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THE THIRD PERSON IN THE ROOM: SERVANTS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY IN THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY GOTHIC NOVEL

by

JENNIFER THOMSON LAWRENCE

Under the direction of Dr. Malinda Snow

ABSTRACT:

"The Third Person in the Room: Servants and the Construction of Identity in the Eighteenth-Century Gothic Novel" explores the eighteenth-century Gothic novelists' use of the stock servant character device to illustrate the tenuous nature of identity construction in a novelistic world torn between an admiration for its feudalistic past and a desire to embrace rising notions of individualism. I examine representations of real and literary servants to argue that the servant figure offers a convenient avenue for the discussion of class, social expectation, and economics, for as both family members and participants in the economy of the outside world, servants bridge the gap eighteenth-century authors find between their reclusive, feudalistic past and their social, individualistic present. Further, servants' ties to the household associate them with the feminine perspective and provide authors, particularly authors of the Female Gothic, with a means of presenting the female voice in cases where it had otherwise been silenced by male oppression. In this work, I focus specifically on usurpation in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, Robert Jephson's *The Count of Norbonne*, and William Godwin's *Caleb Williams*, maternal

history in Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron*, Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian*, and Sophia Lee's *The Recess*, sexual surrogacy in Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and aristocratic criminalization in Charlotte Smith's *The Old Manor House*. I examine these works in the context of eighteenth-century realistic literature, social criticism and historical frameworks as well as through the lens of current theoretical examinations of the eighteenth-century Gothic.

INDEX WORDS: **servants in literature, servants, domestics, Gothic, eighteenth century, class, gender, history, identity, Ann Radcliffe, Charlotte Smith, Clara Reeve, Sophia Lee, Horace Walpole, William Godwin**

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by

JENNIFER THOMSON LAWRENCE

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2008

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By

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Electronic Version Approved

Office of Graduate Studies
College of Arts and Sciences
Georgia State University
April 2008

DEDICATION

To my daughter, Meg, may you visit all the ruined abbeys, haunted castles, grand villas, and sheltered cottages this world has to offer, only at your leisure.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It has long been my opinion that the best expressions of gratitude are short and sweet—brevity is the soul of wit, after all. So, like Polonius, I will be brief:

I would like to thank the following people for their support:

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Introduction

In 1776, Adam Smith wrote in *The Wealth of Nations*:

> The labour of the manufacturer fixes and realizes itself in some particular subject or venerable commodity, which lasts for some time at least after the labour is past. . . . The labour of the menial servant, on the contrary, does not fix or realise itself in any particular subject or vendible commodity. His services generally perish in the very instant of their performance, and seldom leave any trace or value behind them. (332-333)

Smith's description of the product of servant labor sounds dishearteningly familiar to those of us who have spent many a day in the housework hamster wheel, taking part in the never-ending cycle of washing dishes, folding laundry, and picking up Lincoln Logs. But for students of the Gothic, his description of ghost-like servants moving in and out of rooms leaving no tangible trace of their presence has added implications. Since Homer,[1] servants have made brief appearances in the stories of their masters, maybe to share a tidbit of knowledge, make a joke, complicate a situation, or otherwise muck up the master's day. And, since Homer, they have largely, as Smith suggests, done their jobs and receded into the background, seemingly leaving no concrete evidence or significant memory of their existence behind them.

Smith's analysis of servants' intangible productions receives further verification from authors who discuss the functions their servant constructions. When Walpole writes his second preface to *The Castle of Otranto*,[2] he clearly considers servant characters as limited in value, arguing that they are little more than humorous distractions. Because Walpole and many other authors have considered servants to be merely humorous distractions, and for many other reasons related to class and gender, servant characters have been traditionally excluded from serious

critical discussion. Certainly, in the past ten years, we have seen that tradition change, and there has been a sharp increase in scholarship devoted to servant characters;[3] however, while servants in realistic literature of the eighteenth century are receiving more attention, little has been written on the representation of servants in Gothic literature. Of course, some Gothic servants, like Ann Radcliffe's Paulo from *The Italian* and William Godwin's Caleb Williams from the novel of the same name, have received a great deal of attention, but they are the exception.[4] The tendency to view servant characters as insignificant certainly is understandable, given servants' propensity to glide through their masters' lives with little notice, but in the discussion that follows this introduction, I try to catch a glimpse of them to consider the ways in which Gothic novelists introduce servant characters and imbue them with revolutionary considerations, using the type to help them challenge notions of feudalism and domestic hierarchy.

In doing so, I examine eighteenth-century Gothic novelists' appropriation of a particular servant character type, one related to the construction of master identity. This type is reflected in Homer's *Odyssey* by Odysseus's servant Euryclea, who in her recognition of Odysseus's scar transforms Odysseus from stranger to king.[5] The type of recognition revealed in this instance is particularly important to the Gothic novel, as it illustrates the tenuous nature of social power. Eighteenth-century Gothic literature, I will argue, utilizes this servant character type to express growing social concerns over the difference between public and private identity, rising apprehension over the construction of social hierarchy in a world where the divinity of the king was being challenged by the divinity of the one, and increasing uncertainty over the boundary between the household and the outside world. Servants, because of their strong ties to the feudalistic past, their status as family members, and their newly recognized ties to the economic outside world, become ideal implements for Gothic authors' expressions of these concerns and

allow Gothic authors to investigate the master's identity and his place relative to changing social norms. To explore these notions, I point to four key aspects of eighteenth-century society and their influence on the representation of the Gothic servant character: the eighteenth-century's conflicted admiration for its feudalistic past, the rise of the growing prominence of the servant character in both fiction and non-fiction literature, the interjection of the economic outside world into the household, and the evolution of women's societal position as illustrated through their relation to the Gothic household and its inhabitants. All of these elements, I will argue here and throughout this work, collide in the Gothic and result in the increased significance of servant characters.

A Third Person in the Room

Critically speaking, eighteenth-century literature often expresses the elements mentioned above as a byproduct of its society's conflicted sentiments toward two competing notions of power and social responsibility. One notion expresses a nostalgic desire to exalt the feudalistic worlds of literary and social history, and the other reflects an evolving sense of the importance of individual rights. The former relies upon the idea that social harmony requires strict class boundaries. The latter expresses the belief that all men are innately moral and thus need no such boundaries.[6] These diverging, and often contradictory, ideals culminate in the conflicted world of Gothic fiction.[7]

The conflict expressed in Gothic literature usually takes the form of a battle between the divine right of the king and the divine right of the one: the king represented by the father figure and the one by the child. Often, Gothic novelists present this conflict by enumerating the struggles of a displaced child who attempts to meet expectations of class distinction while simultaneously exerting her own moral individuality within the community. During the child's

attempt to exert her individuality, she encounters a parental figure who compels her to return to the social hierarchy of the household. So rather than express herself in public, societal terms, and exert her separation from the feudalistic household as she desires, she is forced back into the private world of the home, her brief quest for freedom and acknowledgment in the outside world reverting to a cloistered family matter, articulated in familial terms as a clash between a parental figure (feudalist) and a suppressed child (individual). While her encounter may take place outside of the public view, her predicament is not free from observers. It is monitored by a third person in the room, a representative of both the family structure and the outside world, of both feudalism and individualism, a servant, and it is in the servant's monitoring of the individual child's progress that we see the most significant evidence of the servant's power within the Gothic.

Servants' status in the household as both outsider and insider, as both representative of the social world and family member, as both feudalist and individual make them ideally suited to fulfill the purposes of Gothic novelists who question ever-shifting social boundaries. For if Gothic novelists struggle with the question of what gives one person the right to have power over another, and consider the answer in terms of morality, economics, sexuality, and/or heredity, servant characters, by virtue of their status as lower-class, powerless, unnoticed observers, allow authors a safe space to explore these notions. In this sense, servant characters are capable of performing the function of participant observers, to borrow an anthropological term, as they live within the community of the elite, monitoring and recording their behaviors, while simultaneously maintaining their own ties to the outside world, thus informing their observation with their own class and cultural understanding. Yet, the Gothic servants' former literary status as mere stock characters allows them to seem less innovative and thus less threatening, as does

their ubiquitous nature in the households of readers. Further, the historic accounts of real servants and their influence on the family's notions of morality, economics, and sexuality allows Gothic novelists the freedom to reflect both traditional literary situations and contemporary, familiar social dilemmas using the servant character type.

In the chapters that follow, I study Gothic literary servants' roles in their authors' exploration of the conflict between feudalistic power and individualism, the rights of kingship and the rights of one, by examining instances of revelation and revolution: revelation in the form of the servant who renders family history, introduces notions of sexuality, or exposes upper-class private identity; revolution in the form of the servant who exploits the failings of the feudalistic system as a means of gaining social and financial advancement. I argue that in presenting these instances of revelation and revolution, eighteenth-century Gothic novelists rely on servant characters to reconcile their society's, particularly middle-class society's, conflicted sentiments toward a furtively admired feudalistic order and a widely promoted individualistic freedom. Servants, who bridge the two standards, disrupt the corrupt proclivities of the sheltered feudalistic world (thus reaffirming the untapped moral potential of the feudalistic form) and simultaneously encourage a movement toward open, moral individuality.

Feudalism or Something Different

Of course, feudalistic decay was a long time coming, and the movement toward something completely different was fraught with perils of its own, so it is not surprising that the Gothic novelists might rely upon characters with a stock origin to help them work through the complex maneuverings between the two forms of social order. Many eighteenth-century commentators, as I discuss in my first chapter, struggle to retain and promote the ideals of the feudalistic world but are met with widespread dissention from observers who express legitimate grievances over

the extravagancy and cruelty of the upper classes. To understand these grievances, we must first understand how the collapse takes place. Lawrence Stone chronicles the decay of class structures in England leading up to the English Revolution, writing:

> The manifold causes of this slump in prestige . . . include the decline in the wealth of the peers relative to that of the gentry; the shrinkage of their territorial possessions, in both absolute and relative terms; the decay of their military power in men, arms, castles, and will to resist; the granting of titles of honour for cash not merit, in too great numbers, and to too unworthy persons; the change in their attitude towards the tenantry from suppliers of manpower to suppliers of rent; the undermining of their electoral influence due to the rise of deeply felt political and religious issues; the increasing preference for extravagant living in the city instead of hospitable living in the countryside; the spread throughout the propertied classes of a bookish education, acquired at school and university, and the demand by the State for an administrative *élite* of proved competence, irrespective of the claims of rank; the pervasive influence of the rise of individualism, the Calvinist belief in the spiritual hierarchy of the Elect, and the Puritan exaltation of the private conscience, which affected attitudes toward hierarchy and obedience in secular society; and finally the growing psychological breach between Court and Country in attitudes, real or supposed, towards constitutional theory, methods and scale of taxation, forms of worship, aesthetic tastes, financial probity, and sexual morality. (748-49)

The grievances Stone enumerates here have inspired untold quantities of literary analyses, each complaint offering its own set of problems played out in the literature following the seventeenth

century. I cannot explore the implications of all of these grievances in this work, but it is important to note that the forces causing the decline Stone discusses continue beyond the seventeenth century into the eighteenth century and are further magnified by eighteenth-century society's privileging of the construction of public identity over private identity.[8] As I point out in my first chapter, the collapse of a feudalistic system that had so clearly defined social worth as a byproduct of heredity began to destabilize the eighteenth-century social structure, exacerbating the problems Stone enumerates above. Servant characters seem ideally suited for the evolving social landscape, as they can work to challenge yet embrace the representatives of the social elite, to expose growing cracks in the feudalistic system, and to reconcile competing notions of feudalism and individualism, for just as the Gothic genre was created of a blending between romance and novel so too is it inspired of a conflicted tendency to romanticize the feudalistic past and to legitimize the rebellious, realistic individual; thus the servant character provides an ideal middle point where the competing forces can convene.

Representations of Servitude in the Eighteenth Century

Beyond providing a convenient, stock forum for the exploration of class relations**,** servants' constant presence in the homes of eighteenth-century readers made them a perfect fit for commentary on the relations between the classes. I do not suggest in this text that the servants appearing in Gothic literature reflect the actual social condition of eighteenth-century servants. Indeed, as Robbins points out,

> the literary servant does not represent actual servants, or at most does so only tangentially. On the whole, novelists were not more interested than playwrights in conveying anything historically precise about domestic service. This disparity between art and life is observable from the beginnings of the novel. (12)

What I mean to suggest in this discussion is that the servant character type evolves in the eighteenth-century novel, not to reflect the actual conditions between masters and servants, but to reflect potential and to allow servants to stand as both emblems of and respondents to larger social struggles in a society that was moving away from feudalism and toward individualism. Further, I suggest that society at large was particularly interested in and, at times, fearful of the non-fiction exploits of their servants and that this social interest is reflected, as all Radcliffian terrors are reflected, in half-light and shadow.

While it is important to remember that the servants presented in the Gothic literature of the eighteenth century do not mirror their real counterparts, it is also important to reflect upon the ubiquity of servants in eighteenth-century life. Of course, literary servants are not realistic representations of actual servants, any more than Gothic heroes and heroines are realistic representations of eighteenth-century men and women, but an understanding of eighteenth-century society's fascination with servants offers invaluable insight into their literary function, for it is in the comparison between the real situation and the exaggeration that we can understand the purpose of the characters.

Servants were members of the family, for better or worse, and hundreds of guides for servant behavior appeared in the eighteenth century. Servants were a main topic of discussion in manuals for governing family behavior, such as Daniel Defoe's *Family Instructor*, Clement Ellis's *The Duty of Parents*, John Lettsom's *Hints to Masters and Mistresses, Respecting Female Servants,* and Edmund Gibson's *Family Devotion*. They were objects of religious instruction in works like Adam Gordon's *Repentance and Reformation and the Conditions of Mercy*, Jonas Hathaway's *Virtue in Humble Life*, and Theophilus Lobb's *A Dialogue Concerning the Sin of Lying Between a Master and his Servants*. They appear in legal tracts governing taxation and

registration published by the national parliament and local governments, and they are the defined audience in works like Eliza Haywood's *Present for Servant Maids* and former servant Robert Dodsley's *The Footman's Friendly Advice*. Their presence was even significant enough to necessitate the creation of a Society for the Encouragement of Servants, established in Liverpool in 1792, which is described by Henry Smithers in 1825 as a society that "endeavours to excite to the faithful discharge of the several duties of servitude by the sanctions of rewards and punishments, and by constituting good character as indispensable to registry on its books" (311). While Smithers argued for the importance of the Society in his discussion of Liverpool institutions, he is saddened to note that "It does not seem, however, to be properly understood by servants. It wants publicity" (311). Maybe the servants were wary of "rewards and punishments" promised as means of encouragement, for of course, no matter how much masters wanted to "encourage" servants with their treatises, discussions of familial devotion, and well intentioned societies, a social and economic gulf would always exist between the two groups. It was one that was lessening, however, at least in the literature of the period.

If the gulf is lessening in the literature, it is because of a new focus on the potential for servant morality. As I point out above, eighteenth-century Gothic literature's focus on the interposition of servants in the daily lives of their masters is not new. However, in the Gothic novels of the middle and late eighteenth century, servant characters begin a process of evolution. At the close of the seventeenth century and in the opening decades of the eighteenth century, we see several significant servant characters appear in literature. Aphra Behn's greedy yet practical servant-whore Moretta, Daniel Defoe's cunning and dangerous Amy from *Roxana*, and his notoriously criminal Moll Flanders, who begins her unlawful career as a servant girl, all stand as examples of early representations of the power that servant girls can wield over their masters.

The power they wield, however, is almost entirely sexual, and these works help to establish a clear connection between the servant girl and sexuality, one that is alluded to in Hogarth's *Harlot's Progress*, which begins, we may assume from the opening scene in the sequence, with a young girl looking for service and ends with her death, the result of disease contracted through prostitution. These early representations of servants have the servant's immorality in common, and they reflect a fear that Smithers's promise of "rewards and punishments" reveals —the fear that servants could bring crime into the household. Although that fear never vanishes from the literature, readers can look to Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*, as the first real example of a servant who is the central, moral character. Admittedly, as I discuss in my third chapter, Pamela tends to represent a traditional heroine instead of the servant girl and becomes a model for future novelistic mistresses rather than maids, but she still stands as the first servant character to drive a story of her own, and for once, with *Pamela*, readers are focused not on an upper class heroine but on a lower class girl, and for once, she is not a whore or a criminal. In this way, Richardson's novel makes the servant and her labor a bit more tangible, and though the representations of servant characters in the Gothic novels of the eighteenth century still echo the servant girls' sexualized past, after *Pamela* these characters are capable of bringing as much morality into the household as immorality.

Serving the Gothic Household and Saving Matilda

The shrinking gulf between the classes and the servants' ability to represent it in the homes of eighteenth-century readers help Gothic novelists to capture public interest because in their attempt to recreate a golden, chivalrous age and illustrate the clash between classes, the Gothic novelists reflect the pains of their readers and offer readers a sense of catharsis. Elizabeth Napier in *The Failure of the Gothic* explains: "The reader, relieved because of his willing immersion in

fantasy from contemplating the ethical implications of this struggle, can experience, under supervision, a world in which moral aberrations occur and be returned safely and confidently at the end to a domain in which such values remain properly separate" (133). That "domain" in the Gothic is the home. Radcliffe and those that follow her model do not seek to overturn the standard organization of this domain, but instead seek to return it to what they see as a more appropriate, honorable domain, where relationships between men and women are not corrupted by greed and instability but are the product of honor and gentilesse: Kate Ferguson Ellis's "new Eden."[9]

We see these ideas played out in the novels of both male and female Gothic authors; however, their interests are reflected a bit differently as their social positions and motivations for writing often take very different forms. These forms have long been defined as the Male and Female Gothic, and while Ellen Moers was the first author to coin the phrase "female Gothic," the terms Male and Female Gothic have undergone refinement and redefinition since, most notably by Kate Ferguson Ellis and Anne Williams. In short, Ellis defines the difference as follows:

> In the feminine Gothic the heroine exposes the villain's usurpation and thus reclaims an enclosed space that should have been a refuge from evil but has become the very opposite, a prison. The masculine Gothic gives the perspective of an exile from the refuge of home, now the special province of women. It works to subvert the idealization of the home, and by implication the ideology of "separate spheres" on which that idealization depends. (xiii)

The distinction between the Male and Female Gothic revolves around characters' relation to the home, and as such, the Male and Female Gothic forms will deal with servant characters differently.

In the Male Gothic, as I discuss in my first chapter, servant characters often usurp power. Either they are conscious usurpers who drive away the home's rightful owner, as in *The Castle of Otranto*, or they are unintentional usurpers, driven into exile by guilt ridden masters, as in *Caleb Williams*. In either case, we see in the Male Gothic what Ann Williams describes as an "apocalyptic orgy of violence" (104), with male usurpers destroying the lives and households of their feudalistic masters. Some Male Gothic works, like Walpole's, complicate what will be defined as the Male Gothic form by offering hope that the feudalistic world can be redeemed, but they often destroy that hope as quickly as they offer it. In the case of *Otranto*, Manfred's reign ends as all Male Gothic novels end, in tragedy; and although a new feudalistic order arises at the end of *Otranto*, and although the divinely dictated ruler has been reinstated, the reordering of the feudalistic hierarchy comes only after the death of Manfred's daughter Matilda, leaving Walpole's characters, as most Male Gothic characters are left, "permanently marked by what they have suffered" (Williams 104).

The death of Manfred's daughter, Matilda, suggests the most poignant difference between the Male and Female Gothic novels I discuss in this study. For while authors of the Female Gothic may use their novels to enter into the cultural-political discussions of their times, just as authors of the Male Gothic do, and while we see in both the Male and Female Gothic a recognition of feudalism's dangerous allure, the Female Gothic merely refashions the feudalistic household. It may bring the secrets of the feudalistic world to light and place them within a new context, as the Male gothic does, but the Female Gothic will never reshape feudalism at the expense of its Matildas. Male Gothic novels offer no hope that the original feudalistic household can survive the Gothic;[10] the original household will perish, whether that household be represented by the murderous, feudalistic master, Falkland in *Caleb Williams*, or the innocent offspring of that

master, Conrad and Matilda in *Otranto*. Such arbitrary punishment runs contrary to the agenda of the Female Gothic. As Anne Williams explains:

> The Female Gothic heroine experiences a rebirth. She is awakened to a world in which love is not only possible but available; she acquires in marriage a new name and, most important, a new identity. Indeed, she is often almost literally reborn, rescued at the climax from the life threatening danger of being locked up, walled in, or otherwise made to disappear from the world. (104)

The disparity between the annihilation of Walpole's Matilda and the Female Gothic novel's tendency to save Matilda may at least partially be complicated by the female writer's political need to maintain a dying feudalistic structure within the household, and it is in this need that we can see the importance of the servant character's function in the Female Gothic.

While social critics, including Locke, promoted individual freedoms for men, they often denied those same freedoms to women, thus encouraging the maintenance of feudalistic systems (the same systems they believed to be failing in the political world) in the family. Of course many women writers questioned the legitimacy of arguing for greater freedom for men and arguing in favor of continued regulation for women,[11] and as Eve Tavor Bannet points out:

> Public women taught private women to take over government of the family from men . . . . They imagined, proposed, and modeled for their readers an as yet ideal and idealized family in which women 'dignified' themselves through their domestic government and through the capacities they demonstrated by their domestic and philanthropic work. Public women used their authority to reconfigure the patriarchal family in ways that precluded ladies from continuing

> to figure as 'upper servants to their husbands' and gave them culturally prized domestic and national roles. (1-2)

Thus, many female writers of the period took up the cause of domestic liberation, encouraging a new image of the woman as the governing force behind the household. In fact, Mary Wollstonecraft snidely remarks "an unhappy marriage is often very advantageous to a family and . . . the neglected wife, is in general, the best mother" (*A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* 31). Of course, as Bannet and others argue, this movement toward female responsibility for the domestic space ultimately leads women to the "Angel in the House" model of femininity, but in the eighteenth century, women writers were focused on obtaining rights for women in any realm of social life.

Most of the works I explore in this study are written by females and take the Female Gothic form. And in these pieces we see a repeated pattern of loss and return, reflecting the fear that women may lose control over their social lives but gain new control in the household. During these instances of loss and return the servant characters become pivotal in the action of the works. Females in the novels by women usually lose access to their own power, either because they are distanced from the familial history or because they are forced to deny their own sexual interests and embrace passionlessness. As women engage in this struggle, the servant character functions to help them reclaim what they have lost— control of the household. The servant, with her constant tie to the domestic space, can help return the heroine to the center of her feminine strength, the center she had been forced to submit to oppressive male control.

Of course the heroine's dependence on a servant for support may seem contradictory to the feminist ideals that gaining control of the household may suggest; however, as Anne Williams points out:

> These objections all take it for granted that passivity and dependence on others are invariably bad things, a sign of weakness. But perhaps they seem so only to a culture assuming that independence and conquest are the supreme signs of accomplishment. If the Female Gothic plot in fact presents an alternative to the Oedipal crisis in the formation of the speaking subject, then it portrays a subject with different desires, who sees the world with a different eye/I. Since the 'female' gaze has not been created through conflict, division, and abrupt separation, she has a different relations to her own mother and to that cultural (m)other repressed in her access to the Symbolic. (139)

Here, Williams is discussing the heroine's dependence on the often inept hero; however, I would add to this that the heroines' dependence on servant characters similarly reflects not only their ability to create a power base for themselves within a system that cannot interpret them properly but also the notion that the household is the base of their power. With that in mind, I will agree with Williams that the Female Gothic through its alignment to the household is "revolutionary," in that, as she puts it "[the female plot] does not merely protest the conditions and assumptions of patriarchal culture, it unconsciously and spontaneously rewrites them" (139). And I would add that they enact their protest and rewrite the woman's position in the household, particularly as it relates to the woman's history within the household, with the assistance of their servants.

Chapter Overview

In Chapter one, I explore the eighteenth-century crisis of identity and the influence it had on the presentation of servants in the Gothic novels of Horace Walpole and William Godwin. To do so, I examine early eighteenth-century critical representations of servant usurpers, ultimately using these non-fiction analyses as a foundation to study servant usurpers in *The Castle of*

Otranto and *Caleb Williams*, which, although written by two politically invested men with widely different political motivations, reflect virtually identical fears.

In this chapter, I focus on Walpole's Manfred, the ostensible prince of Otranto, as a servant usurper. I argue that Manfred's servant pedigree—he is the grandson of a servant who usurped his master— drives Manfred to commit revolting acts. In the second preface to *The Castle of Otranto,* Walpole discusses servant language and the significance of language as a representation of class. I examine changes that occur in Manfred's linguistic patterns as evidence to suggest that while Manfred might have been reared to be prince of Otranto, he never escapes his servant lineage, and it is only when the revelation of Manfred's usurped position comes to light that the rightful heir can reclaim Otranto and assume his hereditary position, thus destroying the Gothic. In this piece, we see both the dangers of the feudalistic system, represented through the secretive and corrupt environment Manfred uses his usurped power to maintain, and the promises of that same system, a promise reflected through Theodore whose innate nobility is apparent in his language, action, and appearance. I argue that by creating a juxtaposition between Manfred and Theodore, Walpole reaffirms the possibilities of the feudalistic world while simultaneously pointing out the impending pitfalls of a system that relies upon secrecy and exclusion.

