neither forgive himself nor forget the consequences of his momentary "loss of benevolence."

The imperialist and marginalizing implications that emerge from the sentimental dynamics underlying this moment are complicated. Lynn Festa has written extensively on the

intersection of sentimentality and empire, essentially claiming that foreignness makes it difficult

to create objects with which we can sympathize (4), yet the deployment of feeling "fashions the

tropes that render relations with distant others unthinkable" (8). Sentimental texts, she claims,

helped to localize the world by "giving shape and local habitation to the perpetrators, victims,

and causal forces of empire" (2). However, she is quick to point out the difference between

sympathy and sentimentality; the former implies an absorption of the subject into the object

while the latter "is about both the encounter with the object…and the ability to disengage from

the scene" (35). A feeling individual may have a sentimental reaction to a colonized Other, yet

the feeling individual still has an anchoring place to which he can return, with identity intact. As

a result, sentimentality can be read as a tool of the colonizer, a strategy of sublimation in which

the feeling subject, threatened by abjection brought about by visceral contact with the deject,

seeks to control the seemingly "non-assimilable" Other (Kristeva 11). In terms of the novel then,

Caleb and Falkland can be understood as reacting *sympathetically* to each other in the

courtroom scene.

The mediating factor between the two men is, of course, Caleb's testimony, as Falkland

acknowledges that the narrative's sincerity is what has overcome him: "I could have resisted any

plan of malicious accusation you might have brought against me," he remarks, "[b]ut I see that

the artless and manly story you have told, has carried conviction to every hearer. All my

prospects are concluded. All that I most ardently desired is for ever frustrated…I stand now

completely detected" (324). As an "Italianated" Englishman who now lives only to guard his

reputation (282), Falkland is incapable of countering Caleb's plain speech, which, we recall, is an

effective counterweight to the corrupt rhetoric of the public sphere (McCann 75). Honest,

unadorned "English" speech overcomes any illusions of chivalric honor, and Falkland has no

choice but to succumb to Caleb's spontaneous rhetoric. Caleb, meanwhile, sympathizes with

Falkland's visible suffering as we have seen, and as the two dejects embrace, Caleb absorbs

Falkland's "heroism" and "virtues," while Falkland absorbs Caleb's "infamy" (324). The result of

this mutual exchange is death for Falkland and complete self-effacement for Caleb, who

famously concludes his narrative by admitting that he has now "no character that I wish to

vindicate" (326). The "sympathetic" switch that occurs between prosecutor and defendant acts

as the final, resonating example of abjection's disrespect of borders and what this disrespect

produces. Caleb and Falkland, both subjects unto themselves and objects unto each other,

exchange positions and—to an extent—identities, "'I' is expelled [and] the border has become

an object. How can [one] be without border?" (Kristeva 4) Hence, by "murdering" Falkland,

Caleb has essentially "murdered" himself. As Haggerty off-handedly proposes, Caleb's loss of

"character" can be read as "the result of a psychological impasse that makes identity a self-

contradiction" (116).

External to psychoanalysis, Caleb's angry decision to prosecute Falkland is, once again,

readable as a loss of sympathy and hence a loss of civilization. In this reading, the fact that he

regains his sympathy is largely immaterial, as Falkland's dirty laundry has already been aired, an

exposure that in and of itself rocks the foundations of civilization. To learn that the eminent

Squire is a murderer and a tyrant is, in the words of Collins, to "change all my ideas, and show

me that there [is] no criterion by which vice might be prevented from being mistaken for virtue"

(310). Falkland's exposure as one who has been corrupted through and through by Italian vices

destabilizes the validity of the patriarchy; Caleb recites the "moral" as a sort of monologue to

the departed Falkland, mourning that "the poison of chivalry" and "low-minded envy…hurr[ied]

thee into madness…[f]rom that moment thou only continuedst to live to the phantom of

departed honour. From that moment thy benevolence was in a great part turned into rankling

jealousy and inexorable precaution" (326). Of the ending, Garofalo writes that Caleb "never

perceives…that the humanitarian law of universal justice to which Falkland subscribes[39] might

actually be impotent"; he never "suspect[s] that the chivalric law has actually failed. By ignoring

this failure, Caleb only safeguards the very power that Falkland has all along sought to protect

and thus becomes a guardian of the very ideology he would dismantle" (240). However, this

claim hinges on an assumption that Falkland's chivalric values are not exposed to the public as

faulty. I find this supposition to be problematic, as it glosses the fact that Falkland admits to

committing murder and persecuting Caleb in open court and, subsequently, dies "accompanied

with the foulest disgrace!" (326) Caleb's final speech act, then, illustrates that the law is not

"embodied in a terrifyingly powerful Falkland," but rather that it is "a disembodied force that

compels the master like a puppet" (Garofalo 240), a revelation which implies that it is

continental influence which motivates a beloved country Squire to become "the obscene

manipulator of lesser men's fate" (Godwin 239).

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[39] Garofalo claims that Falkland's "law of chivalry…demands fidelity to universal justice" (238), yet she fails to cite any evidence, textual or otherwise, that "universal justice" has anything to do with Italianate chivalry. I cite this problematic portion of her reading simply to remain faithful to context.

CHAPTER II

PRODUCING SAMENESS ABROAD: FEELING, DOMESTICITY, AND THE SUBLIME IN THE NOVELS

OF ANN RADCLIFFE

Description itself is a political act.

-Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*

The project of imperialism has always already historically refracted what might have been the

absolute Other into a domesticated Other that consolidated the imperialist self.

-Gayatri Spivak, "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism"

No figure in the canon of late eighteenth-century Gothic literature is as controversially-

positioned for scholars as Ann Radcliffe. While the last chapter of this study has brought

Godwin's "radicalism" into question at points, it is more or less impossible to mistake the author

of *Political Justice* as a conservative, or even a moderate. Radcliffe scholars, however, have been

eager to claim her as a sort of proto-feminist while simultaneously being stymied by the primacy

of bourgeois heterosexual love in her novels, a position best summarized by Robert Mayhew,

who writes

> [i]t has been suggested that Radcliffe's work has radical strains in its presentation of
> women and more generally in its portrayal of patterns of feminine sensibility…[yet] the
> limitations of her radicalism are discussed, her providential endings of marital bliss
> being as problematic today as they were to early nineteenth-century critics. She
> emerges from this criticism, as she did from trajectory-based generic criticism, as at best
> a liminal figure. (584)

Because of her position as a popular writer who influenced more "literary" authors like Shelley

and Austen, "liminal" is a good way to describe Radcliffe, but "anomalous" is perhaps the best

way to describe her heroines. Though indisputably marginalized because of their gender and

lack of financial mobility, the protagonists of *The Romance of the Forest, The Mysteries of*

Udolpho, and *The Italian* are also highly Anglicized figures moving through a world that is

occupied by monstrous, continental "Others." Considering that these novels were written by a

British author living and working in a period when the imperial effort was highly visible, the latter position grants Adeline, Emily, and Ellena a considerable degree of "inherent" moral superiority, particularly where domestic matters are concerned. Hence, part of this chapter's goal must be to unravel the questions of ethnic-based privilege and gender-based disadvantage that haunt these texts—with examples of both often appearing on the same page—and to consider how these questions play out along an imperialist axis.

First, however, it is important for us to establish a more universal understanding of how Radcliffe's work is situated in relation to colonialist discourse, and the extent to which its relative positioning differs from that of *Caleb Williams*. To do this, it is best to begin with a cursory consideration of how the texts' antagonists operate because, though their ethnic anomalousness renders them somewhat similar to Falkland, the manner by which they oppress the novels' protagonists is quite different, and it is through an examination of this difference that we can develop a better sense of the divergent form that nationalistic conflict and oppression takes in Radcliffe. In essence, while both Godwin and Radcliffe couch conflict in colonialist rhetoric, challenges to Caleb Williams's ethnic character are brought up more often in public spheres, while Adeline, Emily, and Ellena encounter such challenges more often in domestic contexts.

Much like the heroines, the monstrous "Others" of Radcliffe's texts may be easily identified as such, yet their nationalities are not readily mappable, as they are simultaneously connected with England and southern Europe. While Montalt, Montoni, and Schedoni are ethnically French or Italian, these "Otherized" villains' manners and Machiavellian personalities seem to be pulled from Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre (Agorni 30), thus connecting them with an English cultural heritage. Though a claim that these figures are Anglo-inflected Frenchmen or Italians, and therefore mirrors of the English-but-Italianated Falkland, would ring

simplistic, their hybridity nevertheless implies that they, like him, can be read as anomalous, foreignized threats to the British polity. However, where Falkland's actions essentially deracinate Caleb Williams and in so doing call the guarantees of the *Magna Carta* into question, Radcliffe's antagonists work to undermine female virtue and the ideals of domesticity. In essence, while Falkland's oppressive acts directly assaulted national values since they were projected onto a man and his civil liberties, Radcliffe's villains, with their persecution of women's "private" virtue, are more circuitous in their undermining of Britain's cultural values. Frances Chiu's claim that Gothic fiction can be seen as a "large-scale political allegory…which renders the public sphere into a more comprehensible private and domestic one" (par. 13) provides evidence not just of the common critical perspective that private virtue is linked to national strength, but also indicates the Gothic's involvement in this discourse. And even though she is writing on Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron*, Abby Coykendall's claim that "for Reeve, family history is national history, and the traumas within one directly mime the traumas within the other" (462) similarly rings true on a larger historical register.

Considering that both *Caleb Williams* and the works of Ann Radcliffe are concerned with foreignized threats to the polity, and both ultimately encode these threats in the rhetoric of empire, these differences may at first seem negligible. When considered in a finer context though, this divergence is quite significant in that it demonstrates how the discursive dimensions of British imperialism play out relative to English domesticity and middle-class femininity—realms of inquiry that are certainly connected to concerns about national identity, yet are also of course fruitful areas of scrutiny in their own right. Furthermore, the fact that Caleb Williams seems to "fail" at the task of preserving a distinctly English self, while Radcliffe's heroines succeed, is a discrepancy worthy of further consideration.

The "easy" explanation for the latter incongruity lies simply in the realm of authorship: Godwin and Radcliffe are two different writers with largely divergent political sensibilities: the first writes to impugn the aristocracy's suppression of the middle class's "natural freedoms," and the second writes to affirm the salience of domestic virtue. However, when this issue is viewed more closely on a textual/historical level, matters become far more complicated. To parse out this question, I propose that Caleb Williams does not have the same domestic support networks that Radcliffe's protagonists have—even if in some cases all the heroines possess are "surrogate" parents and their resonant lessons. As a result he does not have access to the discourses of sensibility and sublimity that Adeline, Emily, and Ellena use to preserve their identities and negotiate their threatening environments. I maintain that the ability to harness these discourses proves to be crucial in Radcliffe's work, and the fact that Caleb is incapable of utilizing them is what effectively condemns him to his final, denationalizing fate.

"A Vision of Herself [or Himself]": What Caleb Lacks

It would seem that the genesis of many of Caleb Williams's problems lies in the way he is positioned in relation to his oppressor. Very little is known about Caleb's parents other than that they were "peasants" who "had no portion to give [him] but an education free from the usual sources of depravity, and the inheritance long since lost by their unfortunate progeny! of an honest fame" (3). Although Caleb does refer to Collins as "my father" at one point in the text (309), the most significant role model/father figure in Caleb's life is undoubtedly the anomalous, antagonizing Falkland, whose "virtues" Caleb breathlessly characterizes as "almost too sublime for human nature" (107).

Radcliffe's heroines, on the other hand, tend to possess not only some kind of "innate" awareness of English female virtue, but also an unproblematically "good" parent or parent-figure whose guidance affirms their subscription to "proper" moral codes: Adeline is sheltered

by La Luc, who is a paradigm of benevolent patriarchy; Emily's father St. Aubert teaches her how to avoid excessive sensibility while at the same time preserving a virtuous regard for others (85-87); Ellena is raised by her affectionate and levelheaded aunt, Signora Bianchi, and is guided and sustained later in the text by her mother, Sr. Olivia, although neither party is aware of their kinship until the very end. Also unlike Caleb, Radcliffe's heroines tend to recognize villains when they see them: Adeline quickly realizes upon observing Montalt and La Motte that something sinister is occurring between the two men (106); Emily admits to herself that she "had never liked Montoni" and that "from the usual expression of his countenance she had always shrunk" (168); and Ellena, upon first seeing Schedoni, notes that his "air and countenance were equally repulsive," and that "there was something also terrific in the silent stalk of so gigantic a form; it announced both power and treachery" (256). Even upon learning (erroneously) that he is her father, Ellena is still suspicious, as we are told that Schedoni's "eloquence…was not sufficient to justify an entire confidence in the assertion he had made, or to allow her to permit his caresses without trembling" (274). I would claim that the heroines' are represented as such good judges of character because they have been cathected—partly because of their parents' influence— with a vast reservoir of sensibility, which grants them what Syndy Conger refers to as a "*heightened consciousness…*[a] capacity to *penetrate beyond physical surfaces*" (161, original italics). While this "heightened consciousness" certainly allows them to see past the villains' oftentimes charming demeanors—in contrast to the bedazzled Caleb—it also, more provocatively, grants them an ability to essentially penetrate into and draw strength from the sublime.

Elsewhere[40] I have highlighted this provocative dialectic between sensibility and

sublimity within the context of the "female Gothic" by pairing Conger's claim with Vijay Mishra's

contention that "one gains access to the sublime through self-contemplation, unrestrained by

other demands or imperatives. In this narrative, 'the sublime is simply *the heightened*

consciousness of beholding oneself beholding the world'" (35, my italics). Furthermore, it is

Kant's sublimity which makes us "conscious of our superiority over nature within, *and thus also*

over nature without us (as exerting influence upon us)" (qtd. in Mishra 35, my italics). Hence,

possessing a vast reservoir of sensibility grants one a "heightened consciousness," while

possessing a "heightened consciousness" makes one more attuned to the sublime. This, in turn,

allows one to tap into one's own inner strength and thus preserve an emphatic sense of self.

This understanding of sublimity and its effects recalls Kant, whose formulation of the sublime

experience imagines it as enabling the viewing subject to experience "an intense self-presence"

and a "feeling of exaltation" (Ryan 265, 267). In the context of Radcliffe's work (and elsewhere),

an experience of the Kantian sublime is brought about by viewing majestic scenes of nature,

whether it is the "Alpine steeps" (256) that cause Emily's "mind [to recover] its strength" (257)

in *Udolpho*, or the "grandeur" of "a landscape spread below" that makes Ellena realize in *The*

Italian that "hither she could come, and her soul, refreshed by the views it afforded, would

acquire strength to bear her, with equanimity, thro' the persecutions that might await her"

(106). The "Kantian" sublime, I have argued, can be metaphorically read in Radcliffe as a kind of

"good father," since the romantic, natural world that produces this type of sublimity clearly

protects and, in a sense, "teaches" the heroines the fortitude they need to remain centered in

the face of oppression. In addition to the textual evidence cited above, part of my conclusion is

based on Eugenia Delamotte's *Perils of the Night* (1990), in which she claims that the heroine is

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[40] Charlie Bondhus, "Sublime Patriarchs and the Problems of the New Middle Class in Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Italian*." *Gothic Studies* 12. 2 (2010).

protected from the villain by a "spiritual barrier" constituted by her "conscious worth" of her own virtue (32-33). This steadfast confidence, I contend in the article, comes from the Kantian sublime which, like a "good father," provides his daughter with moral instruction and protects her virtue. More provocatively for our current purposes, Delamotte goes so far as to suggest that the heroine's "conscious innocence" is what allows her to maintain "a vision of herself in an environment in which everything works to make her seem, even in her own eyes, other than what she is" (177). I highlight this statement because it evokes a conflict that is central to all of the texts we have engaged—namely, the protagonists' constant efforts to resist their antagonists' tireless attempts to ethnically and morally anomalize them despite their Anglo-virtued conceptions of themselves. Put plainly, by helping the heroines' to maintain their virtue—an important (if not the most important) locus of domestic, bourgeois identity in the novels—the Kantian "good father" sublime contributes invaluably to the preservation of its "daughters'" Anglo-inflected selfhood.

One must keep in mind, however, that there were at least two dominant conceptions of sublimity occupying the British imagination in the 1790s. In contrast to Kant, Burke suggests that the sublime imposes upon the viewing subject a "sense of [her or his] own limitation" (Ryan 266); this type of sublimity is most readily encoded in the seemingly all-powerful villains who persecute and imprison the *seemingly* powerless Adeline, Emily, and Ellena. Similarly, this type of sublimity seems to be an apt descriptor of the awe-inducingly "omniscient" Falkland, the sole significant father-figure in Caleb Williams's world. Because Falkland—whose antagonizing influence ultimately turns Caleb's "sympathy" to "gall"—is the only source of paternity and sublimity in this text, one could say that Caleb is simply not discursively equipped to effectively resist the corrupt patriarchy's anomalizing influence in the same way that Radcliffe's sentimental heroines are. Simply put, Caleb's lack of a "benevolent" patriarch precludes his

access to sustainable sympathy, and since Falkland is the sole source of sublimity in the text,

Caleb does not have a constructively (read: "Kantian") sublime object upon which he can turn

his sentimental, "heightened" gaze anyway. As a result, he does not have the self-preserving

discursive mechanisms that Adeline, Emily, and Ellena have, and is therefore incapable of

maintaining "a vision of [him]self in an environment in which everything works to make [him]

seem, even in [his] own eyes, other than what [he] is" (Delamotte 177).

Position(s) and Conflict: Heroines and Ethnic Anomaly

Despite (and perhaps also because of) the discourses at their disposal, Radcliffe's

heroines occupy a problematic ethnic nexus within the texts. To ground their position in both

discursive and historical terms, it is useful for us to turn to the scholarship of Felicity Nussbaum,

who begins *Torrid Zones* by stating that "the invention of the 'other' woman of empire enabled

the consolidation of the cult of domesticity in England and, at the same time, the association of

the sexualized woman at home with the exotic or 'savage' non-European woman" (1). Here,

Nussbaum is defining "women of empire" as colonized women—brown persons characterized as

lascivious and alien, whose sensationalized existence creates a politically convenient—however

inaccurate—analogue for the "sexualized woman at home," thus bringing into relief the urgent

necessity of a paradigm of domestic femininity to distinguish the "civilized" homeland from its

"uncivilized" colonies. However, Nussbaum also points to a broader definition of this term,

claiming that it further

> encompasses European women in their complicity in the formation of empire *and* in
> their being scapegoated as the focus of luxury and commercial excess. The term
> ["women of empire"] unites women around the world in the eighteenth century in
> Europe and the colonies, because they share the threat of unregulated sexuality and the
> promise of maternity; what unites them in feminist theory is their mutual oppression.
> (2)

Nussbaum's terminology therefore provides a useful starting point for our consideration of

Radcliffe's heroines not only because it points to the conflict of ethnic privilege and gendered

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disadvantage that is a hallmark of these characters, but also because Adeline, Emily, and Ellena

can easily be understood as idealized daughters of the British bourgeoisie who act as a "stable"

and "moral" counterpoint to the dark, "exotic" sexuality of both the villains and "foreign"

women (i.e., Mme Cheron, Laurentini/Sr. Agnes, the Marchesa di Vivaldi, etc.). Furthermore,

Nussbaum's elaboration that "European women are curiously considered to need protection

from the sexually passionate indigenous men of the empire" (3), evokes Radcliffe's heroines'

embattled relationships with sinister continental patriarchs. I ought to clarify then that my

intent here is not to label Adeline, Emily, and Ellena as "women of empire"; nor is it to label

them as *other than* "women of empire." Rather, I invoke Nussbaum for the purpose of providing

historical/theoretical context—I understand her reading of "women of empire" as indicative of

female anomaly in the imperial eighteenth century. If British women are implicated in the

colonial project as oppressors, and yet simultaneously recognized as victims of a white

patriarchy—as colonized women of color clearly are—then this helps not only to ground my

claims that Radcliffe's heroines are "anomalous," but also to clarify how easy it would have

conceivably been for Radcliffe to create female characters who are ethnically French and Italian

but who behave like bourgeois Englishwomen.

Indeed, the heroines' essential Englishness has certainly not escaped the attention of

critics. Ronald Paulson says of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* that "[t]he deeply intuitive feelings of

Emily are the quiet English virtues of the spectator of sublime overthrow across the channel"

(279), and Ellen Moers muses that "[t]here is something very English about Mrs. Radcliffe's doll

heroines" (139). However, the only scholarship that I am aware of that has made a *direct*,

sustained attempt to deconstruct this seeming disconnect between ethnicity and performance

appears in critical literature specifically on *The Italian*. Diego Saglia's "Looking at the Other:

Cultural Difference and the Traveler's Gaze in *The Italian*," (1996) for example, makes the case

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that Vivaldi and Ellena take over the roles of the English tourists who are visiting the *Santa*

Maria del Pianto in the Prologue, while Schedoni stands in for the assassin that the same British

tourists spot in the church. Provocatively, Saglia here labels Schedoni as "inherently foreign" and

Vivaldi and Ellena as "apparently foreign" (18-19). Similarly, Cannon Schmitt refers to Ellena as

"an incarnation of Englishness" (855), comments that "[f]oreignness in *The Italian* is

concentrated in the figure of Schedoni" (861), and refers to Ellena's contradictory character

traits as foregrounding Radcliffe's tendency to shoehorn an Italian female character into an

English mold (859).

It is important, however, that I intervene with a caveat here. One of the primary goals of

this chapter is to consider through a close reading the shifting ethnic positions of both the

heroines and the villains. As we will see, the female protagonists' virtue and subscription to an

English bourgeois ethos is called into question at a few points in the respective texts; likewise,

the "villains'" ostensible status as continental stereotypes is also destabilized at various

moments as they experience—often, admittedly, fleeting—moments of guilt, uncertainty, and

repentance. In essence, both parties exist on a shifting continuum, which itself is located at a

discreet nexus of "English bourgeois" values and "continental Otherness"; the distinction

between English heroine and foreign villain then is largely a question of which aspect of the

character's identity is emphasized at a given moment in the text. Obviously, by virtue of their

behavior, the heroines are generally more on the "English bourgeois" side of the continuum

while the villains are generally more on the other end for the same reason. Hence, as we will see

in the analysis, it is ultimately impossible to label any character as "inherently British" or

"inherently foreign," despite Saglia's tendency—in an otherwise excellent article—to do so.

In fairness to Saglia provocative work, I also ought to point out that he describes the

Gothic as "a conflict between agents of similarity and figures of difference" (13), and he claims

of *The Italian* specifically that "Radcliffe's romance testifies to a sustained effort in creating an imaginative geography of Italy and in pitting this realm of otherness against the travelling characters" (15). Essentially, I agree with Saglia's claim here that Radcliffe's fiction represents a "conflict" between (English) "similarity" and (continental) "difference," and that the "imaginative geography" of the continent is the venue for this conflict; hence, Saglia's scholarship undeniably provides an important frame for this chapter. However, Saglia also, I think, understates the complexities of the characters' ethnicities and their performances of those ethnicities. Thus, part of my task must be to fill this gap and address some of the nuances that critics have—likely unintentionally—neglected.

While Saglia's and Schmitt's work will ultimately play a considerable role in my own close reading of these texts, the larger critical narratives that frame this study offer far more provocative solutions to the overarching dilemma of Adeline's, Emily's, and Ellena's ethnicities. To parse out the terms of this anomalousness along a historical axis, I claim that Radcliffe's heroines are essentially living in a diaspora, a placement which identifies them with creolized dejects such as the Anglo-Indian Emma Roberts, whom I will discuss in more detail in the next section. When we consider Nussbaum's claim that there is a political-discursive conflict between "women of empire" and English domestic femininity alongside my claim of the existence of an ethnic/behavioral divide in Radcliffe's heroines, we can suggest that part of the protagonists' struggle is the battle between their English manners and their foreign backgrounds—essentially Adeline, Emily, and Ellena's performance identifies them with the cult of domesticity, yet their continental blood and (oftentimes familial) proximity to licentious, "Other" characters situates them in a position that is *discursively similar* (though certainly not identical) to the "Other," narrowly-defined "woman of empire"—she whose "darkness" and inherent "foreignness" renders her, in the British popular imagination, the inverse of middle-class domestic values. Not

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only does this particular tension ground the discussion in anomalous ethnicities, it is also in

dialogue with my earlier point that the mere existence of the Gothic as such, with its wild

settings and cast of noble chevaliers, fainting women, megalomaniacal barons, and scheming

monks, reflects an absorption and embracement of colonialist discourse.

Admittedly, the heroine's internal conflict seems a bit one-sided, as Adeline, Emily, and

Ellena never overtly deviate from the narrow path of virtue. However, their "true" "English"

identities are nevertheless called into question at certain odd moments in the texts, and when

such questions are raised, they are generally accompanied by threats of the heroines being

somehow sexualized. By way of example, the possibility of "going native" is represented in *The*

Italian when the reader is duped into believing that the malicious Italian monk Schedoni is

Ellena's father, thus creating the potential for a sort of moral miscegenation (Schedoni is

actually Ellena's uncle through marriage—hence they share no blood tie). Similarly, in *The*

Romance of the Forest, Adeline is led to believe that one of the Marquis de Montalt's merciless

henchmen is her father (we later discover that her father was actually murdered by the Marquis

de Montalt, who is her uncle). More nuanced examples of the "going native" fear occur in *The*

Mysteries of Udolpho, first when the possibility is obliquely raised that Emily is attracted to her

villainous uncle-through-marriage Montoni, and second when she is briefly implicated in Sr.

Agnes's/Laurentini's sexual guilt.[41] Considering that both national and personal identities are at

stake here (and not forgetting who the author is), the English subject must attempt to reverse

this trajectory so that the continental Other is assimilated into the self rather than the reverse.

Radcliffe's heroines work to accomplish this via the deployment of discourses of domesticity and

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[41] In her "The Pleasure of the Woman's Text: Ann Radcliffe's Subtle Transgressions." *Gothic Fictions: Prohibition/Transgression.* Ed. Kenneth Graham. New York: AMS Press, 1989. 151-62, Coral Ann Howells sees these as "eccentric moments, which evade the constraints of conventional narrative and social order, lifting the veil to reveal other possibilities not contained within the conventional story at all" (151). In a larger sense, I would say that the entire notion of "going native" can be seen in the same way, as an evasion of "the constraints of conventional [nationalistic] narrative and social order."

sentimental assimilation, staving off threats to their virtue—and by proxy, their highly gendered

ethnic identity—by behaving as "ideal" Englishwomen. To this end, Adeline strives to win the

parental affection of the La Mottes despite their eventual cruelty; Emily respects the

disingenuous Montonis as her aunt and uncle; and Ellena, despite her suspicions about

Schedoni, accepts him as her father. Through these actions, I contend that the heroines are

attempting to draw the villains (who are the chief signifiers of alterity) into the domestic

economy—a move that is reminiscent of Richardson's protagonists' constant attempts to reform

the rakes who persecute them. And, of course, Adeline, Emily, and Ellena do not rejoice in the

villains' falls, choosing to extend their seemingly endless supply of pity to their persecutors

instead, a gesture of benevolence that cements their idealized middle-class English identities;

essentially, they act as "ideal English daughters" in an attempt to reform their "less-than-ideal,

continental fathers." In this sense then, Radcliffe seems to be upholding the status quo as far as

the role and rights of women are concerned.

