Treatments of Time and Space in the Early Gothic and Dark Romanticism

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Abstract:

This thesis argues that while the Early Gothic, represented by Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* and Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian*, is concerned with irrational, tyrannical forces of the past being defeated by rational heroes of the present, Dark Romanticism, represented by Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher*, portrays the fallibility of reason in modernity. This thesis will investigate the way the Gothic novel evolves in its representation of time, space, and place.

I: Introduction

The Gothic novel, starting with *The Castle of* Otranto published in 1764, is often set in Medieval castles and by gone times. While the aesthetic qualities associated with older architecture, macabre subject matter and the supposed irrationality of the past contribute to the horror presented in Gothic stories, the changes to physical space and notions of time show how the anxieties portrayed in the Gothic changed during the shift from the 18th century to the 19th century. The horror felt by the characters changes with the function of time (defined by character legacy and the objects) and space (defined by physical construction and moral places). Depictions of morality, faith and human agency changed throughout the course of the Gothic genre from the late 1700s to the early 1800s, reflecting shifting ideas of inheritance,

enclosed spaces, religious places, and objects tied to specific environments – all of which are linked to the treatments of time and space.

This thesis argues that while the Early Gothic, represented by Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* and Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian*, is concerned with irrational, tyrannical forces of the past being defeated by rational heroes of the present, Dark Romanticism, represented by Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher*, portrays the fallibility of reason in modernity. This thesis will investigate the way the Gothic novel evolves in its representation of time, space, and place.

The Early Gothic novel represents time as the battle between generations for inheritance, which will allow a morally upright individual to replace a morally corrupt ancestor, through the inheritance of artifacts of the past that symbolize and contribute to the moral qualities of the new generation.

Conversely, Dark Romanticism represents time as the inheritance of a curse that is either self-inflicted by the leading character of the story or irreversibly placed upon them with no hope of fixing it. Objects relating to the past are not artifacts that protect a character through their ties with it but instead symbolize the inevitability of their downfall.

Space in the Early Gothic novel consists of enclosed physical environments that limit the protagonists, subjecting them to the control and authority of the antagonists, along with a great prominence of religious spaces to represent the preservation of morality.

In Dark Romanticism space loses its ability to protect the characters from the threats of the external world, and there are no sacred places where they can find protection or sanctuary.

The Castle of Otranto (1764) by Horace Walpole, being the foundational text for Gothic literature, establishes many of the elements and tropes of the genre that will be heavily adapted by later authors. What distinguishes Gothic literature from other stories of the late Enlightenment period is the focus on an inheritance plot, and the theme of legitimate power, which also features supernatural elements. At its very inception, the Gothic plot develops in the closed environment of the castle, with figures representing authority – or the lack thereof – as individuals of interest. Additionally, the idea of the supernatural and the secrets held by families outside the knowledge of the public will be featured and transformed as well

The story begins in the principality of Otranto with a marriage that will confirm Conrad as the heir to the tyrannical Lord Manfred. On the day of the wedding, Conrad is crushed to death by a giant helmet. Terrified by this sudden death and an accompanying prophesy that his family's power will come to an end, Manfred begins to act frantically to preserve his lineage and hold over the principality – which involves divorcing his wife Hippolita and attempting to marry Isabella, his son's bride. The actions of Manfred encourage a peasant named Theodore to help Isabella escape, with the encounter between Manfred and Father Jerome revealing Theodore is also of noble lineage. With this reveal, the story becomes a struggle for Otranto's ownership between Theodore – who must prove his virtuosity by showing his strength to Frederic the Marquis and saving Isabella – and Manfred, who wants to secure his authority through any means necessary. The spirit of Otranto's rightful ruler, the crusader Alfonso, haunts the castle legitimizing Theodore as the heir: Alfonso's legacy is crucial in setting the tone for the events of the novel and its Gothic themes of fate, power, and family history.

Apart from the selfless act of saving Isabella, Theodore's life exhibits signs that he is chosen by fate which ensures the chain of events that leads him to the principality in the first place, since he was saved from a life of slavery by pirates thanks to a Christian ship.

In this early establishment of the Gothic, metaphysics is driven by a religious and spiritual mixture of elements that constitute fate. While the presence of Alfonso indicates the appearance of the occult, his origin as a former crusader allows for a Christian influence that indicates the role of providence in the actions of every character. The metaphysics behind *The Castle of Otranto* is based largely around the principle of fate, where providence and the will of Alfonso's spirit seem to drive the whole lives of Manfred and Theodore to where they need to be for their confrontation to take place. Even the accidental murder of his own daughter Matilda is framed as an act of sin, one that requires him spend his days in search of redemption – as if a divine plan dictated what would occur

The battle between Theodore and Manfred is an establishment of character conflict, particularly conflict for determining authority, being an important part of the Gothic story. The depiction of morality is very distinct between the two, with Theodore's traits of altruism and honor making him the hero while Manfred's temper and unethical acts making him the villain. The display of power shown in *The Castle of Otranto* is between individuals, with the capacity of a character's strength being highlighted through their abilities in a one-on-one confrontation. The tension of scenes such as the threat to Theodore's life, the battle with Fredric and the murder of Matilda are based on the power exerted by Manfred personally, with action being driven over what he himself will do once he appears before the characters.

The Castle of Otranto introduced several key features that would act as important aspects to the Gothic novel. These include stories that center on inheritance to represent the past haunting the present, supernatural elements to blur the lines between reality and the unreal while adding ambiguity, the conflict of characters of differing social standings, as well as metaphysical forces to explain the condition of its characters along with the decline of morality to some degree.

The Italian (1797), by Ann Radcliffe, follows a similar struggle for obtaining a noble position, altering some details of the Gothic established by Walpole which led into the more drastic changes made with the advent of Dark Romanticism. The story focuses on a framed narrative about a famous, morbid confession made in a Neapolitan Catholic church. The significance of this framing is how the presence of an Englishman viewing the story of the confession 'Englishises' the novel – where Radcliffe addresses how the readership of this Gothic tale consists of an English audience. The narrative itself is about Vivaldi and Ellena, a noble heir to a marquis and an orphaned maiden he is courting. Once Vivaldi's mother, the Marchesa, learns of their relationship, the story turns into a chase to foil the marriage. With a couple up against the Catholic church that the Marchesa employed, Vivaldi and Ellena are captured and prevented from marrying and their struggle becomes the need to survive, as opposed to battling for their inheritance. Furthermore, by having forces of the past (the current rulers of church and state who obtained their positions before the story's beginning) come into conflict with characters of the present, the emphasis on the past haunting the present is brought back from *The Castle of* Otranto. Once the story of Ellena's past as a noble descendant is made apparent, the machinations of the Marchesa and the dark division of the Catholic church are exposed by a repenting confessor named Schedoni.

The nature of character conflict is largely the same in *The Italian* as it was in *Otranto*, given how the tension is based on confrontations held between individual characters – with the focus of these confrontations revolving around control over power. The difference in power dynamics, however, is what Radcliffe dramatically changes from Walpole's depiction. While threats to Vivaldi and Ellena's life are instigated by individuals like Schedoni, the resolution to these threats cannot come from defeating such people in the way that Theodore did in *Otranto*. This is because the antagonists of *The Italian* represent entire institutions. Faced with a more abstract threat, as opposed to a single tyrant that can be defeated, Vivaldi and

Ellena act defensively throughout the story. Morality of religion is a primary focus by Radcliffe, particularly with the degradation of ethics seen by the Catholic church – first hinted with the harboring of assassins in the introduction, and then with the corrupt division of the church that hunts the protagonists fronted by Schedoni. The metaphysics of *The Italian* follow the same notions of fate seen in *Otranto*, given how it was the familial relationship of Schedoni and Ellena – a factor that neither of them could control or have known – that saved the life of the latter. The greatest change that Radcliffe makes to the Gothic form is removing any supernatural agency from the story. While Schedoni's presence is initially described as "this demon in the garb of a monk," he is revealed to be just a cunning member of the church (Radcliffe 9). Overall, the changes brought by Radcliffe to the Gothic include the abstraction of the main characters' opposition, transforming them into a force that cannot directly be opposed; the explanation of supernatural elements to show that ambiguity over the unexplainable can provide Gothic suspense; and the depiction of religious morality degrading alongside the integrity of rulers as seen in *The Castle of Otranto*.