Walpole's optimistic take on the potential of the feudalistic world is not embraced by William Godwin, and in the second part of my first chapter, I examine Godwin's presentation of the feudalistic structure as one that relies upon secrecy and repression. The autobiography of its title character, this novel embodies servant revelation, and so I discuss the two types of revelation Godwin presents in the novel, the revelation of the lead character through autobiography and the revelation of Caleb's/Falkland's secret, a revelation which is at the core of the novel's action. I argue that both Caleb and Falkland believe in the potentials of the feudalistic world, but

Falkland's obsession with surface identity and maintaining feudalistic power drives him to criminal behavior. In order to save himself from becoming a victim of Falkland's feudalistic secret, Caleb must reveal Falkland's true nature to the world, thus destroying a man and a world he feels invested in perpetuating. In the end, both Caleb and Falkland become victims of feudalistic secrecy, because one dies as a result of revelation and one loses his reputation and possibly his mind.

Chapter two presents the idea of maternal history and the servant's function as maternal historian (since the mother is often absent from the Gothic world).[12] Here, I focus on Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron*, Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian*, and Sophia Lee's *The Recess* to explain that it is the ultimate goal of the servant historian to rescue Gothic characters from the immoral world constructed by the false family— a product of faulty, paternal history— and return them safely to the structured, moral, true family. In doing so, the servant returns the missing mother to the center of the household and secures her power base. Once done, the servant fulfills Adam Smith's prediction and retreats into the background becoming excluded once more from family politics.

My discussion of Reeve's novel focuses on the main character, Edmund, and his quest to uncover his maternal history. To do so, Edmund must navigate the historic record as preserved in three distinct class-based versions, the ornate and revised upper-class history, the gritty and limited peasant history, and servant history which because it is linked with both the household and lower-class society has the potential to bridge the gap between upper-class and lower-class histories, thus leading Edmund back to his true, maternal history, a history that once revealed allows him to assume his proper place in the world.

Like Reeve's Edmund, Radcliffe's Ellena has lost her mother and her place in the world. To recapture her rightful name and to protect herself from her evil father/uncle Schedoni, Ellena must discover her own maternal history. In my examination of Ellena's quest to uncover and reveal her maternal history, I consider the significance of Paulo, who recites the horrible history of the heroine's, family by way of making conversation. Of course, as Paulo recites this shocking history, he has no way of knowing that it is related to the family of his master's lost love— he has merely stored it as an pleasing instance of feudalistic misbehavior – but through his revelation of the history, the audience begins to get a better understanding of the relations between the heroes and villains of the novel, and once the other prominent servant character in this novel, Beatrice, locates the heroine's mother and reintroduces maternal history to the heroine, Paulo's story and Beatrice's story can be reevaluated and seen as the seeds of a maternal history that has now been reinstated, allowing the hero and heroine to create a new family for themselves.

While Reeve and Radcliffe present the revelation of maternal history as a remedy to the disease of feudalistic secrecy, Sophia Lee expresses no such optimism. In her Historic-Gothic novel, Lee presents a world that is unable or unwilling to accept maternal history, but the feudalistic stakes are raised in Lee's *The Recess*, which is set largely in the courts of Queen Elizabeth and King James. Although maternal history is never publicly revealed in Lee's novel, Lee suggests that maternal history alone is not enough to counteract the corruption of the feudalistic world supported by paternal history, and while the servants in Lee's novel are able to present a warped maternal history that includes their own incestuous relationship, the heroines of the novel are never able to take that history out into the world, and their best efforts leave them in ruins.

In Chapter three, I continue my focus on revelation to examine the tenuous relationship between the Gothic heroine and her sexuality, focusing on the assistance that the servant girl offers in the construction of the Gothic heroine's sexual identity. As the only representative of the outside, sexualized world and as the only character with the ability to prove that such a world is not necessarily immoral or inappropriate, the female servant promotes feminine independence for the Gothic heroine, and her intervention allows the heroine to move away from the stagnation of the Gothic world to create a new, more egalitarian society, one in which the heroine's private and social identities can coexist peacefully with her sexual identity. I explore these ideas through the novels of Horace Walpole and Ann Radcliffe. Here, I find that female servants function in two ways: either to introduce proper notions of sexuality to the dangerously passionless heroine, as in the case of *The Castle of Otranto*, or to become a sexual surrogate, taking over the love story when the heroine is forced to protect herself through the denial of love, as is the case in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.

My discussion of *The Castle of Otranto* focuses on the servant character Bianca and her introduction of love notions to Matilda and Isabella. The chapter particularly focuses on Bianca's influence over Matilda, who is a virtual prisoner in her own house and seems to have embraced passionlessness as a natural course. Although Bianca's introduction of Eros to Matilda ultimately leads to Matilda's death, the love relationship Matilda cultivates with Theodore allows for the revelation of Theodore's true social position, saves her friend Isabella from an unwanted marriage, and forces her father to recognize the horrors he has perpetrated in the name of protecting his feudalistic secret.

Unlike Matilda, Emily St. Aubert needs no introduction to love. She meets and falls in love with Valancourt early in Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* only to be separated from him by

her selfish aunt and duplicitous uncle. During the separation, Emily is imprisoned in the Castle of Udolpho and subjected to repeated sexual advances by her uncle's roguish friends. While Emily's love relationship with Valancourt might have been acceptable and even beneficial in the outside world, in Udolpho such an open attachment to love becomes detrimental. Consequently, while in Udolpho, Emily must deny her own love desires. In this chapter, I examine the ways in which Radcliffe illustrates Emily's repression of those desires and Radcliffe's attempt to maintain the romance of the story by allowing Emily's servant girl, Annette, to act as a sexual surrogate. As a surrogate, Annette performs all the actions a Gothic heroine would usually perform: she falls in love with a hero, she is imprisoned, she is threatened with rape, and she loses but then regains her lover. Because the heroine is placed in a position of extreme sexual danger, she denies love and behaves passionlessly as a means of shielding herself from the unwanted advances of her uncle's associates. To fill in the gap left by the heroine's passionlessness, Radcliffe substitutes the servant Annette's mini-Gothic romance thus maintaining the sublimity that a threatened love relationship evokes in the reader's mind. The substitution not only allows the heroine to maintain her passionlessness, but also provides a surrogate servant hero, one that can ensure Emily's escape and the resumption of the novel's true love story.

My final chapter, chapter four, explores the idea of aristocratic criminalization. In this chapter, I examine *The Old Manor House* to consider the ways in which Charlotte Turner Smith relies upon and then complicates the fear of class climbing and the influence of a criminalized lower class by creating a system in which the aristocratic values of Rayland Hall do not suffer from servant criminalization but in fact criminalize the servant class which might otherwise, if placed in the bourgeois household, serve dutifully. To make this association, I draw connections

between Smtih's fifth novel, *The Old Manor House*, and her fourth novel, *Desmond*, using Desmond's explanation of feudalist failings as they refer to the relationship between master and servant as a means of guiding my reading of *The Old Manor House*. I also examine Smith's personal political and economic motivations for exploring the frailties of the feudalistic world through her servant characters.

To explore these ideas, I focus specifically on the exploits of Mrs. Rayland's three upper servants, Mr. Snelcraft, Mr. Patterson, and Mrs. Lennard, all of whom are unintentionally encouraged by their mistress's extreme focus on heredity and money to turn Rayland Hall into a den of thieves. Despite the fact that these servants are treated well by their mistress, they learn to place unwarranted significance upon social placement and financial success from a mistress who revels in her family's history of fortune and power. As a result, Snelcraft and Patterson bring murderers, smugglers, and other unsavory characters into the household, and in fact run a smuggling ring out of the house, and Mrs. Lennard not only attempts to steal her mistress's money and property from the rightful heir but also hastens Mrs. Rayland's death. Although Mrs. Rayland spends most of her life unaware of her servants' exploits, and so she is largely unaffected by them, the influence of the servants' actions is fully felt by Mrs. Rayland's revolutionary cousin and supposed heir, Orlando.

After establishing the criminalization of the servants, I trace the consequences of that criminalization through to the next generation, focusing on the effects servant criminalization has on Orlando and on his relationship with Monimia, a servant-girl at Rayland Hall. I examine the stark contrast between Orlando's love relationship with Monimia and the expectations of his feudalistic aunt and her class, and the ways in which Mrs. Rayland's criminal household threatens to overpower Orlando's sentimental nature throughout the novel. I compare Orlando's

egalitarian treatment of his servant-lover with other servant love relationships presented in the text to argue that Orlando's revolutionary view of the world allows him to treat a woman, and a lower class woman for that matter, with the respect he would offer any person. However, I come to the conclusion that despite Orlando's best intentions, he never quite moves beyond the expectations of his class, and even though he rids Rayland Hall of its feudalistic tendencies and the resulting criminality, his unconscious participation in and enjoyment of the rewards of class leave his servant/wife as marginalized and in fact less powerful than she was as a servant and Rayland Hall as corrupt as it ever was.

Servants' participation in these instances of revelation and revolution, I conclude, have long-standing effects on the representation of servants in the Gothic. In fact after the eighteenth century the servant character becomes so pivotal to the Gothic story and household that she transforms into her own heroine. To explore this blending of the Gothic servant and the Gothic heroine, I begin with Monimia, the first Gothic servant/heroine, and then progress to consider Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre and Daphne Du Maurier's second Mrs. de Winter in *Rebecca*. In my discussion of these works, I examine the ways in which all of these Gothic servant/heroines complicate the Gothic household and reflect the concerns of the Gothic as it moves beyond the eighteenth century and questions nineteenth- and early twentieth-century conceptions of womanhood.

Notes

[1] For a discussion of these types and their prevalence in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature see Bruce Robbins, *The Servant's Hand: English Fiction from Below* (New York: Columbia UP, 1986). In his chapter on servant narration, Robbins explores the traditional narrative function of the servant character as it appears in the eighteenth-century novel, a

function he calls an "odd privilege" (95). He comes to the conclusion that through using servant expositors, authors are, in a sense, pandering to wide, public audiences, who may appreciate the power of the narrative being placed within the hands of a servant-class character, one to whom they can relate. While Robbins's discussion of servant explicators is enlightening, what his chapter is missing is a clear explanation for the authorial need to place explication in the mouth of the servant characters. As Robbins points out, servant narrators are part of a long-standing tradition, and in the novels Robbins examines, servant explicators seems merely an illustration of that tradition—they enter to announce that someone has died or to provide a bit of background information. As the quotation from Smith at the beginning of this piece suggests, I do not deny that they enter, set things right and leave, but what I would like to add is the reason behind their appearance and its relation to the shifting notions of power, history, gender, and economy in the eighteenth century, particularly as they relate to the Gothic novel, a genre Robbins does not address.

[2] Walpole writes, "The simplicity of their behavior, almost tending to excite smiles, which at first seem not consonant to the serious cast of the work, appeared to me not only not improper, but was marked designedly in that manner" (10). He argues that servants are naturally less reserved than their masters, and thus their responses to the events in the novel were appropriate. He writes, "However, grave, important, or even melancholy, the sensations of princes and heroes may be, they do not stamp the same affections on their domestics: at least the latter do not, or should not be made to express their passions in the same dignified tone" (10).

[3] Mark Burnett, Bridget Hill, Tim Meldrum, Pamela Horn, and Bruce Robbins are a few of the critics who have recently addressed servants in literature. For a discussion of the recent

scholarship on servants in literature see R. C. Richardson "Making Room for Servants." *Literature and History* 16.1 (2007): 96-102.

[4] Ann Radcliffe's Paulo in *The Italian* has received a great deal of critical attention, most likely because his role in the novel is extensive, and Radcliffe gives him the last word. Janet Todd's article "Posture and Imposture: The Gothic Manservant in Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian*" offers insight into Radcliffe's use of Paulo to move beyond Renaissance representations of servants, for example, and James P. Carson, Diego Saglia, and Cannon Schmitt see Paulo's repeated desires to return home as indicative of Radcliffe's nationalistic expression in *The Italian*. Further Kate E. Behr devotes a section of her article, "A Misellany of Men," to Paulo.

[5] For further on this see Erich Auerbach's discussion in *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Trans. Willard R. Trask. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1953).

[6] These ideals largely spring out of the theories of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. Hobbes arguing that the state of nature is a state of war which can only be averted when man cedes personal desire to a social authority, and Locke arguing men are innately rational and born equal and they do not need social authority to provide them with recognition of either: "Men living together according to reason, without a common superior on earth with authority to judge between them, is properly the state of nature" (15). These arguments gain particular significance in a century of revolutions, beginning, of course, with the execution of Charles I in 1648 and continuing on through debates over both the American and French Revolutions. The struggle between the divine right of the king and the divine right of the one is a common theme in the literature in the period. I discuss aspects of the debate in all of the chapters that follow, but chapters 1 and 4 focus most specifically on this discussion.

[7] Eighteenth-century society's conflicted feelings toward its past and its future and its connection to the Gothic become clear when we consider early critical response to the genre. E.J. Clery explains:

> By the 1760s critical discourse was actively working to produce the taste and demand for literary antiquities among the reading public, and helping to overcome enlightenment objections to the representation of the marvelous. On the other hand, it imposed the rule that such representations could only be enjoyed in a work of the past, when it could be accompanied by awareness of their out-moded absurdity. . . . If the public's appetite for Gothicism was to be tapped by living authors, it had to be done under the cover of fake antiquity. (55)

The supernatural, feudalistic past was then appropriate for entertainment as long as it remained in the past. Bringing it to the modern world of reason was a dangerous proposition, one that critics were not willing to accept. Of course, critical response to the Gothic did not diminish its popularity among the masses, but the conflicted critical response reflects the larger societal discomfort with an admiration for a past that, as I will point out later, had failed them.

[8] I discuss the eighteenth-century construction of public and private identity at length in my first chapter, so I will simply define them here as one's understanding of one's own identity (private) and the outward projection of what one believes to be appropriate identity (public). While the two identities can correspond, they are usually in conflict, and public identity is always the more valuable of the two. The potential discrepancy between what one is and what one appears is a great cause for social concern during the eighteenth century, for as Paul Langford points out, "The acquisition of wealth was the route to social acceptance and political power at all levels of society. Genteel sniggering was the perpetual prerogative of rank, but it presented no very

serious obstacle to the social climber" (9). Anyone with money could become a person of rank and thus have a public identity which virtually guaranteed them moral acceptance and social power.

[9] See Kate Ferguson Ellis. *The Contested Castle*. (Urbana: University of Illinois P, 1989). Ellis writes,

> [Gothic novels] created a landscape in which a heroine could take initiative in shaping her own history. By allowing the heroine to purge the infected home and to establish a true one, by having her reenact the disobedience of Eve and bring out of that a new Eden "happier far," these novels provided a mediation between women's experience of vulnerability and the ideological uses to which that experience was put. (xii)

[10] As defined by Moers, Ellis, De LaMotte, and Williams, Male Gothic and Female Gothic forms are not necessarily tied to authorial gender. Sophia Lee's *The Recess*, for example, fits most definitions of Male Gothic form almost perfectly. That said, for the purposes of this discussion and in the manner that I will use the terms Male and Female Gothic, the texts and their authors tend to align with the gendered definitions, with the exception, as stated above of Sophia Lee.

[11] Mary Wollstonecraft writes:

> Let not men then in the pride of power, use the same arguments that tyrannic kings and venal ministers have used, and fallaciously assert that woman ought to be subjected because she has always been so. – But, when man, governed by reasonable laws, enjoys his natural freedom, let him despise woman, if she does not share it with him; and, till that glorious period arrives, in descanting on the

> folly of the sex, let him not overlook his own. (*A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* 45)

Additionally, Eve Tabor Bannet points out Mary Astell's response to Locke's theory as it pertains to women:

> Reason, or that which stands for it, the Will and Pleaseur of the Governor, is to be the Reason of those who will not be guided by their own. . . . Nor can there be any Society, great or little, from Empires down to private Families, without a last Resort, to determine the Affairs of that Society as an irresistible Sentence. Now unless this Supremacy be fixed somewhere, there will be a perpetual Contention about it. . . . So that since Women are acknowledged to have least bodily Strength, their being commanded to Obey is pure Kindness to them, and for Quiet and Security as well as for the Exercise of their Vertue. But does it follow, that Domestick Governors have more sense than their Subjects, any more than other Governors have? We do not find that any Man thinks the worse of his own Understanding because another has superior Power. . . . Indeed, Government would be much more desirable than it is, did it invest the Possessor with a superior Understanding, as well as Power. (Astell *Some Reflections on Marriage* qtd in Bannet 25)

[12] In my discussion of maternal history in chapter 2, I define maternal history as history which is outside the written record, outside the record of paternal history. Once a woman marries and she loses her name, she is removed from her paternal record. In order to maintain ties to her history, she must remember her lineage. However, since maternal history is oral and memory based it is particularly open to corruption and erasure, and when the mother is removed from the Gothic so

is maternal history. It falls, then, upon the servant who has memory of the domestic space to transmit maternal history to the next generation.

Chapter 1

"Less than what I should be; more than what I seem": Gothic Servants and the Eighteenth-Century Crisis of Identity

Spoken by Theodore, the former slave and future prince in Robert Jephson's 1781 theatrical adaptation of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, the quotation in the title of this chapter expresses the conundrum of eighteenth-century identity construction: that a person could conceivably have two identities—that which they are and that which they seem. Dror Wahrman defines this split in identity, the recognition of which was just emerging in the eighteenth century. Wahrman writes:

> Identity . . . encompasses within it – in its etymology as well as in its common application for the variety of possible responses to the question 'who am I?' – a productive tension between two contradictory impulses: identity as the unique individuality of a person . . . or identity as a common denominator that places an individual with in a group. . . . In the former sense, sometimes akin to self, identity is the essence of difference: it is what guarantees my quintessential specificity in relation to others. In the latter sense, identity is the obverse, or erasure, of difference: it is what allows me to ignore particular differences as I recognize myself in a collective grouping. (xii)

Widespread recognition of the potential gap between public identity – that which in Wahrman's terms would be defined as group identity— and private identity – that which Wahrman defines as an understanding of personal uniqueness – combined with the social "tension" the recognition of this gap created led to a crisis in class perceptions during the eighteenth century. This crisis

erupts out of an anxiety over the eighteenth-century movement away from an understanding of self which emphasized placement within the class-based group and toward a recognition of the Lockean individual.

Susan Staves explains, in terms that will inform our understanding of this anxiety, the arrangement of class-groups as they stood until at least the early eighteenth century, "the rich and the poor were, by nature, profoundly different sorts of persons. The rich were, by nature, generous, honorable, brave, refined, just, and public-spirited; the poor, by nature, mean, timid, coarse, and self interested. The spectacle of someone born to wealth and privilege and then reduced to poverty contemporaries therefore found especially pitiful" (195). Class, morality, and economics were all naturally ordained, and they all worked together to construct a unified sense of identity. A person was a "spectacle" if he lacked any of those naturally ordained elements which codified his membership in the group and proclaimed his singular identity. He would become a spectacle because if he were lacking any of those elements, he would become unnatural; he would essentially have two identities, that which he was born to be and that which he seemed. Consequently, as reflected in the quotation that opens this discussion, the crisis of class identity in the eighteenth century often expresses itself in a fascination with appearance, a fascination with what one seems. For if appearance defined economic, moral, and group identity and economic worth could exist distinctly from hereditarily ordained group membership, anyone with enough money to consume conspicuously could rightfully assume the identity of the social elite, and then what role could or should class distinction or heritage continue to play in the understanding of public or group identity?

This crisis of identity holds disturbing potential for the relationship between the master and the servant in the period, for recognition of appearance's potential to mislead forced

acknowledgement that the distinction between master and servant could no longer be discerned by exterior or refinement; all a servant would need to play the role of master was the right wardrobe and public persona.[1] We see this fear expressed in the Gothic novels of the middle and late eighteenth century, particularly those of Horace Walpole and William Godwin.

The Gothic is ideally suited for addressing deeper implications of identity confusion in the eighteenth century because often it is located in the distant past—a past in which the terms heredity, character, and identity are virtually synonymous— and because the Gothic novel's use of terror or horror provides an ideal catharsis for guilt associated with the middle class's recognition of their part in disrupting those earlier, more stable, more feudalistic, conceptions of identity. While its displacement in time and its potential for catharsis make the Gothic an inviting forum for an exploration of the identity crisis, the Gothic novel does not speak to the crisis of identity uniformly. Indeed, the Male Gothic and the Female Gothic address the construction of identity from very different angles.[2] In the Female Gothic, the question of identity most often relates to gender rights, focusing on male relatives who attempt to prevent female heroines from taking possession of their rightful property, thus denying them their public identity by taking both their money and, in many cases, their name, and I will examine the ramifications of the Female Gothic interpretation of the identity crisis in the chapters that follow this discussion. Here, however, I wish to focus on the Male Gothic, which often deals with the question of identity in terms of lower-class usurpation, corruption, and permanent destruction. We see this particularly in Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* and in Godwin's *Caleb Williams* where, in both cases, the gap between public and private identity leads to annihilation. In this chapter, I will investigate the eighteenth-century crisis of identity and its influence on the presentation of servants and their masters in *The Castle of Otranto* and *Caleb Williams*. I will

use these novels to detail the fear and guilt associated with middle class destruction of the feudalistic class system and the resulting dread of servant usurpation that such guilt invites. To do so, I will examine early eighteenth-century social critical representations of servant usurpers, ultimately using these non-fiction analyses as a foundation to study the servant usurpers in the novels of Walpole and Godwin.

Economics, Heredity, and the Construction of Identity in the Gothic

Both *The Castle of Otranto* and *Caleb Williams* present servant usurpers and the ensuing violence and chaos caused by the servants' overturning of the social order. The fear of violent social upheaval presented in these novels, however, comes out of a much tamer tradition of concern with servant behavior. In his 1725 treatise on maid servants, *Everybody's Business is Nobody's Business*, Daniel Defoe outlines his objections to what he sees as the "abuses insensibly crept in among us, and the inconveniences daily arising from the insolence and intrigues of our servant-wenches" (2). One of the chief concerns of Defoe's work is the servant-maid's influence on society and particularly the amount of power that the servant maid wields within the family. Defoe focuses specifically on the dress of the servant maid as source of disruption in the household. He writes:

> I remember I was once put very much to the blush, being at a friend's house, and by him required to salute the ladies, I kissed the chamber-jade into the bargain, for she was as well dressed as the best. But I was soon undeceived by the general titter, which gave me the utmost confusion, nor can I believe myself the only person who has made such a mistake. (7)

Although Defoe never addresses it and may not have in fact recognized it, his embarrassment at having misinterpreted the classes of the women in front of him reflects a generalized fear and

guilt that arose in the eighteenth-century middle classes—one that centered on their knowledge of having participated in the disruption of a tightly knit social fabric of a feudalistic world in which distinctions of class were intrinsic. What Defoe's complaints in this document allude to is the fact that the feudalistic social framework was irrevocably broken, and in the middle class's desire to enter into a world that tradition had excluded them from, the middle class had opened up a flood gate of excessive behavior, leading to the eighteenth-century tendency to distinguish class by appearance. This tendency, however, was not limited to the upper and middle classes. The lower classes could play along as well, for, Defoe argues, in their "extravagance of dress," the servant maids drive

> our wives and daughters upon yet greater excesses, because they will, as indeed they ought, go finer than the maid; thus the maid striving to outdo the mistress, the tradesman's wife to outdo the gentleman's wife, the gentleman's wife emulating the lady, and the ladies one another; it seems as if the whole business of the female sex were nothing but an excess of pride, and extravagance in dress. (6)

Defoe's concern for the extravagance that this conspicuous consumption causes and his ultimate solution to that problem, forcing the servants to dress according to their positions, is reminiscent of sixteenth-century sumptuary laws intended to curb such extravagance with its ensuing moral degradation and to create clear distinctions among the classes through the construction of dress codes. In fact, such codes also dealt specifically with servants' tendency to dress out of their place and required stiff penalties for any master not controlling his servant's attire. While Defoe's desire to moderate the dress of servants in his time period had precedence, he was clearly fighting a losing battle. The sumptuary laws of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were widely recognized as unenforceable even at a time when the upper classes, especially the

nobility, were still seen as divinely entitled to rule. According to Michael Hattaway, sumptuary laws of the seventeenth century reflect "the uneasy relationship between old nobility and hereditary titles on the one hand, and the newly enriched on the other." (99). He points out that the laws "suggest an unsuccessful attempt to conserve a fast-changing social structure—and are generally referred to in the plays with considerable irony" (99-100). If this tension existed in a seventeenth-century world that Andrew Gurr describes as an "entire pattern of living" which "enforced a rigid social identity from which there was little chance of escape" (50), a world before the divine right that James I hailed was tossed to the wayside at the execution of Charles I, then the tension must have reached a fevered pitch by Defoe's time.