      However, while I wish to hold onto my contention that Radcliffe's characters can be

read as metonymic figures whose existence points to the larger conflict of preserving an English

identity in an age of empire and diaspora, I would also like to suggest that, by creating English

characters who are nominally French and Italian, Radcliffe may have been attempting to

promote the universal adoptability of English morals. In this reading, Radcliffe seems to be

discursively invoking the missionary aspect of/justification for colonialism—if Hindus can be

converted to Christianity, or former slave Olaudah Equiano can assimilate into London society,

then surely the "misguided" members of "lesser" white European nations can adopt an

"enlightened" value system. And since part of a middle-class Englishwoman's role in this period

is to be a paragon of virtue and an example for men, then Adeline's, Emily's, and Ellena's

unparalleled display of continence while under the oppression of lascivious foreign men (and, to

a lesser extent, women) offers the possibility of English domestic values infiltrating southern

Europe through female intervention in the appropriately "private" sphere of domesticity.

Indeed, if an expanding, interactive empire and Wollstonecraft's call that *all* women enjoy (a

Eurocentric form of) liberty has begun to render feminine ethnic difference disturbingly unclear

for Radcliffe and her contemporaries, then why not take advantage of the relative confusion to

promote the cult of domesticity as a universal standard?

While these reformist possibilities are never fully realized, we still see them hinted at in

all three of Radcliffe's major novels. In some instances—most blatantly in *The Romance of the*

Forest and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*—this dynamic plays out in Radcliffe's deployment of two

villains: one who is utterly "irredeemable" and another who is "somewhat redeemable." In all

three of the novels, however, the possibility of the villains' moral reform is represented at

various destabilizing moments. While Coral Ann Howells (fn 38) has observed instances where

Radcliffe briefly and obliquely places her heroines in morally ambiguous situations, I contend

that there are also moments where the villains are cast into notably anomalous positions:

moments where their apparent status as "foreign Others" is compromised and they briefly and

imperfectly perform or somehow resemble the "typical" performers of English middle-class

morality. I claim that, through such moments, Radcliffe makes the case that non-English

European women can embrace British domestic values,[42] and then raises the possibility that

these women, generally by example, can reform at least some non-English men. The fact that

these men generally do not undergo a "perfect" or sustained reformation allows Radcliffe to

keep one foot firmly planted in tradition—she seems to be claiming that the monstrous

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[42] Cannon Schmitt has made a similar claim in "Techniques of Terror, Technologies of Nationality: Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian*." *ELH* 61.4 (1994): 853-76, stating that "the national label [Ellena] is given serves to suggest the universality of the English ideal: according to the logic of the novel [*The Italian*], that is, all good women behave as if they were Englishwomen. The novel's foreign setting also allows for the contrasting of this ideal with a fantastically amplified and distorted foreignness in a way impossible to domestic fiction, fiction set in England itself" (862).

foreigner does exist, and he is a real threat; however, redemption is still possible for some. Therefore, travel and engagement with continental vice serves a moral purpose, as it allows England to control and be a beacon to the rest of the world.

"An Obsessive Theme of Female Imprisonment":

Captive Travelers (Re)producing the Home

Before engaging in any sustained close reading, I feel that I ought to anticipate my critics and address the potential objection that applying notions of romantic tourism to the novels of Ann Radcliffe is erroneous on the grounds that the heroines of *The Romance of the Forest, The Mysteries of Udolpho,* and *The Italian* are certainly not "tourists" in the traditional sense. Adeline is forced to flee from an abusive father-figure only to enter into a furtive, surrogate family arrangement with the La Mottes; Emily is compelled to travel by her aunt and bandit uncle; and Ellena is kidnapped twice by Schedoni's and the Marchesa di Vivaldi's agents. All of this is true, but Sharon Harrow writes in *Adventures in Domesticity: Gender and Colonial Adulteration in Eighteenth-Century British Literature* (2004) that women commit the social offense of exposing their corporeality through physical movement and exertion (184).[43] Therefore, I would suggest that these unmarried, orphaned heroines need to be abducted or otherwise compelled to travel lest they violate laws of propriety by instigating movement on their own. Indeed, considering Adeline's, Emily's, and Ellena's dread fear of deviating from delicacy, even when faced with potential ruin or death, it would be out of character for them to voluntarily undertake a journey in the first place. Furthermore, eighteenth-century travel writers and commentators traditionally characterized female travelers as somehow "exceptional" and capable of stunning feats. While this certainly marginalizes female accomplishment and

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[43] Yael Shapira makes a similar claim when she discusses "the ideology of the polite body" in "Where the Bodies Are Hidden: Ann Radcliffe's 'Delicate' Gothic." *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 18.4 (Summer 2006): 453-476.

potential (Bassnet 228), it also takes pressure off of Radcliffe and her protagonists—if she is writing out of a tradition of "exceptional," fortitudinous woman travelers—i.e., Helen Maria Williams, Mary Wollstonecraft, Emma Roberts, Lady Mary Wortley-Montague, Hester Piozzi, and Anna Falconbridge, to name a few—then there is room for her heroines to be "exceptional" while in difficult positions, and to act like British travelers when they are on the road, observing scenery and filtering it through English discourses. Essentially, the heroines' abductions and imprisonments place them in difficult situations—similar to Anna Falconbridge, who was widowed while in Africa, or Emma Roberts, who occupied the British-India diaspora—yet it also affords them the opportunity to engage the discourses of travel and scenic proprietorship like Hester Piozzi or Lady Wortley-Montague. In a sense, Radcliffe is allowing her heroines to be *both* fortitudinous women and English tourists. In this way, she presents a remarkably representative—if unrealistic—portrait of female travelers and their positionality.

Nevertheless, the fact that these characters are compelled to travel still makes it difficult to claim uncritically that they are journeying in order to reform a tainted domestic space. I would certainly not go so far as to claim that the protagonists' abductions are merely plot devices, ways for Radcliffe to maintain delicacy; to do so would fail to take into consideration all of the concerns that the novels are expressing about controlled bodies and patriarchy. However, it is interesting that the source of domestic corruption in Adeline's, Emily's, and Ellena's lives is, in all cases, the violent intervention of the foreign—specifically, villains who are inevitably characterized as dark, passionate, and oppressive. Consider the fearsome "southern sublimity" of Montoni, as described by Emily: "[t]he fire and keenness of his eye, its proud exultation, its bold fierceness, its sullen watchfulness, as occasion, and even slight occasion, had called forth the latent soul, she had often observed with emotion; while from the usual expression of his countenance she had always shrunk" (157). Like northern European

travelers, who effaced threatening difference through "direct" (albeit filtered and preconceived)

encounters with the foreign, Radcliffe's heroines must confront the source of their domestic

woes.

Of course, the juxtaposition of travel and domesticity in these novels has still deeper

complications. Jane West, for example, expresses in *The Advantages of Education* (1793) that

"domestic marriage is the temple of worship towards which all female adventurers must travel"

(2). Although West represents one extreme, Mary Wollstonecraft herself claimed that

"wherever [the female traveler] goes, a little fertile patch of household comfort grows beneath

[her] feet" (105). One might also consider Nigel Leask's claim in *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of*

Travel Writing, 1770-1840 (2002) that "an associative ligature which mapped the exotic scene

onto a nostalgic landscape of *childhood and home*…render[ed] it an especially approved idiom

for women writers and artists" (176, my italics). This suggests that if Radcliffe is to preserve the

delicacy of her abducted protagonists, then she must construct them in such a way that they

narrate the exotic landscape and those who people it in terms of the domestic. Furthermore,

Leask reads the travelogue of Emma Roberts as reflecting "an obsessive theme of female

imprisonment." Roberts herself characterizes Anglo-Indian women as "prisoners of home and

hearth" whose only hopes for happiness can be found in marriage (222), much like the

imprisoned Adeline, Emily, and Ellena, whose fortitude is rewarded with fairy tale marriages.

While it is true that the home space is typically idealized from the start in Radcliffe's novels, this

is only true of a certain type of home—the rational, companionate domestic sphere that is

represented in Ellena's aunt Bianchi's peaceful villa or Emily's beloved La Vallee. Adeline enjoys

this type of bliss with the La Motte's in the abbey for a limited time, but Madame's jealousy and

Monsieur's underhanded dealings with Montalt disrupt her happiness until she settles at

Leloncourt in volume three. The Anglo-Indian homes that Roberts speaks of as prison-like are

more reminiscent of the "bad homes" that Radcliffe's protagonists encounter in the form of crumbling castles or sinister abbeys. It is companionate marriage that whisks Adeline, Emily, and Ellena back to the "good" domestic space where they are no longer "[literal] prisoners of [the gothic] home and hearth," thus strengthening the essential similarity between the situation of Radcliffe's heroines and the ostensible situation of Roberts's Anglo-Indian women. Finally, Leask makes a direct connection between the relief Roberts finds in the picturesque and the similar feelings that Radcliffe's heroines experience when viewing the sublime, as both are uplifted by a landscape which has been stripped of its sociohistorical implications (224). These connections, I believe, are essential mediations between fiction and history, and underscore the importance of reading Radcliffe in terms of the postcolonial tropes and discourses I have been outlining.

"Relations with Distant Others": Sensibility and Empire

As suggested in the introduction, it is not difficult to understand how discourses as universalizing as sensibility and sublimity could act as tools of imperialism. And in the realm of Gothic fiction, it is Ann Radcliffe's work that deploys these discourses most clearly in the service of empire. I alluded in the last chapter to Lynn Festa's claim that sentiment's universalizing capability and ostensible transcendence of history makes it an ideal descriptor for empire (45). Because empire is at its core a tension between assimilation and othering, Festa suggests that foreignness makes it difficult to create objects with which we can sympathize; hence, as quoted earlier, feeling "fashions the tropes that render relations with distant others thinkable" (8) and sentimental texts localize the world "by giving shape and local habitation to the perpetrators, victims, and causal forces of empire" (2). These claims suggest that the mountain is being brought to Mohammed, so to speak, as sentiment brings the world to England and casts travel— and by proxy, the native—as an extension of the British domestic. Furthermore, Festa defines the process of "going native" as identifying with others and thus adjusting one's personal

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identity (33-34), which of course is the reason why it is important for the English subject to construct her encounters with the foreign object along the axes of an English discourse.

On a similarly broad scale, it is interesting to consider that Radcliffe's novels appear to be *structurally* inflected with certain sentimental conventions of imperialist writing. In support of this, one would do well to consider Mary-Louise Pratt's claim in *Imperial Eyes* that the discourse of sensibility started making its appearance in travel narratives as early as the 1760s, and that the deployment of sexualized sentimental tropes helped to mediate both imperial guilt and abolitionist thinking: "conjugal love" was represented "as an alternative to enslavement and colonial domination, or as newly legitimated versions of them" (86). While the notion of mutually-consenting conjugality seldom appears explicitly in Radcliffe's texts—generally, the closest Radcliffe comes to addressing "normative" sexual desire is in the heroines' and heroes' inevitable marriages—Pratt's findings are relevant to our purposes not only because they point to how sentiment operated as a tool of imperial domination in general, but also because they indicate that sensibility operates this way in Radcliffe to a greater extent than has perhaps been previously theorized. According to Pratt, the 1780s and '90s saw sentimentality being consolidated as a "powerful mode for representing colonial relations and the imperial frontier." If we are to accept her elaboration that "in both travel writing and imaginative literature the domestic subject of empire found itself enjoined to share new passions, to identify with expansion in a new way, through empathy with individual victim-heroes and heroines" (87), then we can claim that not only do Radcliffe's "victim-heroines" deploy sensibility in a foreign context, but also their mere existence as "victim-heroines" for whom the "domestic subject of empire" is meant to feel sympathy suggests that the novels share a formulaic kinship with imperialist writing. By this I simply mean that Radcliffe's rhetorical decision to center the action of the novels on the travails of continental "victim-heroines" who perform a recognizably British

domestic identity suggests that her novels are, in their most basic structure, invoking the traditions of travel writing and colonialist fiction that Pratt has outlined.

There are plenty of textual examples of the heroines' sensibility, and there is certainly no shortage of scholarly articles dealing with this subject.[44] Rather, however, than emphasize what has already been said about how Radcliffe critiques excessive sensibility, or how sensibility helps women to preserve their virtue, I want to focus on moments in these texts when the heroines' feelings are deployed in the interests of moral reform, and when said feelings act as "tropes that render relations with distant others thinkable." In other words, it is most important for our purposes to consider sections of the texts where the female protagonists use their sentimental capacities to narrow the distance between themselves and their "foreign" persecutors.

As one considers these examples, one will likely notice that, in many cases, female contribution to moral reform often seems to occur "unconsciously" in the texts. Put plainly, Radcliffe's heroines generally destabilize the villains' characters and behaviors simply by virtue of their presence and "natural" behavior. This should not be particularly surprising, considering that eighteenth-century middle-class Englishwomen were typically expected to reform men's manners via example.[45] Furthermore, we might also recall Mary Poovey's contention that "delicacy" was understood as an innate female virtue which, nevertheless, needed to be

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[44] A partial list might include the following: Syndy M. Conger, "Sensibility Restored: Radcliffe's Answer to Lewis's *The Monk*." *Gothic Fictions: Prohibition/Transgression*. Ed. Kenneth Graham. New York: AMS Press, 1989. 113-50; Andrew L. Cooper, "Gothic Threats: The Role of Danger in the Critical Evaluation of *The Monk* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*." *Gothic Studies* 8.2 (2006): 18-34; Eugenia C. DeLamotte, "Speaking 'I' and the Gothic Nightmare: Boundaries of the Self as a Woman's Theme." *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth-Century Gothic*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. 149-92; Jacqueline Howard, "Gothic Sublimity: Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*." *Reading Gothic Fiction: A Bakhtinian Approach*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994. 106-44; Fiona Price, "'Myself Creating What I Saw': The Morality of the Spectator in Eighteenth-Century Gothic." *Gothic Studies*. 8.2 (2006): 1-17; Nelson C. Smith, "Sense, Sensibility and Ann Radcliffe." *SEL* 13.4 (1973): 577-90.
[45] See Elizabeth Foyster's "Boys Will Be Boys? Manhood and Aggression, 1660-1800" in Tim Hitchcock and Michele Cohen (eds.) *English Masculinities 1660-1800*. New York: Longman, 1999. 151-66.

constantly practiced and performed (15), or Yael Shapira's similar comment that delicacy "is

both a sensibility and a performance, or rather, it is a presumed sensibility whose existence

must be constantly signaled by action" (457). Hence, as idealized tropes of English bourgeois

femininity, I would suggest that Adeline, Emily, and Ellena are performing sensibility simply by

"being themselves." As a result, there is little need for them to actively "evangelize" in these

texts.

In *The Romance of the Forest*, for example, Adeline's pathos alone is enough to charm

the La Mottes from the very beginning when she is thrust under their protection in the midst of

their flight from Monsieur's creditors in Paris. "Notwithstanding his present agitation," we are

told that La Motte

> found it impossible to contemplate the beauty and distress of the object before him
> with indifference. Her youth, her apparent innocence—the artless energy of her manner
> forcibly assailed his heart...[e]very moment of farther observation heightened the
> surprise of La Motte, and interested him more warmly in her favor. Such elegance and
> apparent resignment, contrasted with the desolation of the house [at which she is
> forced into his care], and the savage manners of its inhabitants, seemed to him like a
> romance of imagination, rather than an occurrence of real life. He endeavored to
> comfort her, and his sense of compassion was too sincere to be misunderstood. (8, 9)

Here we see Adeline as an "object" of "beauty and distress"—in two words, a sentimental

object; and as a sentimental object, she is able to transform La Motte's selfish concerns into

"compassion." Indeed, La Motte is a figure who is ripe for reform and reclamation; the text

essentially constructs him as a virtuous man who has been corrupted by the "dissipations" of

Parisian society. Even though "vice had not yet so entirely darkened his conscience, but that the

blush of shame stained his cheek" (230), his mind is nevertheless "effeminated by vice" (228).

Due to his desperate position and weak character, La Motte does eventually sell Adeline out to

the Marquis de Montalt, who initially wants her for his harem. In the following chapters, Adeline

escapes from the harem, is recaptured, and is sent back to the abbey under La Motte's

protection while Montalt recovers from a wound he received in a duel with Adeline's lover

Theodore. Having recently discovered that Adeline is his niece, Montalt orders La Motte, under pain of exposure, to murder his surrogate daughter in her sleep so that the marquis can keep his own fortune and position secure. However, when La Motte beholds the sleeping Adeline, he is unable to act, for "when [La Motte] approached the bed he…heard [Adeline] sing in her sleep. As he listened he distinguished some notes of a melancholy little air which, in her happier days, she had often sung to him. The low and mournful accent in which she now uttered them expressed too well the tone of her mind" (253-254). Upon examining his intended victim, La Motte loses his resolve, as he beholds "her cheek yet wet with tears, resting upon her arm… [and] her innocent and lovely countenance, pale in grief" (254). The light from his lamp wakes her up, and her subsequent pleas for "pity and protection" convince him not only to abandon his design, but also to orchestrate her escape.

Though Joseph Milicia, who wrote the preface to the 2004 Barnes & Noble edition of *The Romance of the Forest*, characterizes La Motte as "a warning against immoderation," he also concedes that "it is impulsive 'feeling' (or human decency) that leads him finally to save Adeline's life" (xiii). While this is true, one must keep in mind that Adeline's unconscious actions are the primary impetus for La Motte's flash of "impulsive feeling." Adeline's beginning to sing in her sleep a song of personal meaning to La Motte the instant the latter enters her room is clearly a sentimental contrivance, and the very constructedness of the scene brings sentiment's domesticating potential into relief, as a poignard-wielding La Motte is delicately—yet unmistakably—reminded of his foster familial relationship to Adeline. In his decision to help her escape, La Motte effectively rejects the "foreign" Montalt—indeed, it is surprising that Radcliffe did not have him dramatically throwing down the "poignard" with which the marquis supplied him—in favor of filial duty. Hence, as a direct result of the pathos that Adeline exudes, not only is the "effeminate" La Motte finally able to perform an act of courageous virtue, but also, in

betraying the marquis, he sets himself up to be captured and tried, which itself paradoxically leads to his ultimate redemption.

After he is found guilty of assaulting and robbing Montalt, Adeline intercedes with La Motte's prosecutors for absolution, and as a result, he is spared the death penalty in favor of banishment. The text makes it clear that Adeline's sentimental influence is the only reason why La Motte is shown leniency, as it is her "earnest supplication" and the king's "consideration of the service [La Motte] had finally rendered her" that saves him from the death penalty, and her "noble generosity…silenced other prosecutions that were preparing against him, and bestowed on him a sum more than sufficient to support his family in a foreign country" (387). Moreover, not only do Adeline's actions disentangle La Motte from his legal problems, but also they thoroughly reform his character:

> [t]his kindness operated so powerfully upon [La Motte's] heart, which had been betrayed through weakness rather than natural depravity, and awakened so keen a remorse for the injuries he had once meditated against a benefactress so noble, that his former habits became odious to him, and his character gradually recovered the hue which it would probably always have worn had he never been exposed to the tempting dissipations of Paris. (387)

As if to drive home the sincerity of La Motte's return to virtue, the "foreign country" in which he chooses to settle is, ironically yet appropriately enough, England (388). Considering that "his character" has "recovered" its true "hue," which was ruined by Parisian depravity, La Motte's resolution to set out for England reads less like banishment and more like the return of the prodigal son; in this way, La Motte is essentially dismissed as a kind of "gone-native" figure who, through the intervention of the sentimental woman of empire, has managed to reclaim a birthright of virtue.

While La Motte is represented more or less as one who has strayed from the fold, Montalt is presented as a Gothic villain through-and-through, one of those whom Cannon Schmitt describes as "foreign villains [who are] anti-types, exempla of otherness" (855). In one

key moment, the marquis prefaces his request that La Motte murder Adeline with a denunciation of western civilization, impugning "the refined Europeans [who] boast a standard of honor, and a sublimity of virtue, which often leads them from pleasure to misery, and from nature to error," and praising the "uninformed American [who] follows the impulse of his heart, and obeys the inspiration of wisdom" (241). He goes on to claim—in a vaguely Rousseauean tone—that

> [t]he Indian discovers his friend to be perfidious, and he kills him; the wild Asiatic does the same; the Turk, when ambition fires, or revenge provokes, gratifies his passion at the expense of life, and does not call it murder. Even the polished Italian, distracted by jealousy, or tempted by a strong circumstance of advantage, draws his stiletto, and accomplishes his purpose. It is the first proof of a superior mind to liberate itself from prejudices of country, or of education. (242)

It is certainly telling in and of itself that Radcliffe, through Montalt, considers Italian "jealousy" alongside the perceived savagery of Middle and Far Eastern cultures. In terms of the novel and Montalt's character though, this particular diatribe singles him out as one who is inimitably foreign; by implying that "savages" have "superior minds" and by scorning the "prejudices of country," Montalt essentially positions himself outside of an "organized" moral and national establishment. Furthermore, the fact that this speech is an attempt to groom La Motte to act as his personal assassin situates Montalt as a pernicious corruptor who is attempting to strip away the last vestiges of virtue from his morally porous protégé. Likewise, the fact that La Motte (rather unbelievably) does not comprehend the marquis's murderous intent even when the latter speaks of the need to "annihilate" "a reptile [that] hurts us" or an "an animal of prey [that] threatens us" reinforces La Motte's essential innocence and relative distance from vice.

Of course, the "foreign" aspects of Montalt's character are problematized by the fact that he is also Adeline's uncle. While the revelation of a blood tie between the Anglo-virtued heroine and the foreign vice-ridden villain raises the specter of moral miscegenation, Radcliffe dampens the shock of this connection by introducing (364) and just as quickly discrediting (374)

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the far worse possibility of Adeline being the illegitimate daughter of Montalt and a nun, a misdirection she would later deploy to much greater and more protracted effect in *The Italian*. Also as in *The Italian*, Radcliffe mediates the heroine's kinship to the villain by granting the latter a modicum of sympathy. Whereas in the later novel Schedoni's villainous nature is somewhat tempered by his kind—albeit gruff and self-serving—treatment of Ellena after he erroneously concludes that she is his daughter, in *The Romance of the Forest* Montalt has a deathbed conversion in which he is "tortured with the remembrance of his crime" and, after swallowing poison, makes a full confession, reveals his niece's birthright, and grants her "a considerable legacy" (387). While the text does not state that Adeline's sensibility or virtuous example inspired her uncle, as it did La Motte, this is not particularly surprising, as it allows Radcliffe to keep Montalt anchored more or less on the far side of the villainous/virtuous spectrum while simultaneously making it less problematic for the heroine to be related to her antagonist.

The Mysteries of Udolpho does not perform the same kind of familial "gymnastics" partly because Emily's father is known from the beginning and partly because Montoni is not a blood relative of the St. Aubert family—hence, there is no need to soften his character to mediate the problematics of kinship with a virtuous heroine. As a result, it is easier to read Montoni as one who is irredeemably "foreign," yet this does not mean that the text's dynamics are any less complex. While Emily and Montoni comprise the plot's main antagonistic dyad— Yael Shapira describes their relationship as "charged" (464), and Kenneth Graham and Coral Ann Howells have both written on the subtle erotics of their interactions—and it is worthwhile to consider the Emily/Montoni conflict through the lens we have established, it is also fruitful to look at Emily's relationship with Count Morano. There is no criticism of which I am aware that takes an in-depth look at this pairing and, if one reads Emily's connection to Montoni alongside her connection to Morano in the same way that we read Adeline in relation to both La Motte

and Montalt, one can get a better, reinforced sense of how Radcliffe deploys different "degrees"—if that term can be used—of foreignness to explore the woman of empire's domesticating potential.

Morano is introduced as "a Venetian nobleman" (196) who develops an immediate, passionate interest in Emily, though her love for Valancourt and the fact that she "observed some traits in his [Morano's] character that prejudiced her against whatever might otherwise be good in it" (202) causes her to reject his advances. Indeed, when Morano persists in his suit— and is seconded by the avaricious Montoni, who hopes to profit from a marriage between the two—Emily is "astonished and highly disgusted at his perseverance" (204). Montoni's continued insistence on the match causes "Emily's dislike of Morano" to reach the point of "abhorrence," since it makes her realize that "her opinion of [Morano] was of no consequence so long as his pretensions were sanctioned by Montoni," a discovery that adds "indignation to the disgust which she had felt toward [Morano]" (211). Morano's unquenchable passion, fiery temper, apparent disregard for the notion of companionate marriage, and status as a leisured nobleman establish his position as an Italian caricature in the text, and the "British" Emily's "astonishment and disgust" at his passion, along with her "abhorrence" of Morano's circumambulating her consent by attempting to win her hand through an appeal to Montoni's greed, cements his status as such an "Other." However, despite his many transgressions—including sneaking into Emily's bedroom in Udolpho and attempting to persuade her to elope with him—Emily reaches out sentimentally to Morano after he falls wounded in a duel with Montoni.

When the latter orders Morano to leave the castle immediately, despite his critical state, the narrator relates how Emily "came forward into the corridor, and pleaded a cause of common humanity with the feelings of the warmest benevolence, when she entreated Montoni to allow Morano the assistance in the castle which his situation required" (281). Despite the fact

that Montoni seems to possess "a monster's cruelty" (282), Emily, we are told, is "superior to Montoni's menaces, giving water to Morano, and directing the attendants to bind up his wound" (282). As she gazes upon the wounded Count, her "countenance [is] strongly expressive of solicitude" (282), and, nervous as her admirer's presence makes her, "the fainting languor of his countenance again awakened her pity and overcame her terror" (283). It is important to note that in this scene Emily is called away from Morano by an angry Montoni, yet, despite her "impatien[ce] to be gone," she lingers with the wounded Count, repeatedly reassuring him of her forgiveness and "sincere wishes" for his recovery and "general welfare," though stopping short of saying that she loves him, despite his desire to hear her do so (283). It is only when called by Montoni a second time that Emily leaves Morano's side. If sentiment in the context of empire "is about both the encounter with the object [whether that object be an individual, a site, or a cultural practice]…and the ability to disengage from the scene" (Festa 35), then Emily's simultaneous pity for and detachment from the thoroughly Italian Morano effectively renders her a "sentimental figure of empire": she deploys enough sympathy to secure her virtuousness, yet stops short of identifying with the abject Count.