With *Frankenstein* (1818), by Mary Shelley, the Gothic established by Walpole and Radcliffe and drastically changes, while maintaining a recognizable story about an individual being haunted and the issues of inheritance and legitimate legacy. The story follows Victor Frankenstein, a student of science with an interest in alchemy, who seeks to create life and remove death as a threat to humanity. Immediately, Shelley does not imbue noble and altruistic traits into Victor, given that his initial pursuits are done in solitude and for personal glory: "what glory would attend the discovery, if I could banish disease from the human frame, and render man invulnerable to any but a violent death!" (Shelley vol. I, ch. I). His experiment soon starts to haunt him, when he makes the Creature, whom he abandons in fear and leaves isolated to fend for itself. Facing physical harm and ostracization, the Creature embarks on a journey of revenge against Victor – killing his loved ones and seeking a means

for Victor to make his life complete. When Victor repeatedly refuses the Creature, giving him neither affection or the creation of a bride, the Creature kills all of Victor's family and leading to a chase into the arctic.

Among the many major changes that Shelley makes to the Gothic is the shift of the protagonist-antagonist dichotomy seen so far. Rather than have a definitive hero such as Theodore, Vivaldi or Ellena, Shelley mixes character traits of Victor and the Creature so as to make it difficult to categorize what their role is. The Creature is on a quest for revenge, not unlike Theodore avenging the legacy of Alfonso the Good. However, the brutality exhibited prevents him from being a hero fighting against a villain – yet the plight of his life story makes him sympathetic regardless. Similarly, Victor's ambition to solve death 'for the good of humanity' would make him heroic – especially to the era of the Enlightenment that Gothic literature was born out of. However, his neglect and inability to confront his responsibility makes him partially villainous. Morality is shown to have degraded on all sides in Shelley's story. Rather than have a side that represents morality who become victorious at the end, neither Frankenstein nor the Creature exhibit moral qualities that help either of them. Characters with positive qualities, such as Henry with his wish to help Victor and Elizabeth with her innocence, end up dying at the hands of the Creature – leaving no moral space.

Victor is haunted by the consequences of his creation, and the Creature is haunted by the limitations of his nature. The horror of the story resides in Victor's guilt which leads to tragedy in both their lives.

The notion of power dynamics has shifted greatly away from nobility and large institutions. Both of the main characters are largely defined by loneliness, with Victor isolating himself to avoid having his mistake be known and the Creature being forcefully isolated due to the horror of his nature as an amalgamation of dead body parts. As such, Victor and the Creature

can only bring themselves to their confrontations, with little power to back either of themselves up beside their minds and physical strength. However, their relationship of creator and created prevents a confrontation of human against human that would be seen in *Otranto* or *The Italian* – meaning that brute force cannot solve their conundrum. Metaphysics has diminished compared to Walpole or Radcliffe, given that providence and destiny do not dictate the outcome of Victor and the Creature's life as much as it did with Theodore and Manfred, for example. Victor's reality is driven by his agency, and how his choices are responsible for the circumstances he is under.

In *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839) by Edgar Allan Poe, the Gothic is at its most transformed. The short story follows an unnamed narrator who is summoned to the house of Usher by his childhood friend Roderick, who is said to be suffering from both physical and mental illness. Roderick lives in the decaying mansion with his twin sister, Madeline, who is similarly ill. Roderick and Madeline are twins and in a mirrored relationship and, as Roderick's condition worsens, it is revealed that Madeline has been buried prematurely. With her return, Madeline appears before Roderick with "blood upon her white robes, and the evidence of some bitter struggle," and kills her brother with a scream. The narrator flees and witnesses the entire house being torn by a single large crack, before sinking into the lake.

While there are more characters beyond Roderick in the story, Poe presents his conflict as a strictly internal one. Roderick's inner turmoil cannot be resolved by a confrontation with other characters such as the narrator or his own sister Madeline. This internalization is an evolution of Victor's situation, since the latter can confront his own creature whereas Roderick cannot confront what is haunting him – since it is a legacy that has already died. Morality in the story isn't deteriorating over time; it has already been vanquished by the time the narrator arrives in the house – as if Poe is offering a glimpse of what a legacy like Manfred's would look like if it continued uninterrupted. The narrator does not offset

Roderick's madness or the murder of his sister; he instead acts as a passive observer that recollects the occurrences around the house. The display of power by Roderick is directed against his sister. Yet while this could be viewed as Roderick exercising his authority, he is not able to use his power in a way that can truly save himself. Roderick's role as leader to his house does not hold weight in the world around him, unlike the institutional power seen in the principality of Otranto or the marquis title of Vivaldi's family. The metaphysical and spiritual elements are largely vague, as it is not clear if the appearance of Madeline was that of a ghost, and if the narrator's grasp on reality can be trusted – given the extraordinary circumstances of the house's disappearance. Even fate is an ambiguous force, since Roderick's madness could be a curse of his lineage, or an expression of his own immoral behavior. His illness, described by the narrator as an "acute bodily illness—of a mental disorder which oppressed him," could either be a result of Roderick's legacy that he could never control – or something that pertains to just him and Madeline. The emphasis, much like the focus on Victor's agency, is on grounded subjects based in reality as opposed to metaphysical or spiritual entities. In this case, human psychology and the degradation of relationships are key to the story's tension. The strong changes brough about by *The Fall of the House of Usher* include: the depth of character psychology, which opens the possibility for conflict to arise from a character's interiority as much as with surrounding characters, as well as ambiguity regarding the presence of any supernatural force.

II: Time

The representation of time in the Gothic novel takes the form of a clash between forces of the past and the present — embodied through a character's inheritance. In the Early Gothic, referring to gothic literature at the end of the Enlightenment, works by Walpole and Radcliffe focus on inheritance as a celebration of establishment. Over the course of the narrative, negative aspects of the characters' legacy are challenged and lead to the promise of a prosperous future. In Dark Romanticism, which signifies gothic writing before the Victorian era (1837-1901), Shelley and Poe questioned the notion of inheritance through depictions of a great burden carried by their characters. In other words, the Early Gothic views the relationship of past and present to be one of continued fulfilment, so long as harmful, figurative specters of their legacy can be excised, while Dark Romanticism views inheritance as a curse upon those in the present. Through a chronological view of Gothic writing, the conflict between the past and the present matches the anxieties regarding inheritance and its societal impact. Narrative features such as the tension within family, the involvement of societal or religious institutions, and the personal motivations of characters will show how the relationship between past and present is viewed in the gothic between four key authors.

The struggle for inheritance in *The Castle of Otranto* is between different generations who act under highly different planes of morality. The battle between the tyrannical ruler Manfred and Theodore, presumed to be a peasant, acts as a microcosm to the familial conflict that haunts the castle's legacy over the span of multiple generations. With Alfonso the Good being assassinated during the crusades, Walpole shows how an inheritance passed down over time is haunted by a murder that took place against a religious backdrop. A sense of inevitability in Manfred and Theodore's clash is created, given how personality and individual qualities are passed down in inheritance – in addition to the property itself. When

confronted by the herald of Frederic at the beginning of chapter three, the qualities of the assassin Ricardo are projected/displaced on Manfred, as though they shared the same crime through heredity, when stating: “he comes to make good his Lord’s claim against thee, as he is a true knight, and thou an usurper and ravisher” (Walpole ch. III). Judith Wilt wrote on how metaphysical, sinful acts can invisibly create tangible conflicts for future generations to overcome in her book *Ghosts of the Gothic*:

> “The secret sin that works itself poisonously out into the open, destroying at a distance of years or even generations, is a staple of Gothic plot; it is prime evidence for a theological universe, one in which any human act, occasionally a selfless one like Christ's sacrifice but more often a selfish one, may call to itself a power that will magnify the act far beyond the human scale” (Wilt 29).