Defoe's status as a self-made man limits his credibility in this argument, however, and we see this limitation in the fact that his concern hinges on relations between the master class and the servant class. An essay titled "Common Sense," published in 1742 in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, exposes the argument for maintaining and supporting the differentiation among the classes in a way that Defoe may not have been capable of doing. The author begins with the following premise:

> These antient Legislators, who studied human Nature, thought it adviseable for the better Government of States that the People should be divided into the Noble and the Common.—They judg'd it for the universal Good of Mankind, that the Valiant and the Wise should be separated from the rest, and appointed for Council and Command. (247-48)

It is this author's assertion throughout the piece that the distinctions among the classes are not those of culture or society but are instead naturally and spiritually ordained. In fact, he argues that even those cultures considered "savage" by contemporary standards have their own

instances of nobility and draw a sharp line between those who are innate leaders and those who are common. He argues: "nothing can be a stronger Motive to great and worthy Actions, than the Notion that a Man's Posterity will reap the Honour and Profit of his Labours" (248). It is pedigree, then, that sustains the noble spirit. While the author does concede that noblemen are noble in part because they have been raised in an environment that is conducive to sophistication and wisdom and that allows them to be "Strangers to those vicious Falsehoods and Corruptions which Necessity first, and then Habit puts men upon practicing, whose Lives are sent in Pursuit of their Fortunes," he argues that ultimately it is their history, their lineage, that makes them noble and allows them to be the leaders that are capable of sustaining the great English nation (248). Finally, he provides his audience with a warning: "you must either keep your Nobility free from Taint, or have no Nobility at all" (248). It is the duty of every Englishman, commoner and nobleman alike, to protect the distinction of class and to promote the purity of the noble race, for without purity, nobility cannot exist, and without nobility, England cannot sustain itself.

While the concerns exhibited by Defoe and the commentator in *The Gentleman's Magazine* illustrate that the fear of leveling and the recognition of lower-class power were well established by the middle of the century, the horrifying outcome of the world they envision— one in which the boundaries of class distinction are completely breached— finds full force in Gothic novels, most particularly in *The Castle of Otranto* and *Caleb Williams*. Walpole's and Godwin's eighteenth-century Gothic novels explore the fear of losing control of one's identity, or one's self, each author warning his readers that identity based on public persona alone endangers not only the individual but the entire English social structure. In *Otranto,* the displacement of identity through servant usurpation is literal, as a servant kills and takes on the place of his master. *Caleb Williams,* on the other hand, presents the loss of identity metaphorically as Caleb

takes control of his master's identity through knowledge and then displaces him through language.

Both Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Andrea Henderson explore the significance of identity in the Gothic novel, and although neither reflects upon the servant's position in the construction of identity and class in the novels, their theories of identity construction in the Gothic are central to the relation between servants and masters as it appears in *Otranto* and *Caleb Williams*. In *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions*, Sedgwick explains the role of identity in the Gothic novel: "The inside life and the outside life have to continue separately, becoming counterparts rather than partners, the relationship between them one of parallels and correspondences rather than communication. This, though it may happen in an instant, is a fundamental reorganization, creating a doubleness where a singleness should be" (13). For Sedgwick, the question of identity is not necessarily tied to the question of class; however, her distinction between the types of identity, inner and outer, or public and private, becomes essential to understanding the relationship between class and identity in the eighteenth century and in the Gothic novel. Moving beyond the simple definition of identity's dualistic nature that Wahrman's explanation offers in the opening paragraph of this chapter, Sedgwick breaks the construction of Gothic identity into three separate elements— "what's inside, what's outside, and what separates them" (13). The question of "what separates them" becomes the locus of horror or terror in the Gothic novel, for "what separates them" in the Gothic usually takes the metaphorical form of the villain. However, the crisis of identity not only affects the innocent but also the guilty, and in *Otranto*, we see Manfred's split identity exposed after a gigantic helmet falls from the sky and crushes his son, an occurrence that would jar anyone, but that has a particularly devastating effect on Manfred. For, in this case, that which separates identity is not the villain, but evidence of

Manfred's own hereditary villainy. Until this point in the text, Manfred has been a cold, but respectable father and leader. Once he is faced with the realization that his public and private identities are about to be revealed as incompatible, through the appearance of the helmet and loss of his heir, and that he will soon be recognized as a servant usurper, he begins to break under the pressure. He loses control of himself as his inward character of the servant usurper begins to seep out, exposing two Manfreds—the Manfred everyone expects to see and the Manfred everyone sees—leading the other characters to comment continually about Manfred's odd and uncharacteristic behavior. Ultimately, as I will later show, he completely loses the ability to distinguish between his two identities.

Sedgwick does not provide a social reason for the identity crisis in the Gothic, but as Henderson points out, for the author and the villain, it springs from guilt that arises out of an unspoken acknowledgement of the arguments made in both Defoe's piece and that published in *Gentleman's Magazine*. In virtually all Gothic novels, the question of power is one of right determined by both genealogical and sociological means. Henderson explains the function of these two forms in the of determination identity in her article "'*An Embarrassing Subject*': Use Value and Exchange Value in Early Gothic Characterization." She argues:

> At the moment the traditional genealogy-based model of identity was called into question by the ideals of the French Revolution and the realities of capitalist and industrial development, a market-based model of identity that had long been emerging rapidly gained prestige. This model situates identity along a continuum that includes, on the one hand, an 'essential' and private identity that is, paradoxically, developed through labor, and, on the other a social identity that is relationally determined and associated with consumption. Canonical romantic

> interiority focuses on the first pole: it presents a subject that simultaneously appears to have an intrinsic and relatively stable character and to be the product of its own labor. The early Gothic novel, however, tends to focus on the opposite pole, making character a matter of surface, display, and 'consumption' by others. The Gothic novel associates this relational character both with traditional signs of identity and the vagaries of exchange value, focusing on the danger the old *and* new systems of identification represented for an increasingly capitalist society. (226)

According to Henderson, the movement toward the French Revolution, and to which I would add the movement away from the English Revolution, alongside the increasing pressures of a capitalistic economy that placed value not only on material sources of wealth, such as land, but also and equally on non-material means of wealth, such as stocks, expedited a shift away from notions that worth could be genealogically, or naturally, determined and toward the notion that it could be socially constructed. She argues, "As the traditional system of identification and valuation of individuals lost its prestige, people came to understand personal identity, in its public and private aspects, in terms of the dominant evaluative scheme of the growing capitalist and credit economy, a scheme based on market forces" (227). She further argues, "Speculative capital especially, with its extreme immateriality, foregrounded the distinction between tangible and intangible values" (231). From both Sedgwick and Henderson, readers of the Gothic can determine that the notion of identity was largely a social construction and that the individual was in a constant struggle to equate his conception of his identity with the conceptions of those around him.

The function of the servant, particularly the servant usurper, becomes important in the Male Gothic novel's construction of identity through the process of comparison. If identity is fluid and referential as Henderson and Sedgwick suggest, then the Gothic servant functions in large part by establishing that frame of reference. Further, the servant, in his lower social standing, brings into the story traditional struggles between servant and master that reflect the collapse of the feudalistic economic system which determined identity through genealogy. The Gothic, then, becomes a repository for the fear of losing control of the means for creating identity and for guilt over taking on someone else's identity. Jerrold Hogle, in discussing Walpole's tendency to use the furniture of medieval romance as a means for presenting the social ills in eighteenth-century England, offers insight into this Gothic tradition:

> This notion . . . is the ideological product and symptom of an increasingly dominant and capitalist mind-set in which old objects of belief have become repositories of middle-class anxieties about the illegitimacy of a new economic order as it emerges from an older one in the eighteenth and subsequent centuries. In this view, it helps that the old objects are hollowed out because that fact allows the bourgeois fear of rapid and unpredictable aspiration and fall, the guilty sense of a stolen (rather than naturally merited) inheritance, to displace itself into an older region emptied of its original substance and so to relocate all attendant guilt over the newer oppressions of women and the lower classes into a world that seems to be long ago and far away. (24)

With his creation of the Gothic genre, Horace Walpole opened a door to deal with the fluidity of class distinction that so worried Defoe. By setting his novel in the feudalistic past, he displaced the crisis of identity into a feudalistic world where power was the result of outward appearance

and where social distinctions were no longer merely a question of income or consumption, but were instead innate to human character and condition.[3]

Otranto Usurped

Walpole's interest in public and private identity and his associated fear of social displacement, which ultimately manifest themselves in his servant usurper Manfred, reflect his personal background. Though he has long been regarded by many as a social butterfly with a healthy interest in gossip mongering and is remembered as a man who went to the frivolous trouble and expense to reshape his home into a Gothic castle in miniature, which he filled with what Eino Railo calls "'Gothic' rubbish" (2), Walpole was also passionately interested in social justice and in literary criticism. In both his letters and his political speeches, he showed both a passionate hatred of the slave trade and misgivings about the republican arguments that would ultimately culminate in the French Revolution. He was also particularly critical of what he saw as abuses of English merchants involved with the East India Company.[4] As the son of Prime Minister Robert Walpole and as a politician himself, Horace must have learned early in his life the importance of making a distinction between the public and the private identities. Beyond that, however, he may have had two other reasons to be interested in the construction of identity. The first involves a question of legitimacy, which would have attacked the core of his identity. It was widely rumored during his life that he was not, in fact, the son of Robert Walpole, but the offspring of an adulterous affair between his mother and Carr, Lord Hervey.[5] While Walpole never addressed these rumors, for a man with such a strong social acumen, he must have been aware of their existence, and a question of legitimacy would have gone to the very core of both his public and private construction of identity, making the distinction between the two that much more important. A second possible catalyst for his interest in identity has been postulated by

several recent critics. Timothy Mowl, George Haggerty, E. J. Cleary, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick have all argued that Horace Walpole was homosexual—Sedgwick links him with William Beckford and Matthew Lewis, writing "Beckford notoriously, Lewis probably, Walpole iffily" (*Between Men* 92).[6] "Iffily" may not be a particularly firm foundation to base a discussion upon; however, if these critics are correct in their assumptions, then sexuality would be yet another foundation for Walpole's concern with the construction of public persona and his recognition of the difficulties of bridging the gap between public and private identity.

Possibly falling into the trap of believing that Horace Walpole was a mere social dilettante, many critics argue that his first novel should not be taken as much more than a light hearted attempt by the author to entertain audiences rather than a reflection of social concerns. Toni Wein argues that "Part of the reason *The Castle of Otranto* is held in so little esteem is that critics tend to treat with seriousness Walpole's claim that the ideas for the book had their genesis in a dream and its birth in a trance lasting eight days" (13). Further Walpole's statement that he was "very glad to think of anything rather than politics" suggests that he was also loathe to take the work very seriously ("Letter to William Cole" 64). E.J. Cleary in her introduction to *The Castle of Otranto* writes, "Walpole himself was sometimes inclined to dismiss it as a piece of whimsy, and in the twentieth century critics have tended to agree. The story has been regularly censured for wooden characterization and the amateurish self-indulgence of its supernatural effects" (ix). However, Walpole presents a few clues in his introduction to suggest that he took the work a little more seriously than either of his prefaces suggest. Primarily, Walpole's lengthy attack on Voltaire and his defense of Shakespeare and all English literature suggest a deeper understanding of his work's relevance, and, secondly, his attempt to lay down the rules for his

new genre implies an interest in the way the work was composed and a desire to ensure that audiences read the work appropriately.

Furthering the notion that Walpole viewed his work as a serious exploration of social strife are the arguments of Alice M. Killen, Eino Railo and Toni Wein. Railo and Killen both point out that Walpole most likely based his work on the historic family of Otranto, taking both character names and circumstances from that history.[7] Wein's argument, which draws from these discoveries that *Otranto* had a historical foundation, suggests that many things in the novel, even "Walpole's choice of St. Nicholas as the patron saint of Otranto is historically accurate, suggesting that Walpole researched the details of setting and circumstance more thoroughly than he would have liked us to believe" (13). Since Wein, Railo, and Killen have successfully shown that Walpole diligently researched the history of Otranto and its occupants to create this work, it may be conceded that *Otranto* is a bad novel, but not, as he and some of his critics have suggested, an intentionally frivolous piece of fancy devised as an escape for the reader overburdened by a rational world. If this is the case and we take Walpole's second preface as the tongue-in-cheek or as the self-conscious gesture that he most likely meant it to be, or if we at least agree that Walpole spent more time on the construction of this work than he lets on, then we must also imagine that Walpole's work may have aims other than pure pleasure and that far from avoiding politics with his work, Walpole may, in fact, be using it to make a social and political argument.

The first four words of Walpole's work are "Manfred, prince of Otranto" (17). These first words illustrate the story's preoccupation with identity and with social rank. In opening the novel with this description, Walpole is distinguishing Manfred from the other characters within the novel and encouraging his readers to view the work and Manfred's actions within the work in

a certain manner. From the opening line, Walpole tells his audience, *this is a story about someone of the upper class, someone important, someone with status whose words and actions should be taken seriously*. By the time his readers reach the last lines of the novel, however, Walpole changes our perceptions of Manfred by removing his royal pedigree and replacing it with that of a servant usurper. Because of this, Walpole's text works as a careful analysis and a disassembling of class roles and structures, and it is through those modes that he sets up his concern for the construction of identity in his own culture.

Walpole's decision to provide Manfred with a servant pedigree is particularly interesting given the fact that Walpole pays such careful attention to the construction of his servant characters.[8] In the second preface to *Otranto*, Walpole outlines his theories on the construction of literary servants. He says that he incorporates literary servants as a comedic foils and describes their behavior as "almost tending to excite smiles, which at first seem not consonant to the serious cast of the work, appeared to me not only not improper, but was marked designedly in that manner" (10). He argues that servants are naturally less reserved than their masters, and thus their responses to the events in the novel are appropriate. He writes, "However, grave, important, or even melancholy, the sensations of princes and heroes may be, they do not stamp the same affections on their domestics: at least the latter do not, or should not be made to express their passions in the same dignified tone" (10). Servants are, then, weak characters and weakness in the servants distracts from any weakness in the master. Although he argues that the purpose of servant characters is to "incite smiles" (10), Walpole seems to take the construction of his servants as seriously as he takes any part of his construction of this novel, for he mentions their importance not only in the second preface but also in the first. He suggests that his audience use the servants' names as a method of dating the piece, which implies not only that he

carefully considered his servant characters but also that Walpole views his servant characters as a code through which his readers can interpret his novel.

In his presentation of known servants, Walpole sticks to his mantra that servants are mere comic forces. For example, when two of Manfred's serving men see a ghost in the parlor they respond in broken dialogues, unable to maintain rational thought or speech. They speak over each other making their meaning impossible to understand, leading Manfred to call them "blundering fools" and to chastise their fear of "goblins" (34). Walpole's presentation of the servants' language and behavior is typical of that of the traditional literary servant; however, where Walpole diverges from the type and illustrates his integration into eighteenth-century conversations of class, individualism, and identity is through his presentation of his "prince of Otranto." Because Walpole introduces Manfred in terms of his social position, his subsequent descriptions of Manfred's actions and language should seem shocking to the eighteenth-century audience, especially considering that Walpole argues in the second preface that the characters in this work "speak and act, as it might be supposed mere men and women would do in extraordinary positions" (10), and in the first preface, where he suggests that the characters and the content are appropriate for tragedy—"There is no bombast, no similies, flowers, digressions, or unnecessary descriptions. Every thing tends directly to the catastrophe" (6). Since Walpole argues that everything the characters do and everything that the narrator says of them is a part of what leads toward the tragedy, we should take none of Walpole's descriptions for granted, and every character's speech or action should be seen as constructed to move toward tragedy.

Although Walpole reveals Manfred's position as a usurper in the middle of the novel, Walpole keeps Manfred's servant heritage secret until the last page of his work. However, even though he does not tell us until the last page of the novel that Manfred is descended from a

servant, Walpole places subtle hints within the text that help prepare us for his final revelation. In chapter three, Manfred is accosted by Vicenza's knights who have returned to demand Isabella. The knights do not show deference to Manfred's royal position; instead, they sit silently while he reveals his family history. Disconcerted by their silence, Manfred becomes disordered, and in the following passage, Manfred's speech muddles as his inner, private identity begins to bleed out and conflict with the public identity he once carefully maintained. Manfred attempts to relate his pedigree:

> You must know, your lord knows, that I enjoy the principality of Otranto from my father Don Manuel, as he received it from his father Don Ricardo. Alfonso, their predecessor, dying childless in the Holy Land, bequeathed his estates to my grandfather Don Ricardo, in consideration for his faithful services—[The stranger shook his head] – Sir knight, said Manfred warmly, Ricardo was a valiant and upright man; he was a pious man; witness his munificent foundation of the adjoining church and two convents. He was peculiarly patronized by saint Nicholas—My grandfather was incapable—I say, sir, Don Ricardo was in capable—Excuse me, your interruption has disordered me—I venerate the memory of my grandfather—Well, sirs! He held this estate; he held it by his good sword, and by the favour of saint Nicholas—so did my father; and so, sirs, will I, come what will.—But Frederic, your lord, is nearest in blood—I have consented to put my title to the issue of the sword—does that imply a vitious title? I might have asked, where is Fredric, your lord? Report speaks him dead in captivity. You say, your actions say, he lives—I question it not—I might, sirs, I might—but I do not. Other princes would bid Frederic take his inheritance by force, if he can:

> they would not state their dignity on a single combat: they would not submit it to the decision of unknown mutes! Pardon me, gentlemen, I am too warm: but suppose yourselves in my situation: as ye are stout knights, would it not move your choler to have your own and the honour of your ancestors called into question? (67-68)

This long excerpt provides a wealth of information regarding Manfred's inner self and his position in society because his disordered, frantic speech reflects his insecurities at his real social position. On an editorial level, one might notice Walpole's incorporation of the dash in this section. Although Walpole uses the dash throughout this work as a way of both breaking up dialogue and showing parenthetical thought, he uses the dash here to show Manfred's broken psychological state. The dashes in Manfred's dialogue illustrate the fact that his train of consciousness is not linear; instead it is, like his servants', muddled. The dashes may also illustrate that he is struggling to maintain and control his two separate identities—the one of the master and the other of the servant usurper. In his speech to the knights, he makes a self-conscious effort to speak appropriately but cannot conquer his own insecurities about his servile pedigree. Despite his upper-class upbringing and current status as prince, Manfred knows his true pedigree, and when he feels that his secret will be revealed, he unintentionally adopts the language patterns of his servants, his social if not educational and cultural equals. His self-conscious effort toward what he knows to be upper-class speech leads him to blunder, causing the contradiction between what he is and what he is perceived to be to become apparent to his audience. In attempting to imitate the speech of his desired hereditary class, but failing miserably, Manfred is reflecting a long line of servant imitators. In fact, J. Jean Hecht points out

that many real eighteenth-century servants attempted to mimic their master's speech. Some successfully but some merely "mouth malapropisms and other species of verbal error" (212).

Like the narrator of *Otranto*, Manfred begins his history by giving the knights his father and grandfather's names with the initial descriptor "Don," thus using this seemingly innocuous title to make a point about his heritage. By referring to them both as "Don," a term that in the time of Manfred's story would have designated high social ranking, Manfred encourages his listeners to view his lineage as comparable to that of Alfonso. He then proceeds to describe their noble qualities, aligning them with the former prince of Otranto and with a saint, thus making his claim to the throne not just secular but religious as well. Further, his grandfather was not merely a provider of services to Alfonso, but was patronized by Nicholas, suggesting that he was such a worthy man that even the saint believed in and supported his noble position. In the middle of praising his father and grandfather, Manfred becomes "disordered" by the knights, and like all servants, he loses his train of thought while attempting to share an history with his betters. He says "My grandfather was incapable—I say, sir, Don Ricardo was incapable" (67). Because of his disorder, Manfred never finishes his thought. Neither the readers nor the knights ever discover that of which Don Ricardo was incapable; however, his disorder suggests from that early point that Manfred is aware of Don Ricardo's true character and is on the verge of accidentally revealing more than he intends, illustrating both his grandfather's guilt and his own position as a usurper.

Manfred loses his language and forgets to uphold his public identity in several instances in the novel, most notably in all instances involving apparitions. The most compelling of these is Manfred's horror at seeing Theodore dressed like Alfonso. Though the room is full when Manfred enters it, he is the only person affected by Theodore's appearance. Upon seeing

Theodore, he cries, “What art thou, thou dreadful spectre! Is my hour come?” (83) The room’s response to Manfred’s fear is to adjure him to reason. However, regardless of their appeals, Manfred tells them that “Theodore, or a phantom . . . has unhinged the soul of Manfred” (83). In an eerily *Macbeth*-like scene, Manfred realizes the outcome of his family’s treachery, and like Macbeth’s associates, those around Manfred begin to question his sanity. However, their chastising reflects eighteenth-century thought on the supernatural and the appropriate class-based response to it; they admonish him to be reasonable and tease him about his improper behavior. Even after Manfred knows that Theodore is not the ghost of Alfonso but is a mere boy in armor, and even as Theodore tells his story, Manfred is “still possessed with his resemblance to Alfonso, [and] his admiration [is] dashed with secret horror” (84). Still visibly shaken by Theodore’s appearance, Manfred has difficulty forgiving Theodore’s betrayal, which leads Frederic to offer a pungent attack. Frederic says, “if I can pardon him, surely you may: it is not the youth’s fault, if you took him for a spectre” (85). In this short jab, Frederic questions not only Manfred’s manhood, but also his outward identity. The nobility are supposed to be reasoned enough to avoid the superstitions of the lower classes, so in teasing Manfred about his response, Frederic confronts Manfred on his social station. Manfred’s response to Frederic’s taunt is “If beings from another world . . . have power to impress my mind with awe, it is more than living man can do” (85). When threatened, Manfred tries to bolster his public identity by proclaiming his manliness and threatening violence. He cannot accept reason, because as a hereditary member of the lower class he does not have that capacity, so he must resort to violence to protect his power position, which reflects the real dangers of the split Manfred has undergone—it leads men to violent, unnatural behavior.

Throughout the novel, Manfred is described as a savage, and he is accused of lacking reason. However, the descriptions of his violent behavior reflect his actions only after his son's death and his consequent recognition of his guilty position, which forces the exposure of his identity split. Before the exposure, Manfred was a good prince who may not have been overly affectionate to his children, but who was at least not usually tyrannical. Manfred "was not one of those savage tyrants who wanton in cruelty unprovoked. The circumstances of his fortune had given an asperity to his temper, which was naturally humane, and his virtue were always ready to operate, when his passion did not obscure his reason" (33). The narrator takes the trouble to describe Manfred as not "naturally" tyrannical; however, after the death of Conrad, which places stress on the relationship between his public and private identities, Manfred clearly becomes tyrannical. In fact, he is later labeled a tyrant eight times in the text, as if to prove that while he may not have been a tyrant, he became one once his power was threatened by the collapse of his public identity.

Manfred's tyrannical attempt to recombine his identities is placed in context next to the characters of Frederic, Jerome, and Theodore, all of whom reflect sophisticated nobility who have respectable pedigree. Although tempted early on by Manfred's machinations, Frederic has a naturally noble side that ultimately reasserts itself in the ghostly image of the hermit who reminds him of his hereditary responsibility and puts him on the right track, even though he remains torn between "penitence and passion" (107). While Frederic may waiver, the true heir to Otranto never does, and Theodore's steadfast adherence to the values of his class are particularly striking, given his upbringing. Raised as a slave and gaining his freedom only as an adult, Theodore should exhibit the qualities not of a nobleman but of a servant, for Theodore never received the social conditioning necessary to make him into a sophisticated member of

society. Theodore's actions, however, reflect the gap between private identity and public and illustrate that Walpole finds private identity to be more stable than public. If Theodore were to act according to his public identity, that of a servant, he should be bumbling and incoherent, but he exhibits the qualities of a nobleman in ways that Manfred can never. Unlike Manfred, Theodore is not frightened by the prospect of ghosts, nor is his resolve shaken when threatened by those more powerful than himself. Theodore has a constant, stable frame of mind, allowing him to maintain his noble attitude even when the ostensible prince, Manfred, has reverted to savagery.

Theodore, the rightful heir to Otranto, was raised as a slave, not an aristocrat as Manfred was (84). In relating his story, Theodore tells of his escape from slavery, of his return to his family's land, and of his recognition that his father was gone. He then says,

> Destitute and friendless, hopeless almost of attaining the transport of a parent's embrace, I took the first opportunity of setting sail for Naples, from whence within these six days I wandered into this province, still supporting myself by the labour of my hands; not till yester-morn did I believe that heaven had reserved any lot for me but peace of mind and contented poverty. (85)

In his recollection of his early life, Theodore makes two important points. First, that he is willing to work the land to provide for himself, and second, that he would be "contented" in poverty. Theodore is not like the nobility of the eighteenth century who might own land in the country but never set foot on it or do any work to it. Even though he knows he is of higher birth, he is willing to work for his food, rather than take other people's food from them, as Manfred has done. His contentment also suggests a level of purity in that it recalls the pastoral way of life, where man worked closely with nature. He has not forgotten the importance of man's

connection with the natural world, and though he has been to the big city, Naples, his desire is not to remain detached from the natural world, but to return to his home and make his way in harmony with nature. Further, Theodore's representation of his simple life as bringing him "peace of mind" and making him "contented" suggests a level of sophistication in thought. Theodore would be a good leader precisely because he has no significant ambition to lead. It is through Theodore that we see that the danger lies not in the movement among the classes, but in the ambition to establish an outward identity that does not reflect the inner identity.

Horace Walpole's novel provides a foundation for the discussion of class and power through the servant figure, but though his followers picked up many of his tropes and transplanted them into their own works, most— particularly the female writers— did not recycle his servant usurper. For writers of the Female Gothic, the image of the usurper was instead transferred on to a younger brother or other family member, illustrating the problems with the tradition of primogeniture and the inadequacies of inheritance rights as they applied to women in the eighteenth century. However, while later female novelists discarded Walpole's servant usurper, male writers did not wholly abandon the notions of servitude and its relation to the construction of identity and power. In fact, the servant becomes a pivotal figure in the construction of identity in the works of Robert Jephson and William Godwin, through which readers can see how Walpole's early introduction of class and power maintains pertinence in the Gothic.