This reading of Emily's character is borne out by what occurs after she responds to Montoni's summons. When the latter insinuates that Emily remained in the wounded Morano's presence out of a "more than common interest" in the Count, Emily rather wittily remarks, "I fear, sir, it was more than common interest that detained me…for of late I have been inclined to think that of compassion is an uncommon one. But how could I, could *you*, sir, witness Count Morano's deplorable condition, and not wish to relieve it?" (284, original italics) Through this statement, Emily deflects Montoni's scandalous implication while at the same time placing herself in a position of superior moral authority (interestingly, by turning his own diction and syntax against him). Indeed, for her, it is impossible *not* to perform a compassionate act when

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faced with suffering, and by chastising Montoni's lack of sentiment, Emily seems to be attempting to introduce a possibility of moral reform. Indeed, the fact that her sensibility made her "superior to Montoni's menaces" when Morano was suffering implies that she is well-suited to this task—it seems then, that in the romantic imagination, the woman of empire's moral power overcomes the foreign villain's hegemonic authority.

Montoni is apparently aware of these implications, as he sneeringly responds "before you undertake to regulate the morals of other persons, you should learn and practise the virtues which are indispensable to a woman—sincerity, uniformity of conduct, and obedience" (285). Considering the power that a woman of empire wields in these texts, it should not be surprising that Montoni's attempt at deflection is ineffective. Though Emily is initially shocked and hurt by this rebuke, since she understands herself to be "finely sensible not only of what is just in morals but of whatever is beautiful in the female character," her mortification is brief, as "in the next moment her heart swelled with the consciousness of having deserved praise instead of censure, and she was proudly silent." What's more, Montoni is unaware of his failure, because he "was a stranger to the luxury of conscious worth, and therefore did not foresee the energy of that sentiment which now repelled his satire" (285).

Nevertheless, Emily's moral position is still briefly compromised in this exchange. Before issuing the rebuke discussed in the above paragraph, Montoni suggests that Emily's "female caprice" is to blame for Morano's surprise appearance at Udolpho. Believing that Morano's fall from Montoni's esteem caused Emily to develop a belated interest in the Count, Montoni goes so far as to imply that Emily contrived for Morano to be in her bedroom that evening. The reader of course knows this to be untrue, and Emily is predictably shocked at such an indelicate insinuation, yet the sexual undercurrents of this moment, when read alongside Emily's

sentimental outreach to Morano and sensibility's historical position as a coded substitute for

sexuality, raise some interesting interpretive possibilities.

Sensibility's connection to sexuality is perhaps best articulated in George Haggerty's

Men in Love (1999) where he writes that, in sensibility

> the body becomes an agent of sexual response in its very emotional organization. For
> the man or, in a very different way, the woman of feeling a sigh, a tear, the touch of a
> pulse, or the distribution of a charitable coin [or, in Emily's case, a cup of water] can
> carry with it an unmistakably erotic charge, and each of them becomes, in various
> circumstances, the carefully articulated substitute for sexual activity. (82)

The critical tradition that Haggerty highlights casts Emily's act of mercy in an erotic shade. If one

reads this alongside Montoni's scandalous implication and Emily and Morano's failed erotic

history, the resulting constellation of factors articulates what might otherwise be unthinkable in

a Radcliffe novel—namely, that Emily is a sexualized being and that the foreign, aristocratic

Morano possesses an erotic valence for her. Nevertheless, such a possibility is ultimately dashed

by Emily's relative coolness in this scene: she is no weeping Yorick, rapturously feeling the pulse

of a lovely young Parisian. Rather, while her sentimental response to Morano's suffering may

necessarily invoke an erotic tradition, her "impatien[ce] to be gone" and refusal to indulge in

more than "common humanity" short-circuits any sexual implications, thus providing yet

another example of Radcliffe's tendency to introduce in her work that which is taboo, only to

pull back from the thematic precipice at the last minute. Indeed, in this light, Montoni's

subsequent accusations can be seen as Radcliffe acknowledging sensibility's more prurient

implications, while Emily's cool response to Morano and indignant reaction to Montoni allows

Radcliffe to actively deflate the erotic potential of an act that is ultimately meant only to

demonstrate Emily's comparable moral authority. Essentially, Emily arms herself with the tools

of sensibility so that she can practice female virtue by responding to Morano's distress, and so

that she can, like a good "domestic subject of empire"—by this I mean one who is establishing

and promoting English domestic values in a "foreign" space—introduce the possibility of moral reformation in her response to Montoni's insinuations.

Nevertheless, Emily does not seem to be quite as successful as Adeline at "converting manners." Shortly after Morano's rencounter with Montoni, we are told that "[t]he professions of repentance, which Morano had made to Emily, under the anguish of his wound, was sincere at the moment he offered them; but he had mistaken the subject of his sorrow, for, while he thought he was condemning the cruelty of his late design, he was lamenting only the state of suffering, to which it had reduced him" (371). While this passage sets up Morano's next failed attempt to carry off Emily and seems to foreclose any possibility of his undergoing a reformation as far-reaching and permanent as La Motte's, it is nevertheless interesting that this nullification comes nearly 100 pages after Morano's "repentance," and in a brief, expository passage at that. Essentially, for a decent period of time, Morano's character is destabilized, which is more than can be said for Montoni, who is never granted a sympathetic moment. The fact that these two characters occupy two very different spheres of villainy is borne out by the different manners in which they exit the text: Montoni is captured by the authorities—who are assisted by a tip from the vengeful Morano (541)—and eventually dies in prison "in a doubtful and mysterious manner," most likely from poison (588), whereas Morano, for his role in Montoni's capture, is cleared of the false charges that Montoni earlier leveled against him (541).

While it would be fallacious to read, one-for-one, Montoni for Montalt and Morano for La Motte, it is also impossible to ignore the similar dynamics. Like Montalt, Montoni must be removed from the world of the text in order for any happy ending to take place, as it is Montoni's death that essentially returns Emily control of her estates in the same way that Montalt's demise brought Adeline's legacy to light. Furthermore, both La Motte and Morano face some degree of chastisement for their crimes in that both are imprisoned for a space, yet

both are ultimately set free, La Motte to live a life of virtue, and Morano to an uncertain future, since the text never returns to him or clarifies his ultimate fate. Essentially, by creating two legibly non-English villains, one who is more or less an embodiment of evil and one who is capable of being moved—albeit temporarily—by feeling, Radcliffe seems to be suggesting that women, via sentiment, can *potentially* "reform" the foreign space, yet it is an uphill battle, fraught with those who would challenge and call into question female virtue. Regardless of her success or failure at this sort of domestic evangelism, however, the woman of empire can always rest secure in the fact that the path of English virtue is unassailable, that "though the vicious can sometimes pour affliction upon the good, their power is transient and their punishment certain; and that innocence, though oppressed by injustice, shall, supported by patience, finally triumph over misfortune!" (696)

Such is also the case at the conclusion of *The Italian*, though before Ellena and Vivaldi can have their happy ending, the machinations of Schedoni and his hired ruffian, Spalatro, must first be overcome.[46] Diego Saglia has commented on how *The Italian* seems to particularly exemplify the *apparent* binarism of foreign villain/domestic heroine, stating that "[t]he semantic network of darkness woven around Schedoni's figure, his dark cowl, his obscure origins, his 'habitual gloom' (p. 35) ascribe him to the specific domain of Italian and sublime difference" (18), and that "[o]n the one hand, the agents of sameness [Ellena and Vivaldi] work towards unity and stability emblematized in romantic love and the family nucleus it eventually brings about. On the other hand, Italianness questions this stability and tends to disrupt it in the name of a different order of things based on superstition, arbitrary power, lawlessness, or murder"

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[46] While it is true that the Marchesa di Vivaldi plays a significant antagonistic role in *The Italian*—more so than Mme Cheron in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and definitely more so than Mme La Motte in *The Romance of the Forest*—the dynamics between the heroine and her female persecutors are generally not the same as those between the heroine and the male villain. An in-depth consideration of these "villainesses" would be beyond the scope of this study.

(31-32). The latter claim is particularly relevant to our current discussion, as it acknowledges not only the struggle between "the foreign" and "the domestic," but also foreignness's tendency in these texts to be represented as a disruptor of domestic values. However, as we have seen, this kind of disruption moves two ways: the French and Italian villains may destabilize English virtue, but English virtue, as embodied in the heroines, also seeks to reform and order the "chaos" of a foreign-inflected criminality. Along a similar line, Schmitt maintains that "one function of [national] displacement in *The Italian* is the intensification of a binarism between English and foreign already at work in the domestic settings of sentimental fiction" (863); reading Schmitt's claim in light of Saglia's findings and our present discussion then, reaffirms that Gothic novels like *The Italian* are grounded in the domestically-virtued tradition of the sentimental novel and are thus subject to the familiar trope of female sentiment and continence as a near-miraculous reformative tool. Hence, *The Italian*, generally recognized as Radcliffe's most "mature" work, can also be understood as providing a particularly exemplary case of sensibility being encoded as a domesticating, difference-effacing discourse.

Like Adeline and La Motte in *The Romance of the Forest*, Ellena and Schedoni perform an interesting "dance" of sentiment, though this exchange is far more protracted. In the same way that La Motte was ordered by Montalt to murder Ellena, and was foiled by emotions brought about by Adeline's aura of innocence, Schedoni has planned Ellena's murder at the behest of the Marchesa di Vivaldi, and he too is stopped, in his first attempt on the beach, by an alien sense of compassion:

> [h]e, who had hitherto been insensible to every tender feeling, who, governed by ambition and resentment, had contributed, by his artful instigations, to fix the baleful resolution of the Marchesa di Vivaldi, and who was come to execute her purpose, — even he could not look upon the innocent, the wretched Ellena, without yielding to the momentary weakness, as he termed it, of compassion. (259)

What is striking about Schedoni's hesitation is the fact that he is "especially representative" of a Gothic Italy (Schmitt 861); because of his inherent "insensibility" and the fact that he previously murdered his brother and attempted to murder his sister-in-law/unwilling wife, Schedoni's hesitation is more surprising than that of the simpering La Motte. As an image of pathos, Ellena effectively displaces the monk's "savagery" and replaces it with an utterly unfamiliar sense of benevolence which so confounds her oppressor that "the emotions of his mind were violent and contradictory…[h]e considered the character of his mind with astonishment, for circumstances had drawn forth traits, of which, till now, he had no suspicion" (261). It is interesting, however, that upon reflection, Schedoni realizes that his emotional weakness seems to dissipate when he is not in Ellena's presence—he notes that his pity "was transient, [and] it disappeared almost with the object that had awakened it" (264)—a recognition which suggests that the woman of empire is effectually being constructed here as the conscience of the foreign assassin.

Indeed, even Schedoni's hired ruffian, Spalatro, refuses to murder Ellena, and it is left ambiguous as to "[w]hether the innocence and beauty of Ellena had softened his heart, or that his conscience did torture him for his past deeds" (267). While the language of this passage represents Ellena's "innocence and beauty" and Spalatro's "conscience," as two different forces, it is nevertheless telling that Ellena seems to be the first "contract" that Spalatro has ever refused—much to Schedoni's incredulity (266-267). Interestingly, Spalatro's attack of conscience is externalized through an appearance of a bloody specter which represents his former assassinations and which only he can see, as he hysterically relates to a shaken but unbelieving Schedoni: "'[i]t came before my eyes in a moment, and shewed itself distinctly and outspread…[a]nd then it beckoned – yes, it beckoned me, with that blood-stained finger! and glided away down the passage, still beckoning—till it was lost in the darkness'" (269). While it is true that Spalatro is a "rustic" and thus it is not surprising that he should be carried away by

imagination, the fact remains that this kind of hysteria is generally reserved for "good" but

bumpkinish servants like Peter in *Romance*, Annette and Dorotheé in *Udolpho*, or Paolo in *The*

Italian, and of course for the Gothic heroine herself—though in the case of *The Italian* Vivaldi is

much more susceptible to superstitious flights of fancy than Ellena. Yet Spalatro is no loquacious

domestic or swooning sensitive; in fact, Ellena, upon first seeing him, cathects him with what

might be a shade of foreign sublimity, as the very sight of Spalatro causes her to "shrink" from

his "terrific wildness" and she notes that "[s]he had never before seen villainy and suffering so

strongly pictured on the same face, and she observed him with a degree of thrilling curiosity,

which for a moment excluded from her mind all consciousness of the evils to be apprehended

from him" (244). Even after Schedoni attempts to murder her—a key moment that we will

consider in more depth momentarily—and Ellena finds the monk's discarded dagger in her

room, she briefly considers the possibility that the Confessor had come to kill her, but quickly

dismisses the thought, choosing to believe that "Spalatro alone had meditated her destruction"

(281), and as all three characters leave the ruined beach mansion, Ellena places her trust in

Schedoni—albeit cautiously—while continuing to fear Spalatro, of whom "she thought 'assassin'

was written in each line of [his face]" (289).

Hence, Spalatro cannot be categorized as a "mere" rustic; though his class background

enables and mediates his "slip" into hysterical spectralization, he is still a villain and a valid

object of fear for Ellena, which makes this moment of "supernatural" guilt all the more odd.

Considering the chronology of this scene—Spalatro refuses to commit the murder, Schedoni

reminds him of his bloody, unrepentant past, Spalatro morosely alludes to "[t]he bloody hand

[which] is always before me," the narrator raises the "Ellena's beauty and innocence or

Spalatro's conscience" question, and two pages later, the "ghosts" appear (266-267, 269)—I

would read this scene as a case of Ellena's "innocence and beauty" *stimulating* Spalatro's

heretofore easily suppressed conscience. Nevertheless, this is far from being a "complete"

reform—Spalatro is, after all, an Italian whose predominant characteristics are his "terrific

wildness" and the fact that he has first "villain," and then "assassin" "engraved in every line of

his face" (244, 289). Though he is unwilling to kill Ellena with his own hand, it turns out that

Spalatro's "conscience, or his pity, was of a very peculiar kind however; for, though he refused

to execute the deed himself, he consented to wait…while Schedoni accomplished it, and

afterward to assist in carrying the body to the shore," a decision which Schedoni disgustedly

terms "a compromise between conscience and guilt, worthy of a demon" (267). Hence, we are

presented with another example of the woman of empire's ability to promote reform and

morality, juxtaposed with the "fact" that most foreign "villains" are ultimately irredeemable.

Spalatro's villainous personality can be destabilized, but it cannot be effaced.

While we are considering Spalatro, it is also interesting to note that this interplay in his

character is revisited near the end of the text. Schedoni's vengeful former accomplice, Nicola di

Zampari, seeks to expose the Confessor to the Inquisition, and, as evidence, he calls upon a

priest in Rome who heard the last confession of the recently-deceased Spalatro, who, it turns

out, was the very bravo Schedoni had hired to dispose of his brother the Count di Bruno many

years prior. Spalatro's motives for making a Catholic confession, it turns out, are a bit muddled:

> The account which Spalatro had given of his motive for this journey to the priest was, that, having lately [and erroneously, through Schedoni's contrivance] understood Schedoni to be resident at Rome, he had followed him thither, with an intention of relieving his conscience by an acknowledgment of his own crimes, and a disclosure of Schedoni's. This, however, was not exactly the fact. The design of Spalatro was to extort money from the guilty Confessor. (418)

Complicating matters further is the fact that, upon reaching Rome and discovering that Schedoni

had misled him, a wounded and feverish Spalatro ultimately "unburdened his conscience by a

full confession of his guilt" before dying (419). As with Montalt in *The Romance of the Forest*,

Spalatro's deathbed confession turns out to be an important piece of the denouement, as it

provides sufficient evidence to impugn Schedoni for the murder of his brother and the near-

murder of his wife. More thematically, Spalatro's confession allows him to be essentially

"redeemed" at the end, though his initial, treacherous motives for pursuing Schedoni to Rome

simultaneously problematizes this "redemption" and keeps Spalatro's Italianness at the

forefront.

As for Schedoni himself, his attempt to murder Ellena is similar to La Motte's attempt on

Adeline's life, since he is enfeebled by his intended victim's show of innocence:

> While Schedoni gazed for a moment upon her innocent countenance, a faint smile stole
> over it…[h]e searched for the dagger, and it was some time before his trembling hand
> could disengage it from the folds of his garment…[h]is agitation and repugnance to
> strike encreased with every moment of delay, and, as often as he prepared to plunge
> the poniard in her bosom, a shuddering horror restrained him. (271)

As those who are familiar with the novel know, Schedoni is ultimately stopped when he espies a

miniature of himself as a young man around Ellena's neck, and the two come to the false

conclusion that he is her long-lost father (Schedoni is actually Ellena's uncle) (272-274). Upon

discovering this, Schedoni presses a still somewhat doubtful Ellena "to his bosom" and cries

tears of "remorse and grief" (274). As in the episode with Adeline and La Motte then, the

heroine's innocence essentially transforms a murderous impulse into a paternalistic embrace,

since it is unlikely that Schedoni would have noticed the portrait if he had not delayed his strike;

hence, what is meant to be a scene of violence becomes instead a scene of familial reunion.

Because at this moment in the text Schedoni is confounded with Ellena's deceased father—

whom he in fact murdered— we can understand this scene as an example of what Schmitt

refers to as "[t]he simultaneous presence of intransigent otherness and domestic sameness in

The Italian" (855). Here, villain and victim, murderous uncle and virtuous father are, at least for

the next one hundred and fifty or so pages, collapsed into one figure.

Schedoni's character undergoes still greater destabilization when, soon after this encounter, he finds that Ellena's "innocent looks [and] her affectionate thanks, inflicted an anguish, which was scarcely endurable" (287). While this negative reaction to emotional honesty can and should be read as evidence of Schedoni's essential "Otherness," it should also be noted that such an experience of guilt reinforces Ellena's status as the monk's "conscience"; his shell has been penetrated and his initial positioning as a bloodthirsty, Machiavellian stereotype has been destabilized by Ellena's indirect intervention: the scheming plotter who earlier termed "compassion" a "weakness" is experiencing guilt. The extent of Schedoni's internal torment is further hinted at in his uncharacteristic reaction to the "Virginia" tragedy being enacted—albeit ineptly—by a crowd of rustics in a village where the party stops for rest and refreshment. In this *mise en abîme,* Schedoni and Ellena's peasant guide dramatically points out the "villain" who has "murdered his own daughter" in the play. When Schedoni hears "these terrible words," his "indignation" is "done away by other emotions," as he witnesses the actors perform "the moment when [Virginia] was dying in the arms of her father, who was holding up the poniard with which he had stabbed her." We are told that "[t]he feelings of Schedoni, at this instant, inflicted a punishment almost worthy of the crime he had meditated" (318). Schedoni is "[s]tung to the heart" by this performance, and his attempts to leave precipitately upset the peasant guide, who "almost for the first time in his life…was suffering under the strange delights of artificial grief" (319).

Noted Gothic scholar Robert Miles, who edited the Penguin edition of *The Italian* (2004), comments in the endnotes on this reference to "the strange delights of artificial grief," claiming that "[this] phrase reflects mainstream eighteenth-century aesthetic theory on the paradoxical character and benefits of tragic drama." He goes on to cite John and Anna Laetitia Aikin (later Barbauld), who claimed that

> [t]he painful sensation immediately arising from a scene of misery, is so much softened and alleviated by the reflex sense of self-approbation on attending virtuous sympathy, that we find…a very exquisite and refined pleasure remaining, which makes us desirous of again being witnesses to such scenes, instead of flying from them with disgust and horror (*Miscellaneous Pieces*, p.120). (488)

While it is the peasant guide who is described as experiencing this particular "delight," the above historicization is still very much applicable to the emotionally-struck Schedoni, and, with the Aikins' words in mind, I would also remind readers of the intrinsic link between sensibility and spectacle. Schedoni's being "stung to the heart" by a theatrical performance invokes a tradition of feeling men—Lovelace's feigned emotional response to *Venice Preserved* and Clarissa Harlowe's subsequent reassessment of his character comes to mind. However, Schedoni is most certainly not experiencing a "virtuous sympathy" here; rather, his reaction is more reminiscent of Claudius's in *Hamlet*, and thus his behavior can be understood as reflecting his anomalous position: he reacts emotionally to and identifies with visual representations unlike a "typical" Gothic villain such as Montoni, yet the feeling he experiences is that of guilt rather than pathos. Hence, his status as an "Other" is simultaneously maintained and disrupted by a dramatic representation of his attempted murder of Ellena.

Furthermore, a similar "confounding" incident takes place much later in the text. When Schedoni is brought before the Inquisition, the narrator comments provocatively on his unreadable character, stating that it "certainly required something more than human firmness to support unmoved the severe scrutiny, and the yet severer suspicions, to which he stood exposed. Whether, however, it was *the fortitude of conscious innocence, or the hardihood of atrocious vice, that protected the Confessor*, he certainly did not betray any emotion" (392, my italics). As one might expect, the deployment of the term "conscious innocence" is what makes this moment particularly noteworthy. As discussed earlier, "conscious innocence" is a trait that Radcliffe's heroines typically possess: we have already, for example, discussed Emily's sense of

"conscious worth" and "proud silence" in the face of Montoni's unjust rebukes (285). In *The Italian* we see Ellena practicing this trait most readily when the tyrannical abbess of San Stefano accuses her of attempting to marry above her station, an insinuation which causes Ellena to feel "the sting of offended honour…till the pride of conscious worth gradually reviv[ed] her courage and fortif[ied] her patience" (80). As mentioned earlier, this "conscious innocence" is essentially a type of "spiritual barrier" (to borrow Delamotte's term) which protects the heroine's ego from the villain's unjust accusations.[47] Naturally, the reader is aware of the fact that, in Schedoni's case, the accusations being leveled *are* just, and it is "the hardihood of atrocious vice" rather than "the fortitude of conscious innocence" which renders him unreadable, in the same way that a seasoned reader of Radcliffe (or even the Gothic generally) would likely be suspicious, along with Ellena, of Schedoni's claims to paternity (especially with such a large revelation coming comparatively early in the novel). While I wouldn't say that Schedoni's demeanor in this scene and the way it is characterized in the text necessarily has anything to do with Ellena or her actions *directly*, it is still undeniable that this kind of statement is disorienting since it momentarily identifies Schedoni with Ellena—if the fortitude of the "righteous" and the fortitude of the hardened sinner are confoundable in their outward representation, then the gap between heroine and villain is necessarily narrowed. As if to signify and acknowledge this confusion, we are told that Vivaldi "could not judge whether the pride which occasioned [Schedoni's] silence, was that of innocence or of remorse" (403). Therefore, as in the case of his "sentimental" reaction to the story of Virginia, Schedoni here performs a "queer"—perhaps even uncanny—version of English virtue and delicacy; similar to Spalatro and his decision to eschew taking part in Ellena's murder but willingness to assist with disposing of the body, the

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[47] I discuss this in much more depth, and with specific examples, in "Sublime Patriarchs and the Problems of the New Middle Class."

vague possibility that Schedoni's character is anything other than an Italian stereotype is briefly raised and just as quickly dismissed.

Stereotypical representations notwithstanding, Schedoni's death, like Spalatro's and Montalt's, features repentance and the revealing of information that is necessary to guarantee the heroine's and hero's happiness. Surrounded by Zampari, Vivaldi, Vivaldi's father the Marchese, and various officers of the Inquisition, the dying Confessor, who, like Montalt, has poisoned himself, calls upon Zampari "to do justice in this instance, and to acknowledge, before these witnesses, that Ellena Rosalba is innocent of every circumstance of misconduct, which you have formerly related to the Marchese di Vivaldi!'" (452) Schedoni, who has nothing left to lose, apparently decides to reveal all simply out of desire to make things right, as he explains "fallen though I am, I have still been desirous of counteracting, as far as remains for me, the evil I have occasioned" (453). He reveals that Ellena is of noble blood (452) and therefore "worthy" of the Marchese di Vivaldi's approval, and it is "[i]n consequence of the dying confession of Schedoni, [that] an order was sent from the holy office for the release of Vivaldi" (467) from the dungeons of the Inquisition. Hence, Schedoni is somewhat vindicated at the end of the text. Though his essentially "monstrous" character cannot be permitted to remain in a landscape over which Ellena is now "in every respect, the queen" (476), it would seem that his dealings with the heroine and the hero and his discovered kinship with the former have shaken his conscience enough to inspire him to make amends.

In light of these various examples and what they have revealed about the character of Radcliffe's villains, it is interesting to consider what Pam Perkins has written about Radcliffe and Italy. Though she is not discussing sensibility per se, Perkins has read the travel writings of John Moore against Radcliffe's Italian Gothic fiction, and concluded that

> [w]hat she [Radcliffe] is doing is simultaneously employing and inverting the tendency of travel writers to make the strange familiar – whether they do so by representing the

foreign as being subsumed and mastered by the traveller's [sic] gaze, as many recent
critics have argued was a characteristic technique of eighteenth century travel writers,
or, more subtly, by repeating details about a foreign culture in such a way that this
supposed revelation of the exotic fits in comfortably with an established British literary
discourse. Travel writing about Italy thus serves not merely as a source of picturesque
descriptions of landscape for a Gothic novelist such as Radcliffe, but also, more
importantly, as a cultural discourse that she can manipulate to unsettle her readers. (41)

This statement accounts in many ways for the odd, destabilizing moments that we have been
considering. Villains like Schedoni and Spalatro are certainly "strange," yet their problematic,
pseudo-implication in sensibility at times and a more generalized English morality at others,
renders them uncannily familiar. However, where Perkins reads this simply as a technique of
horror writing—and I certainly do not think that there is anything inaccurate about this
assessment—I would once again claim that these instances can also be understood as moments
in the texts where the Gothic heroine either through direct intervention (as with Emily and in
some cases Adeline) or simply by virtue of her "sentimental" nature (as with Ellena and, again, in
some cases with Adeline), destabilizes Gothic villains whose stereotypically continental manners
are textually emphasized, and introduces the possibility of moral reform—albeit a moral reform
which is either never fully realized or realized so late in the text that it does not require the
reader to perform any substantive cognitive labor to refit the villain into a more complex moral
framework.