This quotation by Wilt describes a consistent element found across the gothic in both eras – the horror of inescapability: a confrontation of sorts must take place sooner or later.

Given that Manfred’s initial hold on power allows corruption to remain in Otranto’s legacy, religious and social organizations such as the church and Frederic’s forces are introduced to combat his tyranny. Characters like Father Jerome, representing the church, act antithetically to Manfred by providing shelter to downtrodden figures such as Theodore, Matilda and Isabella. Additionally, the presence of the church protects Theodore in preparation for his confrontation with Manfred. After exclaiming that he is “the son of the Count Falconara”, a descendant to the ruler of Otranto that Manfred’s grandfather killed, Theodore recalls how he was “delivered by a Christian vessel” that saved him from the pirates who kidnapped him years prior. *The Castle of Otranto*, therefore, shows how the earliest depictions of the gothic view both the institution of inheritance and religion quite favorably in dispelling aspects of

the past that haunt the present, and as such holds an optimistic perception of society going forward.

Regarding the character of Theodore himself, the choice by Walpole to make Theodore the grandson of Alfonso rather than his son makes his objective to confront Manfred not one of personal vengeance. Rather, it reinforces the notion that the clash of the past and present is orchestrated by forces beyond the whims of individual people – as seen with the initial prophesy driving Manfred to be more aggressive and paranoid with the pronouncing of Theodore as the true heir by the ghost of Alfonso: "the form of Alfonso, dilated to an immense magnitude... "Behold in Theodore the true heir of Alfonso!" said the vision."

The Italian, similar to *The Castle of Otranto,* presents a generational conflict with Vivaldi against the Marchesa. The development of the family tension by Radcliffe is presented with more peril earlier in the story. Rather than presenting the death of a family member as an act which demands repentance – as seen with the murder of Matilda by Manfred – Radcliffe escalates the threat and immorality of both aristocracy and Catholicism by killing the parental figure of Ellena: "This monk had already forewarned him of the death of Bianchi; and when he recollected the suspicious circumstances which had attended it, his terrors for Ellena increased" (Radcliffe 45). Like how *The Castle of* Otranto was located at a point in time where the sins of Manfred clashed with Theodore's heroism, the temporal setting of *The Italian* is at the moment when the crimes of the past by the Marquis and the Church might be overturned by the virtuosity of young characters in the present.

The issue of inheritance put forward by Radcliffe (relating to issues of the past and present) is that the overwhelming odds of fighting not just individuals, but institutions, require solutions that are unorthodox and possibly immoral – thus beginning to complicate the fight against corruption with moral individual intent. Events such as Vivaldi imitating a pilgrim to break

Ellena out of a convent would show a degree of deception. Additionally, receiving the aid of Schedoni after Ellena convinced him that she is his daughter presents a pragmatic dimension the characters in their battle for inheritance: “She now understood that Schedoni, having discovered the ruffian's design, had rushed into the chamber to save a stranger from his murderous poniard, and had unconsciously rescued his own daughter” (147). The critical difference between *The Castle of Otranto* and *The Italian*, despite sharing a resolved ending, is that the characters of Ellena and Vivaldi hold less agency and must work off their weaknesses – rather than play to their strengths the way that Theodore did. This is due to the antagonists in *The Italian* being figureheads for impersonal institutions, rather than individuals whose legacy can be defeated by solely eliminating them.

The greatest change that Radcliffe brings to the conflict of inheritance is the reversal of how religious institutions assist the protagonists. Rather than have the leading figure of the religious institution provide passages of safety and resolution – Radcliffe presents the Catholic Church as an obstacle in the form of Schedoni and the Inquisition, acting as accessories to the corrupted inheritance. However, as an Early Gothic work made during the Enlightenment, Radcliffe – despite her opposition to Catholicism – still holds preference towards *a* religious institution as opposed to none. Therefore, a cathartic ending is still provided, with the death of the Marchesa and Schedoni showing how social and religious institutions can cleanse themselves internally even with corrupt individuals present. In the person of the nun Olivia, The Catholic Church counters the corruption of Schedoni, when she reveals the aristocratic status of Ellena. This saves Vivaldi obtaining his inheritance while marrying someone of a different class: “It may be worthy of observation, that the virtues of Olivia, exerted in a general cause, had thus led her unconsciously to the happiness of saving her daughter; while the vices of Schedoni had as unconsciously urged him nearly to destroy his niece” (239) writes Brenda Tooley, in her article *Gothic Utopia.* Tooley describes how

Radcliffe created space for the Vivaldi family and the Catholic Church to resolve their own corruption with the help of a few nudges in the right direction – such as Schedoni confessing the extent of his crimes, "The novel presumes the inevitability of institutional exercises of power and created spaces within them for positive agency – always limited, always implicated – but also efficacious" (Tooley 54).

With the agency and actions displayed by characters throughout *The Italian*, Radcliffe begins to account for the psychological drive behind figures that were instrumental in helping Ellena and Vivaldi acquire their inheritance. However, describing the spontaneous actions of Schedoni and Olivia as 'unconscious' still leads to the outcome of the inheritance conflict being solved by forces greater than the characters, rather than through individual agency. This development in the gothic contrasts with the focus on individual agency in Dark Romanticism – as seen with individuals like Rodrick and the narrator in *The Fall of the House of Usher* and the Creature in *Frankenstein*.

Frankenstein presents strong shifts regarding family, institution and the personal motivation and agency of characters when confronted with the question of inheritance. The conflict between past and present in Shelley's work is not portrayed through blood relatives and aristocratic ownership, but in the responsibility of the creator towards his manufactured creation. Shelley continues using generational conflict as was the basis for previous gothic stories, however the generational relationship is not dictated by blood ties but instead through a male creation of an experimented subject – In this sense, making the generational divide an entirely personal relationship rather than an institutional one. Victor's rejection of the Creature adds a dimension to the conflict of inheritance in the gothic story – avoidant behavior. A new element of horror that Shelley introduces is the notion that individuals are not guaranteed to take on the mantle of their responsibility. Inheritance itself is questioned in its value and becomes the source of problems for the characters who try to escape it – in

contrast to the characters in earlier novels who never questioned the rightness of inheritance. Victor spends the story selectively choosing the favorable aspects of his legacy while ignoring the Creature, without addressing or vanquishing the corruption that he himself embedded in his own legacy. Colene Bentley writes about Victor's immediate family consists largely of people not related in the way that characters like Theodore are related to Otranto – thereby leaving Victor more susceptible to criticism over how a great deal of his life prior to the creature was manufactured:

> "Henry Clerval is like a brother to Victor, Justine is welcomed by the Frankensteins and regards Elizabeth as a sister and Caroline as a second mother, the monster both is and is not Victor's offspring... the novel's fictional families are, in fact, made entities. And as created entities, and therefore political ones, their special identity is not insulated from Shelley's or our critical scrutiny." (Bentley 334).

A struggle Victor faces regarding his family situation is how he himself has become the corrupting element that haunts his own legacy. Because of his neglect towards the Creature and his failure to adopt the responsibility for his experiments, Victor is largely responsible for his own downfall. When he becomes engaged to Elizabeth, Victor is aware of how he is in danger: "I was bound by a solemn promise... what manifold miseries might not impend over me and my devoted family! Could I enter into a festival with this deadly weight yet hanging round my neck" (Shelley vol. III, ch. I). This passage shows that Victor wants to establish a traditional legacy through marriage and procreation for existential reasons, as opposed to the ambitious intellectual legacy that he wished to create through his experiments. And yet when he is engaged, he is still ignorant of the responsibility he holds in relation to the creature – with his language implying that the dangers are happening to him rather than caused by him: "I remembered also the necessity imposed upon me" (Shelley). He seems to believe he is cursed, rather than acknowledging he is the one who has created the curse.