Otranto Rewritten

Walpole's presentation of the dangers that ensue when the public and private identities collide focuses solely on the aftermath of servant usurpation, and, more importantly, Walpole's representation of the usurpation act is entirely violent; therefore, before we move on to Godwin's tale of psychological usurpation, it may be helpful to find a transition point in Robert Jephson's

1781 stage adaptation and revision of Walpole's *Otranto* entitled *The Count of Narbonne*. Jephson's version of *Otranto* was performed at Covent Garden, and "Walpole gave his full approval" (Cleary xxii). *The Count of Narbonne* differs substantially from the original in its setting, organization, and character development. Like Walpole, Jephson based his version of events on historic accounts, taking liberties with the histories of the French house of Toulouse rather than the Italian house of Otranto, most likely as a nod to the revolutionary thoughts erupting out of France at that time. The family upon which Jephson chose to base his play included Alphose Jordon, the twelfth-century Count of Toulouse, Narbonne, and Tripole. As in Walpole's story, this version of Alphonso, Alphonse Jordan of Toulouse, was poisoned, only in this account during the crusades, possibly by Eleanor of Aquitaine who wanted his land. Alphonse was succeeded by his young son Raymond V in 1148, who later had a daughter, Adelaide.

Although Jephson changes the background of the characters to match the current political climate, he pays homage to the original by displacing his play in time and by taking inspiration from historic figures. Jephson's presentation otherwise differs substantially from Walpole's in that Jephson is careful to present his characters realistically and to remove many of the supernatural elements so prominent in Walpole's version. Further, instead of dividing the focus of his drama between two heroines, as Walpole does with Matilda and Isabella, Jephson streamlines the story, allowing Isabella to appear only in second-hand accounts and focusing much more heavily on Raymond's relationship with his daughter, wife, servants, and critics. The most telling of his changes appears in the presentation of the Manfred character. Jephson's version of Manfred, Raymond, is not the product of a servant's treacherous overthrowing of Alphonso but is instead the son of a vassal who betrayed his lord. Although the distinction may

seem small, Jephson's Raymond interacts with those in his charge in a significantly different ways than Walpole's Manfred. While Raymond can be tyrannical, he is much more rational in his interactions, and as will become important in the presentation of the relationship between Caleb and his master in *Caleb Williams*, when Raymond does behave irrationally, his servants intervene to save him the embarrassment of having the gap between his identities exposed to outsiders. Of all the changes that Jephson chooses to make in his reenvisioning of Walpole's work, this is the most significant, for it allows readers to see the power of the servant in the relationship between master and servant—power that becomes highly significant in *Caleb Williams*.

Like Manfred, Raymond is particularly concerned with public representations of identity. When Raymond demands to know whether Theodore helped Isabella escape from the castle, Theodore argues that he did what was right, to which Raymond responds "Such insolence and these coarse rustic weeds / Are contradictions. Answer me, who art thou?" "Less than I should be" replies Theodore, and "more than what I seem." He continues: "My habit little suited to my mind, / less to my birth; yet fit for my condition" (I.iii). Like Walpole's Theodore, Jephson's usurped prince needs no help maintaining his identity. Theodore is "more than what he seems," not less, and that gap between the private identity and the public identity, as long as it favors the private, allows him to be better than he appears, both morally and hereditarily, not worse. The pressure to rectify the gap between the identities is much more significant in both Manfred's and Raymond's case because they are "less than what they seem." In Manfred's case, this gap leads to erratic behavior as the servant slips out from the behind the master's façade but in Raymond's case, the gap is less obvious because he is protected by his servants, who take control of his identity in an attempt to keep him from slipping, but inadvertently encourage his downfall.

Jephson's presentation of servants differs substantially from Walpole's. Gone are the humorous class conflicts. Rather than the morally questionable characters presented in Walpole's versions of Manfred and his serving men, Jephson presents the lower classes as all good. Although they respect their master, they refuse to follow his evil orders, not so much for their own sake as for his. Fabian, Raymond's trusted manservant, constantly works behind the scenes to protect his master's public identity. He tells another servant that she should learn to know the "temper of the Count" who when "Serv'd and obey'd, / There lives not one more gracious, liberal; / Offend him, and his rage is terrible; / I'd rather play with serpents" (II.i). However, even though he knows his master has brutal tendencies, he feels a responsibility to maintain his master's public identity by keeping his master's evil plans from escaping the confines of the servant and master relationship. Upon learning that the Raymond plans to have Theodore put to death, Fabian tells Adelaide, "Madam, my lord comes this way, and commands / To clear these chambers; what he meditates, / Tis fit indeed were private. My old age / Has liv'd too long, to see my master's shame" (III. ii). Fabian knows that his master tends toward evil thoughts, but he attempts to protect his master's outward appearance, even when speaking to Raymond's daughter. While Fabian overtly seeks to protect his master from shame, minor characters work to protect him in less overt ways. When Raymond orders his servants to abuse and even kill Theodore, they consistently find themselves unable to do so. They naturally treat Theodore with a reverence, even though they have no idea of his heredity; of the preparation for Theodore's execution, Adelaide tells her servant "Did I not see the dreadful preparations? / The slaves, who tremble at my father's nod, / Pale, and confounded, dress the fatal block" (III.i), and later at the point of execution, their hesitation forces Raymond to yell "Obey me, slaves—What, all amaz'd with lies" (IV.iv). Although their refusal to follow his orders challenges his public

identity as leader, they ultimately save him from becoming a tyrant, and, because of their unwillingness to follow his orders, he is given a moment to recant his commands and save his reputation.

As long as Raymond has his servants to protect him from himself, he maintains a degree of rationality and the integrity of his public identity. It is when he leaves the home and goes out into the world that they can no longer protect him from himself. In the end, he makes the same mistake that Manfred makes, and his only living child, Adelaide, dies at his hand. After stabbing her, Raymond, not shielded by his servants, truly recognizes the gap between who he is and who he has pretended to be. After he sees himself for the first time, he calls himself "heaven abandon'd, and the plague of earth" (V.xv). For the first time, he recognizes his own rage and wonders "What frenzy seized me" (V. xiv). Although this realization seems new to Raymond, the audience knows that his servants have been protecting him from his own tendencies for the entire play. It is only now that he is separated from them that he sees himself as he truly is, and consequently, he destroys himself; stabbing himself with the dagger he used to kill his only remaining child.

Beyond Otranto: Caleb Williams as Unintentional Usurper

Caleb in *Caleb Williams* performs a function similar to that of Fabian and the other servants in *The Count of Narbonne*; however, while Caleb's interest in his master's identity may have started out as innocently as Fabian's, over the course of the novel, it becomes clear that Caleb's motivations are purely self-interested. Further complicating the creation of identity in this text is the fact that Falkland, unlike Raymond, views public identity as the equivalent to life itself, and consequently, he is terrifyingly aware of his servant's capacity to create, maintain, or destroy identity.

As the story of a servant who actively seeks to know his master and his master's history, *Caleb Williams* presents the ultimate fear associated with the struggle to maintain balance between public and private identity, for though *Otranto* may have been set in the distant past with characters who were borderline parodies of social roles, *Caleb Williams* seeks to present the real, contemporary battle between the competing notions of identity construction. In this tale, Godwin forces the two types of identity, public and private, onto a collision course, in the hopes of exposing the falsity of reverence for the trappings of social conduct and in an attempt to privilege inner goodness. In *Caleb Williams*, William Godwin takes the idea of the servant who controls public perception of the master's identity to its horrifying conclusion.

Although not Gothic in the traditional sense, *Caleb Williams* has long been included in discussions of that genre. The novel may not present verifiable ghosts like those we see in *Otranto*, but the characters in *Caleb Williams* are haunted in very similar ways to Manfred in *Otranto* and Raymond in *The Count of Narbonne*. In *Caleb Williams* the characters are haunted by their knowledge of each other. Falkland is haunted by Caleb's recognition of the gap between his public and private identities and by the knowledge that Caleb is a potential servant usurper. Caleb, through his understanding of Falkland's weak dependence upon public identity, is haunted by both his knowledge of public identity's frailty and by his ambition to construct his own respectable, Falklandesque public identity.

In presenting us with the question of identity in these characters, Godwin works to criticize the contemporary notions, exhibited by Edmund Burke in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, that upper class paternalism protects the lower classes from themselves and maintains order; according to Burke, feudalistic paternalism is "a benefit, not as a grievance" and "a

security for their liberty, not as a badge of servitude" (111).[9] To Godwin, Burke's promotion of nobility and heredity rule is invalid because it places emphasis on the wrong aspects of character, specifically it privileges outward, public identity rather than true, private identity. Too much focus on the one (public) corrupts the other (private). His argument reflects the hypocrisy that the narrator in *Tom Jones* presents to us: "It is not enough that your designs, nay, that your actions, are intrinsically good; you must take care that they shall appear so" (85). For Godwin, the question is not how noble his characters *seem*, but how noble they are, and he exposes this idea through his ostensible villain, Falkland.

In *Caleb Williams*, Godwin tells the story of a master who sees identity entirely as the product of outward recognition. Falkland is obsessed with the romantic notions of gentlemanliness and spends his life attempting to appear outwardly good. By contrast, Godwin presents us with Caleb Williams, who is good on the inside, but outwardly unworthy because of his class. The novel, then, shows these two types of identity colliding with one another. In the end, Caleb becomes corrupted by his desire to create an identity for himself in his master's mold, and after his desire leads to his master's death, Caleb is haunted by the same guilt and fear of displacement Falkland suffered from throughout the novel. Like Falkland, who was willing to kill Tyrrel to protect his own identity, Caleb recognizes that he too has been willing to murder to protect his name and reputation and to make a grander name for himself. Ultimately, and ironically as it illustrates one of Burke's key arguments that the struggle for power is self-perpetuating,[10] Godwin's text works off the fear that the desire to maintain a social structure based on domination leads inevitably to self-perpetuating violence. In Godwin's view, those who have power will do anything to keep it, ultimately leading them to tyrannize those below them, thus forcing those who are tyrannized to a point where they must steal power in self-defense, but once

they gain power, the cycle starts over again unless someone changes the system.[11] True power, according to Godwin, comes from the private, inner identity that has the potential to be pure, not from the trappings of outer identity, which is always deceptive.

Kate Ferguson Ellis explores the construction of identity in *Caleb Williams* and narrowly defines Godwin's presentation of identity in the novel, placing it on a continuum: "At one end is Falkland's obsession with other people's perceptions of himself, with his reputation, his honor defined entirely in public terms. At the other end is Caleb, whose conviction of his innocence lives entirely within him, independent of public recognition" (152). She notes the dangers of the dichotomy between public and private identity, suggesting that "once the secret is 'out' in Caleb's consciousness, even if Caleb lives up to his promise never to tell another living soul, Falkland can never be 'home' again. He must constantly be 'out of his mind,' trying to control knowledge that he has forbidden, but that is no longer his exclusive possession" (153). While Ellis makes two good points in these analyses, I would explore each of them a little further. First, I would extend Ellis's argument that Falkland is "out of his mind" to argue that he is "out of himself." As long as Caleb controls information that would destroy Falkland's social identity, Falkland no longer believes that he has control of himself. He is completely dependent upon his servant and his servant's discretion. This is illustrated by the fact that Falkland chooses to hide his private identity in a trunk, suggesting his desire to isolate that part of himself; once Caleb opens that trunk and takes in Falkland's identity, Falkland immediately attempts to isolate Caleb, refusing to allow him to leave the home and exclaiming "I have dug a pit for you; and whichever way you move, backward or forward, to the right or the left, it is ready to swallow you. Be still!" (160). Falkland was already out of himself when he placed the truth of his identity in the trunk, and now that it is in Caleb, he plans to bury Caleb to keep his true identity hidden. Second, and

more importantly, Ellis suggests that each of the two main characters reflects a particular type of identity—Falkland the public and Caleb the private; I would argue, however, that while Falkland's obsession with his outward identity might clearly place him as an emblem of the public identity, Caleb is much more complex. While his knowledge of his own innocence and his tendency to remind the audience continually that he was good regardless of public perception tend to align him with private identity, Caleb is almost as obsessed with public identity as Falkland is. From his authorship of this "autobiography" to his acumen with acting and costume to his ultimate revealing of his master's secret, Caleb illustrates a desire to construct and maintain a public identity that will be accepted and places great emphasis on its creation throughout the text.

Another critical interpretation of *Caleb Williams* helps to put the psychological implications of this novel into perspective. Robert W. Uphaus argues that *Caleb Williams* is not a response to the social and political upheavals and motivations leading to the French Revolution, as many critics have claimed.[12] That, he argues, would make the novel "into a political melodrama where the reader oscillates between praise and accusation" (279). Instead, according to Uphaus, it is an inquiry into the psychological complexity of the human mind. Uphaus's explanation of the psychological exploration in *Caleb Williams* is particularly useful to this discussion because it details, but does not directly address, the recognition of the psychological split in identity which is at the center of *Caleb Williams*, and in fact of all Gothic novels, as it relates to the inherent corruption that happens on the part of both the power holder (the master) and the potential usurper (the servant), when they are forced to recognize the identity gaps in each other for the first time—the servant recognizing the public identity as a construction designed to maintain power and recognizing his own private identity as corruptible and the master recognizing the

servant's public servility as a mask for private ambition. As useful as Uphaus's discussion of the role psychology plays in *Caleb Williams* is, his argument actively turns away from social and political influences on the construction of identity in the eighteenth century; while he is persuasive, it is hard to disassociate identity from culture in the eighteenth century because identity in the eighteenth century was not only psychological but also economic and social, particularly in the Gothic novel where the two forms of identity, public and private, were forced into constant conflict. Godwin's work is psychological, yet it is clearly also political, for underlying Godwin's work is the notion that neither character is truly good or evil. Both characters have the potential for good, but both are forced by the social and political climate into behaving badly in order to protect or acquire power. They are set at each others' throats by the society that Edmund Burke champions in his work, and as long as identity can be constructed solely outside the self in the form of consumption and reputation, they will remain that way. So his work may not be as completely political as some critics would suggest, but it is not merely an exploration of the mind either; it is instead the recognition of the political world's effect on human psychology and the construction of identity.

Although we may be distracted by the means to which Falkland goes to regain control of his identity, and his actions may seem to border on irrationality at times, Godwin never lets us forget that while Falkland's desire to protect his public persona is excessive, it is not entirely without merit. Caleb is the narrator of not only an autobiography, but a biography as well, and Caleb's first instances of usurpation occur through the biography. Collins, because his master is deranged, takes it upon himself to provide Caleb with Falkland's history because "whatever delicacy it became [Collins] to exercise in ordinary cases, it would be out of place in [Caleb's] situation; and thinking it not improbable that Mr. Falkland, but for the disturbance and

inflammation of his mind, would be disposed to a similar communication" (11). Collins does not recognize the threat that Caleb's knowledge of Falkland's identity might pose to his master, so he eagerly shares Falkland's story. However, in telling us the story, Caleb decides to take the biography farther, "[interweaving] with Mr. Collins's story various information which [Caleb] afterwards received from other quarters that [he] may give all possible perspicuity to the serious of events," and to make matters easier Caleb will "drop the person of Collins, and assume to be [himself] the historian of [their] patron" (11). As simply as that, Caleb usurps Collins's power, taking Falkland's story into his own hands. Once he does so, Caleb becomes our sole means of gathering information about Falkland, and even Falkland himself becomes a mere player in Caleb's life story.

Robert Uphaus looks at Caleb's desire to write Falkland's history, particularly pointing to the scene in which Caleb tells readers that he is convinced that Falkland keeps a confession locked in the mysterious trunk, which Caleb ends by saying, "If Falkland shall never be detected to the satisfaction of the world, such narrative will probably never see the light. In that case this story of mine may amply, severely perhaps, supply its place" (326). Uphaus argues that "substitution is not Caleb's only motive he will reenact Falkland's crime, not purely as a matter of narrative description, with Caleb as an outside observer looking in No he will do to Falkland with words what Falkland did to Tyrrel with a knife The process of reenactment had led Caleb to a form of murder" (sic—punctuation omission in the original 286). The trunk in this scenario beautifully personifies Sedgwick's notions of the inner persona. As I argued earlier, the trunk, which Caleb so desperately wants to open and rummage through, reflects the private identity of Falkland, which Falkland cannot allow to get out into the world, otherwise it would destroy his public identity—the identity Falkland views as his true self without which he would cease to exist.

Caleb's decision to recreate what he imagines is in that trunk despite the fact that his doing so will destroy Falkland is exactly, as Uphaus claims, an act of violence, or since this is a servant and a master, an act of usurpation, an inversion of the social order in which the servant takes the power and position of the master.

This point is driven home by the attraction Caleb shows to the trunk during the house fire. During the fire, Caleb takes command of the other servants, and he sets about looking for valuables to save. It is during his search that he stumbles upon the trunk, which he suspects holds the key to Falkland's identity. Caleb writes that upon seeing it he "forgot the business upon which [he] came, the employment of the servants, and the urgency of general danger" (138). Upon seeing the trunk, Caleb forgets that he is a servant, or at least dissociates himself from them. He came into the attic as a servant, but upon seeing the trunk, he realizes that he has sole access to his master's private identity. He cannot control himself and risks burning up in a fire to gain access to the power of knowledge.

While the act of writing Falkland's life is treasonous, Caleb does not seem to recognize this and instead presents it as a simple autobiography. However, though Caleb's stated goal in the opening chapters is to give us a better understanding of the way in which "the whole fortune of [his] life was linked," Caleb unintentionally succeeds in exposing his own desires to mimic Falkland and perhaps take some of Falkland's power. *Caleb Williams*, like *The Castle of Otranto*, provides a form by which one may understand the pressure on the hero to rectify private and public identity, and in doing so, constructs the foundation by which we can see that Falkland is capable of becoming "out of himself." Upon his first meeting with Falkland, Caleb describes his master as follows: "there was a grave and sad solemnity in his air, which, for want of experience, I imagined was the inheritance of the great, and the instrument by which the distance

between them and their inferiors was maintained. His look bespoke the unquietness of his mind, and frequently wandered with an expression of disconsolateness and anxiety" (7). Caleb's initial impression of Falkland follows the tendency Falkland expects—the mind, or the true identity, of a person is written in his outward appearance. Caleb automatically connects Falkland's outward "solemnity" with Falkland's private identity, that of master, leader, important public figure. It never occurs to Caleb at this moment that his "solemnity" may reflect the distracted mind of a murderer instead of a natural inheritance bequeathed to him upon his birth into the world of the gentry.

Caleb may see Falkland's solemnity as reflecting the nature of an English squire, but the figure actually reflecting that role is Tyrrel, who "might have passed for a true model of English squire" (19), yet Tyrrel's public character conflicts with Caleb's notion of what an English squire should be because Tyrrel is "insupportably arrogant, tyrannical to his inferiors, and insolent to his equals" (19). Regardless of his foibles, Tyrrel's neighbors viewed him as the pinnacle of the gentry and "every mother taught her daughter to consider the hand of Mr. Tyrrel as the highest object of her ambition" (21). His identity as the ruler of his small kingdom was threatened and then removed entirely by the arrival of Falkland, who forced a point of comparison, as Theodore does for Manfred in *Castle of Otranto*. Consequently, "the subjects of [Falkland's] rural neighbour were sufficiently disposed to revolt against [Tyrell's] merciless dominion" (21). Before Falkland, Tyrrel was the undisputed leader of his community. He set the definition of a leader, and his outward behavior and his inner character were never at war. He was who he was with no competition. However, Falkland's arrival set up a point for comparison, and Falkland, though he ultimately turned out to be as villainous as Tyrrel, created a public identity for himself that allowed the community to redefine the term "leader."

When Falkland came into the community, he took over Tyrrel's identity, and since Tyrrel could not remake his identity to match Falkland's, he was left with no other option than to redefine the term leader or destroy Falkland's identity. Tyrrel's loss of identity ultimately exposes the fragility of Falkland's own identity, which was completely based upon the ideals of romance and outward construction. When Tyrrel beats Falkland outside the town assembly meeting, Caleb explains, "To Mr. Falkland disgrace was worse than death. The slightest breath of dishonour would have stung him to the very soul. . . . He wished for annihilation, to lie down in eternal oblivion, in an insensibility, which, compared with what he experienced was scarcely less enviable than beatitude itself" (100). Without his good name, Falkland does not want to exist. His identity is completely contingent upon the perceptions of others. Falkland was "too deeply pervaded with the idle and groundless romances of chivalry, ever to forget the situation, humiliating and dishonourable according to his ideas, in which he had been placed on this occasion" (301). Before the point at which Falkland is beaten by Tyrrel, his public and private identities reflect one another, but once Falkland kills Tyrrel in an act of revenge and in a belated attempt to protect his public identity, he is now faced with the knowledge that there are two Falklands, the one people see and the one that they do not. From that point on, he works to extract completely the one that they do not know, leading to his ultimate burial of the private identity in the trunk and the threatened burial of Caleb once it is inside him. Like Manfred, however, Falkland cannot stand the pressure of hiding the gap between his identities and begins to fall apart.

Falkland's vulnerability would seem to suggest, as Ellis argues, that those who base their self worth on their private identities are more stable and less likely to engage in tyranny, and Caleb's opening description of himself would seem to support that view as it echoes the qualities

expressed by Theodore in *Otranto*—though Caleb is raised poor, he is virtuous. Unlike Theodore, however, Caleb shows a marked interest in both public and private identity in his description, suggesting that he might not be the clear representative of a life based on fulfilling the needs of private identity as Ellis suggests. Caleb describes himself as follows:

> I was born of humble parents, in a remote county of England. Their occupations were such as usually fall to the lot of peasants, and they had no portion to give me, but an education free from the usual sources of depravity, and the inheritance, long since lost by their unfortunate progeny! of honest fame. I was taught the rudiments of no science, except reading, writing, and arithmetic. But I had an inquisitive mind, and neglected no means of information from conversation or books. My improvement was greater than my condition in life afforded room to expect. (5)

Caleb's description of himself suggests two things—first that his own identity was bound up in his ability to maintain "an honest fame" but second that though his condition was outwardly humble, he still maintained the qualities that gentlemen should seek to possess. His focus on both these aspects, the public representation of identity and the private perception, becomes significant when he takes on the knowledge of Falkland's private identity, leading Falkland to take over the construction of Caleb's public identity, as he makes sure that Caleb is first branded a thief and then forced to live in various forms of disguise while attempting to escape Falkland's wrath. In an effort to regain control of his own identity, Falkland must strip away Caleb's, but in doing so, he encourages Caleb to find his own power and complete the usurpation. Although Caleb shows an interest in public identity from the beginning of the novel, Falkland encourages and magnifies that interest by threatening Caleb's public identity. In the end, he leaves Caleb

with no other choice but to preserve and improve his own public identity through the destruction of Falkland's.

The relationship between the two characters and the power inversion that occurs between them may best be understood in the construction of the tale itself. In the first volume of *Caleb Williams*, Godwin, following a traditional romantic plotline, establishes the importance of public appearance in the construction of identity. However, the use of the conventional eighteenth-century plot line in contrast with the later more subversive narrative structure presented in the second half of the novel may reflect the disjunction in the characters. Donald R. Wehrs looks at the construction of *Caleb Williams* and its diversion from and simultaneous adherence to eighteenth-century novelistic conventions, and his presentation of the division between the two styles of story, the first volume's conventional presentation of history and the second volume's gritty reality. After exposing the divide, Wehrs argues that the second becomes corrupted by the first:

> Godwin pursues, through Caleb's "memoirs," a deconstruction similar to the hero's, exposing the unwillingness of eighteenth-century "realistic" fiction to trace the "practical effects" of 'the existing constitution of society' by writing a novel that shows the "true" consequences of social circumstances reversing and tendering ironically implausible the standard patterns of fiction from Richardson to Burney. Just as Falkland's descent from nobility to murder inverts *Sir Charles Grandison,* so Caleb's story, originally conceived as a tale of persecution and pursuit ending in the hero's madness, reverses the "virtue rewarded" scheme of *Pamela*. However, the novel's irony toward novel emerges from its generic consistency, from its insistence that novels should really present the true,

> unadulterated consequences of actual conditions. Godwin's revolt, like Caleb's, never moves beyond dependence upon what it reveals to be duplicitous: *Caleb Williams* remains an anti-eighteenth-century novel that is not yet a nineteenth-century novel. (500)

Building upon Wehr's conclusions about the novelistic structure, I would argue that Caleb, in his attempt to differentiate himself from his master, fails, forcing his identity into a replica of his master's. At the onset of his encounters with Falkland, Caleb is inwardly good, in contrast to Falkland's outward goodness. However, through taking ownership of Falkland's identity, Caleb ends up mimicking his master, and finally is left outwardly good, through his revealing of the truth, but inwardly corrupt through his hypocrisy. In the end, Falkland recognizes and rewards Caleb's public victory, but does so in terms that illustrate the destruction of Caleb's privately good identity. He says,

> You have conquered! I see too late the greatness and elevation of your mind. I confess that it is to my fault and not yours, that it is to the excess of jealousy that was ever burning in my bosom, that I owe my ruin. I could have resisted any plan of malicious accusation you might have brought against me. But I see that the artless and manly story you have told has carried conviction to every hearer. (335)

Although Falkland now sees Caleb as a good figure, his description of Caleb as someone who could conquer reflects the shift that has occurred in Caleb's inner identity over the course of the story. Caleb has taken away Falkland's identity and in the end, he is stuck with it, and although it has given him the power in their relationship, it has corrupted him. He says, "I endure the penalty of my crime. His figure is ever in imagination before me. Waking or sleeping, I still behold him. He seems mildly to expostulate with me for my unfeeling behaviour" (336). Like

Manfred, Caleb experiences the ghost of his master and rightful ruler. He cannot be his master, but neither can he be the devoted servant. In the end, he complains, "I began these memoirs with the idea of vindicating my character. I have now no character that I wish to vindicate" (337). Of course, Caleb is talking here of his goodness; however, Falkland's connection of public character with identity throughout the novel and Caleb's intertwining of his public and private identities with Falkland's suggest that Caleb, like Falkland, has been left with the knowledge that only his public identity is noble, and as he has seen, public identity is empty. As Monika Fludernik explains, "Sympathy is an ineluctable need for the individual, but sympathetic involvement, besides elevating humanity to a status of semi-divine fellowship, also carries with it the dangers of infection and corruption, of illegitimate attraction and fatal obsession" (2). Both Caleb and Falkland through their sympathy with one another, or their interrelated concern for the actions and emotions of each other, have infected each other, but the point at which they were joined, the point of murderous hypocrisy, simultaneously gave Caleb power and caused his destruction.