Transport and Ravishment: Adeline, Ellena, and the Sublime

The extent of Radcliffe's discursive proximity to empire should not come as much of a
surprise considering her textual reliance on the sublime. Sublimity and landscape aesthetics in
general, of course, have a long and storied relationship to the imperial project. Although she is
not engaging the sublime exactly, Pratt's notes on "promontory description" provide an
interesting entry point for our consideration of landscape's role in imperialism. Along these
lines, she claims that European "discovery" is inherently ironic, since generally European

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explorers hired natives to guide them to "discoveries" such as Lake Tanganyika in Central Africa

(202). In order to characterize such a moment as significant and "heroic," European travel

writers engaged in "promontory descriptions," in which the speaker deploys a "monarch-of-all-I-

survey" type of discourse (201).[48] Most significant for our purposes is Pratt's understanding of

"promontory descriptions" as "a gesture of converting local knowledges (discourses) into

European national and continental knowledges associated with European forms and relations of

power" (202). Though at this point in her study Pratt is specifically engaging narratives from the

mid to late nineteenth century, this claim is still relevant to our area of inquiry, not only because

Pratt notes that the "promontory description" is "very common in Romantic and Victorian

writing of all kinds" (202) (one would suppose that "Romantic writing" includes 1790s Gothic

fiction) but also because it is in dialogue with David Spurr's concept of "appropriation," in which

the colonizer executes his "desire to recreate, in these unconquered territories or in these

unsubdued hearts and minds, one's own image, and to reunite the pieces of a cultural identity

divided from itself" (42). Indeed, as "creolized" dejects whose sense of self is constantly being

threatened by a foreignized patriarchy, Adeline, Emily, and Ellena "appropriate" the

overwhelming continental landscapes surrounding them by utilizing the discourse of the

sublime, thus claiming kinship with the foreign by drawing it under the aegis of a common

western aesthetic register, and thus "reuniting the pieces" of their "divided cultural identities."

Pratt's caveat that the "monarch-of-all-I-survey scene" is a "masculine heroic discourse

of discovery" which "is not readily available to women" (213) ought not to concern us too much

since Adeline, Emily, and Ellena are not engaging in "promontory description" per se; they are

engaging in the discourse of the sublime. While the former is similar to the latter in the sense

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[48] For a primary example one could consider Richard Burton's *Lake Regions of Central Africa* (1860). Pratt cites a key passage in *Imperial Eyes*, 201-2. Patrick Brantlinger's also references Burton's text as one that "make[s] use of Gothic tropes" (157) in "Imperial Gothic." *Teaching the Gothic*. Ed. Anna Powell and Andrew Smith. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. 153-67.

that in both cases the viewing subject is (re)constructing the landscape along the axes of a

Eurocentric discourse, one must bear in mind that in "promontory description" the viewing

subject's proprietorship over the scene is explicit, while in the discourse of the sublime, the

viewing subject constructs herself as one who is *subjected* and humbled by the spectacle; her

proprietorship exists solely on a subtextual level of appropriation.

More specifically, in terms of the intersection of the sublime with colonialist speech

acts, Dekker suggests that there's a "ravishing sublimity associated in Radcliffe's fiction with

southern Europe, Burke, feudal institutions and buildings, and a transporting sublimity

associated with the North, Shakespeare, natural scenery, and the spirit of liberty: the former

permitting little more than passive receptivity, the latter awakening the mind to presences

beyond the merely seen" (109). While I do not contest Dekker's reading—the "feudal" southern

European villains and their crumbling domiciles certainly do permit "little more than passive

receptivity" while the "natural scenery" does inspire the mind to "presences beyond the merely

seen"—it is interesting that Radcliffe's heroines, though traveling in southern Europe and facing

its allegedly "ravishing" sublimity, engage in landscape description that undeniably reflects the

"transporting" sublimity associated with the north. However, one must also keep in mind that

"transport"—that is, "such attributes of the sublime as an exalting sense of imaginative

expansion and empowerment"—is not limited to an encounter with the "northern" sublime;

such feelings can also be drawn from "the other (Burkean) end of the emotional scale, a strange

mingling of awe, terror, and delight" (8). The fact that this is possible suggests that, by applying

such an "aesthetic appreciation of [the landscape's] merits," Radcliffe's heroines labor to make

sense of the foreign landscape through the deployment of an aesthetic discourse; this implies an

attempt to tame that which is frightening and un-English with familiar language and standards

of virtue and self-reliance.

By way of example, there is an interesting moment in *The Romance of the Forest* where

Peter, the predictably loquacious servant, extols the virtues of his homeland Savoy's location

amongst the Alps in counterpoint to the hills of France. He exclaims

> the hills there are very well for French hills, but they are not to be named on the same
> day with ours.' Adeline [the narrative continues], lost in admiration of the astonishing
> and tremendous scenery around her, assented very warmly to the truth of Peter's
> assertion, which encouraged him to expatiate more largely upon the advantages of his
> country; its disadvantages he totally forgot; and though he gave away his last sous to
> the children of the peasantry that run barefooted by the side of the horse, he spoke of
> nothing but the happiness and content of the inhabitants. (264)

Savoy, which since 1720 had been associated with the Kingdom of Sardinia, was being occupied

by French Revolutionary forces at the time of Radcliffe's writing. As a nation simultaneously

associated with Italy and revolutionary France, it is not surprising that Radcliffe should draw the

reader's attention to the region's poverty—indeed, her referring to "barefooted peasant

children" reminds one of France's critics' tendency to dwell on the image of an impoverished

rural peasantry clad in wooden shoes.

However, Radcliffe is also quick to point out that Leloncourt, Peter's hometown, over

which the benevolent pastor La Luc presides, "was an exception to the general character of the

country, and to the usual effects of an arbitrary government; it was flourishing, healthy, and

happy; and these advantages it chiefly owed to the activity and attention of the benevolent

clergyman whose cure it was" (264). During Adeline and Peter's journey, there is an interesting

shift in Adeline's emotional state before and after she sees Leloncourt, a shift which supports a

reading of the sublime-in-landscape as an Anglifying tool. As the journey wanes on, the grandeur

of Savoy's Alpine landscape begins to take an emotional toll on the fatigued Adeline; we are told

that

> [h]er spirits, thus weakened, the gloomy grandeur of the scenes which had so lately
> awakened emotions of delightful sublimity, now awed her into terror; she trembled at
> the sound of the torrents rolling among the cliffs and thundering in the vale below, and

shrunk from the view of the precipices, which sometimes overhung the road, and at others appeared beneath it. (265)

However, upon approaching Leloncourt, which rests "at the foot of the Savoy Alps," the traveler is once again rejuvenated by the sight of the sublime, as the sunset above the town and the surrounding, mountainous landscape "drew from Adeline, languid as she was, an exclamation of rapture" (265). Here, we see a landscape with Franco-Italian associations becoming an object of "Burkean" terror,[49] until the appearance of a township—a township which is led and managed by an Anglified divine—in the midst of this foreignness stabilizes the heroine's emotional state, a move which suggests that it is the sublime's association with British aesthetic discourse more than anything else which gives it its fortifying valence.

In *The Italian*, there are other, perhaps more subtle, interesting juxtapositions of "good" and "bad" sublimity. Anyone who has studied Radcliffe is familiar with the two "big" sublime moments in the text—the first being when Ellena discovers the convent of San Stefano's turret room, which overlooks a majestic panorama of mountains, and the second being when Ellena, Vivaldi, and the servant Paolo observe and comment on a particular vista as they are fleeing from the convent. The former moment will be considered in more depth later on, while the latter's connection to travel and English identity has already been expostulated by Pam Perkins. Readers of *The Italian* will of course recall that the scene in question depicts the three travelers looking upon Lake Celano, with Vivaldi noting the sublime mountains that surround it, Ellena pointing out the beautiful banks and plains, and Paolo essentially "missing the point" by comparing this scene to a vaguely similar one in the travelers' native Naples (185-186). Perkins reads this moment as an example of the "English" Ellena and Vivaldi's mastery of national aesthetic discourse as opposed to Paolo's rustic provincialism, claiming that

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[49] It is interesting that Emily and Ellena never have similar negative reactions to Italian landscapes in *Udolpho* and *The Italian*. Most likely, this is merely an example of Radcliffe honing her craft over the course of several novels.

Ellena – and to a lesser extent Vivaldi – are more 'English' than Italian in their reactions and in the ways that they are characterised, at least in part because, like a reader sufficiently sophisticated to appreciate the careful intertextualising of the novel and the literature of the Grand Tour, they know how to turn their own country into a tourist site. They know the beauty spots worth observing, and they know the proper language in which to appreciate them, a point emphasised by the supposedly comic inarticulacy and local pride of the servants. (41)

However, there is another, earlier sublime moment which, while perhaps not particularly notable in its own right, raises some interesting associations when considered in textual and historical context. This moment occurs while Ellena is being forcibly transported to San Stefano by Schedoni's and the Marchesa di Vivaldi's bravos. Despite her terror and uncertainty, the mountain scenery that the carriage passes through grants her

temporary, though feeble, relief…till, her spirits being gradually revived and elevated by the grandeur of the images around her, she said to herself 'If I am condemned to misery, surely I could endure it with more fortitude in scenes like these, than amidst the tamer landscapes of Nature! Here, the objects seen [sic] to impart somewhat of their own force, their own sublimity to the soul. It is scarcely possible to yield to the pressure of misfortune while we walk, as with the Deity, amidst his most stupendous works!' (75)

To appreciate fully the significance of this moment, one must bear in mind that Ellena's engagement in sublime, pseudo-religious discourse follows her realization, upon looking out the window of the carriage, that she has entered unfamiliar territory, as there is "no object that could direct her conjecture concerning where she was" (74). Interestingly, despite her troubles, Ellena seems to express the sentiments of the explorer, as she notes the "scanty vegetation, such as stunted pinasters, dwarf-oak and holly which gave dark touches to the many-coloured cliffs, and sometimes stretched in shadowy masses to the deep vallies [sic], that, winding into obscurity, *seemed to invite curiosity to explore the scenes beyond*" (74-75, my italics). While I would not go so far as to say that Ellena is some kind of explorer, the deployment of such a description evokes a tradition of colonial exploration.

Along these lines, it is also interesting that the embattled Ellena takes the time to note and identify the various examples of vegetation—in addition to the "stunted pinasters, dwarf-oak and holly," she also spots "thickets of Indian-fig, pomegranate, and oleander" (75); not long afterward, she is obliged to walk a path "coolly overshadowed by thickets of almond-trees, figs, broad-leaved myrtle, and ever-green rose bushes, intermingled with the strawberry tree, beautiful in fruit and blossoms, the yellow jasmine, the delightful *acacia mimosa*, and a variety of other fragrant plants," a path that "would have charmed almost any other eye than Ellena's whose spirit was wrapt in care" (76-77).

This cataloguing of trees and flora is of course reminiscent of that most benign of travel narrative stock figures, the herborizer—he whom Pratt describes as "armed with nothing more than a collector's bag, a notebook, and some specimen bottles, desiring nothing more than a few peaceful hours alone with the bugs and flowers" (27). Of course, Radcliffe's great herborizer is St. Aubert in *Udolpho*, whose status as such helps to cement his discursive position as an English scenic tourist. Because the herborizer is typically—if not always—gendered male, I would certainly not try to claim that Ellena *is* an herborizer (the absence of "specimen bottles" and such in her inventory also makes such a reading untenable), but it is certainly noteworthy that herborizing was a popular gentlemanly hobby that grew out of the latter half of the eighteenth century's preoccupation with natural history, which itself "conceived of the world as a chaos out of which the scientist *produced* an order" (30, original italics). In Ellena's case, I would say that her tendency to recognize such a wide breadth of plants and trees helps to identify her, rather subtly, with a broader tradition of exploration. The fact that she is a woman and that she is being carried through these landscapes by force ensures that the reader remains focused on the Gothic plot and the heroine's requisite helplessness, yet her effortless naming of the surrounding vegetation simultaneously positions Ellena as one who possesses a degree of

agency over her surroundings—she is actively "producing order" in the midst of her chaotic

predicament. Furthermore, the fact that she is in the midst of a sublime vista during this

moment also helps to mediate problems of gender since, as Yaeger has pointed out, "the

sublime is also the genre of permitted trespass – a genre in which figures of women can seize

the grand roles formerly allotted to figures of men" (199).

However, a mere two pages later, Ellena spies the immense convent of San Stefano, and

this time her encounter with sublimity is far less emboldening:

> Partial features of the vast edifice she was approaching, appeared now and then
> between the trees; the tall west window of the cathedral with the spires that
> overtopped it; the narrow pointed roofs of the cloisters; angles of the insurmountable
> walls, which fenced the garden from the precipices below, and the dark portal leading
> into the chief court, each of these, seen at intervals beneath the bloom of cypress and
> spreading cedar, seemed as if menacing the unhappy Ellena with hints of future
> suffering. (77)

It is easy to overlook, in the effusiveness of the above passage, the fact that the dark convent is

seen only sporadically; it appears and disappears "between the trees," flitting like a specter.

Ellena's inability to see San Stefano clearly is typically Radcliffean, as Radcliffe generally deploys

the sublime—particularly the "Burkean" variety—amidst scenes of obscurity (Conger 131,

Mishra 234). Furthermore, the trees which hide San Stefano from Ellena's view are cypresses

and cedars, both of which are typically associated with the Mediterranean, and neither of which

is indigenous to England, a move which brings into relief San Stefano's status as a highly

foreignized environment. While this observation may seem like a stretch at first, it is compelling

to consider this moment in relation to Ellena's viewing of the same landscape from San

Stefano's turret.

This itself is one of the most significant instances of sublimity in *The Italian* because it

invokes, more clearly than any other sublime moment in the text, the heroine's "soul

expansion." The fact that this key moment is brought about by a more controlled encounter

with a sublime scene that has heretofore been textually associated with Ellena's kidnapping is also intriguing. After discovering that the kindly Sr. Olivia—who she later discovers is actually her mother—has left the door to her "cell" open, Ellena wanders into the turret room as she seeks a means of escape; upon looking out the window:

> [t]he consciousness of her prison was lost, while her eyes ranged over the wide and freely-sublime scene without…Ellena, with a dreadful pleasure, looked down [the cliffs], shagged as they were with larch, and frequently darkened by lines of gigantic pine bending along the rocky ledges, till her eyes rested on the thick chestnut woods that extended over their winding base, and which, softening to the plains, seemed to form a gradation between the variegated cultivation there, and the awful wildness of the rocks above. Round these extensive plains were tumbled the mountains, of various shape and attitude, which Ellena had admired on her approach to San Stefano; some shaded with forests of olive and almond trees, but the greater part abandoned to the flocks, which, in summer, feed on their aromatic herbage…[t]he accumulation of overtopping points, which the mountains of this dark perspective exhibited, presented an image of grandeur superior to any thing she had seen while within the pass itself. (105, 106)

Here, Ellena beholds the same scene that she observed from her carriage, except this time she views it from a "promontory" and thus sees it within the context of the larger countryside. In this particular controlled situation, she is able to more fully derive a sense of agency from her surroundings, and this sense of agency takes the form of devotional reflection, as Ellena feels that she is able to look "beyond the awful veil which obscures the features of the Deity" and thus is able to scorn "the boasted power of man, when the fall of a single cliff from these mountains would with ease destroy thousands of his race assembled on the plains below," and take heart in the fact that "man, the giant who now held her in captivity, would shrink to the diminutiveness of a fairy" (106-107). Diego Saglia has made an observation similar to mine, noting that Ellena's trip to San Stefano is rife with danger and uncertainty, yet when she views the same scenery from the turret room, "Ellena obviously occupies a position of self-assurance, and her eyes dominate the sublime spectacle so that she can organize it through description and, above all, inform it with the appropriate religious meanings. These allegories are in fact a cultural reading of the landscape enabling Ellena Rosalba to position herself in it" (21).

In the context of Saglia's claims and our current discussion, I would read this moment in

counterpoint to Ellena's viewing of the convent; in the latter she is cowed by the "the narrow

pointed roofs of the cloisters; [the] angles of the insurmountable walls, which fenced the garden

from the precipices below, and the dark portal leading into the chief court," while in the current

scene she feels that she is seeing the face of God in "the awful wildness of the rocks [and] [t]he

accumulation of overtopping points." In typical Gothic—but especially Radcliffean—fashion, the

irony is that God does not dwell in the convent or the church, but in the land surrounding these

buildings; indeed, Radcliffe makes the point that the cliffs "rose, in nearly-perpendicular lines, to

the walls of the monastery, *which they supported*" (106, my italics) a statement that is

reinforced by Ellena's subsequent fantasy of tumbling cliffs easily destroying an army. Hence, we

can understand this moment as a case of the Gothic heroine recontextualizing her terrifyingly

foreign surroundings: not only is the land she was forcibly carried through reconfigured in the

language of sublime self-empowerment when viewed from the convent's "promontory," but

also the convent itself is characterized as "prophaned" (100) and "menacing" (77), God Himself

only present in a surrounding countryside that the Gothic heroine has actively cathected with

the sentiments of sublimity.

The Mysteries of Udolpho is a bit of an anomaly in that there are no particularly

noteworthy examples of the sublime mediating an encounter with the foreign—or at least none

that are similar in tone and deployment to the ones we have just considered in *The Romance of*

the Forest and *The Italian*—other than the moment when Emily confronts Montoni over his

callous behavior towards the wounded Morano. As mentioned earlier, Eugenia Delamotte has

read this scene as an example of the heroine deploying a "spiritual barrier," produced by her

sense of her own virtue, which protects her ego from the villain, who would like nothing more

than to rob her of her sense of selfhood (32-33, 175). Building off of Delamotte's claim, I have

argued in "Sublime Patriarchs and the Problems of the New Middle Class" that this spiritual

barrier is in dialogue with the Kantian sublime partly because Kantian sublimity makes us

"conscious of our superiority over nature within, and thus also over nature without us (as

exerting influence upon us)" (qtd. in Mishra 35) and partly because when Emily stands up to

Montoni, her "sacred pride swells against the pressure of injustice, and almost to glory" (381).

Of greater interest for our purposes though is the fact that many of the sublime moments in

Udolpho are connected to notions of domesticity, as Emily frequently pines for the absent

Valancourt while looking upon the Apennine scenery surrounding the castle Udolpho. This

should not come as much of a surprise, considering that Emily spends roughly the first quarter

of the novel traveling through and observing the Pyrenees with Valancourt and St. Aubert.

Indeed, sublimity's ability to produce domestic subjects is a key part of my reading because it

helps to clarify how Radcliffe's texts exemplify the "colonization" of private space.

Sublimity Producing the Private Sphere

So far our discussion on the sublime's intersection with domesticity has been largely

focused on "the domestic" in terms of nationhood rather than so-called "private spheres." Along

these lines, I realize that discourse on the sublime may at first seem out of place in a critical

work that is preoccupied with notions of the home. Admittedly, the sublime is typically

associated more with the individual while the beautiful is connected to the family—Anne

Mellor, for example, states that Henry Clerval's "valuing the picturesque and the beautiful above

the sublime…affirms an aesthetic grounded on the family and the community rather than on the

individual" (138). However, one can also consider Madame de Stael's *Corrine* (1807), a novel

that Dekker describes as "a study in companionable tourism" (223). The titular heroine gushes

her belief that people "become dearer to each other when they share admiration for

monuments whose true greatness speaks to the soul!" (qtd. in Dekker 30) The whole notion of

"companionable tourism," the popular Romantic belief that travel with a companion had "the potential of at once stimulating perception and deepening friendship" (30) suggests that viewing sublime landscapes with a beloved partner deepens the relationship between both parties, thus strengthening ties of kinship and performing labor in service of the home front. For an example that's perhaps more immediately relevant to Radcliffe's agenda, one can consider the words of Lady Anne Percival in Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda* (1801): "[a] woman who has an opportunity of seeing her lover in private society, in domestic life, has infinite advantages; *for if she has any sense, and he has any sincerity, the real character of both may be developed*" (qtd. in McCann 186, my italics). While they may not always be in the domestic space *per se* while having these "moments," Radcliffe's lovers are certainly in "private society" while viewing the sublime since generally their only companions other than each other are benevolent family members (La Luc and Claire in *The Romance of the Forest*, St. Aubert in *Udolpho*, and Signora Bianchi in *The Italian*) or loquacious but loveable and loyal servants (Peter in *Romance* and Paolo in *The Italian*), and it is their "sense and sincerity" before the sublime that allows them to develop their "real characters" in each other's company, thus laying the foundations for a domestic future based on love and mutual respect. While it is true that the heroine also interacts with landscape while in exclusively bad company—Emily's trip to Udolpho, for example—it is in these moments that she reflects on the sublime's ability to strengthen her. Sublimity plays a different role in this context, as the beloved is not present and the heroine's needs are different. However, in *all* cases where the hero and the heroine are together, evil characters are not *immediately* present, and the surrounding landscape acts as a bonding force.

This is relevant to our discussion on empire primarily because it illustrates an intersection between Radcliffe's heroines' domesticating "missions" and Spurr's concepts of appropriation and insubstantialization, which I highlighted in the introduction of this study. To

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review briefly, appropriation represents the colonizers' "desire to recreate, in these unconquered territories or in these unsubdued hearts and minds, one's own image, and to reunite the pieces of a cultural identity divided from itself" (Spurr 42), while insubstantialization casts the "Other" world as "an immaterial counterpart to the dissolving consciousness of the subject" (142). To clarify, appropriation essentially co-opts the foreign landscape—and the indigenous people who inhabit it—and imposes the traveler's/colonizer's own contexts and desires onto the scene. Insubstantialization is similar in that it dehistoricizes a landscape or region and reconstructs it as a kind of set piece against which the Westerner's inner drama can play out. Specifically in the case of Radcliffe, we witness her female and male protagonists "appropriating" continental mountainscapes by framing them in a version of sublime discourse that is meant to heighten the experience of a "companionable tourism" that will inevitably have its end in bourgeois "companionate marriage." And since these characters are, as we have established, eighteenth-century middle class folk traveling through a romanticized and unrealistic past, we can also understand that the scenes they are viewing have been insubstantialized, taken out of historical context and deployed solely to serve the interests and passions of their anachronistic viewers. Finally, the fact that these interests and passions run towards moral reform, marriage, and bourgeois domesticity indicates that the protagonists' shared viewing of the sublime is intended as a device to produce an English model of the private sphere in the midst of foreign landscape, thus echoing my broader reading of these texts.

Examples of how Radcliffe reflects these notions, albeit in different forms, can be found in all three of the works under consideration. In *Udolpho*, when Emily and Valancourt view the sublime while traveling through the Pyrenees, we are told that "the grandeur and sublimity of the scenes, amidst which they had first met, had fascinated [Emily's] fancy, and had imperceptibility contributed *to render Valancourt more interesting* by seeming to communicate

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to him somewhat of their own character" (89, my italics). Radcliffe further clarifies the link

between sublimity, her beloveds, and domesticity by adding St. Aubert to the Emily-Valancourt-

sublime trifecta, as the benevolent patriarch comes to realize that, despite having traveled an

arduous path,

> [t]he wonderful sublimity and variety of the prospects repaid him for all this; and the enthusiasm with *which they were viewed by his young companions, heightened his own, and awakened a remembrance of all the delightful emotions of his early days, when the sublime charms of nature were first unveiled to him.* He found great pleasure in conversing with Valancourt, and in listening to his ingenious remarks: the fire and simplicity of his manners seemed to render him *a characteristic figure in the scenes around them*; and St. Aubert discovered in his sentiments the justness and the dignity of an elevated mind unbiased by intercourse with the world…he [Valancourt] believed well of all mankind; *and this gave him [St. Aubert] the reflected image of his own heart*. (53, my italics)

This passage effectively positions St. Aubert as a sort of older version of Valancourt, while

Valancourt himself is essentially transfigured into an extension of the landscape. I have claimed

in "Sublime Patriarchs and the Problems of the New Middle Class," that Radcliffe's heroes are

not empowered by the sublime—as a benevolent yet *penetrative* and *authoritative* father-

figure, the sublime in nature is something that the hero cannot engage in the same way that the

heroine-as-daughter can. Rather, the hero can only characterize the sublime as something that

must be surmounted—as Vivaldi does when he describes Monte-Corno as "a ruffian, huge,

scared [sic], threatening, and horrid!" (185) and marks how a particular mountain range's

"broken summits…exhibit the portraiture of towers and castles, and embattled ramparts, which

appear designed to guard them against enemies, that may come by the clouds" (189)[50]—or as

something that must be somehow claimed or identified with.

Because of his essential connection to the landscape as established in the last indented

quotation, Valancourt is clearly "taking over the (real and surrogate) father's place in Emily's

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[50] The colonial implications here are obvious, especially when Vivaldi's militaristic depiction of natural scenery is considered alongside Pratt's "promontory descriptions."

world" (Bondhus). In this way, I argue, Valancourt works towards securing himself a place in the

"fraternal patriarchy,"[51] confirming Shaun Lisa Maurer's observation that "the ideal husband [is]

an extension of the ideal father" in eighteenth-century middle-class thought (117). St. Aubert's

silent approbation of Emily and Valancourt's budding romance further validates Maurer's

contention, as the kindly patriarch notes "[t]hey appeared like two lovers who had never

strayed beyond these their native mountains; whose situation had secluded them from the

frivolities of common life; whose ideas were simple and grand, like the landscapes among which

they moved; and who knew no other happiness than in the union of pure and affectionate

hearts" (54). Furthermore, shortly after St. Aubert dies, Emily and Valancourt reencounter each

other and discuss "the scenes they had passed along the Pyrenean Alps." St. Aubert's spirit is

strongly felt here, as "[t]his subject recalled forcibly to Emily the idea of her father, whose image

appeared in every landscape which Valancourt particularized, whose remarks dwelt upon her

memory, and whose enthusiasm still glowed in her heart" (114-115). Therefore, the sublime—

the sensation of which is generated by an encounter with continental mountains—is figured as

productive and supportive of domestic values and the perpetuation of companionate, bourgeois

lineage, a claim that receives its final confirmation from Emily's tendency, more than any other

Radcliffe heroine—except perhaps Adeline—to link spectatorship of the sublime with her

beloved throughout the novel. At one point the text reads: "with what emotions of sublimity,

softened by tenderness, did [Emily] meet Valancourt in thought, at the customary hour of sun-

set, when, wandering among the Alps, she watched the glorious orb sink amid their summits"

(163). At another, Emily observes "the wild summits of the Pyrenees, and her fancy immediately

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[51] For more on the notion of the "fraternal patriarchy," see Shaun Lisa Maurer's *Proposing Men: Dialectics of Gender and Class in the Eighteenth-Century English Periodical.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998. 179, 197.

painted the green pastures of Gascony at their feet. Her heart pointed to her peaceful home—to the neighborhood where Valancourt was—where St. Aubert had been" (130).