Instead of encountering religious institutions that help or hinder him, Victor intentionally isolates himself from any religious sentiment in pursuing his experiments– leaving himself isolated from morality of the past. Victor's most direct encounter with a social institution is in the form of the magistrate investigating the link between him and Henry's death. This confrontation, which is the closest to Victor receiving legal consequences for his actions, is a culmination of Victor not wishing for his experiment to be discovered. Compared to Vivaldi and Theodore who fight to redeem or purify their inheritance from the sins of the past, Frankenstein is the one who curses his own legacy – in large part because of how the potential shame of his deed leads him to keep his experiment and its results a secret, done to avoid the position and responsibility of a public figure. *Frankenstein*'s contribution to the past and present tension in the gothic is a pessimistic view of legacy – where inheritance is transformed into a curse rather than an ideal.

The Fall of the House of Usher puts forward a revision on the established relationship between generations seen in the Gothic. Even with *Frankenstein* and its focus on Victor overwhelming himself with the responsibility of his self-created legacy, there is still a physical confrontation between representations of generations – old versus new, father versus son, in the physical confrontation between Victor and the creature. With Roderick, the conflict of inheritance has become entirely internalized and psychologically damaging. Given Madeline's role as Roderick's double and on an equal standing as him as heir, Roderick has no individual person that he can conflict with in order to cleanse his inheritance. Poe presents the issue of family conflict in the Gothic by showing an irresolvable situation. Given that Madeline is Roderick's sister, and neither of them have heirs that they could pass ownership of the house to – a violent confrontation resulting in death would not resolve the issue of inheritance the way that Matilda caused Manfred to repent, or how the deaths of the Marchesa and Schedoni cleared corruption out of institutions. Given that the condition of

Roderick and Madeline mirror each other, since his sickly condition matches the "disease" of "gradual wasting away of the person," the eventual violence only dooms Roderick as much as it dooms her. Compared to previously discussed gothic works, Poe explicitly explores the consequences of familial betrayal through the morbid display of revenge performed by a murder victim. Rather than a valiant depiction of revenge, led by a spirit of virtuosity like Alfonso who promises salvation if an evil force is defeated, Madeline's appearance is a prelude to violence that seals the end of her and Roderick's house – a violence which she herself enacts, instead of guiding someone like the narrator to perform vengeance on her behalf. What Poe has done to the tension of generational inheritance is make it into an internal struggle – one where there is no enemy figure for Roderick to defeat.

III: Space

The Gothic novel does not solely use the setting as a backdrop for horror through the use of grim aesthetics, but also uses the spatial functions of the stories' locations to convey the threat posed by the antagonists. While time in the Gothic is expressed through the conflict between past and present through legacy and inheritance, space is a measure of control through which one generation oppresses the other – containing, hiding, of prohibiting their actions. The spaces in which the stories unfold can open/liberate or close/imprison depending on the development of the plot. In Early Gothic texts like *The Castle of Otranto* and *The Italian*, the spaces featured are rigid, class-bound structures such as castles, convents, and prisons. The fortified, closed nature of these spaces indicates the intention of hiding away matters of inheritance from the public, mainly in the interest of the novels' villains. The customary attempt by powerful figures to control and dominate their opposers is translated into purely spatial terms. The horror arises from the inescapability felt by characters with strong moral value, which means that space becomes socially oppressive in addition to being physically claustrophobic. By contrast, in the Dark Romantic works of *Frankenstein* and *The Fall of the House of Usher*, space is either destroyed or destabilized. While such a lack of enclosure would benefit characters such as Theodore, Ellena and Vivaldi by weakening the control of Early Gothic villains, in Dark Romanticism this openness does not equate to the diminishment of evil. Rather, with the removal of unambiguously heroic figures, the stories no longer concern a clash of characters in closed environments, but the fear of an individual's inhumane influence spreading. The horror of open spaces in Shelley and Poe's Gothic work is that the villainous actions of characters like Victor, the Creature or Roderick threaten themselves and the world around them because of the lack of spaces to contain them.

In *The Castle of Otranto*, the principality's space functions as a site of private, aristocratic control. The castle space owned by Manfred empowers him to exercise his

authority over those residing inside. The behavior of the space is indicative of the conflict between Manfred and Theodore's lineage, given that the closed environment allows Manfred the opportunity to lock Theodore away – yet equally allows Isabella and Matilda the affordance of hiding. The entirety of Castle Otranto becomes a figure for Manfred and Theodore's opposition, where the environment simultaneously assists and hinders the descendants of Alfonso who have been gathered to fulfill the prophesy. Theodore does not wish to hide from nor escape the space that Manfred wrestles control over, as indicated by his speech towards Matilda: "Give me a sword, Lady, and thy father shall learn that Theodore scorns an ignominious flight" (Walpole ch. 2). Theodore does not seek out an open environment that opposes the closed one that oppressed him, rather he seeks to resolve the conflict with Manfred individually – as a private matter in an aristocratic environment. Therefore, defeating Manfred requires the liberation of Otranto's space from within. Upon the fulfillment of Alfonso's prophesy, thunder breaks down the castle's foundations – to such a degree that some saw viewed it as apocalyptic: "Frederic and Jerome thought the last day was at hand… The moment Theodore appeared, the walls of the castle behind Manfred were thrown down with a mighty force" (ch. 5). Once the closed space of the castle is no more, the crimes of Manfred are made apparent, and Theodore is open to claim the principality. Most importantly, this destruction is not total. By removing the foundations of the space that represented Manfred's tyranny, while keeping remnants of the castle through the presence of ruins, Otranto continues standing with the possibility of reformation by a virtuous Theodore. The malleability of the castle space's function, from a center of oppression to a location ruled by the moral righteousness of Alfonso's legacy, signifies how space in the Early Gothic provides the direction for the social objective of those that inhabit it. This transformational aspect of space is noted by Neal Alexander, who observed the active social function performed by space in the context of literature: "to conceive of space as other than immobile,

inert, ahistorical, and undialectical, and to theorise it instead as an active and fundamental component of social processes" (Alexander 28). In other words, the physical restructuring of the Otranto principality acts as a social indicator for the shift away from tyranny and towards moral, rational rule – an example of how the Early Gothic story would show a triumph over evil in a private context. The Early Gothic's portrayal of not just terror, but also the reordering of private aristocratic life, highlights its aspect as commentary through the reformation of the characters' environment.

Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* continues to utilize the closed, Early Gothic spaces seen in *Otranto*, but also portrays new functions of space through the contrast between confinement and nature. The greatest change brought by Radcliffe to the dynamic of space is how closed institutional environments limit Vivaldi and Ellena, forbidding their marriage, while open space allows them to express their agency and their feelings. Rather than having a single, closed environment represents the dichotomy between a hero and a villain, Radcliffe presents several closed environments that are all potentially confining the story's protagonists. The castle prisons, the convents, the isolated huts where Vivaldi and Ellena are separately confined enforce the prohibition of their marriage. Contrasting these spaces are journeys through expansive lands that highlight the narrative freedom of Vivaldi or Ellena.

The first notable, oppressive environment that prevents the relationship of Vivaldi and Ellena, is the convent of San Stefano. Unlike Otranto, this space does not provide avenues of escape and is heavily regulated to crush any spirit: "when, probably, it was believed that her spirits were subdued by confinement, and by her experience of the suffering she had to expect from resistance, she was summoned to the parlour" (Radcliffe 47). Through the tension between Ellena's mental capacity for freedom – symbolized by her natural excursions in the wide-open spaces – and the limitation of physical movement to which she is subjected by various antagonists, Radcliffe generalizes an institutional opposition to the woman's freedom.