Without a doubt, if the servant's possession of privileged knowledge could be dangerous for the master of the household, it could be unbearable for the servant, at least in William Godwin's estimation. Caleb's possession of his master's private identity allows him to usurp his master's identity, and consequently his power, an act which, in the official ending of the text, causes Caleb much consternation. However, in the unused ending of that novel, Caleb's position as servant-historian has devastating consequences, in that the knowledge Caleb must maintain destroys not only Falkland's public and private identity, but also Caleb's. Caleb's ramblings in this unused scene illustrate the dangers the servant usurper faces:

> I wonder who that Mr. Falkland was, for every body to think so much about him? Do you know? If I could once again be myself, I should tell such tales! -- Some

> folks are afraid of that, do you see, and so—But I never shall—never—never! – I sit in a chair in a corner, and never move hand or foot—I am like a log—I know all that very well, but I cannot help it!—I wonder which is the man, I or my chair? (346)

"Do you know?" Caleb asks his listener, the original servant, Collins, from whom Caleb gleaned his knowledge of Falkland. The pressure of maintaining the secret of Falkland's identity has not only left him unable to "tell such tales" but has stripped him of his identity altogether. He no longer knows his master or himself; more disturbingly, he has lost all sense of his being, of his animacy—"I wonder which is the man, I or my chair." His attempt to capture an accurate picture of reality has thrown him into a world where everything, even his own existence is open to conjecture. There is no identity, no reality for Caleb. "HERE LIES WHAT WAS ONCE A MAN!" (346), laments Caleb in his final moment.

There is something to be said for the fact that Godwin decided not to use this ending to *Caleb Williams*. However, the very fact that Godwin even considered such an ending for Caleb suggests that he was responding to something that he saw in the culture and in the Gothic that earlier authors did not. In most Gothic novels, servants present a moral alternative to the often degenerate master, reflecting not the decayed figures presented in *Caleb Williams* or *The Castle of Otranto* but the noble figure described by Eliza Haywood in her *Present for Servants* in 1769: "A sober, diligent, obedient servant, is a more respectable character, than the greatest nobleman in the land, who fails in his duties to his family and to society, and who lives to no useful or worthy purpose" (Haywood 12). As Haywood's statement suggests, eighteenth-century culture had a propensity to see servants as non-threatening, even reaffirming figures, and many authors, most prominently Clara Reeve, Sophia Lee, and Ann Radcliffe, acknowledge their servants'

connection with the household, their knowledge of family history, and their ability assist their helpless mistresses in the construction of identity. That said, Godwin's unused ending reflects not only the desperate quest for understanding that can come out of the gap between what one is and what one seems as reflected in the novels of the Female Gothic, but also the significant social upheaval that gap can allow. So, if the mistresses in the novels of Reeve, Lee, and Radcliffe extol the virtues of servant identity construction, masters sometimes fear, and rightfully so, the power the servants wield in the household.[13]

While masters may concern themselves with the fear of social rebellion, mistresses are merely concerned with establishing their own societal position. Before they can concern themselves with potential usurpation, they must first gain control of their households and their own identities. In the two chapters that follow this discussion, I will discuss the female characters' attempt to harness the power of their servant's constructive ability to recapture control of their public identities and gain control of the household. The power they acquire for themselves will be short lived, however, and we will see women writers coming full circle, returning to the fears of usurpation Walpole and Godwin expose here. First, women have to gain that control, however, and to do so they must start by gaining control of the construction and distribution of their own histories, for unlike Manfred, who hides his history by refusing to tell it, the female characters in my next chapter would be happy to share their histories; they are just denied an audience.

Notes

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[1] See Dror Wahrman. *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in the Eighteenth Century*. (New Haven: Yale UP, 2004).

> For the modern era, who a person "really *is*" invokes a person's true, essential self. . . . When eighteenth-century Britons like John Hill and James Boswell used this phrase, as we saw both do, what it connoted for them was indeed, as they insisted, a literal transformation, but it was one predicated on a looser and more mutable sense of what a person's identity was to begin with. What made such views about the doubling, splitting, or transmigrating of identities possible, and to some even plausible, was a non-essential notion of identity that was not anchored in a deeply seated self which is what rendered it so different from what was to follow.
>
> Nothing, perhaps, illustrates this difference more visibly than where so many eighteenth-century people did locate the semblance of an anchor of personal identity: *clothes*. (176-177)

[2] See my discussion of the distinctions between Male and Female Gothic on pages 10-15. See also Anne Williams, *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995) and Kate Ferguson Ellis, *The Contested Castle* (Urbana: University of Illinois P, 1989).

[3] Other authors, such as Defoe and Goldsmith, had presented such inversions in their works and shown the dangers of such an inversion. However, none of their works presents the upper class as innately noble. In *Roxana*, Amy takes over the position of her mistress in order to deceive Roxana's servant-girl daughter. The daughter ultimately realizes that Amy is not her mother, but not because of any innate characteristic expressed by Amy, instead, by accident. After taking on the role of an upper class woman, even that of a fallen woman, Amy becomes tyrannical and brutal. Thus, Amy's decline into brutality illustrates her inability to assume that social position. In *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Goldsmith presents us with another inversion—his nobleman takes

the form of a lower class apprentice. In this instance, the nobleman does not lose his characteristic goodness, but in his lower class guise, he is accused of crimes that he did not commit. He leaves his position not because of ambition, but because he wants to experience the freedom of the lower classes.

[4] See Martin Kallich. *Horace Walpole* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1971) and R. W. Ketton-Cremer, *Horace Walpole: A Biography* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell, 1966).

[5] See Kallich 8.

[6] Timothy Mowl makes the claim in *Horace Walpole: The Great Outsider* (London: Murray, 1998); George Haggerty makes it in "Literature and Homosexuality in the Late Eighteenth Century: Walpole, Beckford and Lewis," *Studies in the Novel* 18.4 (1986): 341-52; E. J. Cleary makes a veiled assertion in her preface to *The Castle of Otranto* claiming "Walpole, by now a confirmed bachelor, is arraigned for the 'effeminacy' of the defence of his cousin [Henry Conway], which is taken to betray an unhealthy adoration well known in fashionable circles" (xxix); and Eve Kosofsky Sedgewick makes the argument in *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. (New York; Columbia UP, 1985): 92.

[7] See Eino Railo. *The Haunted Castle: A Study of the Elements of English Romanticism*. (London: Routledge, 1927); and, A.M. Killen. *"L'evolution de la legende de Juif errant," Revue de la Literature Comparee* 5 (1925): 5-36.

[8] Walpole's interest in servants and their behavior extended beyond literature. In several of his letters, he shows concerns for the ways that masters behave in front of their servants and the effects that the behavior has on the servants. See his letter to George Montegu, September 22, 1765, in which he is concerned with the French habit of discussing "free thinking" in front of

their servants; and his letter to John Chute October 3, 1765, in which he discusses French servants' irreverent habits of dress.

[9] Burke calls the support for revolution "seditious, unconstitutional doctrine" and writes

> The people of England will not ape the fashions they have never tried; nor go back to those which they have found mischievous on trial. They look upon the legal hereditary succession of their crown as among their rights, not as among their wrongs; as a benefit, not as a grievance; as a security for their liberty, not as a badge of servitude. The look on the frame of their commonwealth, *such as it stands*, to be of inestimable value; and they conceive the undisturbed succession of the crown to be a pledge of the stability and perpetuity of all the other members of our constitution. (111)

See Chapter 4 of this document for further discussion of this issue.

[10] In *Reflections* Burke writes:

> In obtaining and securing their power, the assembly proceeds upon principles the most opposite from those which appear to direct them in the use of it. An observation on this difference will let us into the true spirit of their conduct. Everything which they have done, or continue to do, in order to obtain and keep their power, is by the most common arts. They proceed exactly as their ancestors of ambition have done before them. Trace them through all their artifices, frauds, and violences, you can find nothing at all that is new. They follow precedents and examples with the punctilious exactness of a pleader. They never depart an iota from the authentic formulas of tyranny and usurpation. (277)

[11] For an extended discussion on the ways in which servants misappropriate power see Chapter 4 of this document.

[12] See Marilyn Butler. *Burke, Paine, Godwin, and the Revolution Controversy*. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984): 149-78.

[13] Bruce Robbins points out that servant characters did not always reflect those notions, and that it was not until their appearance in the novel that servants, particularly servant narrators, gained respectability. Basing his points upon Robert Alter's analysis of servants in drama and literature, *Rogue's Progress*, Robbins argues "Thanks to the insidious immediacy of the narrator's hold over the reader, the same 'low-life' figure whom the play condemns as a 'scoundrel' can disarm criticism and establish a subversive right to fellowship [in the novel]" (93).

Chapter 2

The Servant Historian and the Reconstruction of Maternal Identity

> They allow us Poetry, Plays, and Romances, to divert us and themselves, and when they would express particular esteem for a woman's sense, they recommend history; tho' with submission, history can only serve us for amusement and a subject of discourse. For tho' it may be of use to the men who govern affairs, to know how their fore-fathers acted, yet what is this to us, who have nothing to do with such business? Some good examples indeed are to be found in history, tho' generally the bad are ten for one; but how will this help our conduct, or excite in us a generous emulation? Since the men being the historians, they seldom condescend to record the great and good actions of women; and when they take notice of them, 'tis with this wise remark that such women acted above their sex. By which one must suppose that they would have their readers understand, that they were not women who did those great actions, but that they were men in petticoats.
>
> Mary Astell, *The Christian Religion*[1]

Although the subject of the Gothic novel's historically displaced setting has been widely addressed in modern criticism of the genre,[2] and while the question of whether that traditional romantic displacement offered appropriate moral instruction was thoroughly considered during the eighteenth century,[3] what has not been considered is the transmission of history within the Gothic novel, particularly as it relates to servant historians. In his discussion of servant exposition, Bruce Robbins claims that "Servants speak on behalf of the family, its past, its continuity over the generations . . . But what they expose in this way . . . is something far from idyllic; the story of their own exclusion, their own 'exposition'" (112). Robbins argues that servants, though briefly powerful in their narrative control, exhibit through that control their own exclusion from the family— their own status as outsider. Robbins's point is a good one, particularly in terms of the novels I discuss in the previous chapter; however, in the context of the Gothic written by women his point must be modified. In the Gothic novels of Clara Reeve, Sophia Lee, and Ann Radcliffe, servant exclusion fully manifests only once the heroine

internalizes the history presented by the servant and makes the story her own. Although distinguished from the upper classes and motivated by different ambitions than the novel's central figures, the servant is not excluded from the family, as Robbins suggests, because in the Gothic *the family* often does not exist. We see in the Gothic a memory of family or the façade of family, both exhibited through the relation between the heroine and her detached father or between the heroine and her evil uncle, but those false families stand as only a reminder that something is missing. What is missing, I will argue, is maternal history, a type of history to which servants, because they are connected to the household, have access and through which they obtain their narrative power. The ultimate goal of the servant historian is to rescue the Gothic heroes and heroines from the immoral world constructed by the false family and return them safely to the structured, secure, true family, and it is not until the servant creates the family, through his transmission of maternal history, that the main character can move forward and the servant figure can be excluded. So, in the Gothic, the exclusion of which Robbins speaks does occur, but it occurs as a process of construction and exclusion.

To understand the function of the servant historian and this process of construction and exclusion, we must begin by considering the traditional role of the servant historian in literature and its importance within eighteenth-century culture at large. The servant-historian type was well established before *The Castle of Otranto* appeared. It is a long-standing tradition, as has been illustrated by Erich Auerbach and Bruce Robbins in their works on servants in literature[1]. Robbins, for example, recognizes that servant narrators are a staple of literature, arguing that they are "A sort of permanent residue, always already anachronistic, they seem inseparable from precedent, convention, and self-conscious literariness" (34). He uses this premise as the centerpiece of his discussion on the different roles adopted by servants and the effect that those

roles have on some texts of the periods, pointing to Auerbach's investigation of servants, which considers the servant and master relationship in *The Odyssey*. Auerbach focuses on the fact that Odysseus is recognized when he returns from his voyage by a faithful servant, Euryclea, who knows him when she sees his scar. Robbins follows Auerbach to argue that the purpose of the servants' involvement in Odysseus's recognition and return to power results from a desire to return to a "golden age" when kingship was respected, and he argues:

> From a historical perspective that does not assume . . . the calm stability of the Homeric world, the servants who so oddly surround Odysseus' homecoming might appear as oblique defenders of the dying system of kingship, which was "the agent of the community principle." In defending Odysseus against the suitors, his servants would also be defending the people of Ithaca against a rapacious, expropriating aristocracy. Odysseus would in fact be the agent of his servants, then both in the formal sense—their recognition places him back at the head of the community . . . empowers him—and in the sense that his restoration could be associated with the return and renewal of traditional popular rights to the land. (31)

The servant's position as historian is, then, according to both Robbins and Auerbach, a reflection of societal fears surrounding a perceived diminishing of the power structure—a reflection that becomes particularly evident in eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century British novels. Robbins explains one reason behind eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century novelists' dependence on long-term servants; he claims, "At a time when the majority of servants changed positions every year or two, the literary prevalence of long-serving family retainers may have stemmed both from paternalist illusions and from their peculiar usefulness as figures of family

continuity. They seem to be as ubiquitous as families themselves" (92). According to Robbins, the servants and the families are bound together in the fiction and share in narrative duties. In fact, it would be impossible to imagine one without the other.

Because the servant historian type reflected a generalized fear of shifting power relations, it served as a convenient addition to the Gothic landscape; however, beyond providing a convenient literary type, servant historians also recall instances of servant-master relations in eighteenth-century culture: instances which would seem to argue against the restorative, empowering type that Auerbach and Robbins suggest. In fact, on the whole, servants' relation to family history often was represented as dangerous and intrusive in the fiction, examples of which I explore in my previous chapter, as well as in the non-fiction of the period. As J. Jean Hecht points out, the eighteenth-century master-servant bond still retained some of its medieval flair but was largely becoming a contractual, economic relationship. Of course, that shift did not prevent the idealized version of the servant-master relationship from being promoted by Robert Dodsley and others in their guides to servant behavior, and Hecht argues, "The master might expect fidelity and attachment from his domestics no less than from the other members of his family. They were supposed to guard his secrets, defend his good name against calumny and hostile criticism, and in general make his interests their own" (75). Despite the fact that servants were *supposed* to protect the history of the family, their shifting economic position and its propensity to expose families to social danger could not be ignored.

Indeed, servant handbooks of the period often recognize the dangerous power of servants' storytelling. Eliza Haywood wrote in her *Present for Servants*, "Never tell the affairs of the family you belong to; for it is a sort of treachery, the ill consequences of which you may be very

fatal, and occasion mischief that you cannot be aware of" (13). Likewise, in his poem *Servitude* Robert Dodsley warns:

> But above all be careful to conceal
>
> What passes in the House in which you dwell;
>
> Your Master's House his Closet ought to be,
>
> Where all are Secrets which you hear or see;
>
> Things which may seem of smallest Consequence,
>
> Ought not by any Means be carried thence;
>
> For he who indiscreetly babbles small Things,
>
> May be suspected of the same in all things. (25)

Finally, Jonathan Swift's satirical *Directions to Servants* illustrates the power that servant historians wield in the eighteenth-century household: "In order to learn the Secrets of other Families, tell your Brethren those of your Master's; thus you will grow a favorite both at home and abroad, and [be] regarded as a Person of Importance" (34).

If servant narrative posed such a threat to the good name of the household, then the question must be considered: why would Gothic female novelists place such emphasis on their ability to maintain and transmit history? Part of the answer may lie in eighteenth-century conceptions of history and the historian's role and the growing debate about the appropriate means of exploring history. As Daniel R. Woolf points out, before the eighteenth century:

> Historical details were contained in and conveyed by external authorities (by and large chronicles, the classic authors, and of course the Bible). Among the educated they were quoted selectively and often decisively in oral or written rhetorical contexts arising from political, judicial, religious, and pedagogical

> dialogues or disputes. A small number of individuals possessed broad knowledge of the past, but very few, if any thought about the past as a whole as a discrete and meaningful field over which constructive thought could be exercised. (36)

This was the case, Woolf argues, because history before the eighteenth century was largely presented as "story principally for the purposes of moral edification or entertainment, with examples and models to be absorbed by the individual readers/listeners. The story itself was secondary to the icons that populated it; little more than a vessel to make the historical example more palatable" (36). Historic story served a morally didactic purpose and was important merely as a representation of the deeds of great individuals, icons. It was a conduit through which the names of great men could be passed. However, the function of history in the lives of its readers was ever shifting, as during the eighteenth century, history was a growing discipline. In fact, M. G. Sullivan points out, "The role and function of historical writing and the self-understanding of the writer of history was always unstable during the eighteenth century. . . . History was thus diffused through many channels" (145).

As the discipline struggled to define itself, history, or more precisely historians, also struggled to compete with the novel in the new publishing marketplace. Woolf explains that, after the Restoration, history tended to grow in a "public rather than private direction" as "historical knowledge [moved] out of the library and the closet and into the marketplace, the dining room, and the garden" (37). He argues that this movement into the public realm encouraged history to expand, allowing it to consider deeper connections between communities and events and "facilitated the telling of multiple kinds of stories about the past" (43). He points out that "by the 1700s, the sharpest historical thought could slice through the past from many different angles" (43). David Richter takes this idea a step further, explaining:

> To the Englishmen of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the primary use of history was as a source of ethical *exampla*. And while English historians of the later eighteenth century were committed to understanding the past, understanding it meant more than merely recording as annalists its follies and barbarities: it meant coming to terms with the inner logic of the age, with the way its values hung together as various aspects of a single culture. (82)

This new understanding of history allowed for different voices to be heard, and ultimately supported the women Gothic novelists' use of the servant as a reliable source for history; however, while movements were made toward diversifying historic understanding and considering new ideas, women were still largely excluded from history and its production.

They are excluded because eighteenth-century male critics promoted historic knowledge as a tool for improving their understanding of their own time, and eighteenth-century culture at large often privileged the practical applications of historic knowledge, applications which tended to exclude women. "Roman history," Pamela Perkins argues, "was inescapably connected to contemporary politics in the eighteenth-century British view, and there was a clear sense that the main lessons that boys would gain from it was the knowledge of how to be right-minded, active citizens" (249). She continues, "That such studies were instrumental in this growth is made clear by [Vicesimus] Knox's insistence that a boy educated without a thorough grounding in the classical past will be weak and effeminate" (249). Perkins's findings reflect the widespread eighteenth-century belief that Mary Astell illuminates in her comment presented at the beginning of this chapter. Men need knowledge of history to help them govern. They must know of wars and political acts because that knowledge will guide their decisions, but such information was deemed inappropriate for women. Astell writes, "It may be of use to the men who govern

affairs, to know how their fore-fathers acted, yet what is this to us, who have nothing to do with such business?" (293).

While some women were involved in the mainstream, scholarly production of history, they were by and large excluded from those types of historic observation, focusing instead on more personal, family histories. As Isobel Grundy explains, "Women's history before the nineteenth century— history written about, or by, or for women— is generally assumed to be non-existent, a classic absence of silence. Examination, however, shows that the presumed absence is merely an absence of what we have mistakenly expected to find." (126) She continues, "Women used, modified or originated such genres as epic or fictionalized history, like (probably) Elizabeth Cary, Lady Falkland; biography, like Lady Falkland's daughter (either Anne or Mary Cary) and Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle; scandalous court memoirs, like Delarivier Manley; and family history, like Lady Anne Clifford and Cassandra Willoughby, later Duchess of Chandos" (126).

The last type of history mentioned by Grundy, "family history," is the most significant to the Gothic novel and to the function of the servant historians. Eve Tavor Bannett points out that since true history was often too corrupt for the malleable spirits of women readers, female authors often displaced novels into the past. She writes, "Rather than take true history for their pattern . . . women writers would project the mores, values, and concerns of their own contemporaries onto an imagined ancient of Gothic past or clothe their examples in the eighteenth-century dress of 'familiar histories'" (59). Certainly this is often the case, but in the Gothic novels, this use of "familiar history" is a bit more complex. Bannett argues:

> What better instrument to furnish [women] with such ideas than narratives that portrayed them in their familiar situations as daughters, wives, mothers, and mistresses of the family and which showed them contending with the sort of

> issues and choices they would, in all probability, have to confront themselves? "Familiar histories" offered women more useful examples than "true histories," both because they were familiar, in the sense of dealing with situations with which women were well acquainted, and because they were familiar in the older, eighteenth-century sense of "pertaining to the family" and to the behavior due among members of a family household. (60)

Bannett's assertion works well outside the Gothic genre, but one of the key elements of the Gothic novel is the absence of the mother figure. The "family history" Grundy speaks of is not often available in the Gothic, and in most cases it is what must be discovered, reconstructed, and presented as the exemplum for future generations.

The limited access to "familiar history" reflects a larger problem with the preservation of history in eighteenth-century society at large. According to Woolf, while women did not consistently take part in scholarly, published historic studies, they played an important role in detailing family history. In fact, he argues, "women were sometimes the principal source for basic information about lands, estates, and buildings whose histories had been complicated through marriage and alienation" (654). Woolf's assertion can be understood through Charlotte Turner Smith's aged encyclopedia of family knowledge Mrs. Rayland, who "had peculiar satisfaction in relating the history of the heroes and dames of her family" (15). After detailing Mrs. Rayland's fascination with her own family's portraits, Smith compares the matriarch to Sir Roger De Coverly, who, according to *The Spectator*,[4] treated all of his visitors to his portrait hall and then explained the portraits' history. For Sir Roger De Coverly, such interest in his family history allows him the opportunity to both share the dignity of his family line and explore their curious behaviors, even though he finds them somewhat embarrassing.

While Sir Roger may have considered his family history a form of curious entertainment, the interest in the family history for women like Mrs. Rayland was not one of mere curiosity. It was one of necessity. Woolf explains, "Genealogical pursuits also provided a means for women to counteract the anomaly in the English legal system that acknowledged them as kin for the purposes of inheritance but overlooked them in the written record of descents, which stressed the male line" (654). Family history, then, became a powerful economic tool through which women could claim their property, and the maintenance of that history was a matter of social and economic life and death. Family history, for women, was not merely a tool by which they learned to govern, but a means of social, economic protection—it could be attached to tangible results. The history of the family is the mother's history, a maternal history. Keeping this family history became a mother's duty to herself and to her daughters. It served as a maternal record that lasted beyond marriage and changing surnames and in spite of primogeniture.

This historic knowledge, however, was in constant conflict with the paternal, published versions of history which threatened to replace and undermine maternal history. As Woolf argues, "The seventeenth-century antiquary John Aubrey saw this sort of traditional knowledge [maternal history] in decline, and he explicitly connected its marginalization from history proper with rising literacy, especially among women who had allowed book learning to interfere with their memories" (653). So, while maternal history could protect women's rights to family assets, it was particularly vulnerable to modification and erasure.

A more detailed account of Sir Roger from Joseph Addison's *Spectator* 110 exposes this modification of maternal history in terms that will be useful to the exploration of the Gothic. In this piece, the Spectator presents the history of his friend Sir Roger, who lives near a ruined abbey. Sir Roger's servants warn the Spectator not to enter the Abbey because it is haunted.

The Spectator expresses no surprise that the servants would imbue this place with unearthly qualities because its sublime grandeur lends itself to those sorts of ruminations.[5] While the servants' superstitions provide fodder for the Spectator's musings on the underclass's educational needs, the Gothic atmosphere and the servants' responses to it cause more practical and tangible problems for the Spectator's friend Sir Roger, who

> has often told me with a great deal of Mirth, that at his first coming to his Estate he found three Parts of his House altogether useless; that the best Room in it had the Reputation of being haunted, and by that means was locked up; that Noises had been heard in his long Gallery, so that he could not get a Servant to enter it after eight a Clock at Night; that the Door of one of his Chambers was nailed up, because there went a Story in the Family that a Butler had formerly hang'd himself in it; and that his Mother, who lived to a great Age, had shut up half the Rooms in the House, in which either her Husband, a Son, or Daughter had died. (170)

For the purposes of the Gothic novel, this anecdote provides insight into the conflict between paternal and maternal history and the servant's role in the maintenance of maternal history. The history presented here is not the paternal history of war and politics, these are the notions Sir Roger reports with pride when discussing his family portrait collection. The history presented in this instance cannot promote morality through example. Nor is this history a flattering portrait of maternal history, but then this story is provided by Sir Roger through Addison, neither of whom is impressed by the preservation of maternal history and both of whom see this type of information as superstitious curiosity.[6] In this exploration, however, we are allowed glimpses into the maternal history of genealogy (the deaths of "her Husband, a Son, or Daughter").