The Romance of the Forest is somewhat similar to Udolpho in terms of this particular dynamic. However, perhaps because it is the earliest of the three novels, it is also markedly atypical in its treatment of the heroine-hero-sublime scene triad because all of Adeline's encounters with the sublime occur while Theodore is absent in body—though such scenery does seem to encourage her to "retrace all the conduct of her beloved Theodore, and endeavor to recollect his exact countenance, his air, and manner" (285). Nevertheless, the sublime's relationship to domestic unity is still present in Romance, most notably when Adeline, La Luc, his sentimental daughter Clara, and their servant Peter picnic among some castle ruins in the Alps. In this scene, Adeline makes typical observations on the "stupendous mountains" and the "gloomy grandeur of these woods" (290) while La Luc makes the familiar connection between sublime nature and its "Great Author" (291). The romantic Clara, however, is the one who highlights a link between sublimity and familial complacence, exclaiming "how delightful would it be to pass one's life beneath these shades with the friends who are dear to one"; in response to Clara's effusion, we are told that Adeline "sighed deeply to the image of felicity, and of Theodore, which it recalled, and turned away to conceal her tears" (290). Hence, though her beloved is not physically present at the scene, Adeline still situates him at the crux of domesticity and sublimity.

As for The Italian, there is a voyeuristic episode near the beginning in which Vivaldi watches Ellena at her balcony while he is under the sublime enchantment of Mount Vesuvius and the distant chant of a funereal procession. We are told that

> [t]he solemnity of the scene accorded with the temper of his mind, and he listened in deep attention for the returning sounds, which broke upon the ear like distant thunder muttering imperfectly from the clouds. The pauses of silence, that succeeded each groan of the mountain, when expectation listened for the rising sound, affected the

imagination of Vivaldi at this time with particular awe, and, rapt in thought, he
continued to gaze upon the sublime and shadowy outline of the shores, and on the sea,
just discovered beneath the twilight of a cloudless sky. (15)

While this scene climaxes with a "beautiful" rather than "sublime" appearance from Ellena—

who looks like "a Grecian nymph" surrounded by "clematis" (16)—it is amidst this sublimity that

Vivaldi breathlessly listens to Ellena "sigh, and then, with a sweetness peculiar to her accent,

pronounce his name" (17), an action that assures him of her regard. Considering Ellena's

delicacy, her refusal to obey "the dictates of her heart" when it is not practical to do so (210),

and Vivaldi's frequent bouts of uncertainty as to whether or not Ellena truly loves him (160, 176-

9, 212-13), small, private moments such as these reassure the reader (and Vivaldi) of

companionate marriage's eventual, inevitable triumph. Along these lines, this same "pavilion"

where Vivaldi "had overheard that short but interesting soliloquy, which assured him of

[Ellena's] regard" is also the site where Signora Bianchi, sitting with the two lovers, later sighs

"'this sun so glorious, which lights up all the various colouring of these shores, and the glow of

those majestic mountains; alas! I feel that it will not long shine for me – my eyes must soon

close upon the prospect for ever," a realization that impels her to urge Ellena and Vivaldi's swift

wedding (47).

Ultimately then, since their various adventures and travails eventually lead to the

ultimate end of companionate marriage and domestic bliss, and since in Radcliffe "recollected

'ideal scenes'…supply fortitude during trials and help the individual *remain faithful to her true*

self and loved ones in foreign and self-alienating circumstances" (Dekker 115, my italics), I would

argue that the sublime, at least as far as Radcliffe is concerned, actively promotes the individual

as a potentially domestic subject, and this promotion of domesticity echoes and enables the

heroine's reformative interactions with the continental Other.

Empire Mediating Conservative and Progressive Projects

Thus far I have been focusing primarily on the heroines' "norming" potential, their

status as moral reformers amidst the "turpitude" of southern Europe. It is impossible to cast

these characters in this position without implying a certain level of condemnation, and indeed,

the cultural labor that these women perform is quite deserving of criticism since it perpetuates

an illusion of British moral primacy. However, we must also bear in mind that these characters

are clearly victims of patriarchal oppression, and it is perhaps as a result of this oppression that

they attempt to reform female roles in the domestic arrangement. As we just established, an

encounter with the sublime promotes individual development, yet in Radcliffe, this "evolution"

is mediated by the heroines' position in relation to domesticity. Perhaps the best way to phrase

it is that the sublime promotes the individual as a domestic subject, yet the individual has freely

chosen to become such a subject.

It is interesting that in Radcliffe's literary world, the protagonists shape and define

themselves as domestic subjects *while* they are traveling or occupying a "foreign" space that

exists external to the safe bourgeois home (malicious convents, the Marquis de Montalt's ruined

abbey, the castle Udolpho, etc.). This seems to defy Angela Keane's claim in *Women Writers and

the English Nation in the 1790s* (2005) that women who travel and define themselves outside of

the home are erased from the heterosexual family structure and even femininity itself (3). It

similarly problematizes, Susan Bassnett's statement that "travel for some women, it seems, may

have offered a means of redefining themselves, assuming a different persona and becoming

someone who didn't exist at home" (234). I would like to suggest that, by allowing female travel

to produce a progressive female domesticity, Radcliffe is challenging the dominant discourses of

the time on women and travel—her heroines are certainly not unsexed, as Keane claims, and

they do not "assume a different persona" as Bassnett suggests. Adeline, Emily, and Ellena all

retain their "idealized" state throughout their adventures, excepting, of course, Howells's "eccentric moments" where "new possibilities are raised in the text." As I have established in this chapter, these women are traveling because the home has been disrupted and tainted by the violent intervention of the continental "Other"—they travel to reproduce the domestic on terms that remain loyal to middle-class English values, but that also allow women more agency.

In terms of imperialist discourse, we have already seen how perception of the sublime in Radcliffe is filtered through, and perhaps even allowed by, the viewer's developed notions of sensibility—heroines, heroes, and their beloved family members react positively to the sublime, while unfeeling "evil" characters are never transported by their surroundings. What is interesting about this is that the sensibility of Radcliffe's protagonists is reminiscent of the sensibility of Mary Wollstonecraft, who redefined the doctrine by casting "delicacy, chastity, and modesty" as tools by which women could gain "equality, self-respect, and independence" rather than as a patriarchal tool in which women are passive receptors of moral codification (Jones 106). Essentially, while sensibility in Radcliffe *does* act conservatively as a tool by which the heroines attempt to draw the villains into the "established" domestic economy—a colonialist move—the values it implies also allow the heroines to practice the virtues of the patriarchy while at the same time using those virtues to produce themselves as individuals—a move that is reminiscent of Godwin's English liberty. The fact that perception of the sublime is filtered through the discourse of sensibility suggests then that Radcliffe's female protagonists are, by extension, situated as individuals in relation to the sublime and what it imparts. Thus, the heroine's inevitable marriage can be understood as a joyous act of free will—domesticity is freely and happily chosen. Therefore, even though domesticity may "quell women's expression of both the erotic and the political" (Nussbaum 24), it simultaneously exists as an enterprise that

women deployed *on their own* and in the name of *their own social interests* (Armstrong and Brown).

In light of Nussbaum's and Armstrong and Brown's findings, it is tempting to conclude that Radcliffe's approach to domesticity is more radical than conservative.[52] Other critics seem to imply this, though perhaps not using the language that I have. Andrew McCann writes:

> in Ann Radcliffe's novels, heterosexual love is the basis of a relationship between two equal parties such that, *in the private space of the hearth, husband and wife come together simply as human beings unmarked by the hierarchical structures that, elsewhere in these novels, typify a world of Gothic intrigue and exploitation.* The family, in other words, becomes the site of a subjectivity and a form of communal solidarity outside of and unmediated by relationships of ownership and exchange (86, my italics).

Liberalizing as this may seem, the woman's role is still one of sequestration, as even Jacobins in the 1790s quarantined woman in the domestic space so that she and her inescapable sexuality wouldn't interfere with the business of radical politics (148). However, this is mediated by the fact that, if women are indeed socialized to see themselves as "objects before the male libido," then marriage is "not a moment of alienation, but of fond recognition of self-confirmation" (153). Domesticity can therefore be understood as a hegemonic space which is also, paradoxically, a space that is fervently sought after by women as some sort of *telos* on their quests for identity formation.

The implication remains, however, that English values are somehow universal—why else would the protagonists be able to project these values so successfully onto foreign landscapes? Why else would virtue, as it is understood in the context of the eighteenth-century, English, middle-class subject, be upheld by all of the "good" characters, regardless of their textual ethnicities? Why else would the heroines be "idealized" in these terms? This moral universalism, along with Radcliffe's tendency to define virtue along anti-Jacobin lines

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[52] Perhaps Radcliffe's Latitudinarian upbringing is showing here. See Robert J. Mayhew's "Gothic Trajectories: Latitudinarian Theology and the Novels of Ann Radcliffe." Eighteenth-Century Fiction. 15: 3-4. 2003. 583-613.

("fulfillment of one's familial duties, gendered responsibilities, and social duties" [Armstrong 3-

4]) precludes any revolutionary claims that Radcliffe is a radical writer. Besides, if she were

overtly propagating a more Godwinian agenda, her work would likely have been castigated by

anti-Jacobin critics.[53] Interestingly, in their review of *The Italian*, the *Anti-Jacobin Review* wrote

the following of the servant Paolo's character: "allowing that human nature is nearly the same in

all countries, we should still contend, that Paulo is more of an Englishman than an Italian" (501).

This statement not only encapsulates conservative attitudes towards "human nature" and, by

extension, "universal morality," but also illustrates Radcliffe's complicity in this discourse, and

her critics' awareness of that complicity. However, the *Review*'s literary critic also takes issue

with Radcliffe's writing style, stating that "the wilderness, the mysterious horror of many

situations and events in Mrs. R. are rather German than English" (27). This vaguely disapproving

comment is likely meant to imply that Radcliffe's work uncomfortably engages a foreign

sensibility. Interestingly, Keane ascribes the *Review*'s troubles with Radcliffe's work to the fact

that "her fictions are centred around female protagonists who move through landscape and

who exceed the commonplace representational reduction of women to property, and indeed

become proprietors" (19). Hence, while Radcliffe shies away from promoting what period

commentators might have identified as a "radical" agenda, she still presents a more progressive

representation of women, casting them as subjects rather than objects.

Like her characters then, Radcliffe's politics, as expressed in the novels, are not easily

mappable. To situate Radcliffe more historically, I again point out Agorni's reading of Hester

Piozzi who, she claims, creates an "imagined community of learned Italian women [which

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[53] Most reviewers' only objections to *The Romance of the Forest, The Mysteries of Udolpho,* and *The Italian,* were literary, rather than social, ones. However, one unknown critic—erroneously identified as Coleridge for a space—summed up his review of *The Italian* in the following, positive way: "But, notwithstanding occasional objections, the *Italian* may justly be considered as an ingenious performance; and many persons will read it with great pleasure and satisfaction" (169). See the *Critical Review* xxii (June 1798), 166-9.

allows] British women writers to find a legitimate entry into forbidden territories in this

historical period" (130). Essentially, in her letters, Piozzi draws an Italy that resembles an ideal

British society that also accommodates women more wholly (141). In a more direct connection

to the texts, Keane maintains that Radcliffe creates female characters who occupy the same

strata as property-owning men (19). While I find Keane's assessment to be erring heavily on the

side of optimism, there is no denying that Radcliffe performs labor similar to Piozzi's by

imagining new possibilities for women not only in the domestic, but also in the public space—

Adeline goes to court to testify and secure justice at the end of *The Romance of the Forest*; the

embattled Emily not only claims ownership of her inherited property at the end of *Udolpho*, but

also sensibly manages it by liquidating her unnecessary real estate assets; and though Ellena

never really has an opportunity to play a role in the "public space," she still participates in what

Brenda Tooley refers to as a "feminotopia" that allows for "limited [female] autonomy" at the

convent of the Santa della Pieta in *The Italian*. While it is true that Ellena does not end up

settling at the Santa della Pieta, the prospect of her taking up permanent residence with the

nuns is raised as a viable possibility should her situation with Vivaldi's family not improve (350-

351). Furthermore, her long-lost mother Sr. Olivia eventually comes to reside there, thus

strengthening the domestic implications of a convent which has already been described as being

"like a large family, of which the lady abbess was the mother" (348). And although Ellena does

end up marrying Vivaldi, they settle in a house that is close to the Santa della Pieta (474). Again,

I cite this aspect of Radcliffe's writing to make the point that her approach to domesticity, while

"conservative" in some ways, still falls on the "radical" side of the political spectrum in other

ways, as not only does she propagate marriage based on mutual respect rather than social

control (as delineated above), but also because she creates a more active role for women in

both the domestic and economic spheres.

I have devoted so much of this chapter to deconstructing Radcliffe's approach to domesticity because I believe it is key to understanding how she and her work are situated in relation to travel and empire. Radcliffe is almost certainly complicit in the creation of a "moral empire" in which middle-class values can and should be universalized—a feat she accomplishes through her particularized deployment of the sublime and, to an extent, sensibility and domesticity. And yet, one must still keep in mind that the sublime experience is "individualized." Female sensibility and virtue are more about achieving independence than adhering to repressive social codes, and a somewhat reconfigured domesticity not only grants women more marital equality but also allows them a rather impressive level of control in the spheres of property and economics. This suggests to me that Radcliffe's heroines are in fact traveling not only to efface difference but also to reshape and better understand how they are positioned in relation to domesticity. Dekker makes an interesting claim along these lines in *The Fictions of Romantic Tourism*, stating that "then, as now, changes of scene and company promised the possibility of a corresponding transformation of self, temporarily making the tourist 'feel like a new person'" (46). Radcliffe it would seem is taking this dynamic a step further—her heroines, as we have established, are not "tourists" in the literal sense; their journeys are compulsory and life-changing, and therefore the "transformation of self" which they undergo is much more far-reaching. What is key here is Dekker's inherent claim that travel and displacement force the individual to resee herself, which is essentially what Radcliffe's heroines are doing when they contest the bounds of domestic femininity while living in diasporic exile; indeed, Dekker later sums up his argument by stating that "Romantic tourists often seem to value the foreign not for its own sake but because it offers far less resistance to imaginative reshaping than the known and familiar would" (52). Therefore, I would suggest that Radcliffe's heroines need to be somewhat foreignized (nominally French or Italian) and need to be traveling through these

"exotic" sites in order for them to entertain the possibility of social reform; as with Piozzi's

"imagined community of learned Italian women," it is somehow politically safer, and perhaps

even easier, to reinvent the self while abroad, both literally and figuratively.

Travel's progressive implications can also be noted if one reads Adeline, Emily, and

Ellena as women who are leaving behind the home and "trying on" different domestic

configurations. Adeline lives with the La Mottes—a kind of surrogate nuclear family—in the

abbey St. Clair before being abducted to what is essentially Montalt's harem, and then escaping

to the ideal sentimental community of Leloncourt. Emily lives in a variety of houses, most

notably the threatening Udolpho and the benevolent Chateau de Villefort; and Ellena

experiences negative convent life at San Stefano, decayed domestic horror at Schedoni's beach

mansion, and a community of sentimental sisterhood at Santa della Pieta. In all cases the

heroines attempt to make the best of the situation, practicing sentimental virtue and English

delicacy in locations where such behavior often isn't necessary, or even appropriate (Napier

107). As I've established, this can be read as a key example of the heroine as romantic

traveler/colonizer, overcoming threatening alterity by practicing the very values that are

supposedly under attack at home (and in her own foreignized body) by this same alterity and

thus proving the British moral system's continuing validity. These attacks come in the form of

the destruction of the parents or parental figures, their places being usurped by the foreign

villains, and the physical home itself sometimes even being threatened, as when Emily's

avaricious relatives the Quesnels plot to acquire La Vallee and change the sentimental

homestead into a fashionable resort for themselves. However, this dynamic can also be read as

the heroine's attempt to assess different domestic structures. Her adventures behind her, the

Radcliffean protagonist closes out her narrative by settling into a domesticity that eschews the

patriarchy of the castle or convent life and, while internalizing the liberal lessons of Adeline's

Leloncourt, Emily's La Vallee and Chateau de Villefort, and Ellena's Santa della Pieta, is still

grounded in an institutionalized, heterosexual contract. Rather than the self telescoping into the

Other, the Other is appropriated into the self. In the words of Angela Keane, Radcliffe's heroines

are the "ideal citizens of public-minded private spheres. Enlightened, reflective and sustained by

property, they establish familial structures based on mutual love and communal responsibility"

(19).

Ultimately then, we can understand Radcliffe's nominally southern European heroines

as diasporic figures whose primary conflict is to situate themselves in relation to domesticity

while at the same time staving off the danger of becoming nativized and anomalous. Similar to

Caleb Williams, they run the risk of becoming uncivilized as a result of constant persecution at

the hands of foreign, abject Others: the foreign patriarchs who, like Falkland, occupy an

uncertain and terrifying space between Italian and English cultural heritages. Since it is these

villains who have disrupted the heroines' domestic space—whether through murder or the

manipulation of complicated processes of inheritance and patriarchal law—the heroines are

forced to travel with them into the dangerous "torrid zones," where they risk either losing their

civilized identities or dying, while at the same time exploring different domestic configurations.

However, by deploying the discourses of sensibility, sublimity, and domestication that literal,

"real world" colonialism plays a part in enabling, and then applying them to (fictional) travel,

Radcliffe's protagonists discursively reform their surroundings and, in so doing, preserve their

identities as separate from those of their foreignized persecutors, eliminate threats of anomaly,

and reaffirm middle-class domestic values—albeit in a more progressive, individualized, proto-

feminist way. Their ability to see their persecutors as Other anticipates Victor Frankenstein's

approach to the Monster (as we will see), yet they avoid his grim fate by deploying a sensibility

that recognizes the villains' humanity and invites them to reform their lives and join the

heroines in the domestic economy. Therefore, Adeline, Emily, and Ellena release the perfect

measure of sentiment—they acknowledge their persecutors' as having *the potential* to become

"civilized," yet they do not engage in the self-effacing sympathy that destroys Caleb Williams

when he confronts Falkland in court. Radcliffe then, by erasing literal Englishness and setting up

a discursive formulation of the diaspora, is able to discourse with both "the English subject and

the colonial specter" (Harrow 17) in such a way that walks the line between the extremes of

Caleb Williams and *Frankenstein*.

CHAPTER III

(NOT) PRODUCING THE SELF IN THE OTHER: THE FAILURE TO EFFACE DIFFERENCE IN

FRANKENSTEIN

A little over twenty-five years after *Frankenstein*'s initial publication, Mary Shelley's

two-volume *Rambles in Germany and Italy* (1844) appeared. In the Italian part of her travel

narrative, Shelley expresses her support for the Carbonari and writes, with a somewhat

uncritical sense of nationalism, that English citizens "ought to sympathise in [the Italians']

struggles; for the aspiration for free institutions all over the world has its source in England"

(qtd. in Bennett 114). At another point, her assessment of the Italian people sounds

uncomfortably similar to George Cooper's assessment of the Irish as "barbaric" individuals who

nevertheless are "fitted by nature…for the highest attainments in moral or intellectual

excellence" (194), as she writes that

> [n]o one can talk to them [the Italians] without perceiving latent, under ignorance and
> superstition, great natural abilities, and that heartfelt piety which springs (as our higher
> virtues do,) from the imagination which warms and colours their faith. Poor people!
> how I long for a fairy wand which would make them proprietors of the earth which they
> till, but most not reap. How sad a thing is human society: yet ... it warms my heart when
> I find the individuals that compose a population, poor, humble, ignorant, misguided, yet
> endowed with some of the brightest gifts of our nature, and bearing in their faces the
> stamp of intelligence and feeling. (qtd. in Nitchie 41)

While the first of the above passages from the *Rambles* displays an Anglocentric attitude

characteristic of many of the writers and commentators I have been addressing in this study, it

is key to note that, in the words of Esther Schor, Shelley is generally "urg[ing] the English to

'sympathise' with, not pity, the Italians," and, in so doing, "she is urging a new and

unaccustomed regard for them as peers" (246). And though the second of the above passages

adopts a patronizing tone, one ought to note that Shelley, unlike Cooper, does not compare the

European Other to aboriginal "savages," nor does she seem to be calling for English intervention

in Italy, instead expressing a wish that the Italians themselves become "proprietors of the earth

which they till." Indeed, for Shelley, the solution to Italy's political problems, its clashes with

papal and Austrian hegemony, lies not in "subjugation" or "revolution" but rather in "peaceful

mediation" (qtd. in Bennett 114). Furthermore, Shelley seems to have recognized, largely

through her alliances with the Carbonari, that Italian poverty and "superstition" is the result of

imperialism and abused power rather than being somehow intrinsic to ethnic character. This

situates her as one who possessed and promoted a more generous understanding of European

Otherness, a position informed more by direct contact with the people and less by the crutch of

stereotypes and received "wisdom."

Shelley's approach to tourism can similarly be seen as "more generous" in the sense

that she channels the politics of her famous mother and represents travel as a sentimental

process through which one comes to recognize—rather than impose or deny—the self in the

Other (Schor 241). While it is true that her opinions on travel and its ethics did not appear in

print until well after *Frankenstein* was published, it is likely that she had formed many of them

much earlier, having, for example, read Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters* with Percy while on their

elopement journey which took place between 1814 and 1816 (237)—a journey which she and

her husband would in fact chronicle in 1817's *History of a Six Weeks' Tour through a part of*

France, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland; with Letters Descriptive of a Sail Round the Lake of

Geneva and of the Glaciers of Chamouni. Furthermore, as my reading of *Frankenstein* will

demonstrate, it is Victor's initial desire to produce an inherently subjugated Creature, and his

later desire to destroy rather than sympathize with it, that are attacked most emphatically in the

novel.

To provide further evidence of Shelley's "liberalism" in matters of imperialism and

Otherness, I refer to Jessica Richard's claim that "[t]he details Shelley gives us of Walton's

behavior as the captain of a polar expedition make it clear that her use of the Arctic frame

narrative was meant to critique [John] Barrow's [of the Royal Admiralty] romance of polar

exploration" (305). Since it is commonly understood that Robert Walton's voyage to the sublime

Arctic acts as an effective mirror of Victor's own overreaching, Shelley's criticism of

Barrow/Walton implicates this natural philosopher's pseudo-imperialistic actions as well;

referring to Walton's misguided hope that the northernmost point of the world is a spring-like

paradise (28), Richard concludes her essay by stating that "Walton's polar quest shows us the

risks of a hubristic ethic of exploration, whether poetic or scientific, that irresponsibly creates

'regions of beauty and delight' out of a world that is stark and cold" (308). While I feel that

Richard is being a bit too pessimistic in her implication that Shelley viewed early nineteenth-

century Europe as "a world that is stark and cold"—such an attitude is more characteristic of her

Things As They Are father—I think the heart of the matter is that Shelley is critical of imposition,

specifically the imposition of hubristic desires and the personal ego onto the Other, whether

that Other be a sublime landscape or a marginalized individual. Along these lines, Andrew Griffin

has suggested that the Monster's promise of self-immolation in the Arctic would be "a bitter

parody of both Walton's and Frankenstein's dream of the fire in ice, underscoring the sorrow

and fatality in that dream" (69). Following this reading, one could argue Shelley is trying to

communicate that aggressively attempting to map one's own desires onto an Other—rather

than respectfully recognizing the kinship that one shares with that Other—ends not in a sublime

discovery of "a new species of many happy and excellent natures" or "a country of eternal

light," but in death, effacement, and "the agony of the torturing flames" (189).

Shelley's apparent sympathy for her hyperphysical "hideous progeny" and her critical

take on Victor's and Walton's arrogance in the face of sublime nature also has, as we will see,

implications for how aesthetics are situated in the text. The role of aesthetics raises some

difficult questions, and many critics have made speculations about Shelley's position on

sublimity and beauty;[54] three particular readings stand out as key building blocks in my own

discussion. Ann Mellor, for one, casts *Frankenstein* as an example of "Mary Shelley's criticism of

the unfettered Romantic imagination and its celebration of the sublime," suggesting that the

novel represents "an affirmation of the beautiful over the sublime" because "the sublime

appeals to the instinct of self-preservation and rouses feelings of terror that result in a desire for

power, domination, and continuing control" while the beautiful "appeals to the instinct of self-

procreation and rouses sensations of erotic and affectional love" (104). For Mellor, Shelley is

positing that sublimity emphasizes unknowability, and it is only through an understanding of

"the unknowable as lovable," that one can "prevent the creation of monsters…capable of

destroying all human civilization" (104). More recently, however, Nancy Fredricks has offered a

provocative challenge to Mellor's claims, arguing that "the aesthetics of the beautiful works to

enslave women and secure their dependence on men as objects of exchange under patriarchal

domination" (178). Furthermore, Fredricks also asserts that beauty as a discourse is "responsible

for the monster's abandonment and abusive treatment, fueling his bitterness and murderous

rage," while the sublime provides a space in which "the marginalized can be heard" (178).

Complicating matters further is Elizabeth Bohls, who suggests that Shelley's "critical deployment

of aesthetics reveals it to be an imperial discourse—one of the languages of high culture,

seemingly far removed from the practical tasks of empire, but actually helping produce imperial

subjects to carry out those tasks" (25).

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[54] Consider Nancy Fredricks's "On the Sublime and Beautiful in Shelley's *Frankenstein*." *Essays in Literature* 23.2 (1996): 178-89; Barbara Freeman's "'*Frankenstein*' with Kant: A Theory of Monstrosity, or the Monstrosity of Theory." *SubStance* 16.52 (1987): 21-31; Anne K. Mellor's "*Frankenstein* and the Sublime" in *Approaches to Teaching Shelley's Frankenstein*. Ed. Stephen Behrendt. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1990. 99-104; Jonathan Padley's "*Frankenstein* and (Sublime) Creation." *Romanticism: The Journal of Romantic Culture and Criticism* 9.2 (2003): 196-212; and Nóra Séllei's "A Book of His Absences—Mary Shelley's Debate with the Romantic Concept of the Sublime." *B.A.S.* (1998): 81-87.