This is exemplified in the way Ellena and Vivaldi take up their marriage plans again after they were interrupted by Schedoni and Ellena's escape from the convent with the help of Vivaldi (88). The open spaces they cross during the journey towards Naples liberates them to attempt a wedding ceremony, but Ellena and Vivaldi are apprehended as soon as they find themselves inside a religious space. "Ellena was now insensible; and the men continuing to advance, Vivaldi drew his sword to protect her… a voice, tremendous from its loudness, like bursting thunder, dissipated the cloud of mystery… The Inquisition!" (112).

This alternation between oppressive indoor space and freedom-bearing outdoor space parallels the changes to the hero-villain dynamic that Radcliffe introduces. While the ending of *The Italian* still conforms to the Early Gothic's vision of rational heroes triumphing, the change of treatment of space parallels the change in the relation of protagonists against antagonists. With Ellena and Vivaldi's inability to oppose entire institutions, closed spaces become dangerous for them. Given that the closed environments of the story serve to empower institutions, the ability for Ellena and Vivaldi to take control of their lives is predicated on leaving confined environments – given how even a beach "house" poses a threat to their wellbeing (136).

Radcliffe introduces outdoor space as a new element in the Gothic novel, its function relating to the concept of control. Unlike *Otranto*, Radcliffe provides description for the environment and gives a particularly positive connotation to characters remaining in open space. David Vallins points out the positive connotations of 'openness' portrayed in the Early Gothic by analyzing the significance of the natural sublime in *The Italian*: "Radcliffe's mountains primarily evoke the ideal of liberty from or transcendence of oppressive forms of aristocratic and religious institution (depicted primarily through the Gothic structures they inhabit)" (Vallins 191). Thus, through the contrast between oppressive interiors and liberating natural landscapes, Radcliffe adjusts the function of space in the Gothic tradition – enough

for Dark Romanticists to take her foundation and strongly change all its connotations by collapsing space entirely.

Mary Shelley greatly changed the function of space in *Frankenstein* by collapsing spatial boundaries, shifting the horror from characters attempting to break oppressive confinements to desperately seeking a means to confine a spreading terror. Unlike in *Otranto* or *The Italian*, the horror of *Frankenstein* is not rooted in villains that restrict noble characters – but in the repeated failure to find any containment for the Creature, physical or otherwise. While *Frankenstein* holds a greater amount of 'openness' compared to Early Gothic texts, where physical confinement is lost very early in the story, this does not serve to benefit Victor or anyone else in the story given how there are no heroic of even innocent characters like Theodore, Ellena or Vivaldi.

Victor is the perpetrator of an experiment that violates the sanctity of human life. In this regard, Victor is similar to the Manfred or Schedoni villain figure, with the exception that he himself created the threat he seeks to confine to keep his position in life – and he holds few means of doing so. Through a combination of his position holding less significance than previous Gothic characters, as well as a lesser capacity to even use the few means of containment he does have, *Frankenstein* signifies a change in the treatment of confined spaces by making their absence central to the horror of its story. The horror is that the creature cannot be confined in an enclosed space and is free to roam and follow Victor and his loved ones, wreaking havoc on the outside world. The creature is like a power unleashed that cannot be reversed.

Despite consciously committing the grotesque act of collecting body parts, along with his stated ambition to "render man invulnerable to any but a violent death," Victor does not face the Creature the one opportunity he has of dealing with him in an enclosed location–

immediately after his creation in the laboratory (Shelley vol. 1 ch. 1). As a result, the creature is unleashed into the world without guidance. When given another chance to contain the Creature, instead of using physical containment, Victor pretends to agree to give the creature the space and freedom it craves by creating a bride for him. Actually, by refusing to carry out the experiment, Victor is limiting the creature to the confinement of its own life – denying it the power to generate.

Instead of the collapse of space indicating a promise of a greater future, like with Theodore, Victor's rejection of the Creature and rendering his laboratory useless only ruptures stability and increases the risk of the Creature harming someone – which comes to fruition with the death of Clerval. The greatest reversal of the relationship between outside and inside space, compared to *The Italian*, is when the Creature attacks Victor's home and kills Elizabeth. Rather than the outdoors acting as a refuge from a corrupt interior space, the outside has become an invading force that harms the domestic space – marking the Creature as a threat to the public that had not been conceived of by the Early Gothic. Rather than outside, unconfined space maintaining a positive connotation through the freedom it provided Ellena and Vivaldi, the lack of a regulated, confined space leads the Creature to encounter scenarios that affirmed his status as an abomination to humanity. Like his description of outdoor environments in *The Italian*, Vallins also describes the mountains in *Frankenstein* and how they shifted from a positive contrast to oppressive institutions, to a sign of the Gothic's horror affecting everyone beyond a private, aristocratic space:

> "the mountains in Frankenstein variously symbolize the isolation or exclusion of the creature and the overreaching of his creator… Shelley thus distinctively shifts the significance of mountain landscapes from those of sublimity, liberty, and hope… to those of hubris, excess, isolation, exclusion, and negation" (Vallins 191).

Despite both stories utilizing the grandiosity of nature, Dark Romanticism does not have characters experience the awe of the natural sublime to improve the private, institutional sphere. Here the outdoor environment, the unscalable mountains, reflects the horror that they might spread to the public, the hubris of Victor and the Creature becomes a threat to all. Shelley shifts the Gothic tradition by showing that in a world where boundaries no longer contain threats, and where spaces of safety no longer exist, the horrifying acts of individuals diffuse across society and become inescapable.

Poe returns to the private, aristocratic space of the mansion where characters are confined in *The Fall of the House of Usher*. The greatest distinction between this house and the castle of Otranto, is that the enclosed space is imploding – with the decay of the story's space indicating that the horrors inside will spread beyond upon the house's fall. In previous stories, the presence of a confined space was enough to indicate the functionality of containing an individual. However, Poe introduces the element of a space's integrity to show how – despite holding Roderick and Madeline within – the house of Usher is not likely to have a successful future compared to the endings of Early Gothic stories. The narrator notes that the house "seemed to be that of an excessive antiquity," which does not create the immediate alert that the lack of space in *Frankenstein* created, yet still provokes uncertainty that what occurs in the house will stay contained (Poe).

The inability of the house of Usher to contain is reinforced by Madeline's escape from the further confinement of the family tomb, which should be the ultimate place of rest. It is revealed that Madeline was entombed alive, and she re-enters the house to exact her revenge upon Roderick. Not only does Madeline's return signify the house's physical inability to contain individuals but also signifies the failure to keep Roderick's own madness sealed, since Madeline mirrors Roderick's madness and is unable to die unless he does. Even with the complete collapse of the house and the family associated with it, the trauma of the events

does not collapse along with it, as the narrator of the story escapes and carries the events of the ending with him. After his escape, he notes that his "brain reeled," indicating a mental effect that the story put upon him, the contagion of Roderik and Madeline. Of all the Gothic novels discussed so far, Poe's short story achieves the strongest horror through ambiguity and the treatment of space as neither absent nor a reliable containment for the horrors kept within four walls. Unlike the possibility of reformation seen in *Otranto* and *The Italian,* or even just the possibility of a moral reckoning in *Frankenstein*, Poe offers no hope of improvement for the future. As such, *The Fall of the House of Usher* is a dismantling of spatial authority and signifies a concern with private, upper-class horror spreading into society.