Further, students of the Gothic also understand, or at least hope, that there must be more behind the "Reputation of being haunted" or the "Noises . . . in his long Gallery" or the suicidal butler, but neither Sir Roger nor Addison feels the need to explain, and the knowledge which may or may not be of importance to the history of the place and the family dies with the female head of household (Sir Roger's mother), and that history which is retained by the servants is soon silenced by Sir Roger.

For Sir Roger the superstition in the household is detrimental, even evil, and it must be removed from the home. "Upon the Death of his Mother" Addison explains that Sir Roger "ordered all the Apartments to be flung open, and *exorcised* by his Chaplain, who lay in every Room one after another, and by that Means dissipated the Fears which had so long reigned in the Family" (emphasis mine, 170). Sir Roger sees the female historical knowledge not only as an inconvenience, but as an evil that threatens to undermine the modern home he hopes to create for himself. He is forced to respond to maternal history, which he considers superstitious, with another superstitious act, exorcism, in order to convince the family to live in the place without fear— family here referring to the servants as well as any of Sir Roger's relatives. The literal definition of exorcism is "to clear (a person or place) of evil spirits; to purify or set free from malignant influences" (OED 2). Here he is driving away the malignant spirit of his mother. He is purifying his home of her memory and of the residual family history retained by the servants, leaving only his pure, paternal version of history in the place of her evil maternal history. To gain control of his household, he has to construct his own singular history of the house, spirit free, memory free, in which he is the champion of the family, in which he is the moral center, in which he is the "icon" of which Woolf speaks above. He literally cannot coexist with the

competing histories, but must construct a story in which he is the hero, an history which Addison has written for him.

Sir Roger's problem with the servants' history may result not necessarily from the history itself, but from the type of history that the servants choose to relate—that of scandal, of horror. Although Addison focuses on the dangers of superstition reflected through the servants' understanding of history, Sir Roger's problem illustrates a larger point that Reeve picks up in *The Old English Baron*—paternal history ignores or subverts that which does not tend toward general importance. It focuses on the global, rather than the specific, or to return to Woolf's argument, on the icon rather than on the story. In doing so, paternal history tends to construct an incomplete narrative, and it is in this incomplete narrative that maternal history is lost or misplaced.

However, by the eighteenth century, having the victor's version of history was no longer enough. As Woolf points out,

> By 1700 . . . details about the past traded at a much higher rate in public and domestic settings, even where not much depended on their possession. They circulated textually, verbally, graphically, and tangibly with such frequency and velocity that it was possible to *think* in ways that were fundamentally historical. And there were, among the possessors of such erudition, enough internalized reference points, and sufficient sense of their dynamic interconnection, for there to develop that previously missing mental category of historical knowledge, eventually extended to nature as well as human action. (36)

History, if it were to be moral, if it were to be scholarly, had to reflect that "dynamic interconnection." It had to be complete, and that completion included maternal history. True,

Sir Roger's simple desire to use portions of his house is innocent enough, but the underlying problem with Sir Roger's story is that he revises history to suit his own purposes. The exorcism may have convinced the servants to work in those rooms, but it could not remove the horrors that happened there— from the space, from the servants' memories, or from his family history. Further, while Sir Roger's desire to purge the dreadful history from his house suits his immediate purposes, it creates a gap between the past and the present, a fissure into which the Gothic can seep.

Gothic depends on the loss of history, on the gap in knowledge, and acts such as Sir Roger's are those which encourage that loss. We see this in Reeve, Lee, and Radcliffe, each of whom attempts to undo what Sir Roger and those like him have done by reinstating maternal history and presenting that history to the heroine, thus allowing her to see herself as a complete person, horror and all. Because the Gothic is notoriously lacking in mothers— the traditional purveyors of maternal history— the maternal history must be taken up by the servants, who like the mother, have ties to the home and access to female historic knowledge. Through their presentation of maternal history, servants are able not only to help the heroine, or the hero in the case of Reeve's novel, reestablish her own economic and social standing but construct a family, for the end result of the servant historian's presentation of knowledge is not merely to help the heroine understand herself but also to return the mother, either through the presentation of the mother's story as in Reeve and Lee or in the literal presentation of the mother as in Radcliffe.

Clara Reeve and the Reconstruction of a Baron

In *The Old English Baron,* Clara Reeve reconsiders Horace Walpole's blending of the Romance and Novel genres. While Reeve praises Walpole's intentions in his construction of a new genre, she seeks to revise his formula, which she claims "palls upon the mind" and lacks

"probability" (41).[7] Abby Coykendall explains, "Reeve inaugurates the now proverbial lineage of the Gothic genre—placing Walpole at its head and laying claim to the new literary pedigree—only to forsake the genealogy that she seems to sanction and fashion her work into exactly what Walpole means *Otranto* not to be: plausible fiction" (444). Reeve wants to improve this new genre by removing some of what she terms "machinery" and focusing on the construction of realistic romance (41). She argues that her novel

> is the literary offspring of the Castle of Otranto, written upon the same plan, with a design to unite the most attractive and interesting circumstances of the ancient Romance and the modern Novel, at the same time it assumes a character and manner of its own, that differs from both; it is distinguished by the appellation of a Gothic Story, being a picture of Gothic times and manners. (40)

Reeve sees in this new form the potential for social improvement, and in her preface, she discusses the significant role that history can play in the construction of truth, writing, "History represents human nature as it is in real life. . . . Romance displays only the amiable side of the picture; it shews the pleasing features, and throws a veil over the blemishes" (40). While Reeve draws a sharp distinction in her preface to this novel, she later elaborates on the connection between Romance and History in *The Progress of Romance*, writing, "The effects of Romance, and true History are not very different. When the imagination is raised, men do not stand to enquire whether the motive be true or false. – The love of glory has always a certain enthusiasm in it, which excites men to great and generous actions, and whatever stimulates this passion, must have the credit of the actions it performs" (102). History encourages moral instruction, an attribute particularly suited to *The Old English Baron*, which was titled *The Champion of Virtue* in its first edition. Indeed, history, and the construction of history, is the central focus of Reeve's

reconsideration of Walpole's new genre, and it is only through a consideration of the types of history Reeve presents that we can understand her intent in the novel and the significant role her servants perform.

Clara Reeve is the first Gothic novelist to present a motherless household, and accordingly, the Gothic household of *The Old English Baron* is one that lacks maternal history. Like *Otranto*, *The Old English Baron* is a novel about the exposure of history and thus identity, but Reeve changes Walpole's formula by presenting exposure as a means of differentiating between paternal and maternal history. While characters of all the classes relate histories during the novel, Reeve makes a distinction among the types of histories related by the different classes, and it is largely in the distinction among the histories that Reeve's intention for the servant's position as maternal historian becomes clear. The servants of the household carry parts of the history, but while their knowledge of the household is more complete than that of the other characters, their knowledge has been corrupted by the gaps encouraged by paternal history, and the novel becomes a process of discovering the history of Edmund's mother. In *The Old English Baron*, Reeve presents paternal history as that possessed by upper-class usurpers and peasant-class outsiders. The upper-class paternal history has replaced the maternal history of the household, while the peasant-class paternal history has been hidden entirely from view. In both the case of the upper-class paternal history and the peasant-class paternal history, gaps that allow for the Gothic must be filled in order for Edmund to become master of maternal history and his household. To fill in these gaps, Edmund relies upon the help of servant historians and in the process becomes a servant historian himself.

By placing servants in such a powerful role in the text, Reeve is reconsidering the servant character as established in *The Castle of Otranto*. Her servants are no longer silly, bumbling,

potentially dangerous characters who exploit the gap between public and private identity to usurp power. Instead, they are valued members of the household, who rather than exploit the gap created by identity confusion or historic obscurities seek to ensure the proper placement of power. Reeve does not, as Walpole does, use the servant character for comic purposes. In fact, one thing that makes this novel very different from Walpole's is the fact that there are no broken conversations between the servants and the masters. Servants in Reeve's novel cannot bungle their stories or digress from the point, for their histories tie the story together and add coherency, so she disregards the Walpolean pattern for the sake of structure, both its tone and method.

She illustrates the importance of servants' ability to communicate history in Harclay's first visit to the Fitz-Owen manor. On his way to meet Fitz-Owen, Harclay runs into one of Fitz-Owens's servants and asks him several questions: "How long have you lived with the Baron? – Ten Years—Is he a good master? – Yes, Sir, and also a good husband and father. – What family has he?" (51). Harclay's initial question to the servant is intended to gauge the extent of the history between the servant and the master, and ten years seems to be an adequate amount of time to illustrate that the servant is capable of understanding the history of the family and the master's character. Harclay's second question builds from the first, requiring the servant to evaluate the master based on their history together. Because of the servant's history with Fitz-Owen, he is able to answer not only to the master's treatment of servants, but also to his treatment of his family. Harclay's final question, "What family has he?" requires the servant to provide a genealogy for the Fitz-Owen family. What Harclay asks for in this encounter is maternal history, the history of the household.

Harclay next encounters Fitz-Owen himself, and it is in this encounter that we can begin to see the distinction Reeve makes between paternal and maternal history and in the effectiveness

of each. Of the historians in her novel, the least apt are the members of the upper classes, and their presentation of history illustrates the dangers of paternal history. When the people of the upper classes in the novel reveal history, they reveal only what the audience already knows and then incompletely: they relate it to one another in edited, general terms or incorrectly because they are ignorant of the complete history, only having knowledge of the paternal. Fitz-Owen, for instance, repeats the history of Lord Lovel and his family, only after Sir Philip and the audience have heard if from Wyatt. The narrator tells us "He gave a brief account of the principal events that had happened in the family of Lovel during his absence; he spoke of the late Lord Lovel with respect, of the present with the affection of a brother" (52). His recounting was "brief" unlike Wyatt's, which was limited by Wyatt's societal position, but relatively complete. Later readers discover that Fitz-Owen's description of the history must have been very "brief" indeed, for after hearing Oswald's partial history of the Lovels' deaths, Fitz-Owen exclaims "I never heard so much as Oswald had now told me concerning the deaths of the Lord and Lady Lovel; I think it best to let such stories alone till they die away of themselves" (70). Fitz-Owen does not express a great interest in the history of the house or of his predecessor. He does not seek to understand or disprove the account. Like the Addison's Sir Roger, Fitz-Owen expresses a weak respect for maternal history, and he would prefer to allow that history to "die away." He even attempts to have his house exorcized just as Sir Roger does when he sends Edmund down into the east wing to investigate the ghost stories and, he hopes, disprove them. As Sir Roger has done before him, Fitz-Owen tries to have the negative history of his house expunged from the record. However, in doing so, Fitz-Owen has unknowingly encouraged the horrors of the Gothic to enter his home. The history of the Lovels will never disappear. It remains in the servants and in the ghostly resonance in the east wing of the castle, and Edmund's attempted exorcism only

encourages its continuance, for the genealogy of the house, the maternal history, must be recognized; without that recognition horror and chaos ensue.

Unlike Fitz-Owen, Harclay does exhibit an interest in history, especially in collecting it and even in perpetuating it, but once he obtains history, he never passes it along with detail. Instead, he follows the typical masculine, upper-class form of transmission. His final construction of a monument to commemorate his friends reflects not only his understanding of the significance of history, but also his similarity to Fitz-Owens in his ability to gloss over truth for the sake of decorum. As a tribute to his lost friend, he erects a monument inscribed:

> Praye for the soules of Aruthur Lord Lovele and Marie his wife, who were cutoff in the flowere of their youthe, by the trechery and crueltie of their neare kinnesmanne. Edmunde their onlie sonne, one and twentie years after theire deathe, by the direction of Heavene, made the discoverye of the mannere of theire deathe, and at the same time proved his own birthe. He collected their bones together, and interred them in this place: -- A warning and proofe to late posteritie, of the justice of Providence, and the certaintie of Retribution. (159)

Here, Harclay does attempt to present the history of the Lovels' as a warning to posterity in a permanent and public manner, but like most paternal historians, he omits the particulars of the family history— those that take over a hundred pages to explore in the novel itself—and chooses to describe their deaths in metaphor, "cut off in the flowere of their youthe," rather than in honest, if harsh, language. Further, the familial relationship is unclear as Lovel's brother becomes "a kinnesmanne" in Harclay's account, and the genealogy of the household is once again subverted.

The exception to the rule that the upper classes in *The Old English Baron* do not hold on to or share history is Lord Lovel, the usurper. Lord Lovel shares the history of his murderous behavior with Sir Philip and several others when he thinks he is on his death bed. However, while Lovel's recitation of history is complete, his audience is not of his choosing, and Reeve makes it clear that it would be very unnatural for Lovel to want to share his family history with anyone other than a member of his household, a servant. When Harclay tells Lovel that he must confess, Lovel responds "I am surrounded with my enemies. I want to speak to one of my own servants; let one be sent to me" (123). While the surgeon sees nothing out of the ordinary in this request and goes to fetch the servant, Harclay refuses saying, "He shall not speak to any man . . . but in my presence" (123), and the conversation between the Harclay and Lovel turns to a dispute over the servant's right to be the keeper of family history: "Am I not allowed to speak with my own servant, said [Lovel]?—Yes, Sir, you may; but not without witnesses. – Then I am a prisoner, it seems? – No, not so, Sir; but some caution is necessary at present" (123). Lovel clearly sees the servant as the appropriate conduit for family history, a fact that Harclay recognizes and fears, and while Harclay allows Lovel to have visitors during his sickness, the priest and the surgeon, he "obliged the servant to retire with him" saying, "I leave you, Sir, to the care of these gentlemen; and whenever a third person is admitted, I will be his attendant" (123). Clearly, Harclay and Lovel distinguish the significance of the servant's position as family historian, Harclay understanding the danger of allowing a servant to hold on to the history, for as he has seen before, good servants can often be threatened into maintaining a family history for long periods of time.

Unlike the nobility, the peasant classes are less likely to create gaps in history by glossing over connections or omitting them for the sake of decorum; however they too are unreliable

conduits for maternal history because their knowledge of the household is limited and because their outsider, peasant class status leaves them vulnerable and thus hesitant to share their knowledge. In this way, their transmission of history is particular to themselves and to broader notions of power thus reflecting a masculine sense of history.

We see this in Margery Twyford's account. Margery and Andrew Twyford's histories are mingled as Margery retells the events surrounding Edmund's birth, but Reeve informs us that Margery's second-hand account of Andrew's history is correct, at the end of the novel when the two are interrogated and their stories agree, and "there could be no collusion between them, and that the proofs were indisputable" (149). The Twyfords' story illustrates the gory side of peasant-class history and the horrors that can ensue when paternal history allows for gaps in understanding. Andrew's account deals with the tangible, visceral side of the story, as is illustrated by his interaction with the corpse and bones of the dead lady. He and his friend Robin find the Lady Lovel's body, rob it, and bury it. The description of Andrew's encounter with the body is disturbing and gritty:

> As Robin and he were going over the foot bridge, where he found the child the evening before, they saw something floating upon the water; so they followed it, til it stuck against a stake, and found it to be the dead body of a woman. . . . Andrew told me they dragged the body out of the river, and it was richly dressed, and must be somebody of consequence. I suppose, said he, when the poor Lady had taken care of her child, she went to find some help; and, the night being dark, her foot slipped and, she fell into the river and was drowned. (87)

Andrew's account via Margery lacks knowledge of relationship. He can only speculate that the woman is the mother to the child and has no knowledge of her background other than the fact

that her clothing suggested that she was of the upper class. Unlike the "proper" history recorded by Harclay on the monument which describes the lady as "cutoff in the flowere of [her] youthe" (159), Andrew presents Lady Lovel as a corpse, floating haplessly in a river until it is snagged on a stake. There is no romance in Andrew's description of dragging the corpse out of the river or burying it between two trees. Andrew's version is harsh and real. Equally ignoble is his description of the interment; he says to Robin, "I will give you a sheet to wrap the body in, and you may take off her upper garments, and anything of value; but do not strip her to the skin for anything." (87). As soon as he and Robin finish the burial, they decide to "sit down and eat in peace" and "sleep in peace too, for" as Robin says "we have done no harm" (88). They then divvy up their bounty and go their separate ways. They have, however, done harm, for by burying Lady Lovel in secrecy they have literally removed, or hidden, Edmund's access to maternal history, and the gap that they create by the removal forces Edmund out of his household. They provide him with a new one, and with a new mother, but he can never function successfully in that world because his upper-class genealogy haunts him just as surely as his real mother haunts the east wing of the Fitz-Owen manor. His genealogy is undeniable, and even though he does not know it, it creates problems for him both in the home of his adopted parents and in the Fitz-Owen manor when he becomes a servant.

Although Harclay and Fitz-Owen present very different versions of history than the Twyfords, their histories have gaps in common, and it is in the gap that the servant historian gains his significance. Reeve's upper-class historians provide only an "approved," paternal history, one which depends upon metaphor and omission, while her peasant-class historians present literal histories, which lack an understanding of relationship and are often hidden from public knowledge. It falls upon the servant to fill in the gaps created by the omissions of

paternal history and undo the damage that they have done, for the servant, with his foot in the upper-class household and the peasant countryside, understands both types of history and can use each type as it serves his purpose, a purpose that requires the resolution of a family mystery and the reconstruction of the family. They can simultaneously, through their traditional role as long-standing family members, take on the role of the maternal historian and fill in gaps left by the upper-class paternal history, which does not have access to peasant-class history and which glosses over important elements of maternal history. Until the servant can put his knowledge of the outside and the inside worlds together to construct one, coherent maternal history, the mystery will remain unsolved and the household will remain corrupt.

Of course, the most apparent servant historian in *The Old English Baron* is Edmund himself, but before moving to Edmund, readers should first examine Joseph and his position as a servant historian, for it is he who introduces the act of history telling to Edmund, and it is he who sets the stage for Edmund's ultimate decision to search out his maternal history. Joseph first introduces the idea that Edmund may be the son of Lord Lovel after telling the history of the house. He says,

> I must tell you, though I never uttered it to mortal man before; the striking resemblance this young man bears to my dear Lord, the strange dislike his reputed father took him, his gentle manners, his generous heart, his noble qualities so uncommon in those of his birth and breeding, the sound of his voice—You may smile at the strength of my fancy, but I cannot put it out of my mind but that is my own Master's son. (82)

Joseph is able to make a genealogical connection that no one else can make because he is the only servant remaining in the castle that actually knew the Lovels. Furthermore, his knowledge

of Edmund's background and of Edmund's adopted father in particular, allows him to realign and interpret the history in a way that no one else in the novel can, until, of course, Edmund employs the methods of the servant historian to discover his true lineage. Because he has known and loved Edmund's real parents, Joseph's knowledge of their family history guides Edmund in his quest, and he provides Edmund with the tools that he needs in order to succeed. Upon trying to unravel the mystery of Edmund's lineage, Oswald suggests that Lord Lovel "corrupt[ed] the wife of a peasant" in order to become Edmund's father (84). Joseph is taken aback by such an accusation and has the following conversation with Edmund:

> Hold there! said Joseph; my Lord was incapable of such an action: If Master Edmund is the son of my Lord, he is also the son of my Lady. – How can that be? said Edmund. – I don't know, said Joseph; but there is a person who can tell if she will: I mean Margery Twyford, who calls herself your mother. – You meet my thoughts, said Edmund; I had resolved, before you spoke, to visit her, and to interrogate her on the subject. (84)

The accusation to which Joseph responds is important to Edmund's maternal history because in the absence of Edmund's mother, it falls to Joseph to preserve Edmund's genealogy. Joseph knows Edmund's true lineage and is able to share it despite the fact that it has been lost to the accepted, paternal history. Edmund says that he was already planning to "interrogate" Margery before Joseph encouraged the idea, so he is already questioning the "accepted" history; however, his quickness to consider Oswald's point that Lord Lovel must have "corrupted" a peasant girl illustrates that Edmund does not yet have the family knowledge base or the ability to construct a complete maternal history. Since Edmund never knew his real parents, the Lord and Lady Lovel,

his access to that portion of the history is seriously limited, and he needs Joseph to lead him in the right direction and reinforce his decisions so as to view history from multiple levels.

If the ultimate, goal of the servant historian is to rescue the Gothic characters from the Gothic world and help them to construct a moral, historically complete household, then the servant historian that best suits that purpose in this novel is Edmund. Of course, Edmund is largely ensuring his own safety, security, and morality in his development and presentation of a maternal history, but despite his upper-class origins, he remains a servant historian and can shed light on the servant historian's role from the perspective of both the servant historian and the Gothic hero. Edmund clearly does not have the ability to historicize the family on his own. He did not have access to his real mother, and thus she could not pass that knowledge down to him. He learns the skills of the servant historian from Joseph and adapts them to his own purposes.

Edmund's synthesis and presentation of maternal history occurs when he arrives at Harclay's home. After faking his death and escaping from the Lovel home, Edmund approaches Harclay with "a strange story" (106). Aware of the fact that his history provides not only the means for his societal ascension but also the promise of returned social and moral order, Edmund decides to share his history with Harclay only with "only heaven to bear witness between [them]" (107). Further, he refuses any rest or refreshment before he begins his story for as he says, "I cannot eat or drink till I have told my business to your honour" (167). Despite Edmund's desire to protect his maternal history until he has used it to claim his rightful social position, another servant historian, immediately recognizes the significance of Edmund's appearance and springs into action to "tell [all of Harclay's friends] all that he knew relating to Edmund's birth, character, and situation" (107). John Wyatt, the servant in question, presents the story that Edmund is there to present, one of maternal history, and he uses the story to explain the significance of Edmund's

appearance and to provide a character for him. Interestingly, the maternal history that John Wyatt provides differs from the one than Edmund is there to present, thus magnifying the importance of Edmund's move to explain his genealogy to Harclay. Edmund is misrepresented in this scene, just as he has been misrepresented for his entire life, and in order to claim his rightful position, he must rewrite the history that Wyatt is presenting and broaden it with references to his maternal lineage.

Although Reeve respects Edmund's wishes, limiting the conversation to himself, Harclay, and God, she tells us that Edmund "related at large every thing that had happened, recounting every interesting particular which was imprinted on his memory in strong and lasting characters" (107). Here, we see Edmund's servant background affecting his ability to relate history. Rather than briefly explain the history of the Lovels, as Fitz-Owen does, or shockingly share the gory details of their demise, as the Twyfords do, Edmund's story takes place over several hours, and the details of his history elicit emotive response from Harclay: "he clasped his hands together, he lifted them up to heaven, he smote his breast, he sighed, he exclaimed aloud . . . he breathed short . . . he trembled, sighed, sobbed and was almost suffocated with his agitations" (107). Even though Reeve decides not to share the exact nature of Edmund's history, the response that Harclay gives and the outcome of the history becomes the centerpiece of the novel.

Now that the household is ordered and the maternal history has been reestablished, the family has been constructed, and we can return to Bruce Robbins's argument about servant exclusion. He argues that servants expose "the story of their own exclusion, their own 'exposition'" in their narrative control (112). When we examine the closing scene of *The Old English Baron*, his theory holds true. In the closing, celebratory scene of the novel, Reeve emphasizes Edmund's silence: "he could not utter a word," he "had no power to speak his feelings," and he was "still

silent" (156). When he finally does speak, he speaks in a "faltering voice" and in servile language: "My Lord, I am yours! All that I have is at your devotion! Dispose of me as it pleases you best" (156). While his words remain those of a servant, Edmund's position in society has changed substantially, and the family has been restored to order. At this restoration, even Joseph is left with a "faltering voice" as he exclaims, "Now I have lived long enough! I have seen my master's son acknowledged for the heir of Lovel! . . . Long live the heir of Lovel!" (156) From this point on, the difficulty in narration expressed by both Edmund and Joseph becomes irrelevant, for now that they have fulfilled their obligations and returned the family to its secure, moral foundation the remainder of the book deals not with the past but with the future. The servant historians managed to return maternal history and construct the family. They are not excluded entirely from the beginning, but in the end, there is no need for their participation in the construction of history, and thus in the construction of family. Edmund's family will have a new mother in the form of Emma, and his training as a servant historian will ensure that his family will value both paternal and maternal history and the gaps that allow for the Gothic will no longer be admitted.

Ann Radcliffe and the Remembrance of a Mother

Like Reeve, Ann Radcliffe uses servant historians to restore moral order; however, while her novels often hinge on the discovery of maternal history and the reconstruction of the family, the work itself places less emphasis on the transmission of history. In *The Italian*, Radcliffe presents two servant historians, Paulo and Beatrice, both of whom are responsible for the heroine's return to the moral household, but by vastly different means. Beatrice takes the role of the traditional Homeric servant and echoes Joseph in *The Old English Baron*. Her position in this novel is that of maternal reinstatement; she is their life-long family servant, and her longevity gives her access

to maternal history. Paulo, on the other hand, presents history in a more innovative form throughout the novel, but particularly in the history he presents in the Paluzzi, in which he relates the story of the Black Penitents, a history which unbeknownst to him becomes pivotal to unraveling the mystery of maternal history in the novel.