Irreconcilable as these positions may appear to be, I propose that they can in fact be

synthesized, and that such a synthesis produces some intriguing results. I believe, for example,

that Bohls is correct to claim that aesthetics as a whole can be constructed, by default, as an

imperializing discourse, yet Fredricks is also correct to state that, in *Frankenstein*, the beautiful

marginalizes while sublimity grants a voice to the marginalized Monster. I can also agree—albeit

conditionally—with Mellor's contention that Shelley critiques the "unfettered Romantic

imagination" through her deployment of the sublime; however, I feel that Shelley's critique of

sublimity has less to do with the Monster's ability to inspire awe and terror—as Mellor does—

and more to do with Shelley's representation of Victor's hubris. Specifically, I argue that, while

beauty *does* work to marginalize the Creature, it is unable to accomplish anything more than a

temporary exclusion. Though "society's valorization of the beautiful" (Fredricks 178) in the text

keeps the Monster out of the private sphere for a time, the fact that he responds to his

alienation by violently destroying the Frankenstein household suggests that the beautiful has

failed in its ostensible purpose of preserving existing power structures. Similarly, the Monster's

intrusion on Victor's attempts to find succor amongst the sublime vistas of the Alps, and the

inevitable failure of Walton's Arctic voyage,[55] suggests that the sublime does not succeed as an

epic, masculine "system" which "human beings construct out of the elemental chaos of nature"

in order to impose "a phenomenological order on an unknown noumenon" (Mellor 103). In

essence, the sublime cannot operate successfully as an imperializing discourse in the text largely

because the "subaltern" Creature's very nature is sublime. Thus, I argue that *Frankenstein*

represents a failure of aesthetics—like Mellor I acknowledge Shelley's critical position on the

sublime, yet I believe that the focus of Shelley's criticism is on the sublime's use as an

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[55] While the ending of Walton's voyage is of course unknown, Jessica Richard has written that Walton's setting out on July 7th, an unusually late departure date for a polar expedition, "all but dooms his enterprise to failure from the outset" (299). See "'A Paradise of My Own Creation': *Frankenstein* and the Improbable Romance of Polar Exploration." *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 25.4 (2003): 295-314.

appropriating discourse rather than as a force of soul-shrinking terror; like Fredricks I recognize

that *Frankenstein* criticizes the beautiful and uses the sublime to grant a voice to the

marginalized, yet I also, like Bohls, consider the sublime's role within a larger colonialist

tradition. Unlike Bohls, however, I link the sublime and its failure as an imperialist discourse with

the implosion of domesticity and sentiment.

Hence, while other critics have certainly performed focused readings of the novel in

terms of the sublime, the sentimental,[56] and the domestic[57]—and these readings help to frame

and situate my own—the purpose of this chapter is to account for how *all* of these discursive

threads intersect in *Frankenstein* and are in turn mapped upon the rhetorical landscape of

empire. In other words, while the novel has been read in terms of empire, sentiment, sublimity,

and domesticity, and some critics have identified an overlap between *some* of these discourses,

I wish to juxtapose *all* of these concepts in an effort to present a reading of *Frankenstein* which

demonstrates how the languages of morality, aesthetics, and domesticity operate *jointly* to

enable and justify the marginalization of the Other. Furthermore, I wish to illustrate how

Shelley, in contrast to Godwin and Radcliffe, suggests that an encounter with Otherness can

reveal for the European subject failures that are inherent in moral, aesthetic, and domestic

discourses. Specifically, I accomplish this in several ways. For one, I posit that Elizabeth Lavenza

and the Monster are similarly positioned as uncanny racial figures, and that this helps to

indicate how uncomfortably close the domestic subject and the colonial subaltern are situated

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[56] See, for example, Isabelle Bour's "Sensibility as Epistemology in *Caleb Williams*, *Waverley*, and *Frankenstein*." *SEL* 45.4 (2005): 813-27; Syndy Conger's "Prophecy and Sensibility: Mary Wollstonecraft in *Frankenstein*." *1650-1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era* 3 (1997): 301-28; and David Marshall's *The Surprising Effects of Sympathy: Marivaux, Diderot, Rousseau, and Mary Shelley.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.
[57] See, for example, Debra Best's "The Monster in the Family: A Reconsideration of *Frankenstein*'s Domestic Relationships." *Women's Writing* 6.3 (1999): 365-84; Adam Komisaruk's "'So Guided by a Silken Cord': *Frankenstein*'s Family Values." *Studies in Romanticism* 8.3 (1999): 409-41; Michelle Levy's "Discovery and the Domestic Affections in Coleridge and Shelley" *SEL* 44.4 (2004): 693-713; and Johanna M. Smith's "'Cooped Up' with 'Sad Trash': Domesticity and the Sciences in *Frankenstein*." *Frankenstein*. By Mary Shelley. Boston: St. Martin's, 2000. 313-33.

in relation to each other, and how this placement is mediated through the assignment of aesthetic value. I also spend a considerable amount of time examining the De Lacey family episode, with particular attention paid to how Safie's reception and education reveals the various complications associated with the question of Otherness in the novel. Finally, I develop my earlier-stated contentions on the role of aesthetic discourse in the novel.

Like the other primary texts that this study has engaged, *Frankenstein* is of course not explicitly a "novel about empire"; rather it is a novel which heavily deploys imperialist discourses and features a foreignized subaltern—in this case, the Monster—as a central character. Indeed, it is certainly not difficult to read The Monster as a discursively colonized individual. Srinivas Aravamudan, for example, describes the Tropicopolitan as a "colonial subject" who is both "object of representation *and* agent of resistance" (4, original italics). Although the Creature has no direct ties to the tropics, he is certainly comparable to the "colonial subject" in that he is both an "object of representation *and* [an] agent of resistance." More specifically, as a representative of "death, incest, and illicit sexual desire" (Hill-Miller 64) in addition to foreignness—Patrick Brantlinger cites the Creature's straight black hair and yellow complexion as indicating "perhaps a tint of racial darkness or Orientalism" (156)—the Creature can be understood as representing the colonial uncanny, in which the subject is different from the European spectator, yet still embodies European "racial, psychological, and sexual anxieties" (Smith and Hughes 3). This in turn provides an interesting lens for looking at the Creature's status as an anomalous figure: not only does he occupy the borderland between human/not human, creator/created, master/slave, autonomous subject/contingent object, but also he problematizes clear distinctions between colonizer and colonized—as a representative of the "colonial uncanny," he is "birthed" by a privileged, European man and is constituted and

understood by and through the lens of Eurocentric discourse, yet, by virtue of his appearance and "unnatural" conception, he is still, emphatically and inexorably, "Other."

Indeed, partly because of the novel's cultural stature and partly because of its preoccupation with enterprise and alterity, critics have been eager to interpret *Frankenstein* through racial and colonial lenses. The most well-known treatment is of course Gayatri Spivak's oft-anthologized "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" (1986), in which she concludes "Shelley's point is that social engineering should not be based on pure, theoretical, or natural-scientific reason alone, which is her implicit critique of the utilitarian vision of an engineered [read "colonized"] society" (848).[58] Considering that about a third of *Frankenstein* is narrated in the (eloquent) voice of a sympathetic non-European Other, it does not require much mediation to read this novel as more critical than Godwin's[59] or Radcliffe's of empire and its machinery; as a result, it can also be said that Shelley, as the author of *Frankenstein*, displays a far greater awareness of the political baggage and shortcomings associated with the adjacent discourses of domesticity, sublimity, and sensibility.

Different as Shelley's novel is in terms of its approach to morality, aesthetics, and domesticity, I would also add that sympathy plays, to a certain extent, a similar role in *Frankenstein* as it did in *Caleb Williams*—specifically, it is understood as "the essential civilizing ingredient" (Hill-Miller 70), and because the Creature is consistently denied any share in this "civilizing" discourse, he, like Caleb, is permanently relegated to an anomalous position.

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[58] More recent critics have made similar claims about *Frankenstein*'s inherently critical position on empire. In addition to Jessica Richard's earlier-cited article on Walton's ill-founded Polar expedition, John Bugg has compared the novel to abolitionist texts such as Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*, Joseph Lew has penned an article entitled "The Deceptive Other: Mary Shelley's Critique of Orientalism in *Frankenstein*," and Elizabeth Bohls notes that the novel's use of multiple narrators and voices "unsettles narrative authority and points in the direction of cultural relativism. It interrupts the universalizing monologue with which European culture tries to impose its values, notably aesthetic value, around the world" (25).

[59] Catherine Hill-Miller claims in *My Hideous Progeny: Mary Shelley, William Godwin, and the Father-Daughter Relationship* (1995) that *Frankenstein* rewrites the plot of *Caleb Williams* to "give power and authority to the rejected social outcast" (75).

Furthermore, Jeffrey Cass suggests that "[t]he Monster embodies the myopic self-interest and greed of Frankenstein as colonizer, someone whose 'lack of domestic affections' spurs him on to greater acquisition, to greater power" (37), a reading which not only conflates the colonizer and the overreaching scientist and impugns them both as creators of monstrosity, but also identifies the root cause of Victor's transgression as his "lack of domestic affections." It can therefore be said that both father and daughter are writing about the loss of civilization, and locating the loss of civilization within the loss of sympathy, which itself has strong ties to the domestic. The importance difference, however, is that Godwin characterizes this loss as a function of the continentalized aristocracy's (read: the "Other's") denial of domestic stability to the English subject, while Shelley, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, characterizes this loss as a function of the insular European subject's denial of domesticity to the monstrous Other.

It is fair to say then that, particularly in the case of *Frankenstein*, the discursive threads we are considering—empire, sympathy, and the sublime—are inflected by and refracted through the home sphere; hence, our first priority must be to come to an understanding of what domesticity means in this novel.

Sameness and Difference in the Frankenstein Household

We have seen how "stable" middle-class domesticity is represented as a site of liberal, Eurocentric civilization in *Caleb Williams*—the loss of the domestic is the "circumstance *more than all the rest*, that gradually gorged [Caleb's] heart with abhorrence of Mr. Falkland" (303, my italics)—and is dramatically idealized in Radcliffe. Shelley's narrative, however, "views domesticity as an aspect of human alienation rather than its solution," largely because the cult of domesticity is founded upon hierarchical relationships and a sense of insularity that views outside or "foreign" influences with suspicion and disdain (Komisaruk 410-411). Like her father, Mary Shelley recognizes the damaged nature of this hierarchical system; unlike her father, she

locates the source of this damage *within the inherent structure* of the bourgeois home, rather than within an exocultural force that has aggressively corrupted a pristinely-imagined homestead. Along these lines, Thomas Dutoit has written that the novel's "real monster" is "the domestic scene and its discourse on virtue, happiness, and affection"—a discourse which he refers to as a "fiction" (867)—and Sarah Goodwin maintains that the Creature "gives expression" to "repressed violence in the home" (100,101). Citing both of these critics in her reading, Johanna Smith identifies the Creature as "Victor's murderous 'spirit'" who "reveals the dark side of the Frankenstein family's oppressive domesticity" (321). Taking matters a step further, Elizabeth Bohls claims that

> [t]he Frankensteins' aesthetic community is dysfunctional in more ways than one. It represses women and promotes colonialism, even genocide. Western civilization, viewed from the inside, has not got its parts put together quite right. This suspicion is confirmed when we see this disproportion reflected from the outside—blown up in the monstrous mirror that is Frankenstein's creature. (28-29)

However, just what is so "oppressive" about the Frankenstein home? Vis a vis domesticity, one of the central assumptions of this study has been that the English (or Anglified) subject is compelled to travel by a sense of dissatisfaction with the domestic space which she or he inhabits, and that the ensuing journey can be read as an attempt to reform the tainted sphere via an exploration of alternate homes. Caleb Williams flees Falkland's estate and wanders Britain because the imposition of continentally-inflected aristocratic hegemony has demolished the security of the home, and while on his journey, he seeks a dwelling more congenial to bourgeois values—first in the "honorable" robbers' den and later in Laura's Welsh community. In Radcliffe's novels, Adeline's, Emily's, and Ellena's homes are disrupted by violent, continental patriarchs, yet their journeys expose them to a variety of different domestic structures and always terminate in the claiming of a companionate, bourgeois homestead that simultaneously acknowledges a greater measure of autonomy for women. In the case of

Frankenstein, however, Victor's relationship to domesticity is rather curious. Prior to his attending medical school at Ingolstadt and "birthing" the Creature, there appears to be no real split with the home sphere as such. Indeed, the darkness in the Frankenstein family is largely subtextual; however, it is this unsavory subtext which, according to Debra Best, pushes Victor to produce the Creature.

In "The Monster in the Family: A Reconsideration of Frankenstein's Domestic Relationships" (1999), Best maintains that the impetus behind Victor's mad quest is his Walton-like desire for "a clear and steady relationship which will provide a sense of stability, certainty, and self-identity" (373), something he lacks in his "multivalent" family which, "[r]ather than creating a complex network of bonds to pull [itself] together" produces "confusion concerning one's proper role in the family while also leading one towards social loss and familial taboos, such as incest and gender transgression" (370). Essentially, Best reads Victor's domestic relationships as perplexingly multifarious—in Elizabeth Lavenza "cousin, sister, mother, and wife" are "juxtaposed…so that the elements of incest become apparent," while Justine Moritz plays "the roles of sister and mother [which] conflict with that of servant" (367); and Victor himself fulfills traditionally "feminine" roles when he cares for the sick William and helps to educate his younger brothers (368).

Where Best essentially reads the dysfunctions of the Frankenstein family along gendered and psychoanalytic axes, Adam Komisaruk takes a more overtly political stance, maintaining that "[n]umerous characters in *Frankenstein* show hostility toward members of their own families, let alone toward the national, sexual or racial 'other' whom Victor's creature epitomizes. These characters," he continues, "also tend to be the strongest embracers of capitalist individualism, especially by way of the tortured commercial triangles involving Britain, France, and the East" (411), a statement which, when read in light of Ann Mellor's contention

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that "while celebrating the egalitarian bourgeois family, Mary Shelley acknowledges that it has never existed" (217), provides strong evidence that in *Frankenstein* the initial trouble has less to do with "the foreign" and more to do with the systemic problems of the bourgeois home and its subtle connections to the imperial effort. In support of this connection, I return to Komisaruk, who cites Elizabeth Lavenza's status as "[a]n instrument for perpetuating a privileged European stock [who] is commodified from the first" (418), a status which is established when Caroline Frankenstein characterizes her as "a pretty present for my Victor" (44). Similarly, Caroline herself can be understood as a "picture of male condescension" (Komisaruk 419) since we are told that Alphonse Frankenstein "strove to shelter her, as a fair exotic is sheltered by the gardener" (42).

Komisaruk's reading, then, points to a provocative metaphoric link between domesticity and imperial enterprise; I would elaborate on this link by suggesting that one of the most intriguing textual connections between domesticity and empire comes comparatively early in the novel. As Victor prepares to build the Creature, he feverishly relates that

> [n]o one can conceive the variety of feelings which bore me onwards, like a hurricane, in the first enthusiasm of success. Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world. A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs. (58)

Here, Victor's frenzy is partly written in the language of travel and colonization and partly in the language of domesticity. Breaking through "bounds" and *enlightening* a "dark world" is reminiscent of an attempt to bring Enlightenment ideals to a space that dwells in darkness— both the darkness of "unsophisticated," aboriginal practices and the darkness of skin—while Victor's subsequent indulgence in a fantasy of benevolent patriarchy creates an interesting bridge between the discourses of empire and the discourses of the home, as it ties him rhetorically to both the "benign" colonizer and the bourgeois father.

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On a side note, it can be argued that Victor's sentiments and the subtle connection that

he makes between domestic affection and imperial enterprise are drawn, in part, from his

encounters with the larger scientific community. His mentor M. Waldman, for example, lectures

to a roomful of students at Ingolstadt, claiming that modern-day natural philosophers

"penetrate into the recesses of nature, and show how she works in her hiding places. They

ascend into the heavens…[t]hey have acquired new and almost unlimited powers; they can

command the thunders of heaven, mimic the earthquake, and even mock the invisible world

with its own shadows" (53). After hearing Waldman's hubristic speech, Victor seeks him out and

fashions the elder scholar as a sort of father-figure. By virtue of his indulgence and support,

Waldman becomes a "true friend" to Frankenstein, one who "smoothed for me the path of

knowledge, and made the most abstruse enquiries clear and facile to my apprehension" (55). In

this way, Waldman's primary job in the text becomes to act as a benevolent patriarch who

simultaneously raises the imperialist dimensions of scientific enquiry. Indeed, his rhetoric almost

seems to normalize Victor's quest; if the post-Enlightenment scientist can and should "penetrate

into the recesses of nature" in order to cultivate "new and almost unlimited powers" over it,

then who is to say that those powers should not include the ability to bestow life? Waldman's

directives suggest then that Victor, while admittedly taking matters to an extreme, is

nevertheless acting in the spirit of his peers. And Waldman's patriarchal position complicates

matters further by subtly reinforcing the link between domestic affection and scientific/imperial

enterprise which Victor initially observed in his own family.

To situate this connection between domesticity and empire in relation to the other texts

we have been considering, I would say that where Radcliffe's heroines seek to reaffirm the

values of the homeland in a world that has been shattered by the confusion and syncretism of

empire—a confusion and syncretism that operates on a microscale in the "foreignized

homeland" of *Caleb Williams*—Victor actively sets out to reshape the world in his own image.

Ironically, his creation of an anomalous being helps to reinforce the boundary-less world that, in

other forms, Caleb and Radcliffe's heroines find so threatening. In other words, Victor

Frankenstein is not motivated to "break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world"

by the malignant intrusion of the foreign into the domestic space. Rather, domesticity

engenders imperialism in that it represents European intervention as an unquestionably

benevolent enterprise—Alphonse Frankenstein comes "like a protecting spirit" (41) to his future

wife, the "fair exotic" Caroline Beaufort, while Caroline herself "rescues" the Italian—though

emphatically white—Elizabeth from an impoverished foster family composed of "dark-eyed,

hardy little vagrants" (43) when the Frankenstein family is vacationing in Italy. Furthermore, this

cycle of "rescuing" seems to undergird the entire structure of the Frankenstein household,

which is characterized by what Smith calls an "emotional quid pro quo." She suggests that

> [a]mong the Frankensteins, a gift requires gratitude and so produces a sense of
> obligation, a debt that can be discharged only by endless repetitions of this
> pattern…[Victor] owes gratitude for the life [his parents] have given him and for their
> care, and this obligation forms the cord that, no matter how silken, confines him within
> the family. Hence he repeats this pattern when he contemplates creating a new species.
> (319, 320)

In this reading, Victor's desire for praise from "a new species" is simply a desire to replicate the

example his parents have provided. All three cases—Alphonse's "rescue" of Caroline, Caroline's

adoption of Elizabeth, and Victor's creation of the Monster—are essentially the same in that

each is a problematically beneficent act, each involves a privileged individual taking up a

disadvantaged "exotic," and each is an inherently domestic act—marriage, adoption, and

"birth," respectively.

The two explanations for Victor's actions which we have identified—one, that he creates

the Monster out of a desire for a "clear and steady relationship" which will resolve his position,

and two, that he is emulating his parents—have both been well-argued and are certainly not

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mutually exclusive. I have drawn upon the first argument to establish the dysfunctional nature of the Frankenstein household and to clarify that this dysfunction stems from the anomalous positioning of the family's members. I have drawn upon the second as a way to begin building a bridge between the discourses of home and empire. That being said, I would now like to elaborate further on these discursive connections by considering how the Creature and Elizabeth Lavenza—who are seldom, if ever, thought of in relation to each other in the critical scholarship—represent an intriguing fusion of these two discourses. In so doing, I hope to cement the domestic/colonial link which is a centerpiece of the novel while simultaneously taking steps towards defining the role of the anomalous in the text.

As mentioned above, Elizabeth's Caucasian features are emphasized when she is first introduced in the narrative, a rhetorical move that has not escaped the attention of Komisaruk, who refers to "Victor's insistent figures of whiteness in describing her" (417). Indeed, Victor dwells on the details of Elizabeth's figure in admiring depth, noting that "[h]er hair was the brightest living gold…her brow was clear and ample, her blue eyes cloudless, and her lips and the moulding of her face so expressive of sensibility and sweetness, that none could behold her without looking on her as of a distinct species, a being heaven-sent, and bearing a celestial stamp in her features" (43). What is particularly odd about this passage is that a figure of such emphatic whiteness should be exotified as a "distinct species." This characterization, combined with Elizabeth's incongruous appearance amongst the "dark-eyed, hardy little vagrants," sets her up from the very beginning as an anomalous subject. Throughout the text, Elizabeth develops paradoxically as both a figure of familiarity and a figure of Otherness: she is white, yet she is so white that she seems to be of "a distinct species"; she fills all of her feminine domestic roles as "cousin, sister, mother, and wife" impeccably, yet by occupying all of these different positions—often simultaneously—she raises the specter of incest.

Furthermore, as the most uncategorizable member of the Frankenstein family, Elizabeth

seems to have more in common with the Creature than a casual reading might suggest. Indeed,

these two individuals become psychically linked for Victor on multiple occasions. Immediately

after creating the Monster, for example, Victor dreams of kissing Elizabeth only to find her dead

in his arms, and the Creature's famous threat "I shall be with you on your wedding-night" (146)

causes him to spend his first night with his new bride obsessively patrolling the house rather

than consummating the marriage (167). Most relevant to our purposes however, is the curious

resemblance between Victor's description of Elizabeth's initial appearance and his description of

the newly-created Monster. As with Elizabeth, Victor focuses on skin color, hair, eyes, and lips:

> His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was
> of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances
> only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the
> same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shriveled complexion
> and straight black lips. (60)

The reference to the Creature's "pearly" teeth is what sets this description structurally apart

from the description of Elizabeth. If teeth are being used to incorporate whiteness into a

description—as they clearly are here—then there is no need to describe Elizabeth's teeth

because the rest of her features do enough to connote her fairness. However, the "pearly

whiteness" of the Creature's teeth has a different effect—it serves to heighten the

grotesqueness of the rest of his features. I would therefore suggest that the striking image of

white teeth framed by "straight black lips," along with the fact that the Creature's other facial

features gruesomely mirror Victor's description of the almost-too-white Elizabeth, strengthens

the case that the Monster is a representative of the colonial uncanny. The white teeth/black

mouth dichotomy represents an uncomfortable synthesis, a variation on Rudyard Kipling's

Anglicized Indians, "a kind of child of Frankenstein, both 'Ours' and irremediably Other, a

grotesque parody of civilized humanity" (Spurr 85). Meanwhile, the part-by-part descriptions of

Elizabeth's and the Creature's faces present a correlation between a "heaven-sent" (43) figure

of domesticity and a "demoniacal" (61) figure of colonial Otherness. Under this rubric,

Elizabeth's characterization as a "distinct species" of a "celestial" (61) nature places her at the

corresponding extreme to Victor's "wretched devil" (93).

Though it is useful to an extent to think of Elizabeth and the Creature as representing

two opposing forces, Elizabeth's multivalent, anomalous position within the Frankenstein

household (and the text) makes it impossible to read her merely as an angelic foil to/mirror

image of the Creature. Similarly, the Creature's ardent desire for a mate, whom he believes will

cause his "virtues" to "arise" and whose companionship will allow him to "become linked to the

chain of existence and events" (130), precludes any reading which positions him exclusively as a

hellish enemy of the domestic establishment. Rather, it is more accurate to say that the

similarities between Elizabeth and the Creature represent the inseparability of the domestic

subject and the colonial subaltern: both are uncanny figures who represent an anomalous fusion

of "sameness" and "difference," both in terms of physical appearance and in terms of social

position (or desired social position, in the case of the Monster).

Having established this, it is now necessary for us to move to a fuller discussion of how

these two forces interact with each other. To do so we must move ahead in the novel and

consider the Monster's stake in domesticity, as it is his intrusion into the De Lacey and

Frankenstein families and his desire for a mate which provide the clearest examples of the

uneasy overlap of "sameness" and "Otherness."

The Other(s) in the House

Victor Frankenstein's greatest sin is commonly identified as his failure to take paternal

responsibility for his creation. In the text, the Creature himself makes this charge when

requesting a mate, demanding of Victor to "[d]o your duty towards me, and I will do mine

towards you and the rest of mankind" (93). Given the language in which it is framed, I am confident in reading the Creature's request for a female companion as an echo of the "emotional quid pro quo" (Smith 319) of favors, debts, and gratitude which characterizes the Frankenstein household. Not only does this mirroring further blur the boundaries between the Frankensteins' domestic situation and the world of colonial Otherness that the Monster represents, but also it makes Victor realize "[f]or the first time…what the duties of a creator towards his creature were" (95). While Victor replicates the cycle of favors and gratitude that characterizes his family when he creates the Monster (Smith 319), what he apparently does not anticipate is that the Creature's gratitude is not automatic; it is contingent upon Victor's willingness to act the part of the benevolent father. Indeed, the Creature seems to be willing to give Victor the gratitude that he seeks, telling his maker at one point, "I will be even mild and docile to my natural lord and king, if thou wilt also perform thy part, the which thou owest me" (93), and at another, "Oh! my creator, make me happy; let me feel gratitude towards you for one benefit!" (129) The (re)production of domesticity then, is the price that must be paid in order to secure happiness for the creation and peace for the creator.

As readers of the text know, Victor reluctantly agrees to do the Creature's bidding, only to renege at the last minute, tearing up the completed but not yet animated female in full view of his enraged progeny. Victor's actions here problematize Sharon Harrow's claim In *Adventures in Domesticity: Gender and Colonial Adulteration in Eighteenth-Century British Literature* (2004) that Frankenstein is a typical "Enlightenment traveler who voyages away from home and domesticates difference in exotic lands" (205). Although Victor does indeed "voyage away from home"—literally in his trips to Ingolstadt, the Orkney Islands, and the Arctic, and figuratively in his creation of the Monster—and although he certainly *fantasizes* about "domesticat[ing] difference in exotic lands" when he imagines himself as the beloved father of "a new species,"

his inability to recognize the Creature as human—referring to him only as "a daemon," "a fiend," "a monster," and "a devil"—and his destruction of the female being strongly suggests that he resists the idea of "domesticating difference."[60] Because to "domesticate difference" is to produce a "grotesque parody of civilized humanity" (Spurr 85), this is not particularly surprising. Consider the Monster's vision of domestic life with his mate in "the vast wilds of South America": "[w]e shall make our bed of dried leaves; the sun will shine on us as on man, and will ripen our food. The picture I present to you is peaceful and human" (129). The fact that this picture is "human," I argue, is actually why it is so detestable to Victor. To grant the Creature a wife is to recognize his humanity; to recognize the Creature's humanity is to recognize himself in his creation; and in light of the uneasy similarities between the Frankensteins' domestic situation and the colonial uncanny as described in the previous section, to acknowledge the Creature's domestic affections is to acknowledge the monstrosity latent in the Frankenstein household.