IV: Place

Compared to the physical dimension of space, place here indicates a spiritual dimension that refers to moral integrity and sacrality. The presence of morality and the ability to resolve conflicts in the Gothic text are tied to locations that have sacred significance and offer sanctuary to the bodies within them. While space refers to the containment of the physical person, the collapse of sacred places is tied to the metaphysical integrity of the characters' moral world and their capacity to solve any moral failings. The Early Gothic included Christian sites that helped to protect the characters and facilitate the resolution to the conflicts they faced. The sacred environments seen in *The Castle of Otranto* and *The Italian*, such as churches and convents, hold significant differences from the other institutional locations in these stories.

While still functioning as places of confinement for the antagonists that seek to hold the protagonists inside of closed spaces, the sacred place – often, but not necessarily, being a religious location – does not strictly harm the protagonists in the way that non-sacred space does. Within such sacred places, Walpole and Radcliffe's antagonists never harm those within sacred places without terrible consequences. For Walpole, the religious place is a meeting ground for Theodore and Manfred's conflict to resolve, while both characters find the history of their lineage recorded in Christian places of worship. In addition to protecting the sanctity of the body in these places, the place can favor the protagonists – often providing information that helps to dispel the authority of the antagonists. In the works of Dark Romanticism, places of religious or sacred significance are either desecrated or absent altogether. Once the function of the sacred place is removed by Shelley and Poe, the impossibility of a religiously justified moral ending and the horror of spreading this nihilistic immorality to the wider world becomes a threat – similar to the collapse of physical containment space in the previous section.

In *The Castle of Otranto*, the sacred place in the story is represented by the Church of St. Nicholas – where characters seek physical protection from Manfred, find that metaphysical moral integrity is preserved, and where the narrative itself favors the side of Theodore's legacy over Manfred's. Regarding the physical wellbeing of the characters, the church comes to their minds as a sanctuary. During her escape from Manfred, Isabella recalls the church as a place that would protect against Manfred's unethical actions: "she recollected a subterraneous passage which led from the vaults of the castle to the church of St. Nicholas. Could she reach the altar before she was overtaken, she knew even Manfred's violence would not dare to profane the sacredness of the place" (Walpole ch. 1). The sacredness of the church thus functions as a limit on Manfred's power, indicating a spatial boundary where narrative justice has the potential of arising amidst such tyranny. The church represents the narrative 'favoring' Theodore's because of how the church and its resident, Friar Jerome, is able to reveal the truth about his lineage – beginning the end of Manfred's rule. Even with the harm that Manfred wishes to enact on Theodore, he will only to do so when Theodore is relocated to the court of the castle rather than call for his death in the church's presence.

By the end of the story, morality is fully preserved for the future of Otranto thanks to the church and its influence. The culmination of Manfred's wrongdoings occurs in the church when, believing that his intended bride Isabella is trying to marry Theodore, Manfred inadvertently kills his own daughter Matilda. Realizing that both of his children have died, Manfred seeks atonement and relinquishes his hold over Otranto – illustrating the strong moral influence that the church has as a sacred place. Even when its sanctity shows the possibility of being violated at the end of the story, its strong moral influence overcomes the main villain of the story.

The Italian utilizes the sacred space of the convent in a similar effect to the church in *Otranto*. However, despite providing Ellena with the story of her lineage that confirms her

legitimacy as an aristocrat, the changes brought by Radcliffe begin to highlight a shift towards the degradation of morality that will be central to Dark Romanticism. The greatest similarity between *Otranto* and *The Italian* regarding the representation of sacred places is that they both provide their protagonists with the knowledge of their lineage needed to secure their ending as rulers. One difference is that, despite Sister Olivia providing help from within, the church is overwhelmingly filled with agents of its faith that threaten Ellena's life. Although they do not have the malicious intent to kill Ellena to the extent that Manfred did toward Theodore, figures such as the Abbess and her nuns still act against Ellena's wellbeing – mainly by threatening her with extensive punishment that defiant prisoners have experienced: "your conduct this morning, which is understood to have thrown a premeditated insult upon the abbess, is to be punished with what they call imprisonment… During nearly two years she languished upon a bed of straw, denied even the poor consolation of conversing through the grate" (Radcliffe 73-74). Therefore, the appearance of Sister Olivia acts as an exception rather than the norm that the convent expects of those inside. Ellena's imprisonment within the convent where she is made to suffer means that, although there is not a complete collapse of sacred authority within the religious place, it is found to have degraded greatly compared to the church in *Otranto*. This is because, despite there being no direct harm done to Ellena's body – nonetheless the body itself is held in captivity and therefore robs the individual of their agency. Instead of the sacred place acting as a refuge for anyone under any deadly circumstance, Radcliffe portrays the place as an oppressive sight that is only marginally better than being imprisoned in the same fashion that Vivaldi was.

One aspect that yet redeems the convent is that even the villain of Schedoni recognizes it as the best option for protecting Ellena while he is under the impression that she is his daughter. The sacred place still fulfills the function of siding with the protagonists' eventual interests better than other institutional environments. *The Italian's* depiction of being

imprisoned rather than protected is a step towards Dark Romanticism fiction and the collapse of all morality once sacred places begin to fail people.

Similar to Walpole's depiction of the religious place as a moral center, Radcliffe's portrayal of the church – with less favorability held towards the institution and providing more focus to individual people like Olivia – is still one that is manufactured by her. While commenting on real phenomenon such as the inquisition, *The Italian*'s Catholic institution is crafted for the sake of the story. When describing how 'English' tendencies emerge from Radcliffe's writing, particularly with Protestantism's negative outlook on Catholicism in the 18th century, Cannon Schmitt calls the convent of San Stefano "one of Radcliffe's luridly imagined conflicts" (Schmitt 867). Thus, Radcliffe not only uses the sacred place as a narrative device but also as a site of cultural commentary, gesturing toward the growing instability of religious authority and its diminished role in preserving moral order – a thematic trajectory that will deepen in the works of Shelley and Poe.

In *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley fully transitions away from the sacred religious places of early Gothic fiction by replacing them with the laboratory – an emblem of scientific overreach. Unlike the churches and convents in *The Castle of Otranto* and *The Italian*, which provide some degree of protection, redemption, or moral reckoning, the laboratory is a site that represents the complete reversal of the sacred place's function: Victor and other characters are harmed by the influence of the laboratory and are not healed or protected from their interactions with it; the laboratory does not offer information that provides resolution to the story, instead only creating conflicts for both Victor and the Creature. The greatest sign of moral collapse is caused by Victor attempting to reanimate human remains. Despite the experiment proclaiming to help humanity by defying the condition of death, Victor is operating on a task that makes him a god-like figure: "A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me" (Shelley

vol. ch. 3). To complete his goal and fuel the laboratory that drives his ambitions, Victor enters in a sacred place – a graveyard – and robs it of whatever body parts he requires. Right for the beginning of the story, Victor hubristically claiming the right to play god, and turning the buried, sanctified human body into an ingredient for an experiment, shows him violating a principle of the sacred place. Victor, taking his ideals and harming the sanctity of places he enters, shows how he has embodied the laboratory and the degradation of morals that he represents. Veronika Ruttkay, in *Anatomy of tragedy: the skeptical gothic in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, writes about how Victor's entire being is dictated by the laboratory and its incentive to defy morality for the sake of science:

> "Having acquired the trained attention of the scientific observer, he seems unable to adjust his way of looking, even when looking at another living being. But, simultaneously, he also loses control over his experiment, now indefinitely extended, as life itself has become his laboratory" (Ruttkay 6).

At the end of *Otranto,* when Manfred eventually broke the sanctity of the church by killing Matilda, he repented and did not take the desecration of a corpse into consideration. Victor goes beyond by harming the body even after death, commodifying the human body with no possibility of resisting his experiment. Victor's laboratory renders the human form into raw material, rendering the act of handling a body in a graveyard akin to a scavenger hunt for scraps – degrading the sanctity of the human being, dismantled and reassembled with no ritual or reverence.