Paulo's function as a pivotal character in this novel has been widely recognized by critics, and as a result this character has received more critical attention than any other Gothic servant. Janet Todd suggests that in exaggerating Paulo's loyalty, Radcliffe is expressing her conservative views of servitude; she is responding to the cultural struggle between masters and servants. James P. Carson, Diego Saglia, and Cannon Schmitt see Paulo's comments as indicative of Radcliffe's nationalistic expression in *The Italian*. They argue that Radcliffe uses Paulo's love of his home to reinforce a rising desire to promote England and Englishness. In a similar strain, but on a different topic, Ronald Paulson and Sue Chapin examine the fear of social upheaval and Radcliffe's response to those fears through *The Italian*. For Paulson, the fear of social upheaval emanates from the violence of the French Revolution and *The Italian* reflects a fear of upheaval and a desire for stability. Although he does not specifically address Paulo, the lower class servant's loyalty to an aristocratic master would fit nicely into his discussion. All critical analysses of Paulo seem to focus on his presence as in some way didactic. Through Paulo, they suggest, Radcliffe is commenting on social customs and injustices. It is in this vein that I choose to approach Paulo, and I would like to add to this discussion the idea that Paulo gains his didactic license through his control of maternal history, for while Paulo fills all of the roles these critics suggest, he is also a powerful force in the construction of identity, and without his presence, the novel's hero and heroine would lose themselves in their Gothic situation and Ellena would never have her name and family connection restored.

Radcliffe subtitles her work *The Confessional of the Black Penitents*, and confession appears as a theme throughout the book but is particularly important to the development of Paulo as servant historian. In the framework story, Radcliffe takes time to describe the elaborate space constructed for confessional in a Catholic church. The space is grand, ornate, and totally alien to the English travelers that look upon it:

> The Englishman looked whither his friend pointed, and observed a confessional of oak, or some very dark wood, adjoining the wall. . . . In the central division was the chair of the confessor, elevated by several steps above the pavement of the church; and on either hand was a small closet, or box, with steps leading up to a grated partition, at which the penitent might kneel, and concealed from observation, pour into the ear of the confessor, the consciousness of crimes that lay heavy on his heart. (3)

For all of the trouble that Radcliffe takes to describe this ornate confessional, she makes little use of it in this novel. Confessions in this novel occur in the courtroom, in the bedroom, in the sitting room, in the dungeon of the Paluzzi, but generally not in the confessional. One of the most compelling, and significant confessions in this novel, in fact, is not a true confession at all, in the sense that the crimes exposed are not presented by the guilty party in question to a priest, but are relayed at second hand by a servant. In the framework story, the confession is presented by the Englishman's Italian friend, who retains a written copy of the confession constructed by a young student who transcribed a story once related to him. However, while the Italian friend gives credit for recording the confession to the young student, the young student's earliest and ultimate source is Paulo, Vivaldi's servant, who presents the story of the confession to his master. Paulo's knowledge of this confession reflects the power of the servant historian:

servants have access to all information, even that information that is not part of the paternal record, and the ability to retain it in ways that other members of society either choose not to or cannot, depending upon their circumstances. The Englishman points out the significance of Paulo's knowledge when he exclaims, "I thought confessions were always held sacred by the priest, to whom they were made," and the Italian replies, "Your observation is reasonable . . . the faith of the priest is never broken, except by an especial command from an higher power; and the circumstances must even then be very extraordinary to justify such a departure from the law" (4). Indeed, Paulo supports this assumption during his retelling of the confession: "What he did confess, Signor, I know not; for the confessor, you now, never must divulge, except, indeed, on very extraordinary occasions. It was, however, something so very strange and horrible, that the grand penitentiary suddenly quitted the chair, and before he reached the cloisters he fell into strong convulsions" (80). The confession presented to the Black Penitents becomes the centerpiece of the novel. However, Paulo is neither priest nor penitent, and his access to this confessional history, which will ultimately be revealed as part of the maternal history, reflects an important point about the servant's ability to store and recollect history.

Paulo begins his story of the confession as a means of providing Vivaldi with basic information about the convent of the Black Penitents but continues it as a means of calming and controlling his master. As he stands outside the ruins of Paluzzi with Vivaldi awaiting the monk, he relates the history. Paulo says, "there are some odd stories told of [the convent of the Black Penitents]; and I am inclined to think this unknown monk must be one of that society, his conduct is so strange" (71). Just as he begins his story, on Vivaldi's urging, the appearance of the mysterious monk interrupts him. A chase after the monk ensues and the story is only picked up again once the master and servant find themselves trapped in Paluzzi's dungeon. After

realizing that they are trapped, Vivaldi becomes despondent and anxious. Acting quickly to recover his master's sensibilities, Paulo decides to revisit his story, for "[h]is master, however, was insensible to all he said, till he mentioned again the convent del Pianto; and this subject, as it seemed connected with the monk, who had hinted the fate of Ellena, interested the unhappy Vivaldi, who withdrew awhile from his own reflections, to listen to a recital which might assist his conjectures" (79). Once again, just as Paulo gets to a central point in his story, the two are interrupted by a ghostly presence, and the history must be postponed. At the end of this section of the history, the narrator tells us: "Vivaldi had no further spirits to enquire for the remainder of Paulo's narrative. Almost despairing for himself, he could not feel an interest concerning strangers; for he had already perceived, that it could not afford him information connected with Ellena" (82). Of course, Vivaldi misinterprets the history, for as we discover later, he is wrong on both counts. He is not interested in traditional paternal history—it does not pertain to his goal of establishing a family; however, Paulo's history is not the history of strangers, and it does indeed relate to Ellena. In fact, it is the history of Ellena's mother and father, the maternal history that the story needs in order to find resolution. Paulo is no more aware of the connection than Vivaldi, but his ability to hold on to a history and his desire to reassert the history later in the novel reflect the significance of the servant's role as historian. It is the servant's duty to maintain the past, no matter how trivial that past may seem to the master, for the master has been trained to believe that the only important history is standard, patriarchal history. The servant is the master's link to an older, more moral home, and the only way that the servant can help the master return to that home is by keeping each piece of history, no matter how unconnected those pieces seem to the master at any given time.

Radcliffe picks up their story again in chapter IX, not by allowing Paulo to finish the

narrative, but by illustrating the power of Paulo's history. After gaining his freedom from Paluzzi, Vivaldi goes to confront Schedoni and force him to reveal Ellena's whereabouts. Until this point in the novel, Vivaldi has no concrete evidence to suggest that Schedoni is anything but a pious confessor. In fact, Radcliffe takes great pains to point out that Schedoni is a man without a history. She writes of,

> a man called father Schedoni, an Italian, as his name imported, but whose family was unknown, and from some circumstances, it appeared, that he wished to throw an impenetrable veil over his origin. For whatever reason, he was never heard to mention a relative, or the place of his nativity, and he had artfully eluded every enquiry that approached the subject, which the curiosity of his associates had occasionally prompted. (34)

Schedoni carefully hides his genealogy. He constructs an "impenetrable veil over his origin." He seems to understand the power of maternal history and attempts to erase his connection to it. It is his erasure of maternal history that allows for the creation of the Gothic in the text and causes familial confusion. The effect of Schedoni's erasure is realized in tangible terms later in the novel when he is incapable of correctly identifying his own daughter. Rather than depending upon maternal history, Schedoni chooses to place his faith in an inanimate object (a portrait) and mistakes Ellena for his daughter. He has successfully removed Ellena's real mother, and he has no servant historian to relay the maternal history to him, so he misreads the connection and suffers the consequences.

Nevertheless, Schedoni's erasure of maternal history serves to empower him early in the story. Although Vivaldi suspects that Schedoni has evil intentions toward Ellena because Schedoni spends so much time with the Marchesa, Vivaldi has no real proof, and the evidence

provided to him suggests exactly the opposite; his fellow monks describe Schedoni as "the pride of our house; he is severe in his devotion, and in self-punishment terrible" (105). Vivaldi can only speculate about Schedoni's involvement, and when he does, he is wrong on most counts, except for those speculations he makes on the basis of the history provided by Paulo. When he confronts Schedoni, Vivaldi accuses him of being the monk in the Paluzzi, which we ultimately find to be untrue. He also questions him about his affiliations with the Black Penitents, however, and it is on that basis that "though he perceived the countenance of the monk suffer some change" (105). Although Schedoni does not verbally acknowledge this portion of his history, his response allows Vivaldi to gain the first true insight to Schedoni's past. This first insight is particularly important, for as the remainder of the novel proves, even Schedoni lacks a true understanding of his own history. Because it offers a portion of the truth, this one insight into Schedoni's history becomes pivotal to the text and to the actions that both Vivaldi and Schedoni take through the remainder of the novel. The story that Paulo provides moves the characters toward the realization of maternal history and toward the reestablishment of the household.

That movement continues through Beatrice's presentation not just of maternal history but of the mother later in the novel. When Ellena first sees Olivia, the nun is "concealed by a black veil, whose transparency, however, permitted the fairness of her complexion to appear" (86). Of course, much has been made of Radcliffe's use of veils and veiling in this novel,[8] but with regards to servant historians, this scene is particularly interesting because it offers a metaphorical view of the Gothic master's relation to maternal history without the servant historian. Ellena is "rendered insensible to every other object in the chapel" by Olivia's appearance but has no reasonable explanation for her feelings other than the woman had a look of "despair" and because of that seems to Ellena to be the only person "in the convent who must be capable of

feeling pity" (87). Ultimately, we discover that the relationship is much deeper than Ellena imagines and begin to suspect that she is drawn to her mother for reasons beyond those which the narrator expresses here. Even naming serves insufficient to add reference to the situation. When Ellena tells Olivia her name, Ellena responds "Di Rosalba . . . do you know any person of my name?" "No" Olivia responds "but your features have some resemblance to those of a friend I once had" (93). Ellena has lost connection to her true family name and maternal history. Because her name has been lost, she no longer fits into Olivia's maternal history, and in a very literal sense, her own mother does not recognize her. The gap inserted by the patriarchal restructuring of history has become so large that the genealogical, maternal history of the family has been broken, and without the servant historian's ability to provide a frame of reference for that attachment through her ability to maintain maternal, household history, the complexity of the relationship may go totally unrecognized, or may remain veiled.

In chapter IX of volume III, Radcliffe allows Beatrice to remove that veil and to move from beloved servant to servant historian. Beatrice appears to relate the story of the Marchese's death to Olivia.[9] However, her presentation of this information, while offering Ellena a bit of freedom, does not offer as much freedom as her next act of history telling. As soon as Beatrice seems to fade into the background after recounting her history, Radcliffe brings her back suddenly with the arrival of Olivia, and it is in this encounter that Beatrice's true power as a servant historian becomes evident. Ellena proceeds to ask Beatrice about some other instances she found curious, when Olivia suddenly recognizes the servant's voice: "'I certainly ought to know that voice,' . . . 'though I dare not judge from your features. Is it, -- can it be possible! – is Beatrice Olca, to whom I speak? So many years have passed'" (377). Although at first not certain of her relation to Olivia, Beatrice soon answers, "My eyes deceive me! Yet there is a strange likeness . . . you

are so like her, lady, yet you are very different too" (377). Upon mutual recognition, Olivia begs Beatrice to explain her relation to Ellena, soon realizing that Ellena is her own daughter. Beatrice is the only connection between Olivia's old life and her new. She is the only character that has been capable of maintaining the maternal history. Through her dedication to Olivia's family, Beatrice has provided an opportunity for the reunification of the family. As with the Euriclea in the *Odyssey*, of whom Auerbach and Robbins speak, Beatrice's knowledge of the family history allows the rightful heirs to find their places again and reestablishes order.

The servants' abilities to reassert domestic, moral order through historical, referential identification not only benefit the heroes and heroines but can have visceral effects upon the villain as well. As the truth of Schedoni's history emerges, he begins to waste away. The narrator tells us that

> some hints . . . which had fallen from Vivaldi, and which occasioned him so abruptly to leave the church, alarmed him. So much terror, indeed, had they excited, that it is not improbable that he would have sealed his secret in death. . . . Since that hour, he had known no peace, and had never slept; he had taken scarcely any food, and was almost continually on his knees upon the steps of the high altar. (109)

Those hints, of course, are of Vivaldi's knowledge of Schedoni's true maternal history, as provided by Paulo, and Vivaldi's accusations produce severe, physical symptoms in the villain. They "had produced a surprising change in [Schedoni's] appearance" and "he resembled a spectre rather than a human being. His visage was wan and wasted, his eyes were sunk and become nearly motionless, and his whole air and attitudes exhibited the wild energy of something—not of this earth" (110). Schedoni does not belong in the moral world, and as the

servants ensure that his interference with maternal history comes to light, his place within the moral world, the world of the living, becomes tenuous. Here, after Paulo's history has started to reveal his sins, Schedoni begins to lose touch with this world, and from this moment on begins a movement out of the moral world, culminating in his suicide. What seems to be his last chance at maintaining a hold in the world is his connection to Ellena; however, that too is destroyed when Beatrice shares her knowledge of maternal history and removes the possibility of a relationship between Ellena and Schedoni. In the end, "a livid [corpse] was all that remained of the once terrible Schedoni," and the servants' history has worked to reinstate the social order (404). The chapters that follow Schedoni's death reflect this return to moral order, and, as with *The Old English Baron*, as soon as the servants' history comes to light and the moral household is reestablished, the remainder of the novel turns away from history and toward the future.

Sophia Lee and a Failed Restoration

While the majority of Female Gothic texts present history and historians offering potential for moral reformation, *The Recess* stands out as an exception. History is vitally important in *The Recess*, for Sophia Lee reworks English Renaissance history to fit a romantic, Gothic plot line; however, the history presented by servant characters in this novel does not lead to the reconstruction of the moral household. Instead, in *The Recess*, Lee argues that there is no moral past from which historians can draw. The servants' presentation of maternal history does not reconstruct the family but instead brings about their destruction. While the heroines of this novel are recognized as the daughters of Queen Mary by both Queen Elizabeth and King James, their maternal history is never publicly acknowledged, and they die without receiving the compensation that Reeve and Radcliffe allotted to their characters. Moral order is never reestablished in Lee's novel and history is destructive rather than restorative. The struggle that

the girls encounter once they learn their maternal history and attempt to construct a household in the face of paternal erasure reflects larger frustrations apparent in the novel itself. In this way, *The Recess* is a reconsideration of paternal history. Lee sets it up as a "true story" of family presented in challenge to the paternal version of events, in this case actual history. She also arranges the novel in epistolary form, a form that would have been acceptable for the transmission of maternal history, a form outside the mainstream historic accounts, allowing the novel to become a battle between maternal history and paternal history. Of course, maternal history is bound to be insufficient in this case because here, maternal history is entirely fictitious; therefore, she cannot possibly allow her characters to construct a stable, enduring family through their knowledge of maternal history, and so maternal history is defeated before it even begins to exert its power. Nevertheless, maternal history puts up a good fight in the novel, and the maternal history presented by her servant historians at the beginning of the work sets the stage for the battle between maternal and paternal history that is explored throughout.

Lee opens her novel by presenting two girls who have spent their lives hidden in a cave. If paternal history seeks to erase or remove that which does not lend itself toward general political importance or if it follows an evolutionary process of elimination, then the cave reflects the notion that paternal and maternal history are at war. These girls have no place in paternal history, which is governed by Elizabeth, so they have been concealed from it, virtually erased altogether. In the standard Gothic novel, Lee's heroines Matilda and Ellinor, because of their moral acumen and upper-class propriety, deserve to be rewarded with recognition, and in fact, Lee seems to leave that option open throughout the novel; however, rather than allowing them the recognition they deserve and restoring the moral social order by reinstating maternal history and filling the gaps created by Elizabeth's paternal history, Lee instead takes everything that the

heroines gain over the course of the novel away from them and leaves their story open to the judgment of the audience.

Lee's decision to complicate the ending of her story is typical of this writer. Early in her literary career, Lee wrote two pieces, "The Chapter of Accidents," a play, and *The Life of a Lover*, a novel.[10] In both of these works, she examines the question of virtue. She presents women who make different choices regarding their virtue, and as April Alliston points out, Lee's desire to allow the audience to make their own decisions opened Lee to criticism. In the preface to *The Life of a Lover*, Lee explains, "At the time when I produced a frail Cecelia, I was so severely censured by the rigid moralists who directed the newspapers, that I should have thought it due to myself to show immediately, by printing these volumes [*The Life of a Lover*, whose heroine maintains her virtue intact], that I had considered both sides of the question" (qtd in Alliston xiv). Similarly, Lee attempts to "consider both sides of the question" in *The Recess* when she allows her heroine narrators to present conflicting stories. As Megan Lynn Isaac points out, "Rather than creating female role-models or presenting an agenda for social change, Lee illustrates the typical problems women encounter in society" (204). Lee, it seems, uses the Gothic to make larger statements about the roles of women in society and about the function of maternal history.

One way that Lee makes her statement is through illustrating that history is not the stagnant repetition of a truth, the knowledge of which leads to one appropriate moral awareness. She does this by presenting conflicting narrative accounts (she is in fact the first author to do so), in the form of Matilda's version of events and Ellinore's version of events, and through these conflicting narratives, Lee forces readers to come to their own conclusion about the difficulties her characters face. As David Punter points out, Lee "does not set out to create her own truth,

but to mould a cogent set of truths out of the elements history has left her. The result is unwieldy . . . but this is because Lee does not shirk the intractable nature of much of her material, and is content to allow mystery and contradiction to stand" (51). For women, moving between the worlds of paternal power and maternal influence, domestic tranquility opens them up to tragedy and loss. Lee illustrates this notion through the character of Ellinor, who suffers when Elizabeth tries to prevent her from marrying a powerful man who could promote her claim to the throne. Elizabeth forces Ellinor to choose another path, thus unintentionally forcing Ellinor to become just what she herself has become, barren. However, as a non-mother, Ellinor can become just as socially powerful as Elizabeth. Since she will never have a daughter, she does not have to worry about collecting and passing down her maternal history, she can focus on constructing a paternal, governing history for herself. Ellinor thus begins to take on the guise of a man, is forced to fight in war, and although only in disguise, dresses up in the robes of a general. Ellinor's social power becomes much greater once she is forced to become barren. In fact, Ellinor became the only woman in her family capable of finally overthrowing Elizabeth because she meets her on her own terms. The conflict between the two socially strong non-mothers leads them both to insanity, however, for Lee seems to argue that as women they cannot and should not turn away from family and their maternal history in order to obtain social power. Although Elizabeth's mental illness is not as pronounced as the illness she caused in Ellinor, the mental illness that both women feel from fighting against one another causes both physical illnesses. Matilda, like Ellinor, is given a choice between maintaining a maternal history and constructing a paternal history and attempts to choose both. For Matilda, the end result is a life led in hiding, imprisonment, and mourning for the death of her husband and child.

History, then, is tied not with morality but sexuality, which is expressed not in negative terms, but in amoral terms, until it is linked with the notion of family and the creation of family, in which case it becomes aligned with power and violence. Lee here shifts away from the traditional presentation of maternal history, but in this novel, it is difficult to separate maternal history and genealogy from power. The family is fractured and political in this novel, and its home cannot be the center for domestic morality. Ellis argues that Lee "makes Elizabeth's court an inverted Eden, a parody of familial ties" (72). Once the sexuality and power enter the domestic sphere and take precedence over maternal history, then the domestic sphere can no longer hope to be the center for morality, and for that reason, the maternal history provided by servant characters in this novel becomes not restorative and referential, not the source for identity and the route to morality, but an inversion of those things. Ellis offers one more point that illustrates this idea: "Curiosity about 'the world' followed by true love is not a fall, or would not be under 'natural' circumstances. These mentions do not bring evil into the world. Evil in the world is what brings them forth as a fall. . . . And the cause of evil in the world, for Lee . . . is the manmade institutions that attempt to confine sexuality, both male and female" (73). Maternal history does not bring forth morality, but knowledge of the "manmade institutions that confine sexuality." In this novel, those institutions are reflected by the collision between true love and pure sexuality, as reflected by the motherly aspirations of Mary Queen of Scots, and the Machiavellian tactics of Elizabeth, who attempts to regulate Mary's sexuality and natural desire to have a family in the interest of protecting her own power base.

Lee's inverted presentation of the relation between maternal history and sexuality may be best expressed in the relationship between her servant historians. Matilda and Ellinor are raised in hiding by Mrs. Marlow, a woman who "called [them] her children, and caressed [them] both

with parental fondness," and Father Anthony, "as [they] called him from hearing [their] mamma, to whom we understood he was brother" (8). The girls are raised in an environment devoid of history or story, and they spend their days staring at old portraits trying to invent histories for the people in them. Father Anthony teaches them that the world is an evil place in which "a few haughty individuals commended the miserable millions whom a few artful ones made so" (8). Though Father Anthony and Mrs. Marlow, their mother figure, attempt to keep them from the world, their desire for freedom ultimately forces Marlow to reveal their history. In the history, Marlow reveals that she is not their mother, but in fact, the illegitimate sister of their benefactor and a former attendant for Mary, Queen of Scots. Following the orders of Queen Mary and her secret husband, the Duke of Norfolk, who is father to the girls and Mrs. Marlow's brother, Mrs. Marlow kept the girls in hiding and watched over her brother's manor. In the history, the girls discover that Father Anthony is not merely Mrs. Marlow's brother, but her husband, who only became aware of the relation on the eve of their wedding when he received a message from their mother. Mrs. Marlow's story clearly has many implications for the girls. They now know their true maternal history, but the import of that maternal history has not yet come to pass. However, in mingling their story with hers Mrs. Marlow provides a hint at the dangers maternal history has to offer the girls. Mrs. Marlow and her husband, Father Anthony, loved each other a great deal, so much so that even after they discover their familial bond, they are not sufficiently disturbed by the connection to avoid spending their lives together. Of course, Father Anthony gives himself over to God after the discovery, but he still essentially lives with his sister/wife and takes on the role of uncle/father to the girls. The home that has once seemed a moral refuge becomes a place of torment through its awkward alignment with maternal history: the girls are raised by two people who were servants to their parents and are in fact their married but not married,

servant/mother/aunt and servant/father/uncle. George Haggerty argues that "the maternal space is the scene of horror (the incestuous relation of their foster parents, [and later] their own brutal incarceration and near-rape)" (67). However, it is also the only safe place that the girls have ever known, and leaving it because of the horror it evokes places the girls in line for greater horrors, for it is not the domestic space that is immoral, but the effect of the outside world upon the domestic space. As long as the girls remain in the domestic space, away from the corrupt world, they are safe and secure, but once knowledge of maternal history brings them into conflict with paternal history, the household is a place of immorality and can never be redeemed. Here, Lee suggests the danger of the struggle between maternal and paternal history. While they both provide knowledge, the knowledge they provide is often in conflict and sometimes destructive, even in the hands of a servant, for there is no prelapsarian, moral world of the home for the heroines. Through the course of the novel, she illustrates that what once seemed moral was, in fact, always corrupt, and the servants' history did nothing more than open the girls' eyes to the immorality surrounding them.

Each of these texts explores the relationship between maternal and paternal history, morality, and the servant's position as the arbiter of family identity. In the case of Radcliffe and Reeve, the servant's alignment with maternal history allows for stability and the reinforcement of the proper moral code. Lee may complicate this scenario in *The Recess* by having the servant's presentation of maternal history lead to the destruction of the household, but her point may be that maternal history is necessary to the functioning of a healthy household and a household constructed in the absence of maternal history never truly had the opportunity to reflect morality. As Wollstonecraft will later argue, untested morality is no morality at all, and Lee's heroines cannot live the unexamined life. They must not only know their maternal history, but find their

places within it and live up to it. They must learn to make a comparison between their actions and the actions of others to find a clear moral compass. Unlike Reeve and Radcliffe, Lee argues history is not enough to ensure morality. History must be placed within a moral context and must be reviewed within that context. For Lee's heroines the road to moral fortitude, and the family that follows, is impossible to navigate. Because they were alienated from both their maternal history and the context by which to judge their history, their learning curve is too steep to surmount. As a consequence, the girls consistently fail to overcome the corrupt world around them, and, they can never return to the moral home that Reeve and Radcliffe allow for their heroines. Lee's heroines end up a sad reminder that morality and stability must be achieved in the present and the future, for the past has nothing to offer but immorality, insanity, and death.

In these novels, Reeve and Radcliffe offer the hope that knowledge of maternal history passed down through servants can rebuild the household and give women the power in the family they have been denied. Both offer glimpses of homes where the mother figure is reinstated, where mothers are true companions to their husbands, where husbands recognize the value of maternal history, and where the servants move toward exclusion. Lee, on the other hand, questions whether maternal history can suffice, and the death of Matilda's daughter at the end of *The Recess* suggests another significant role that servants must play in the lives of their mistresses—constructor of sexual identity; for in the Gothic, as the death of Matilda's daughter suggests, women must not only come to terms with the maternal history that has been denied them, but they must learn to become mothers themselves. While Matilda fights pitifully to protect her daughter, the death of her daughter suggests that until the Gothic world is annihilated, women may know their maternal history, but they may not be able to use it to guide them toward

becoming mothers themselves, so while servants may find exclusion at the end of *The Old English Baron* and *The Italian*, they still have work to do.

Notes

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[1] Mary Astell *The Christian Religion as Profess'd by a Daughter of the Church of England* (London 1705).