For his part, the Creature argues his case passionately, claiming that "[i]f I have no ties and no affections, hatred and vice must be my portion; the love of another will destroy the cause of my crimes, and I shall become a thing, of whose existence every one will be ignorant. My vices are the children of a forced solitude that I abhor; and my virtues will necessarily arise when I live in communion with an equal" (130). This argument reveals that the Monster has bought into the Enlightenment myth that domesticity is a cure for vice, a concept he seems to have imbibed from his viewing of the De Lacey family. Indeed, the Creature seems to recognize the ability of familial affections to promote virtue, as he is "moved…sensibly" when he sees the impoverished Felix and Agatha going hungry so that their blind father can eat (102) and, despite

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[60] While Victor does encounter difference on his literal journeys—he comments on the "squalid poverty" of his temporary neighbors on the Orkney Islands, for example (143)—he does not give these or any of the other native peoples he encounters much thought, his mind being constantly preoccupied with the Creature and his demands.

the earlier cruelty he received from the villagers and the knowledge of hegemony that he gained

from overhearing Felix read Volney's *Ruins of Empire*, he still at this point "look[s] upon crime as

a distant evil," claiming that "benevolence and generosity were ever present before me [in the

De Lacey cottage], inciting within me a desire to become an actor in the busy scene where so

many admirable qualities were called forth and displayed" (114-15). This construction of the De

Lacey family as a domestic oasis is not surprising; Debra Best comments that "[a]lthough French

in origin and living in Germany, the De Laceys represent the typical but idealized family

demographics for nineteenth-century England," and Johanna Smith notes the De Laceys'

"interactive domestic style" and the family's "conventionally middle-class separate-spheres

arrangement," with Felix working outside and Agatha performing indoor chores (323). As figures

of middle-class sentiment then, the De Laceys initially appear as an "idealized" and "stable"

family unit (371), one which the Monster longs to join. And in a way, he does become a member

of the family, as he "assist[s] their labours" by gathering wood and depositing it at the door

(102), and he clearly forms a strong emotional attachment to his "friends" and "protectors"

(110). Furthermore, the fact that the Monster's "hovel" is "situated against the back of the [De

Lacey's] cottage" (99) and he is able to observe them through "a small and almost imperceptible

chink, through which the eye could just penetrate" (100) suggests that he is, quite literally,

occupying the margins of the domestic space.

While it does not require much textual support to claim that the Creature "learns

domesticity" from the De Laceys, it is far more compelling to consider what the Creature learns

about empire, foreignness, and his own position relative to these discourses from his viewing of

the cottagers. In other words, the most relevant question at the moment would be how are

empire and its subalterns triangulated through the domestic space in *Frankenstein*? One of the

Creature's most significant discoveries, I argue, is that there are *degrees* of difference, and that

some Others are "capable" of being accepted and drawn into the domestic economy while those like himself are not. Naturally, it is the arrival of Felix's beloved Safie, the "sweet Arabian" (107), that precipitates these new lessons. From the start, the Monster recognizes Safie's otherness, as the first things he observes about her are that she is "covered with a thick black veil," that "[h]er voice was musical, but unlike that of either of my friends," and that her "hair of a shining raven black" was "curiously braided." However, he also seems to recognize her sameness to the cottagers, noting that she possesses "a countenance of angelic beauty and expression" and that "her eyes were dark, but gentle, although animated; her features of a regular proportion, and her complexion wondrously fair, each cheek tinged with a lovely pink" (106). Erin Garrett comments that "[i]mplicit to the creature's descriptions of Safie is a juxtapositioning of dark with light, of spirit with flesh, of the hidden with the revealed" (150). In this juxtaposition of lightness and darkness, human sameness and Orientalist otherness, Safie becomes, in Garrett's words, "an inverted human mirror for the unnatural and marginalized creature" (146).

As if to reinforce Safie's status as one who is marginalized and ethnically different, her back story indulges in no small amount of Islamophobia. We discover that her father, a wealthy Arabian merchant, was unjustly imprisoned by the French government, and the ever-sympathetic Felix assisted in his escape. "The Turk" recognizes Felix's love for Safie and, "to secure [Felix] more entirely in his interests" (111), disingenuously offers his daughter's hand in marriage. Safie herself has more in common with her mother, "a Christian Arab, seized and made a slave by the Turks….who, born in freedom spurned the bondage to which she was now reduced." Safie's mother, we discover, raised her daughter as a Christian and taught her "to aspire to higher powers of intellect, and an independence of spirit, forbidden to the female followers of Mahomet." After her mother's death, Safie remains committed to her teachings,

feeling "sickened at the prospect of again returning to Asia, and being immured within the walls

of a haram" and dreams of "a noble emulation of virtue" and "[t]he prospect of marrying a

Christian, and remaining in a country where women were allowed to take a rank in society"

(112). After he is freed, "the Turk," who "loathed the idea that his daughter should be united to

a Christian" (113) flees with Safie in tow, leaving Felix and his family to be imprisoned by the

French government and eventually exiled to Germany. Safie, however, manages to discover the

location of the De Lacey cottage and slips away from her father's house and travels to reunite

with Felix.

While Safie's story may appear to have little in common with the Monster's, it is her

anomalous position as an independent-minded "Christian Arab" and her eminent desire to

become an accepted member of a Christian European community—and to do so via assimilation

into the domestic space—that invites the comparison. Indeed, while the narrative takes pains to

emphasize Safie's otherness, as "she is designated more often by 'stranger' and 'sweet Arabian'

than by her own name" (Garrett 150), her Christianity, European values, and "wondrously fair"

complexion simultaneously render her a strong candidate for membership in the De Lacey

family. As it turns out, Safie is in fact quite eager to assimilate into the western world, and this

swiftly defuses her transgressive potential; Anca Vlasopolos, for example, claims that any

challenges the Arabian Safie might pose to European domesticity are thwarted and "absorbed"

by her Westernization (132).

In the cottage, Safie learns language, history, and economics from her beloved Felix. The

latter instructs his bride from Volney's *Ruins of Empires*, and Safie, along with the eavesdropping

Monster, learns "of the slothful Asiatics; of the stupendous genius and mental activity of the

Grecians; of the wars and wonderful virtue of the early Romans—of their subsequent

degenerating—of the decline of that mighty empire; of chivalry, Christianity, and kings" (108).

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Of particular note is John Bugg's observation that in this scene "the creature aligns himself with Safie as they both react tearfully to the story of imperial expansion into the Americas" (663), the Monster relating how "I heard of the discovery of the American hemisphere, and wept with Safie over the hapless fate of its original inhabitants" (108-109). I propose that this "alignment" represents a moment in which both Safie and the Creature recognize their kinship with indigenous people who suffered a "hapless fate" at the hands of European colonizers (109). What is particularly intriguing about such a reading is that it points to a moment of almost-mutual sympathy; in weeping together over the plight of a subjugated group of ethnic Others, Safie and the Creature are fleetingly and symbolically bound together in the ties of sympathetic identification. While of course Safie is unaware of the Monster's existence and emotions, this brief moment forces the reader to acknowledge and collapse the triangle of Arabian Other, monstrous Other, and absent colonized Others. In so doing, the Creature's metaphorical position as a colonized subject is raised, and his actual position as a secret member of the De Lacey household is momentarily destabilized out of the margins and closer to the hearth.

Bugg further notes, however, that Felix's lessons also reinforce the barrier between the Creature and white, middle-class humanity. Upon learning about "the division of property….that the possessions most esteemed by your fellow-creatures were high and unsullied descent united with riches," and that "[a] man might be respected with only one of these advantages; but, without either, he was considered, except in very rare instances, as a vagabond and a slave" (109), Frankenstein's Creature "deduces his position within such a taxonomy," recognizing that he himself "*is* property," and that, like Caribbean slaves, his only chance at freedom lies in rebellion (Bugg 663, original italics). While the acquisition of cultural knowledge undoubtedly improves Safie's standing in the De Lacey household, it paradoxically urges the Monster back towards "savagery" and thus further away from the human threshold, as his reflections cause

him to lament "Oh, that I had for ever remained in my native wood, nor known nor felt beyond

the sensations of hunger, thirst, and heat!" (109)

I would further suggest that the Monster's lack of property also highlights his status as

an undesirable Other. Consider that Safie's arrival seems to coincide with the De Laceys being

raised out of poverty and into a more economically comfortable position. After Safie has settled

in, the Monster observes that "a greater degree of plenty reigned [in the cottage]. Felix and

Agatha spent more time in amusement and conversation, and were assisted in their labours by

servants. They did not appear rich, but they were contented and happy" (117-118). Because it

was revealed earlier that Safie fled her father's home with "some jewels that belonged to her,

and a sum of money" (114) it is reasonable to suppose that Safie's wealth is the prime

contributor to the economic well-being of the household. The Monster, in contrast, claims to

possess "no money, no friends, no kind of property" (109), thus reinforcing his undesirability in

contrast to Safie's value. Furthermore, Safie's wealth seems to be echoing stereotypes of

Eastern affluence; her father's position as "a Turkish merchant" who was ostensibly jailed

because of "his religion and wealth" (111), yet who is also revealed to be an untrustworthy

individual, invokes typical Turkish stereotypes. In contrast, as a penniless, physically monstrous

Other, the Creature is more readily identifiable with Afro-Caribbean slaves. Howard Malchow

has argued this position quite convincingly in his *Gothic Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century*

England (1996), claiming that

> [b]y the early nineteenth century, popular racial discourse managed to conflate such
> descriptions [as are applied to the Monster's physical characteristics] of particular
> ethnic characteristics into a general image of the Negro body in which repulsive
> features, brutelike strength and size of limbs featured prominently. Frankenstein's
> creature, when we first see him, is defined by a set of clichés that might be picked out of
> such literature. (18)

Malchow also points out that abolitionist discourse during the "Napoleonic era" popularly

represented black slaves as "a special kind of *childlike*, suffering, and degraded being" (14, my

italics), and indicates that the Monster, through his pathos, "childlike rage" (28), and revenge-driven, violent unpredictability, (20) encompasses a strong range of slave stereotypes. I would argue therefore that, by evoking popular images of black slaves, Shelley is able to present the Monster as an Other who is less "desirable" as an equal companion than the moneyed, Christianized, and exotically beautiful Safie.

This is not to say, however, that the Creature *is* a metaphoric African slave. Malchow wisely qualifies his reading by admitting that Mary Shelley probably did not intend

> to create a specifically Negro monster—elsewhere she writes of the Monster's yellow skin—but rather that, reaching into childhood fantasy and imagination, she dredged up a bogeyman that had been prepared by a cultural tradition of the threatening Other—whether troll or giant, gypsy or Negro—from the dark inner recesses of xenophobic fear and loathing. (18)

As cited earlier, the Monster's "yellow skin" and "straight black hair" has been read as an Orientalist move (Brantlinger 156), and Ann Mellor has confidently stated that "most of Mary Shelley's nineteenth-century readers would immediately have recognized the Creature as a member of the Mongolian race" (2). To ask whether the Creature is black or Mongolian, though, is to miss the point; he is the uncategorizable, threatening Other, the ultimate anomaly, one who, unlike the safely Westernized Safie, "cannot be contained by the text" (Spivak 850), nor by any of the cultural or discursive forces that he is implicated in. As Jonathan Padley writes, "[w]hat now stands before Frankenstein is a physical embodiment of Derrida's written catachresis: 'a monstrous mutation without tradition or normative precedent.' Frankenstein's creation is beyond his [or anyone else's] comprehension" (204-205).

In the second chapter of this study, I related how the magistrate and manhunters in *Caleb Williams* must accuse and contain the Irish-disguised Caleb despite his apparent innocence in the matter of the Royal Mail robbery. I described how these men are unable to fathom how one who appears to be a beggar can be in legitimate possession of fifteen guineas,

or how such a man's skin can have "all the sleekness of a gentleman" (243). To the magistrate,

Caleb may not be guilty of the crime he has been accused of, but his failure to fit into

boundaried categories damns him nonetheless. Likewise, Gines and his magazine publisher

brother see through Caleb's Ashkenazi disguise because he writes "poetry and morality and

history…extremely fine" even though he appears to be "no more than a Jew" (264).

Frankenstein's Monster is similarly uncategorizable and as a result suffers a similar fate of

persecution, since it is utterly unthinkable to the people he encounters that this "no more than

a Monster" can hold a love for virtue and a desire for domestic companionship. When he tries to

reach out to the elder De Lacey, who is blind, Felix and the women suddenly return to the

cottage and the former beats the Monster. Later, the Creature observes Felix telling another

man, presumably his landlord, that he intends to move immediately because the Creature's

actions have led him to believe that "[t]he life of [his] father is in the greatest danger" (123).

Shortly thereafter, the Creature rescues a girl who has fallen into a river, and in response her

"rustic" father shoots him in the shoulder (125). In both of these episodes the Creature is

attempting to cross over into the domestic space—in the case of the De Laceys he wishes to join

the family; in the case of the "rustic" and his daughter, the Monster is performing the role of a

protective father. And in both of these cases, the Creature's deformed appearance causes the

recipients of his benefaction to assume that he intends to commit violence.

When these early attempts to win sympathy fail, the Creature reverts to savagery. The

De Laceys' rejection causes him to flee into the forest, where he describes how "I gave vent to

my anguish in fearful howlings. I was like a wild beast that had broken the toils; destroying the

objects that obstructed me, and ranging through the woods with a stag-like swiftness…I, like the

arch-fiend, bore a hell within me; and, finding myself unsympathised with, wished to tear up the

trees, spread havoc and destruction around me, and then to have sat down and enjoyed the

ruin" (121, 122). Similarly, after the peasant father shoots him, he reports that "[t]he feelings of kindness and gentleness, which I had entertained but a few moments before, gave place to hellish rage and gnashing of teeth. Inflamed by pain, I vowed eternal hatred and vengeance to all mankind" (125-126). The bestial imagery of the first passage and the vow of vengeance in the second can lead to only one conclusion: as with Caleb Williams, the denial of sympathy and the foreclosure of domestic companionship effaces the civilizing impulse.

Nevertheless, one must recognize that this moment in the text is a tipping point in some ways, but not in others. On the one hand, the Monster does *not* slip into an irredeemably "savage" state after the De Lacey episode. Even after his rejection, exposure to the natural world still inspires the Creature with "feelings of kindness and gentleness" which are only broken by the rustic's gunshot. And even after this, the Monster still attempts to enter the human community, presenting himself to Victor's child brother William in the hopes that the latter's youth and innocence will make him more amenable to the Creature's appearance (126). And of course, even after William rejects him, and he murders the boy and frames Justine Moritz, the Monster still holds out hope that Victor will make him a mate who is "as deformed and horrible as myself" (128). On the other hand, the Monster's definitive break with the De Laceys also represents a shift in his desires and expectations; realizing that it is impossible for him to find a place in a "normal" domestic arrangement, he seeks alternative possibilities. Companionship with the female monster in the "vast wilds" of South America is the obvious example, yet his designs on William Frankenstein are similarly transgressive. When he sees the boy, he impulsively decides to "seize him, and educate him as my companion and friend." When William resists, the Monster advises him "I do not intend to hurt you" and ominously declares "'Boy, you will never see your father again; you must come with me'" (126). Because the Creature is "'[u]rged by [an] impulse" to perform what amounts to a kidnapping, we can

conclude that he has certainly become more "savage" since his adventure with the De Laceys

and the rustic; however, his initial desire not to harm William—until of course he discovers the

boy's parentage—and his genuine longing for the boy's companionship indicates that he is still

seeking some approximation of a companionable domestic arrangement, albeit a queer one.

This movement from normative domesticity to queer domesticity is, I argue,

interestingly signaled by the destruction of the De Lacey cottage. After he loses all hope of being

accepted into this family's household, the Creature destroys the garden and burns down the

cottage (123-124), yet he does so well after it has become clear that the family has chosen to

abandon their home. He certainly has many opportunities to harm the people themselves; when

Felix chases him out of the cottage, he relates how he "could have torn [Felix] limb from limb, as

the lion rends the antelope," and fantasizes "with pleasure" about "destroy[ing] the cottage and

its inhabitants, and…glutt[ing] myself with their shrieks and misery" (121). Later, he continues to

reflect on causing "injury and death," but when he remembers "the mild voice of De Lacey, the

gentle eyes of Agatha, and the exquisite beauty of the Arabian…these thoughts vanished, and a

gush of tears [read: a sentimental outpouring] somewhat soothed me" (123). In sparing the De

Lacey family but destroying their derelict home, I suggest that the Creature is dismantling the

central icon of normative domesticity in what amounts to a purely symbolic act—not only are

the De Laceys safely elsewhere, but also they have no economic stake in this house, as Felix's

conversation with the landlord reveals that they were renters (123). This action suggests, then,

that the Monster is rejecting normative domesticity as an institution. In dismantling one

structure, however, the Creature recognizes that he must replace it with something else—

hence, his attempts to engage a new, anomalous form of domesticity first with William—who

must die since he is not only a privileged member of the, for all appearances, normative,

domestic establishment, but also because he belongs to the Frankenstein household, which is the chief signifier of hegemony in the Monster's world–and later with the female monster.

"I no longer see the world and its works as they before appeared to me":

Loss of Sympathy, Loss of Civilization

As I have mentioned throughout this chapter, Victor's refusal to create the female Monster represents a refusal to recognize the self in the Other. However, this does not prevent the Monster from recognizing the correspondence between his social desires and Victor's. In what can perhaps be seen as an extreme example of Johanna Smith's "quid pro quo," the Creature famously vows "I shall be with you on your wedding-night" (146) when he realizes that Victor intends to deny him his own "wedding night." Victor, of course, is somewhat absurdly blind to the implications of this remark, remaining convinced that he, rather than Elizabeth, will be the target of the Monster's violence. Indeed, it does not require much of a leap to say that Elizabeth's subsequent death effectively parallels the destruction of the female Creature. Considering this parallel, along with the other correspondences we have noted between the Monster and the Frankenstein family (i.e., Elizabeth's sameness and difference in relation to the Monster, the Monster's anomalous positioning and the Frankensteins' multivalent dynamics, etc.) it can be concluded that the joint deaths of the female Creature and Elizabeth signal that, when the colonial subaltern remains "undomesticated," he will turn his wrath against the European family, a move which of course has subversive implications for the broader social establishment. The wider applicability of the Monster's familial violence gains further credence when we consider his final actions in relation to the final actions of Caleb Williams.

Essentially, the Creature's loss of his mate and his subsequent murder of Elizabeth can be seen as dynamically similar to Caleb's loss of a domestic life in Laura's family and his subsequent condemnation of Falkland in open court: Caleb's being barred from the Welsh

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community turns his "sympathy to gall," while the Monster relates that, when he murdered

Elizabeth he had "cast *off all feeling*, subdued all anguish, to riot in the excess of [his] despair"

(187, my italics). Also, as we have seen, both Caleb and the Creature put up with a great deal of

abuse before their final "loss of sympathy," and both offer their antagonists ample

opportunities for reconciliation. Furthermore, both Caleb and the Creature indirectly kill their

enemies. In Caleb's case, Falkland dies seemingly because of the strain caused by the trial and

his public disgrace; in the Monster's case, Victor dies as a result of the strain caused by his

lengthy pursuit of his creation across the Arctic. And finally, both of these persecuted characters

close their respective narratives by expressing remorse for the destruction they have caused,

highlighting their persecutors' admirable qualities, and placidly accepting their inevitable

effacement. Compare the following concluding passages, from *Caleb Williams* and *Frankenstein*,

respectively:

> I record the praises bestowed on me by Falkland, not because I deserve them, but because they serve to aggravate the baseness of my cruelty. He survived this dreadful scene but three days. I have been his murderer. It was fit that he should praise my patience, who has fallen a victim life and fame, to my precipitation!...Falkland, I will think only of thee, and from that thought will draw ever fresh nourishment for my sorrows! One generous, one disinterested tear I will consecrate to thy ashes! A nobler spirit lived not among the sons of men. Thy intellectual powers were truly sublime, and thy bosom burned with a godlike ambition…thou enteredst upon thy carreer [sic] with the purest and most laudable intentions. But thou imbibedst the poison of chivalry with thy early youth; and the base and low-minded envy that met thee on thy return to thy native seats, operated with this poison to hurry thee into madness…I began these memoirs with the idea of vindicating my character. I have now no character that I wish to vindicate. (325, 326)

> 'But it is true that I am a wretch. I have murdered the lovely and the helpless; I have strangled the innocent as they slept, and grasped to death his throat who never injured me or any other living thing. I have devoted my creator, the select specimen of all that is worthy of love and admiration among men, to misery…You hate me; but your abhorrence cannot equal that with which I regard myself…He is dead who called me into being; and when I shall be no more, the very remembrance of us both will speedily vanish…thou [Frankenstein] didst seek my extinction, that I might not cause greater wretchedness; and if yet, in some mode unknown to me, thou hadst not ceased to think and feel, thou wouldst not desire against me a vengeance greater than that which I feel.

Blasted as thou wert, my agony was still superior to thine; for the bitter sting of remorse will not cease to rankle in my wounds until death shall close them for ever. (188, 189)

It was necessary to quote these passages at length in order to account fully for all of the remarkable similarities between them. Where Caleb praises Falkland's "nobler spirit…among the sons of men," the Monster identifies Victor as "the select specimen of all that is worthy of love and admiration among men"; both individuals slip into an archaic, pseudo-epic speaking style as they address their absent persecutors, with Caleb deploying phrases such as "thou enteredst upon thy carreer [sic]" and the Creature uttering statements like "thou didst seek my extinction"; both speakers denigrate themselves, as Caleb accuses himself of "baseness" and "cruelty" while the Monster identifies as a "wretch" filled with self "abhorrence"; and both speakers resign themselves to oblivion, either of "character" or of "death" and faded "remembrance."

Considering that Mary Shelley dedicated the first edition of *Frankenstein* to "the author of *Caleb Williams*," it should not be surprising that critical comparisons of these two texts are nothing new. Isabelle Bour, for example, points out that "[t]he father-son relationship initially present between Caleb and Falkland strongly parallels that between Frankenstein and his creature; similarly, both novels offer a series of reversals of the positions of the pursuer and the pursued" (814). Prior to Bour, A.D. Harvey performed a close reading of the two novels, arguing that *Caleb Williams* is essentially about humanity's "basic predicament, trapped, alone and defenseless in the face of society," whereas *Frankenstein* has less to do with societal rejection and more to do with being "hunted down, not by fate, not by social forces, but merely by a bogey of [one's] own creation." For Harvey, "Caleb's relationship with Falkland is seen in the context of society as a whole, whereas Frankenstein's relationship with his creature is essentially private, existing apart from the rest of human existence" (26). Nevertheless, the inherent similarities between these two texts—not to mention the inherent danger in labeling

the public and the private as mutually exclusive spheres—leads me to believe that Harvey's reading deserves further scrutiny.

Specifically, I suggest that the similarities between Caleb's and the Monster's closing monologues indicate that *Frankenstein*, like *Caleb Williams*, represents how a loss of sympathy—brought about by the foreclosure of domesticity—ultimately leads to the failure of civilization. As I argued earlier, Caleb's bringing down Falkland destabilizes the entire deluded community, as foreshadowed by Collins's claim that to expose Falkland as a tyrant is to "change all my ideas, and show me that there [is] no criterion by which vice might be prevented from being mistaken for virtue" (310). Likewise, the Monster's actions have done nothing but undermine and ultimately destroy the already problematically-positioned Frankenstein household. The Creature's murder of William and framing of Justine, for example, causes Elizabeth's "whole system of values" to collapse (Bour 821) in that Justine's potential guilt and the violent zealousness of the accusing mob has so shaken her belief in human sympathy that she is left to remark "men appear to me as monsters thirsting for each other's blood" (88). As the primary figure of female sensibility in the novel, Elizabeth's loss of faith signals that "[t]he ethics of sensibility is now untenable, but no other value system has replaced it" (Bohr 821). As in *Caleb Williams*, if sympathy is in fact the "primary civilizing ingredient," then it is not surprising that its effacement (and lack of a replacement) should be followed by the dissolution of the Frankenstein household.

Indeed, despite Alphonse Frankenstein's admonitions that the family should "transfer our love for those whom we have lost, to those who yet live" and that Victor should bear in mind that "[o]ur circle will be small, but bound close by the ties of affection and mutual misfortune…new and dear objects of care will be born to replace those of whom we have been so cruelly deprived" (164), such domestic platitudes have no currency in the face of the

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unstoppable Other. Alphonse's homespun advice and general failure to understand the problems assailing his household—at one point Victor comments that "[m]y father's care and attentions were indefatigable; but he did not know the origin of my sufferings, and sought erroneous methods to remedy the incurable ill" (159)—point more broadly to the failure of the benevolent patriarchy. The privileged Alphonse, who "came like a protecting spirit" to his destitute bride-to-be Caroline Beaufort, and who sheltered her "as a fair exotic is sheltered by the gardener" (41, 42) cannot, it seems, shelter his adult children from the rage of an ill-used subaltern. In fact, his advice that Victor marry Elizabeth as quickly as possible in an attempt to repair the fractured Frankenstein family is what ultimately precipitates both her death and his own, as the news of Elizabeth's murder proves to be too great a shock for him, and he dies in Victor's arms (170).

As for the nightmarish wedding-night itself, it clearly suggests—even before Elizabeth's murder—that the intervention of the subaltern disrupts the normative perpetuation of the bourgeois family unit. Victor's fears and his earlier preoccupation with building the female Monster delay his marriage to the point where Elizabeth wonders whether or not he "love[s] another" (161), and the Monster's threat causes him to dismiss his new wife to bed alone while he spends their wedding-night watching for intruders (167). The Frankenstein family, heretofore known for its remarkable ability to extend and reproduce itself, dwindles to almost-nothingness in a matter of pages as even the fundamental act of sexual reproduction is foreclosed, the young husband substituted in the bridal chamber by his anomalous, illegitimate, dispossessed "son."

This "loss of civilization" also plays out psychologically in the Frankenstein circle. In Victor's case, we see an uncanny doubling taking place between creator and creature in that, after constructing his own double, Victor resists easy classification as either man or monster. A prime example would be his implication in the Creature's crimes. After he destroys the female

monster and is forced to go ashore in Ireland, the townspeople believe he is guilty of Clerval's murder because witnesses saw the Monster escaping by boat and believed it to be Frankenstein (152). More significant however, is Victor's tendency to identify himself with his creation whenever the latter commits a crime. Upon being shown Clerval's corpse, he exclaims, "'[h]ave my murderous machinations deprived you also, my dearest Henry, of life? Two I have already destroyed; other victims await their destiny'" (153). Furthermore, a domestic representative is mistaken for the Monster when Victor is in prison in Ireland and, for no apparent reason, believes that his visitor—who turns out to be Alphonse Frankenstein—is the Monster (156). This dynamic is also dramatically exemplified in Justine Moritz's own identification with monstrosity—her confessor harangues her into admitting to William's murder by denying her absolution and "threaten[ing] and menac[ing]" her until she "almost began to think that [she] was the monster he said [she] was" (83). Although truly innocent and fully conscious of it, Justine doubts her own nature and even her own actions, thus further corrupting the integrity and moral certainty of the "civilized" domestic realm.