In making the laboratory a replacement of the traditionally religious sacred place, Shelley removes the possibility of moral resolution: there is no friar to offer the key to the second half of the inheritance conflict, nor is there an avenue of repentance for an unethical act being carried out. Instead, the story is focused on the consequences of Victor performing

an irredeemable immoral action – without any capacity for atonement. Additionally, because Victor is the leading knowledge on his own experiment, there is no one that can grant him additional knowledge like Friar Jerome did for Theodore. In other words, Victor embodies the carrier of knowledge like Friar Jerome – yet does not want to take responsibility for the weight of his unethical actions by letting someone know – as well as holding the qualities of the Early Gothic villains, yet without the capacity to truly repent for what he did.

Shelley develops on the lack of any potential resolution between Victor and the Creature by showing how the only way to achieve a sense of finality is getting rid of the possibility of seeing one another again. Colene Bentley writes, "A striking feature of this ethical scenario is that at the moment of compact making, Victor and his creature contemplate futures in which they never again encounter each other" (Bentley 342). When the Creature proposes to leave Victor alone once he is provided with a bride, the suggestion is that Victor and his creation cannot reconcile and must settle for living separate lives where they are ideally as far from each other as possible. However, this is only the illusion of a resolution – as either path that Victor could take in this scenario would only lead to degradation. If he denies the Creature based on the assumption that his creation would spread, then Victor is continuing to act immorally by dictating what a living being is meant to perform under his design – a design that came from a lack of an institution to keep him in check. If he accepts, then Victor's creation would grow to a point – he assumes – where the Creature would find its way back to him or to all of humanity, where they would then become a threat to the wider world. The lack of a resolution is phrased best by the Creature when he describes what the hypothetical outcome of the experiment would be, "It is true, we shall be monsters, cut off from all the world; but on that account we shall be more attached to one another. Our lives will not be happy, but they will be harmless, and free from the misery I now feel" (Shelley vol. 2 ch. 9).

Without a sacred place to mediate between the Creature and Victor, they can only show themselves to each other as deeply flawed individuals who both committed unethical acts and who seek to hide from the world that would condemn them. A situation made harder by the lack of sacred places where to atone or ask forgiveness. Shelley's Gothic reimagines the moral center not as a place of communal gathering, protection or divine planning coming to fruition, but as a new type of building that marks the end of human capacity, agency or morality. In the laboratory, that is replacing the sacred place, death loses its spiritual significance – so the capacity for Gothic characters to uphold morality or take accountability diminishes.

While Shelley used the lack of sacred places and the failure of the laboratory to present the dangers of no resolution, Poe focuses on an otherwise religiously-associated space, the family tomb, and adjusts it to have darker implications. More insidious than Shelley replacing the sacred space with laboratories – a space with a lack of sanctification – Poe presents a corrupted family tomb with unsanctified qualities. Madeline, trapped in her tomb, is tethered to the lifeforce of the house and her brother Roderick acting as his double. Arthur Robinson in *Order and Sentience in 'The Fall of the House of Usher'* describes how: "During Madeline's stay in the tomb, it is as though her unwilled body is waiting for both Roderick and the house to catch up with her dissolution; the three are bound" (Robinson 78). This quality of the place, where the violation of the body and unsafe condition of the environment threatens everyone and everything simultaneously, is a complete departure from the sanctuary provided in Early Gothic literature. With regards to the family of Usher and their placement in the world, the distance that they have from the rest of the world does not suggest a need for the family to seek out a solution the way that Victor pondered over – but instead a contentment with resting until their legacy wastes away. When the narrator describes finding himself in a "singularly dreary tract of country, … as the shades of the

evening drew on," the House of Usher is isolated and difficult to reach (Poe). Poe continues what Shelley started by representing the body as violated after death and having the sacred place of the family tomb violated. The key difference is that dead bodies are not collected for a profane ritual to create new life, but instead a living person is treated the same as a dead body, when Roderick attempts to bury Madeline alive. Whether Roderick is lying or not, whether he knows that Madeline is alive or his madness made him ignorant of it, he still reduces the body of Madeline to something less worthy (sacred) than a living being. While the sacred spaces in *The Castle of Otranto* and *The Italian* would conserve the notion of morality, usually through a character, the tomb in *The Fall of the House of Usher* instead preserves the immoral actions – all of which are kept in Madeline, the only one left to reside in the tomb. Rather than performing a burial as a sanctified rite, Roderick performs a burial ceremony to murder his sister. The only religious reference in the story – the "Vigiliæ Mortuorum Secundum Chorum Ecclesiæ Maguntinæ" – is mentioned only in passing through a forgotten church manual, and its antiquated nature suggests a complete disconnection from any spiritual tradition that would otherwise be performed in the house. The great isolation of the house means that, even if there were a surrounding societal organization – no one would be able to halt Roderick's plan of murder, nor have they tried to establish order given the condition of the house itself.

V: Objects

Returning to the notion of time in the Gothic, the significance of objects helps point to a less abstract representation of a character's legacy. As opposed to the generational conflicts and concerns over inheritance in the first section, which express a concern with a character's present and their responsibility, objects all pertain to a character's connection to the past. The effectiveness of the past's inability to resolve situations is reflected in how useful objects prove to be.

For Early Gothic fiction, objects are significant artifacts that function to restore rightful social order by revealing hidden truths. These artifacts link the protagonist to a past that has been obscured or threatened by present corruption. Their presence within the narrative is largely a stabilizing element that authenticates the legacy of the protagonist anticipated by the narrative of inheritance. These artifacts can help to protect the characters even beyond the sacred place that favors them. In Dark Romanticism, the stabilizing function of such items begins to erode, and their presence no longer guarantees stability for a character's salvation. These items still serve as signifiers to a character's tie to the past, yet lose the assurance that their future is safeguarded. Dark Romanticism shifting objects from restorative tools to symbols of disorder signifies a changing mentality that a relationship with the past is not strictly beneficial to the present condition.

Apart from his spirit laying the foundation for the legacy that Manfred fears, Alfonso holds a physical presence through pieces of his armor and weapons that assist his descendent Theodore. The armor that makes up the body of Alfonso's statue provides defense mainly in the interest of Isabella, but indirectly leads to assurance for the future of Otranto upon Theodore's marriage to her by the end. The weapons, on the other hand, help enable Theodore to face the challenges that culminate into the final confrontation with Manfred.

Descriptions of the armor tend to be combined with accounts of other strange happenings throughout the castle, obscuring what the reason for their inclusion is and how they can help Theodore in any substantial way:

> "he stalks Isabella through a castle increasingly characterized by its medieval malevolence: a giant, armored hand appears on a banister; an army arrives bearing a colossal, ancient sword; a figure walks out of an old, musty portrait; a skeletal monk speaks" (Lake 489)

Pieces of armor and their placement throughout the story represent Alfonso's attempts at obstructing the progress of Manfred's plans to pursue Isabella. The first part of Alfonso's statue, the helmet, by killing Conrad and effectively beginning the attack against Manfred inaugurates Alfonso's prophecy– thereby preventing Manfred from solidifying his position on the day of his son's wedding. The other pieces of armor obscure any attempt at discovering or spying on Isabella, as Alfonso obscures the vision of Manfred's allies

The significance of Alfonso's weapons is that they date back to the time of Alfonso, matching the period of the crusades. When paired with the romanticized portrayal of the crusades, taking up arms belonging to Alfonso is akin to Theodore continuing the fight that was abruptly cut off by Manfred's lineage. Just as the crusades were often idealized as righteous missions to reclaim sacred spaces, Theodore's struggle against Manfred becomes a form of holy restoration. While saving Isabella and having his identity revealed were the initial steps to his journey, taking the blade from Alfonso's collection is his first step in up-taking a physical trial – followed by facing off against Frederick. Beyond props to convey the antiquity of the castle and the disorientation of a haunted setting, the presence of Alfonso through his armor and his weapons displays an ability to break past the veil of reality and obtain a presence in Theodore's lifetime. Through helpful acts, the reader also obtains an

appreciation of Alfonzo's contributions and develops an understanding of Alfonzo putting his support behind his.