While it is not difficult to read the above challenges to the domestic space—the effacement of sympathy, the displacement of the benevolent patriarch, the curtailing of reproduction, and the psychological destabilization of "virtuous" characters—as attacks on the broader social structure, Shelley makes the societal implications of the Monster's actions even clearer when she identifies the failures of the justice system. While Justine's unfair execution is the obvious example, it is far more interesting to consider Victor's rather inexplicable attempt to report the Creature to a criminal judge. The magistrate, rather than scorning Victor's tale as the ravings of a madman, seems willing to believe in the Monster's existence, but expresses concerns about the accused's ability to evade capture. "'I would willingly afford you every aid in your pursuit," the judge offers, "but the creature of whom you speak appears to have powers

which would put all my exertions to defiance. Who can follow an animal which can traverse the sea of ice, and inhabit caves and dens where no man would venture to intrude?" (171) The law's inability to contain the Monster not only points to the latter's anomalous status but also suggests that his mere nature allows him to foil easily the existing power structures. And because the aspects of his nature which allow him to "traverse the sea of ice" are also those aspects of his nature which render him "hideous"—which in turn prevents him from claiming membership in the domestic economy and thus causes him to lose his sympathy in the first place and therefore to vow "eternal hatred and vengeance *to all mankind*" (126, my italics)— then it can be concluded that the Creature's position as a metaphoric colonial subaltern who has been denied a share in domesticity situates him, like Caleb Williams, as an anomalous, disenfranchised figure whose exclusion goads him into destabilizing the existing structure of both the public and private spheres.

The Failure of Aesthetics

Drawing on David Marshall's *The Surprising Effects of Sympathy: Marivaux, Diderot, Rousseau, and Mary Shelley* (1988), Isabelle Bour notes that "[r]epeatedly repulsed, the creature diagnoses the failure of sensibility," a failure which originates with Victor, who "cut[s] himself off from nature" and from his family while laboring on his creation, only allowing himself brief "interludes of emotional expansion," as when he travels through Chamounix after the death of Justine (821, 822). Bour's argument points to an intrinsic link between sensibility and the sublime as they are represented in *Frankenstein*—both are assumed to be humanizing discourses in the sense that they are meant to expand the self and promote benevolence and humility; both are overarching concepts meant to help sustain the white, bourgeois self and its institutions; and both are ultimately doomed to failure in this novel.

Earlier in this chapter, I cited Elizabeth Bohls's intriguing claim that Shelley's use of

multiple narrators "unsettles narrative authority and points in the direction of cultural

relativism. It interrupts the universalizing monologue with which European culture tries to

impose its values, notably aesthetic value, around the world" (25). While I do agree with her

ultimate conclusions that "*Frankenstein* indicts aesthetics as an inherently imperial discourse,

structured by principles of hierarchy and exclusion," and that "[a]esthetics binds together a little

community, a microcosm of polite British society, marred by its subordination of women and

colonization of non-European peoples" (34), I believe that it is important to emphasize that, like

sympathy, aesthetic discourse still *fails* as a colonizing force in this novel, and that the failure of

these forces inevitably results in the breakdown of the illusion of domestic stability. This, in turn,

provides further support for one of this chapter's central claims, that *Frankenstein* highlights the

symbiotic, inseparable relationship between the home and the imperial effort.

On the one hand then, aesthetics can indeed be seen as "imperial discourse—one of the

languages of high culture, seemingly far removed from the practical tasks of empire, but actually

helping produce imperial subjects to carry out those tasks" (Bohls 25). This reading, similar to

many of the claims I have made in earlier chapters, points to aesthetics as a coding device which

enables and justifies imperial enterprise. By having "a non-European [become] an aesthetic

subject, while the subject who sets the standards and judges aesthetic value is white and

European" Shelley is creating a somewhat Burkean space in that "Burke's negro woman, like

Frankenstein's creature, 'naturally' inspires a negative aesthetic response in a 'standard' subject.

The doctrine of the standard of taste forms part of an aesthetic ideology that extrapolates the

viewpoint of an educated white European man to a universal standard and contributes to

justifying colonialism and slavery" (31). Again, the sublime, imagined to be a universal,

boundary-breaking concept, ironically acts as a provincial discourse which sustains the power group and promotes the status quo.

On the other hand however, one must bear in mind Nancy Fredricks's provocative claim that "[t]he sublime settings in the text…provide a space where the marginalized can be heard. In contrast to the power of beauty, which works to contain and maintain social distinctions and hierarchies, the sublime in *Frankenstein* opens the way for the excluded to challenge the dominant discourse" (178). Considering that the sublime in *Frankenstein* empowers the doomed subaltern while at the same time *not* successfully performing any of the "positive" functions that it did in Radcliffe—uplifting the downtrodden protagonist, resituating the foreign within a familiar discourse, helping to produce domesticity, etc.—I would suggest that Victor and his family *attempt* to make sense of their conflicted world by viewing it through the "civilizing" lens of aesthetics, yet aesthetics, like sympathy, is ultimately ineffective as a universalizing force in this text. Beauty is exposed as a marginalizing discourse, and sublimity "belongs" to the Monster and the Monster alone.

The failure of both the sublime and the beautiful in *Frankenstein* is most succinctly represented in an often-overlooked passage that appears near the end of the novel. As Victor and Elizabeth cross Lake Como by boat after their wedding, Victor silently observes "the mighty [Mount] Jura opposing its dark side to the ambition that would quit its native country, and an almost insurmountable barrier to the invader who would wish to enslave it" (166). Victor offers no further commentary on Jura's perceived role as a "barrier," yet an attentive reader will notice the irony of this moment. As a representative of the sublime, Jura has *not* succeeded in its role as a force meant to stand against "the ambition that would quit its native country," since Victor has in fact followed his ambitions by traveling to Ingolstadt and creating the Monster. Likewise, Jura has also failed in its second task since the Creature has, with great ease, managed

to scale the Alps to "invade" the Frankenstein household and, in a sense, "enslave" Victor. Furthermore, by referring to the mountain as a protector of the "native country" rather than the Frankenstein home, Victor effectively conflates the national and the domestic, thus suggesting that the failure of aesthetics as an insulating discourse has implications which stretch well beyond the hearth.

As Victor looks wistfully on the sublime, Elizabeth similarly observes "how the clouds, which sometimes obscure and sometimes rise above the dome of Mont Blanc, render this scene of beauty still more interesting" (166). In her reading of this scene, Bohls remarks that Elizabeth resembles "a tour guide" with her observations on the beautiful, yet concludes that "[t]his female aesthete is too passive and colorless to be much of a force in the novel" (26). I would elaborate on Bohls's assertion by noting that Elizabeth's commentary turns out to be little more than a failed attempt to distract herself and Victor from their gloomy situation, as Victor observes: "Thus Elizabeth endeavoured to divert her thoughts and mine from all reflection upon melancholy subjects. But her temper was fluctuating; joy for a few instants shone in her eyes, but it continually gave place to distraction and reverie" (166). Unlike in *The Italian*, where Vivaldi and Ellena observe the sublime and the beautiful aspects of a particular landscape—"'See,' said Vivaldi, 'where Monte-Corno stands like a ruffian, huge, scared [sic], threatening, and horrid…'Mark too,' said Ellena, 'how sweetly the banks and undulating plains repose at the feet of the mountains; what an image of beauty and elegance they oppose to the awful grandeur that overlooks and guards them" (185, 186)—this does not act as a "bonding" moment for Victor and Elizabeth. Recall that in the latter scene Vivaldi is characterizing the sublime as a force which must be overcome because, as Ellena's future husband, he must surmount the benevolent patriarchy which "overlooks and guards" the beautiful heroine in order to claim her as his wife. In this way the scene in *The Italian* gestures, as I argued in the previous chapter,

towards marriage and the "natural" reproduction/perpetuation of domesticity. This, however, is not the case for the Frankensteins; the sublime only reminds Victor of his own failings, and the beautiful is a "passive and colorless" object which can only be observed and appreciated in passing.

Unlike in Radcliffe then, the sublime in *Frankenstein* becomes entirely the province of the Monster, the subaltern. While it is true that Radcliffe's villains are also characterized in sublime terms, it can be argued that they are only as sublime as the heroines make them out to be. Kenneth Graham raises an excellent point when he notes that, seen through Emily St. Aubert's eyes, *Udolpho*'s Montoni is represented as a "smouldering, passionate demon-lover." However, when '[v]iewed objectively, Montoni's life forms a pattern of unfulfillment. He gambles in casinos but loses. He is ambitious to be a military leader but becomes only a robber captain, one whose capture is perfunctory when the narrative has no further use for him. Despite his displays of passion and energy, he lacks sexual drive" (167). In *Frankenstein*, however, there is no disputing the Creature's size, strength, mobility, and inability to be contained by the text. Unlike Montoni, who is only sublime because Emily imagines him to be, the Monster's power and influence is beyond question. And because, as Fredricks has observed, majestic landscapes provide a space in which the Monster can speak and make his will known, sublimity in nature is also compromised as a site of affirmation and control for Victor.

Sublime and Beautiful Landscapes

Frankenstein's most noteworthy example of the sublime in landscape appears shortly after Justine's death, when Victor travels through "the near Alpine valleys" to Chamounix "s[eeking] in the magnificence, the eternity of such scenes, to forget [him]self and [his] ephemeral, because human, sorrows" (89). His observations of the scenery are distinctly

Radcliffean in their invocations of divinity, tendency to inspire a soul-expanding courage, and indulgence in flights of fancy:

> [t]he immense mountains and precipices that overhung me on every side—the sound of the river raging among the rocks, and the dashing of the waterfalls around, spoke of a power mighty as Omnipo[tence]—and I ceased to fear, or to bend before any being less almighty than that which has created and ruled the elements, here displayed in their most terrific guise…Ruined castles hanging on the precipices of piny [sic] mountains; the impetuous Arve, and cottages every here and there peeping forth from among the trees, formed a scene of singular beauty. But it was augmented and rendered sublime by the mighty Alps, whose white and shining pyramids and domes towered above all, as belonging to another earth, the habitations of another race of beings. (89)

Victor's reasons for seeking out the sublime in landscape are somewhat different from Radcliffe's heroines', however. While in both cases the viewers are attempting to gain succor and a sense of empowerment, Radcliffe's heroines are, as I argued in the previous chapter, also working to assimilate a foreign landscape by triangulating it through a familiar aesthetic, Christianized discourse. Because the Swiss Alps present scenes remembered from Victor's boyhood (89) they are not "foreign" to him and therefore do not need to be "tamed." Rather, Victor is returning to that which is already familiar in what can be described as an attempt to locate a constant within his shifting, unstable life: "Six years had passed," since he last visited Chamounix, and he notes that "*I* was a wreck – but nought had changed in those savage and enduring scenes" (89, original italics). This observation constructs the sublime as a dependable, universal force; no matter how much the world may be changed by havoc-raising subalterns, *this* sacred space of "maternal nature" "whisper[ing] in soothing accents" remains untouched (90). Indeed, the use of the term "maternal" and Victor's memories of visiting Chamounix "frequently during [his] boyhood" (89) ties the sublime with the domestic here. However, whereas in Radcliffe the sublime's domesticating potential is primarily raised when the heroine is viewing a landscape with her beloved at her side, and such episodes look towards *future* marital companionship, *Frankenstein* places this dynamic on its head. Victor gazes at the

sublime while he is alone and is reminded only of his family's happy *past*; in fact, Elizabeth never enters his mind during these moments.

It might seem problematic then to read the sublime as an imperializing discourse in this case. While it is true that Victor is not engaging in the same kind of appropriating rhetoric that Adeline, Emily, and Ellena do, the fact remains that he is still using the sublime as a way to avoid his guilt and thus marginalize, in his own mind, the subaltern he has created. Furthermore, Nancy Fredricks has made the provocative claim that "[i]t is not the sublime itself that is being critiqued in the book…but hubris in the face of its unlimited power" (185). The most consequential examples of this hubris are, as Fredricks relates, Victor's desire to unravel the sublime mysteries of nature by breaking through the "ideal bounds" of "life and death" (58), his eager acceptance of Professor Waldman's directive that natural scientists ought to "penetrate into the recesses of nature, and show how she works in her hiding places" (53). However she also notes that Victor displays a similar disregard for the powers of landscape—while traveling through Chamounix, for example, he is undeterred by a sudden thunderstorm, pompously declaring "[s]till I would penetrate [the mountains'] misty veil, and seek them in their cloudy retreats. What were rain and storm to me?" (91) Considering how closely the language in the latter quote mirrors the words of Professor Waldman, I would suggest that Victor's burning desire to climb the mountain echoes his earlier "fanatical" wish—to borrow Fredricks's term—to defy the "natural order" by creating life out of death. What might otherwise be a "stock" sublime scene is therefore transformed into a symbolic representation of Victor's "colonial" journey of creation.

Furthermore, by having Victor's journey climax not in "an experience of 'solitary grandeur,'" but rather in "an unsettling encounter with the once abandoned and now very angry creature" (186) Shelley challenges sublimity's status as a rhetorical system through which the

"civilized" viewer can claim supremacy over the subaltern. As Fredricks relates, "[i]nstead of the self-aggrandizement Victor seeks when he journeys to the mountain top, he finds himself engaged in a dialogue with one so far excluded from his narrative. He comes face to face…with his own limitations in the face of the 'other'" (186).[61] Like Moses climbing Mt. Horeb to meet with God in the form of a burning bush and receive his commission to free the Israelites, Victor's ascent terminates in a meeting with the god-like Creature who ultimately charges him with the task of building a female Monster. Rather than somehow taking on a "divine aspect" though— recall the "spiritual barriers" that Radcliffe's heroines cultivate after enjoying communion with the sublime and their subsequent ability to strike their oppressors with a momentary sense of awe—Victor is shown just how powerless he truly is in the face of his creation. Indeed, when he returns home to his family from this conference, Victor is hardly a figure of Radcliffean faith and fortitude; he claims that "[m]y haggard and wild appearance awoke intense alarm…I felt as if I were placed under a ban—as if I had no right to claim their [his family's] sympathy—as if never more might I enjoy companionship with them" (132). Rather than strengthening him in the face of foreign "oppression" and edging him closer to a state of happy domesticity then, his encounter with the sublime and the Monster that inhabits it renders him more alien.

In light of the problematic nature of sublimity in this novel, it is tempting to conclude, as Anne Mellor does, that Mary Shelley celebrates "the beautiful over the sublime" via her idealization of Henry Clerval (104). Indeed, Clerval is a likeable, if innocuous, character who, while journeying with Victor, is greatly pleased with the "Fairy-land" visions that characterize their trip up the Rhine. In fact, Clerval explicitly privileges the beautiful over the sublime,

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[61] Barbara Freeman reaches a similar conclusion when she notes that "geography [in *Frankenstein*] produces neither peace of mind nor aesthetic pleasure, but rather a vision of and an encounter with monstrosity. Each time a sublime landscape is depicted, it is linked to the Monster's appearance…[t]he landscape is the same as Kant's—that of Nature in al her might and majesty, but the effect (and affect) produced is not" (24).

commenting that "[t]he mountains of Switzerland are more majestic and strange; but there is a charm in the banks of this divine river….[o]h, surely, the spirit that inhabits and guards this place has a soul more in harmony with man, than those who pile the glacier, or retire to the inaccessible peaks of the mountains of our own country" (137). Victor is touched by his friend's words, and briefly digresses from the narrative to characterize Clerval, with "[h]is wild and enthusiastic imagination," as a Wordsworthian child of nature, even anachronistically quoting a few lines from "Tintern Abbey" (137). For Mellor, Clerval's "valuing the picturesque and the beautiful above the sublime…affirms an aesthetic grounded on the family and the community rather than on the individual" (138).

I, however, am more inclined to agree with Bohls's implication that the beautiful is a colonizing force, and Fredricks's contention that it is not the sublime but hubris in the face of the sublime that Shelley is critiquing. Likeable as Clerval appears, his statement that "the spirit[s]…who pile the glacier, or retire to the inaccessible peaks of the mountains of our own country" are less "in harmony with man" acts as an unwitting marginalization of the Monster. Unknowingly, Clerval is doing essentially the same thing that Victor does—reinforcing the Creature's alterity and implying that this alterity indicates inferiority. My point is further borne out by the doubling which takes place between Victor and Clerval a mere few pages later. Though an emotionally fragile Victor sees "an insurmountable barrier placed between me and my fellow-men" he is still able to enjoy Clerval's company to an extent, and his ability to do so can perhaps be attributed to a key similarity that the two men share: namely, Clerval is an aspiring colonizer. Victor reports that

> in Clerval I saw the image of my former self; he was inquisitive and anxious to gain experience and instruction…He was also pursuing an object he had long had in view. His design was to visit India, in the belief that he had in his knowledge of its various languages, and in the views he had taken of its society, the means of materially assisting the progress of European colonisation and trade. In Britain only could he further the execution of his plan. (139)

Clerval's desire to join the British imperial effort, and his comment that "'I could pass my life here [in Cumberland and Westmorland]…and among these mountains I should scarcely regret Switzerland and the Rhine'" (141) is the closest Shelley gets in the novel to implicating England itself. However, considering just how closely Clerval's colonial aspirations are juxtaposed with Victor's scientific ones, and considering the text's emphatic statement that "[i]n Britain *only* could [Clerval] further the execution of his plan"—an entirely unnecessary line in terms of the surface narrative—I believe it is safe to conclude that the text is subtly yoking Victor's creation of the Monster with British imperialism. While this observation is certainly not unexpected, I would add that by transposing Frankenstein and Clerval in this way, it also becomes difficult to parse out the differences between the intended functions of the sublime and the beautiful in the text. In other words, if the beautifully-inclined Clerval is "the very image" of the sublimely-inclined Victor, and if both men are colonizers in a sense, then it can be argued that both men *are attempting* to use their aesthetic discourse of choice to achieve unwholesome ends— indeed, as we have seen, Victor is using the sublime-in-landscape to "kill his guilt" and thus purge himself of responsibility for his creation, while Clerval is using the beautiful-in-landscape to devalue the sublime and, by proxy, the Creature.

Along these lines, it is also interesting to note that both the sublime Alps and the beautiful countryside affect Victor in similar ways—the "sublime and magnificent scenes" of the mountains "afforded [Victor] the greatest consolation [he] was capable of receiving" though "they did not remove [his] grief" (90, 91); likewise, during his trip along the Rhine, Victor's "spirits [are] continually agitated by gloomy feelings" even though he "drink[s] in a tranquility" from the surrounding beauty (136), and the natural wonders of England's romantic Lake District bring him an "enjoyment" which is nevertheless "embittered both by the memory of the past, and the anticipation of the future" (140). The fact that the sublime and the beautiful are

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virtually indistinguishable in terms of the limited effects they have on Victor's mood suggests then, that aesthetic discourse has failed its practitioners as a universalizing force.

Aesthetic Beings: Monstrosity and Beauty

Perhaps popular aesthetics fail in this text because the Monster himself is, first and foremost, an aesthetic being. Jonathan Padley notes that Victor's ostensible interest in his project is scientific, yet he (and everyone else) reacts primarily to the Creature's great size and hideous features (197). Nóra Séllei points out that the Monster "is the most embodied creature in the whole novel...[and] he is the most repulsive because of his very physicality, because of being the body" (85). While I agree that the Monster is defined primarily in terms of his physicality, I would also add that Elizabeth is almost as heavily "embodied" in the text, though in a more "positive" way—note the parallels I earlier observed between Victor's description of her and his description of the Monster. To claim that the Creature and Elizabeth, as primarily aesthetic beings, are "embodied" touchstones of sublimity and beauty may at first feel overly obvious. However, such an ascription takes on greater meaning when one considers that both of these individuals are, as I argued earlier, anomalous figures—the Monster is anomalous partly because of his "unnatural birth," partly because of his unclear racial coding, and partly because of his lack of a constructive role in the world; Elizabeth's anomaly stems partly from her status as a redundantly white adoptee from a dark-skinned, poor family, and partly from her multivalent position within the Frankenstein household. Furthermore, both individuals enter the Frankensteins' circle as a result of a colonial-inflected intervention—the Monster is born out of Victor's desire to "break through bounds" and "enlighten a dark world," while Elizabeth is "rescued" from brown people by Caroline and Alphonse Frankenstein. Hence, if the two figures who most clearly embody aesthetic discourse are anomalous figures who are also, to different

extents, "subalterns," then the whole system's ability to universalize human experience, assimilate the Other, and assuage colonial guilt is undermined.

To elaborate on the sublime's association with the subaltern in this text, I refer once again to Elizabeth Bohls's conclusion that "*Frankenstein* indicts aesthetics as an inherently imperial discourse, structured by principles of hierarchy and exclusion. Aesthetics binds together a little community, a microcosm of polite British society, marred by its subordination of women and colonization of non-European peoples" (34). For Bohls, the fact that "subordination" and "colonization" are the underlying forces which "bind together" the Frankensteins' community illustrates that "[w]estern civilization, viewed from the inside, has not got its parts put together quite right," an indictment which "is confirmed when we see this disproportion reflected from the outside—blown up in the monstrous mirror that is Frankenstein's creature" (28-29). Understood from this position, the Monster's inherent sublimity—which is produced by his size, grotesqueness, and seeming omnipresence—can be read as an ironic co-opting of this imperializing discourse: what Victor has essentially done is project and concentrate all of western culture's fears and dysfunctions into his sublime creation. In further support of this, Barbara Freeman has effectively argued that "*Frankenstein* makes explicit and dramatizes what Kant's analytic contains but cannot say, demonstrating that the *shape of the sublime…is precisely that of monstrosity*" (21, my italics).[62] To this I would add that sublime objects are such because, according to Kant, they "convey the idea of their infinity" as a result of "the inadequacy of even the greatest effort of our imagination in the estimation of the magnitude of an object" (94). Hence, the Creature is sublime not just because of his enormous frame and uncategorizability, but also because he is fated to act as a gargantuan metaphor: in his ethnically

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[62] Kant, with his moralistic agenda to "shield [the sublime] from the mostrous [sic] object's 'destructive' force" (Freeman 22-23) would likely not have seen the Creature as a sublime being because he is "monstrous" and thus "destroys the purpose which constitutes" his conception (Kant 91).

unstable body and "unnatural birth" he bears the overwhelming weight of that which is simultaneously systemic and unthinkable—namely, western fear and guilt about both the colonial subaltern and the shortcomings of the anomalous domestic space.

Taken in this context then, it is not surprising that Victor—as a privileged member of the current system and all of its attendant justifications—should initially have envisioned and "selected his [creation's] features as beautiful" (60) only to be shocked by the hideousness of the whole. Indeed, in strictly literal terms, it seems somewhat unbelievable that Victor should have been blind to the Creature's ugliness until its animation. I would therefore argue that the various dysfunctional aspects of western civilization—colonial subjugation and domestic anomaly being the most relevant—which are embodied in the Monster cannot be recognized as undesirable until they are seen as a whole and in relation to each other. Individually the Monster's "features" may appear "beautiful" and his "limbs" may be "in proportion," yet taken together, the effect is monstrous: the "yellow skin" cannot cover "the work of muscles and arteries"; the "lustrous black" of the hair and the "pearly whiteness" of the teeth may appear pleasing, yet they create "a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes" (60). Tellingly, there is a similar dynamic at play in how one perceives the sublime, as Kant explains:

> in order to get the full emotional effect of the size of the Pyramids we must avoid coming too near just as much as remaining too far away. For in the latter case the representation of the apprehended parts (the tiers of stones) is but obscure, and produces no effect upon the aesthetic judgement [sic] of the Subject. In the former, however, it takes the eye some time to complete the apprehension from the base to the summit; but in this interval the first tiers always in part disappear before the imagination has taken in the last, and so the comprehension is never complete. (90)

Likewise, the Creature's appearance seems to have no effect on Victor while he is building it because he is "too close"; "the first tiers" of monstrosity "in part disappear before the imagination has taken in the last," and thus he does not fully comprehend the extent of the Creature's hideousness until he has essentially "stepped back" and apprehended the whole.

Considering that Victor's motives are, as we have established, inherently selfish and later

superimposed over Henry Clerval's desire to engage in the imperial project, we can therefore

see the Creature's coming-to-life and Victor's belated recognition of its monstrosity as indicating

a moment of clarity—the sanitizing veil of aesthetic and moral discourse slips, and Victor is

forced to confront not only the vast, interrelated network of his culture's sins but also his own

implication within those sins. Perhaps the sublimity of Chamounix was able to lift his spirits

during his "boyhood," but now he has come face-to-face with the sublime, overbearing

knowledge that he and his kind are producers of monstrosity. Is it any wonder, then, that he

flees in horror from his creation?

Conclusion

It is always welcome when chronology aligns with an argumentative arc. In my chapters

on Godwin and Radcliffe, we saw these authors' largely uncritical confidence in the inherent

power and goodness of sentiment, domesticity, aesthetics, and their imperialistic valences. In

this chapter, we have seen Mary Shelley's far more skeptical take on these discourses. While I

feel that any argument that *Frankenstein*'s critical view marks or in some way symptomatizes a

larger political turning-point would require a level of historical excavation that extends beyond

the scope of this study, I do think that it bears repeating that Mary Shelley's robust experiences

as a traveler had a hand in her sympathetic portrayal of the Other. In her and Percy Shelley's

History of a Six Weeks' Tour through a part of France, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland; with

Letters Descriptive of a Sail Round the Lake of Geneva and of the Glaciers of Chamouni (1817),

for example, she laments the destruction that Napoleon's army has wrought on the French town

of Nogent, writing that

> [n]othing could be more entire than the ruin which these barbarians had spread as they
> advanced; perhaps they remembered Moscow and the destruction of the Russian
> villages; but we were now in France, and the distress of the inhabitants, whose houses
> had been burned, their cattle killed, and all their wealth destroyed, has given a sting to

my detestation of war, which none can feel who have not travelled through a country
pillaged and wasted by this plague, which, in his pride, man inflicts upon his fellow. (19)

Indeed, the final lines of the above excerpt possess a particular resonance for this study—one

cannot feel a true "detestation of war" or subjugation until one has at least "travelled through a

country pillaged and wasted by [these] plague[s]." While Mary Shelley of course only

experienced this kind of devastation secondhand, she undoubtedly witnessed more than her

father, who was largely an armchair intellectual, or Ann Radcliffe, who either rarely or never

visited the countries she wrote about, basing her famous landscape descriptions on paintings

and travel narratives.

In light of her biography and the sentiments expressed in *Frankenstein* therefore, I

conclude that the well-read, well-traveled, and politically-informed Mary Shelley recognized the

potentially appropriative nature of sensibility, sublimity, and domesticity, and, unlike William

Godwin and Ann Radcliffe, used her most famous work to contest these elements of popular

discourse. In bidding the "hideous progeny" that was her novel "go forth and prosper" then,

Shelley offers an "implicit critique of the utilitarian vision of an engineered society" (Spivak 848)

by leveling a powerful challenge against the mutually-reinforcing alliance of empire, moral

philosophy, aesthetics, domesticity, and fiction.

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