Prior to Olivia revealing her relation to Ellena and her lineage, the object that represents her tie to the past – acting to her benefit – is the portrait of a young Schedoni which she keeps on her person. In between two stays in convents, Ellena was captured by Schedoni and ordered to be killed to prevent the marriage between her and Vivaldi. After a stichomythic conversation about the word "father" going from the meaning of a priest to the lack of a father figure in Ellena's life, the reveal of the portrait occurs after a verbal interrogation over what she refuses to give up. Upon seeing the portrait, Schedoni initially tries to act distant while Ellena closes the gap between them:

> ""My father!" exclaimed the astonished and doubting Ellena "my father!" and fixed her eyes upon him. He gave no reply, but when, a moment after, he lifted his head, "Why do you reproach me with those looks!" said the conscious Schedoni. "Reproach you! reproach my father!" repeated Ellena, in accents softening into tenderness, "Why should I reproach my father!"" (Radcliffe 144)

Despite not holding the same physical power as a statue's armor or an armory of weapons, Ellena's portrait is more effective plot device, changing the story immediately, compared to Alfonso's artifacts, which serve Theodore's gradual development without immediately defeating Manfred. Even with the reveal that Schedoni is Ellena's uncle – not her father – this episode created a change so drastic in Schedoni that he would go on to mend Ellena and Vivaldi's relationship, all while shielding Ellena from the Marchese.

George E. Haggerty notes that *The Italian* features one of the strongest effects that a portrait has on a Gothic character: "Here the portrait, a miniature, does far more than the portraits accomplished in *The Castle of Otranto* or *The Monk.* Here it has saved the life of the

heroine, and what is more, it has brought about a change in the sentiments of the villain" (Haggerty 143). Even the motivation behind hiding Ellena in a convent changes compared to her imprisonment in the San Stefano. Since Schedoni is aware of the sanctity that remains in such places, he sends her to a convent to keep Ellena physically safe while he visits the Marchesa to convince her that the marriage of Vivaldi and Ellena should go through. *The Italian* features one of the strongest individual items tied to the past, as – similar to an entire sacred place – Ellena's miniature portrait of Schedoni was enough for him to seek his own atonement and eventually confess.

Victor's life is tied to his goal of furthering humanity's project of defeating death, with his family not being of great significance in his life until after he creates the Creature. Therefore, the only thing Victor ends up objectifying as a relic of his own past is the Creature itself. Shelley problematizes the notion of turning the legacy of an individual into an object, which is done by contrasting Victor – who views the Creature as an object of his creation that represents his past mistakes – and the Creature himself, who understands himself as a conscious being living in the present. Unlike Theodore and Ellena, who correctly recognized their respective artifacts as tools to help them achieve success, Victor fails to anticipate that the Creature would hold his own conscious state beyond just serving Victor's interest. The Creature internalized the abandonment of Victor and proceeded to confirm the associations that people make about him on a first viewing by giving into violence. After Victor separated from the Creature out of physical horror of what he had created and for existential reasons, the relationship between the two has degraded the life and legacy of them both. Paul Sherwin, in writing about how the Creature has internalized his objectified state, writes:

> "The creature's utmost desire is that another reciprocate his need for sympathetic relationship, and even after he becomes searingly conscious of his exclusion from the human community and begins to objectify the negativity he arouses in others, we

> recognize that his aggression is a by-product of disintegration, not an innate drive that has been cathartically unbound" (Sherwin 890).

In other words, the Creature upon his creation operates on a different set of assumptions from Victor's: the Creature expects a familial experience, which he ends up partially obtaining voyeuristically through the De Lacey family after Victor abandons him. While Victor sees him merely as a scientific product and an object of horror. The disconnect between Victor and the Creature's expectations of each other presents a mismatch between the objectified force of the past with the figure of the present. While Alfonso's spirit embodies many objects, thus becoming the closest to a living object of the past in the Early Gothic, Dark Romanticism denies the presence of a spiritual side to a living body, be it Victor's creature or Roderick's undead sister Madeline.

While the Creature and Alfonso can be compared for their status as living artifacts of the past, Ellena's miniature portrait and Roderick's novel *The Mad Trist* are similar for their status as personal possessions that function as a turning point device for a particular moment in the present. Alfonso and the Creature act as a continuous presence that affects the journey of Theodore and Victor respectively, while the miniature portrait and *The Mad Trist* are placed to subdue the main threat to the characters in a particular moment. Unlike Ellena's portrait, however, the reading of Roderick's novel does not restore familial understanding or safeguard either him or the narrator. The reason for this is because Roderick has already crossed the threshold of burying Madeline, therefore actions of redemptions do not suffice – compared to Schedoni who hesitated enough with the killing of Ellena to reverse his intentions upon interacting with the artifact of the past. *The Mad Trist* does not bring lost knowledge of the past that fills a gap that family members were seeking but instead highlights the prophetic nature of doomed events that are bound to recur in real life. In other words, Roderick experiencing the story of *The Mad Trist* ends up reinforcing the downfall of

his house rather than resolving it. Leo Spitzer wrote about how the reading of the story corresponded to the revival of Madeline by writing: “They spell her [Madeline] victory over the dragon of death…it is as if by the intensity of his feeling he had succeeded in conjuring up her presence” (Spitzer 356). With regards to time, the destabilizing element of artifacts in Dark Romanticism shows the inability to tame the past to the extent that the Early Gothic was able to. While the Early Gothic found that elements of the past could be controlled – seen through the defeat of Manfred, as well as the alliance with Alfonso and Schedoni – Dark Romanticism shows the breakdown of human agency where forces of the past are too overwhelming for a single person to handle. When faced with the weight of their ethical violations, which consist in objectifying living creatures, Victor and Roderick are destroyed by the consequences of their own creation by refusing to repent and share their folly with others.

VI: Conclusion

By exploring how Early Gothic and Dark Romanticism literature employ space and time, both the narrative elements of Gothic literature and the anxieties through the course of the 17th and 18th centuries are shown to have changed. The Early Gothic, with its focus on the tension of inheritance, was concerned over leadership determined by rationalism concurrent with the era of the Enlightenment. The possibility of moral, rational actors overcoming villains, representing an outdated ideology, presents a faith in social structure and human progress. This positive outlook towards the integrity of social order is represented through the representation of 'time' – particularly through the use of inheritance and artifacts from the past – where obtaining some form of a legacy is seen as a heroic task to undertake, done in order to fight evils from the past while maintaining its foundations. The use of space, specifically the use of confined spaces and sacred place, reflects how the environment – no matter how confined – can be resolved from within and reformed internally. With the presence of Alfonso inside of Otranto and figures like Olivia inside of the convent, confined spaces still show signs of redemption and possibility. Early Gothic literature, therefore, shows the possibility to overcome adversity for the continuity of society. With the shift over to Dark Romanticism, however, the optimism towards societal structure and human agency begins to erode. Time no longer functions as a linear path towards the present via inheritance, but instead represented through irreversible corruption. The inheritance held by Victor and Roderick does not hold hope for their futures, instead becoming a curse that haunts them until the end of their lives. Space, too, transforms: once-redeemable environments become decayed or unstable, such as the forgotten holy places in the house of Usher or the lack of safe retreats in *Frankenstein*. Dark Romanticism reveals a world where individuals are isolated, where systems of support have collapsed, and a loss of Enlightenment ideals are prevalent. The different treatments of space and time between the Early Gothic and Dark Romanticism,

therefore, is as much an ideological shift as it is a change in storytelling technique. Gothic literature, over a little more than half a decade, evolved from a genre grappling with ancestral wrongs into one viewing the world with a more existentialist lens.

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