[2] See David H. Richter. "From Medievalism to Historicism: Representations of History in the Gothic Novel and Historical Romance" *Studies in Medievalism* 4 (1992): 79-104. Richter provides an ample overview of contemporary and current discussion on the representation of history in the Gothic.

[3] The opposing viewpoints are best summed up by James Beattie in his "On Fable and Romance" and Clara Reeve in her *The Progress of Romance*. Reeve writes:

> The effects of Romance, and true History are not very different. When the imagination is raised, men do not stand to enquire whether the motive be true or false. – The love of glory has always a certain enthusiasm in it, which excites men to great and generous actions, and whatever stimulates this passion, must have the credit of the actions it performs. On the contrary, whenever this spirit, and this enthusiasm, become the object of contempt and ridicule, mankind will set up for themselves an idol of a very different kind.—They will devote themselves to mean or mercenary pursuits which debase and corrupt the mind. – This thirst of immoderate wealth or pleasure, will engross their attentions and desires; or else they will sink into a state of supine indolence, and become entirely negligent of what they owe themselves, to their connections, or to their country. – There must

> be a stimulus to excite men to action, and such as is the motive, such will the action be (102).

Beattie writes:

> Romances are a dangerous recreation. A few, no doubt, of the best may be friendly to good taste and good morals; but far the greater part are unskillfully written, and tend to corrupt the heart, and stimulate the passions. A habit of reading them breeds a dislike of history, and all the substantial parts of knowledge; withdraws the attention from nature and truth; and fills the mind with extravagant thoughts, and too often with criminal propensities. I would therefore caution my young reader against them; or, if he must, for the sake of amusement, and that he may have something to say on the subject, indulge himself in this way now and then, let it be sparingly, and seldom" (James Beattie, "On Fable and Romance" 1783: 573-74 qtd in Miles *Ann Radcliffe the Great Enchantress*)

[4] See Joseph Addison. "No. 109" *The Spectator with Notes and General Index*. (Philadelphia: J. J. Woodward, 1830): 168-169.

[5] In describing the Abbey, Addison writes:

> The ruins of the abby are scattered and down on every Side, and half covered with Ivy and Elder-bushes, the Harbours of several solitary birds which seldom make their appearance till the dusk of the evening. The place was formerly a Churchyard, and has still several marks in it of graves and burying places. There is such an echo among the old ruins and vaults, that if you stamp but a little louder than ordinary, you hear the sound repeated. (169)

[6]Sir Roger's obsession with his family line represented in his portrait gallery mimics the maternal history I will discuss later; however, an important distinction should be made between the story he chooses to tell and maternal history. While Sir Roger discusses the genealogical relationships between people in his family, he tends to focus on the political and military achievements and forget the stories of his female ancestors. For example, he says the following of one aunt, "this homely thing in the middle had both their portions [portions of sexual intrigue] added to her own, and was stolen by a neighbouring gentleman, a man of stratagem and resolution, for he poisoned three mastiffs to come at her, and knocked down two deer-stealers in carrying her off. Misfortunes happen in all families. The theft of this romp, and so much money, was no great matter to our estate" (*The Spectator* 109, 168*)*. Added to this discussion Sir Roger tells us of his family's brief period of debt,

> That debt lay heavy on our house for one generation, but it was retrieved by a gift from that honest man you see there, a citizen of our name, but nothing at all akin to us. I know Sir Andrew Freeport has said behind my back that this man was descended from one of the ten children of the maid of honour I showed you above; but it was never made out. We winked at the thing, indeed, because money was wanting at that time. (*The Spectator* 109, 168).

In both of these instances, Sir Roger downplays the significance of female history in his family, neglecting to remember important aspects of their history that reflect upon the household. It is this sort of omission that allows for the intrigue of the Gothic.

Unlike Sir Roger, Addison outwardly criticizes maternal history in *The Spectator* number 299 in which he tells of a mother who tells her children such glorious tales of her own family history

that they wonder “why [their father] never told them of the generals and admirals that had been in [his] family” (431).

[7] Reeve writes of *The Castle of Otranto*: “Had the story been kept within the utmost *verge* of probability, the effect had been preserved, without losing the least circumstance that excites or detains the attention” (41).

[8] See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "The Character in the Veil: Imagery of the Surface in the Gothic Novel." *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 96:2 (1981): 255-270.

[9] Bruce Robbins does not discuss this scene in particular, but it follows the pattern that he establishes in his discussion of servant exposition. Following his formula, she should relay the information and then become superfluous to the conversation, but here, she has a great deal more to offer.

[10] Lee published *The Life of a Lover* twenty-four years after “The Chapter of Accidents,” but it was “probably Lee’s first sustained literary effort” (Alliston xlvii)

Chapter 3

The Gothic, the Servant Girl, and the Construction of Sexual Identity

In her historical analysis of servants in eighteenth-century England, Bridget Hill describes the female domestic's sexual vulnerability in terms that students of the Gothic would find quite recognizable. She writes,

> The very characteristics which distinguished female domestic servants made them particularly prone to sexual exploitation. The fact that by far the overwhelming majority were young, single girls, away from their family, their friends, and relations meant that just when they needed protection from such exploitation they were taken away from those best able to give it. In a strange household miles away from their own village and family the young female domestic servant must have been both lonely and isolated. (44)

If one were to substitute the term "Gothic heroine" for all expressions related to servitude in Hill's description of the servant girl's position, one would find an almost perfect definition of that character type in Hill's portrayal. Like the Gothic heroine, the female domestic of the eighteenth century was primarily a child of the country and thus pure but highly vulnerable to corruption.[1] Both the Gothic heroine and her servant face isolation and live at the mercy of men who pose a threat to their morality. The difference between the two types of women, of course, resides in class expectation and financial power. Unlike the Gothic heroine, the female domestic has little or no means of defending herself against the inappropriate demands of her master. Consequently, the female servant, in real life and in the fiction of the period, becomes an emblem of sexuality and sexual desire. However, despite, or perhaps because of, her alignment with the sexual world, the female domestic's social position, that of isolated country girl lured to

the city and exploited by a powerful master, makes her the ideal counterpart for the rigidly chaste, passionless Gothic heroine.

Ann Radcliffe and Horace Walpole illustrate this construction of counterparts in their novels *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Castle of Otranto* and utilize the relationship between the sexualized servant and her mistress to expose the untenability of the Gothic heroine's passionless persona, a persona she adopts as a means of defending herself against the advances of the Gothic villain. Of course, this construction of counterparts is not new to the Gothic. In fact, it is one that evolves over the century. Early works, like Aphra Behn's *The Rover* and Daniel Defoe's *Roxana*, for example, illustrate instances of this counterparting, *The Rover* exploring the servant and mistress's differing views on the commodification of sexuality and *Roxana* illustrating the interchangeability of the servant's and mistress's role in the household. These particular examples of early counterparting, which I will discuss below, inform the development of counterparting in the Gothic and along with Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* provide a lens through which we can examine the consequences of authorial decision to establish a counterpart between mistress and maid. For the counterparts we see in Walpole and Radcliffe are both a byproduct of concerns evident in *The Rover* and *Roxana* and a response to *Pamela* – a work which not only reinvented the relationship between sexuality and servitude in the eighteenth century but that simultaneously prefigured the later eighteenth-century feminist struggle for control of domestic space, a struggle central to many Gothic novels, particularly those written by women. We see these ideas illustrated in Walpole and Radcliffe, as female servants act either to introduce proper notions of sexuality to the naively passionless heroine, as in the case of *The Castle of Otranto*, or to play the role of sexual surrogate, taking over the love story when the heroine is forced to deny love and embrace passionlessness, as is the case in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.

Passionlessness and Primogeniture

In her discussion of Ann Radcliffe's novelistic style, Eleanor Wikborg describes the Radcliffian heroine's sexual position in terms that help to explain the significance of the female domestic's function. Wikborg argues,

> Radcliffe has used the Gothic form to conjure up a set of patriarchal figures whose potential for attraction is inseparable from the threat of female annihilation that they pose. The sexual power they offer exacts from a woman the dangerous price of total submission, demanding that she give up her conception of herself as a person in her own right. This is a price that she does not make her heroines pay. (39)

Radcliffe may not make her heroines relinquish either their private or public identities, but she and other Gothic novelists almost always protect these private and public identities at the expense of sexual identity, thus helping to reinforce the notions of decay and degeneration characterized by the Gothic world. To put it simply, sexuality, or the repression thereof, is the centerpiece of the Gothic. In fact the tension of the Gothic springs out of the conflict between the younger generation's desire to create a new household and the older, feudalistic desire to maintain oppressive laws of inheritance and the denial of personal freedom. Ironically, the Gothic world of primogeniture is a world in which reproduction— the sole purpose of "respectable" sexuality and the only means of perpetuating the repressive pattern of primogeniture and thus the Gothic— cannot exist. The impossibility of reproduction often manifests in an absent mother, a point I explore in chapter two, or in the death of children born into the Gothic world, as is the case in Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*, Eliza Fenwick's *Secresy*, and Sophia Lee's *The Recess*. Further, the isolation and decay of the Gothic household forces

the sexually respectable heroine into a position where her only options for sexuality are either incestuous or surreptitious; as a result, she must adopt a passionless identity to protect herself from "annihilation," as Wikborg argues, and if she has any chance to construct a household in which she can not only participate as a valued member but also help govern, a household situated not in the shadowy feudalistic world of the Gothic but in a new mother-centered domestic space which begins the movement toward the "Angel in the House" of the nineteenth century, she must find a way to balance her sexuality with her passionlessness.[2] For, it is through the sexlessness of the heroine and the consequent stagnation that occurs in the household that the Gothic world gains its power.

Gothic writers understand that while the passionless, rational heroine may be a necessity in the world where sexuality aligns not only with maliciousness but also with incest, passionlessness leads to a stalemate. To break the stalemate, one character must change: either the Gothic villain must give up his sexual and financial desire or the Gothic heroine must accept hers. The stagnant Gothic world thrives on this stalemate. Since the Gothic villain cannot relinquish his quest for sexual and financial control because doing so would require a seemingly impossible change in character and suggest that reform of the old order is possible, the Gothic heroine must contrive a way to express both her sexuality and her passionlessness. The passionlessness protects her but without access to a sexual identity the heroine cannot engage in any behavior, such as courtship and the ultimate creation of her own family, which would destroy the Gothic world through growth and change and allow her to gain power.

George Haggarty explains the connection between sexuality and power in the Gothic, writing "Gothic fiction . . . is not about homo or hetero desire as much as it is about power; but that power is itself charged with a sexual force – a sexual-ity— that determines the action and gives it

shape. By the same token, powerlessness also has such a valence and performs such a function" ("Mothers and Other Lovers" 157). Power and sexuality are aligned in the Gothic, as Haggarty points out. Thus, the only way that heroines can gain power is to gain control of their sexuality, and so the plot of the novel often revolves around the heroine's movement toward gaining that control. However, as Haggarty points out, powerlessness has the ability to shape action as well, and the Gothic heroine cannot occupy the role of powerful and powerless in the same moment, so in order to move seamlessly from powerless to powerful—and by seamlessly, I mean avoid being forced into an incestuous or otherwise inappropriate sexual relationship—she must find a counterpart for herself. A person who already safely resides in the sexual world, and who can guide her as she moves from powerless/passionless/sexless girl to powerful/passionate/sexual wife and mother.

Therefore, while the novelists deny their heroines access to sexual identities and in fact force the heroines to repress their sexuality, authors often also provide them with female domestics to assist the heroines in reconnecting with their sexuality and balancing sexuality with the need to adopt a passionless persona. For if Radcliffe and Walpole seek to present the patriarchy's sexual power as a means of controlling female behavior and causing identity annihilation, then that power is only really a threat to the *heroines*, whose identity Radcliffe and Walpole seek to protect, not to the female servants. Domestics, whose social identity is always in flux because of their status as both outsiders and family members and who, as a consequence have little or no claim to a coherent social identity, therefore posing no obvious threat to the patriarchy, become conduits through which the heroine receives access to sexual identity and thus power that her patriarchal oppressors have forced her to deny.

Because servants are not bound by the same social expectations as their mistresses and because they already have long standing associations with sexuality and the sexualized outer world, they can become representatives of and champions for sexuality. In the Gothic they do this in two ways: either they introduce Eros to the heroine through discussions of the male hero, who has heretofore gone unnoticed by the mistress, as in the case of Bianca and Matilda in *The Castle of Otranto*; or they keep sexuality alive and serve as a sexual surrogate if the heroine is separated from her lover as Emily is in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, acting in this instance to represent the love relationship the mistress must repress to maintain her public identity.

Sexualized Servants and Celibate Mistresses: The Construction of Counterparts

On the face of it, this type of surrogacy would seem detrimental to the heroine's ability to maintain her purity and thus protect her public and private identities because by the time the stock female domestic character reaches the Gothic novel, she has a tainted sexual image.[3] Indeed, in the early literature of the century, female servants are examples of sexual freedom, constructing a clear triangle between sexuality, economy, and household. Take the following conversation between Aphra Behn's characters Angellica and Moretta, who appear in her play *The Rover*, for example. In the short encounter, Angellica, a respected courtesan, and her servant Moretta discuss Angellica's increasing interest in Willmore, and Moretta warns Angellica against such sympathetic feelings:

> **Angellica:** . . . inconstancy's the sin of all mankind: therefore, I'm resolved that nothing but gold shall charm my heart.
>
> **Moretta:** I'm glad on't: 'tis only interest that women of our profession ought to consider, though I wonder what has kept you from that general disease of our sex so long, I mean that of being in love.

> **Angellica:** A kind but sullen star under which I had the happiness to be born. Yet I have had no time for love; the bravest and noblest of mankind have purchased my favors at so dear a rate as if no coin but gold were current with our trade. . . . (II.i 162-173)

The women's conversation sets up a convention that will become important throughout the century, particularly for servants: the difference between selling one's body and selling one's self. Although in this conversation both women recognize themselves as lacking societal virtue, virtue itself is rarely, if ever, championed in this play, and they, along with the other characters, often make comparisons between virtue and money, always privileging the earning of money. It is not until Angellica begins to conflate sexuality with love, and begins to focus on the importance of making and keeping vows—an important social virtue— that the ideas of selling her body and selling herself conflate and become problematic. When Angellica admits to her servant advisor that she has fallen in love with Willmore, Moretta responds, "I told you what would come on't, but Moretta's an old doting fool . . ." (IV.ii 150). Though a prostitute as well, Moretta, because of her co-status as servant, is more adept at distancing her labor from her internal self. That said, her separation is one that she expects Angellica to understand. As Angellica's servant, she depends upon Angellica's income. She knows that if Angellica begins to conflate selling the body with selling virtue, she may choose to protect her virtue over earning money, and if this is the case, both Angellica and Moretta will suffer financially. Moretta may also know that she, as a servant, has been able to create and maintain a separation that Angellica, as a non-servant, cannot. Angellica says, "had I given him all / My youth has earned from sin, / I had not lost a thought, nor sigh upon't. / But I have given him my eternal rest, / My whole repose, my future joys, my heart! / My virgin heart, Moretta! Oh, 'tis gone" (IV.ii 155-160).

Despite her position as prostitute, Angellica emphasizes the importance of her hold over a "virgin" heart and thus a link to virtue, which though she earlier argues that virtue has much less value than money, she seems not to believe that truly. Indeed, her sorrow over the loss of her "virgin" heart reflects Anita Pacheo's assertion that Angellica seeks to move from prostitute to Petrarchan mistress. However, as Pacheo argue, "her attempt to transform the prostitute into the Petrarchan mistress, 'wounding men with her eyes,' suggests a more complex strategy. For it is a fundamental principle of Petrarchanism that the mistress must possess both beauty and chastity" (334). Of course, Angellica does not really possess chastity, so she constructs it by focusing on her "virgin" heart. As long as she has her "virgin" heart, Angellica can play the role of Petrarchan mistress and maintain possession of her social standing, but once she gives it away and begins to focus on virtue, she loses her social position. The difference in these two women's relation to love is their ability to separate their inner selves from the outward presentations of themselves, to take comfort in the distinction between their public and private identities.[4] On the surface, both women are prostitutes, but because Moretta is also a servant, she is adept at maintaining ownership of her inner self, whereas Angellica slips and sells both, leaving her no identity except that which Willmore gives her, and she would gladly trade the financial success which once established her social identity to redeem that one priceless thing, her "virgin heart."

This singular example illustrates why it is not surprising that Walpole and Radcliffe would have chosen servant girls as representatives of sexuality in their novels. Moretta's ability to maintain both her sexual and social identities makes her an ideal, if flawed, model for Gothic servants. However, Moretta cannot move to the Gothic as she is for the Gothic exists in a novelistic world that demands higher morality than Moretta is capable of offering, and thus she must be modified considerably before becoming a role model for the Gothic servant.

Moretta illustrates the connection between selling labor and selling the self that predominantly links servant girls to the sexualized world, but part of her angst over Angellica's love for Willmore comes from a realization that she cannot stand in for Angelica. Moretta may be a prostitute like her mistress, but she knows she could never fill her mistress's social role, so while they are counterparts, with Angellica and Moretta, we see no true potential for substitution. To see the potential for servant/mistress substitution in action we must look forward to Daniel Defoe's *Roxana*.

In this novel, the reader is presented with Roxana, a heroine who is as lacking in social virtue as Angellica but who, despite her open exploration of her own degeneracy, attempts to present herself as justifiably corrupt. Roxana's servant-girl, Amy, is with Roxana throughout the novel, and she is Roxana's counterpart, taking on and reflecting back whatever vices Roxana adopts. Over the course of the novel, Amy not only acts as Roxana's double, but she often takes over Roxana's role as mistress, and at times, the two become interchangeable as Amy substitutes for Roxana when Roxana must either reassure herself of the acceptability of her inappropriate behavior by proving that her closest female companion is as immoral as she or protect herself from her darker inclinations. In the two most notorious scenes of counterparting and substitution in the novel, Amy takes over first the role of mistress by sleeping with her master while Roxana looks on and second the role of mother by punishing Roxana's problematic daughter, something that Roxana seems to find necessary but cannot do herself. Terry Castle explains the complex relationship between these two women,

> From first to last Amy's presence infiltrates Roxana's narrative in a curiously intense way, and modifies its complicated psychological structure. . . . The reader thus experiences a double focus in the fiction: we receive not, as in other, perhaps

> more straightforward Defoe novels, simply the primary history of the speaker, but this history as transformed by the persistent presence of an other, an alternate self, indeed in Roxana's case—an ideal self. Amy is the secret sharer in Roxana's life: she acts out her mistress's fantasies, she accepts the functions Roxana projects, both consciously and unconsciously, onto her. (83-84)

Castle's explanation of the relationship between Amy and Roxana is particularly important to the Gothic novel and the servant characters that will eventually trace their lineage to Amy, in that Amy becomes a reflection of her mistress's inner qualities: qualities the mistress cannot express herself because doing so would jeopardize both her public and private identities. Roxana tries to explain the complex relationship between herself and Amy in several instances in the novel, but her reflection on the relationship during a moment when she believes she and Amy will both die in a shipwreck, is particularly honest and enlightening. Roxana says,

> I am guilty of my own Sin, and thine too: Then it came to my Remembrance, that I had not only been the same with *Amy*, but that I had been the Devil's Instrument, to make her wicked; that I had stripp'd her, and prostituted her to the very Man that I had been Naught with myself; that she had but follow'd me; I had been her wicked Example; and I had led her into all; and that as we has sinn'd together, now we were likely to sink together. (126)

Amy is a mirror of Roxana's inner wickedness, a wickedness Roxana tries to rationalize during the remainder of the story, for of course, as soon as the ship lands safely the two forget their promises to mend their ways and return instead to their wicked lifestyles. As the story continues and particularly as Amy begins to harbor violent thoughts against Roxana's daughter, Roxana seems to forget this moment of clarity.

In the last conflict of the novel, the relationship between Amy and Roxana threatens to dissolve when Amy suggests killing Roxana's long-lost, pesky daughter, Susan. Roxana desires nothing more than the girl's disappearance from her life, but she forbids Amy to kill the girl because doing so would impossible to excuse, for since Roxana's entire story depends upon rationalizing her own behavior, the murder of Susan would destroy the public identity Roxana strives to create for herself. Although Roxana never openly encourages Amy to kill the girl and in fact expresses horror at Amy's suggestion of murder, an expression that drives Amy away, Amy's murderous impulse is a direct result of that "wicked Example" Roxana set. Amy is, as Roxana describes her, Roxana's "Right-Hand," "Stewart," and Roxana says "without her, indeed, I knew not how to go away, nor how long to stay" (318). Without Amy, Roxana's life is the "utmost Horror and Confusion" (318). In threatening to kill Susan and then in, presumably, acting out that threat, Amy behaves not as Roxana cannot but as Roxana chooses not to. Roxana knows her counterpart will do it for her, and in allowing her counterpart to take over the filicide— literally and figuratively for Amy is as much a mother to Susan as Roxana, and Susan actually initially believes Amy to be her mother rather than Roxana— Roxana reaps the benefit of Amy's evil deed while maintaining deniability, a deniability from which Amy, because of her servant status, could never benefit. Amy is never quite on par with Roxana, despite the fact that Roxana says Amy is more of a friend than a servant, but Amy's servant status allows her more freedom of action, and she can do things that her mistress would not.

When Roxana's daughter finally does disappear, Roxana assumes Amy has murdered her, but despite the fact that she has plenty of evidence to support that assumption, as time passes, Roxana begins to reconsider. In the end, she hopes that Amy will return to her and attempts to convince herself that Amy did not indeed murder the girl. In the admission of this possibility,

Roxana not only releases Amy from any culpability for the crime, but she also releases herself. While Roxana openly admits that she has made Amy the devil she is, her admission only goes as far as sexual immorality. Roxana cannot admit to herself that Amy's murderous behavior reflects her own murderous desires. Terry Castle explains the disconnect between Roxana's stated desires and Amy's actions: "at the level of deep structure, Roxana's narrative seems shaped by profound configurations of which she is apparently unaware. The double is in a sense so close to Roxana herself that she cannot really see her" (95). Amy takes over those desires that Roxana cannot express to ensure Roxana's safe continuation of her quest for wealth and social standing. In doing so, she behaves as the later Gothic female servants behave. Certainly, Amy's behavior is more sinister, but Amy represents a precedent that will become important later, in that she behaves as a surrogate for her mistress taking over when the mistress either cannot or is unwilling to do so.

In both Amy and Moretta, we see the establishment of counterparts. Amy behaves as Roxana's double, doing that which her mistress cannot because of her status as heroine, and Moretta sets her mistress's actions beside her own to evaluate the connection between labor, virtue, and economy. While both these servant characters reflect types that will inform the servants and mistresses in Gothic novels, the Gothic heroine and servant girl owe a debt to yet another servant girl, Samuel Richardson's Pamela.

Samuel Richardson's reenvisioning of the female servant's commodification has widely been recognized as a turning point for all female characters for the remainder of the eighteenth century. As Kate Ferguson Ellis points out:

> Roughly speaking, before 1740 sexual temptation was a force that heroines were either unwilling or unable to resist. Accidents and coincidences might come to

> their aid, but the imagined alternatives to ruin were limited to renouncing men entirely or becoming a controlling vampire, a stranger to virtue. With the publication and popularity of *Pamela*, the possibility of resistance is called forth and participates as a necessary component in the new discourse on female virtue. Heroines gain power by this move, but their hearts must now select their future spouse on the basis of feelings that are disconnected to sexuality. . . . She can marry for love, but only if love is divorced from what we might call a material base. (20-21)

That's all well and good for the heroines of the novels. Richardson's novel set a precedent that gave them the possibility of gaining power, even if Richardson did strip them of their sexuality, but the widely recognized change that *Pamela* created in her novelistic daughters forced a more staunch divide between the novelistic mistress and her maid. While the heroine could removal all taints of sexuality by denying any behavior that might be conceived as improper, the maid had no such luxury. In selling labor, she was in essence selling herself, and since Richardson destroys the distinction Behn's characters express in *The Rover*, the female servant is left holding the sexual bag not only for her mistress, but also for the novels themselves as she remains the only female link to the sexualized world.

In this way, *Pamela* may help the mistress but she cements the servant girl's association with sexuality in the eighteenth century. For one, the novel reinforces the servant's relationship to sexuality by forcing a comparison to what came before, and this comparison was troublesome to many readers, as Henry Fielding's *Shamela* satirically announces, because the idea of a sexually respectable servant girl was far beyond what most readers were willing to accept. However, while sexuality may be repressed in a way that Fielding finds extreme, Richardson's servant girl

is not a typical servant girl. In fact, the servant's ability to create a distance between selling the body and selling the self becomes much less tenable when Samuel Richardson creates Pamela because Pamela takes Moretta's previously divided mind and body and forces them back into one entity. In this way, she makes the selling of one's labor and the selling of one's body coincide, and so in order to protect her virtue, she must distance herself from her servant status. The clearest reflection of this connection appears once Pamela's mistress dies and the sexualized master takes over the household. The reader then follows Pamela's progress from servanthood to mistresshood. From the moment Mr. B takes over the household, Pamela's position in the household becomes less and less servile. Although she retains the name of servant throughout most of the novel, she rarely performs any sort of service for the household and in fact spends the vast majority of her time as a captive doing nothing at all but avoiding Mr. B's advances and writing letters. His overt advances force her to realign her understanding of herself and make it clear that she can no longer afford to distinguish between selling her labor and selling herself. Her labor, her body, and her public and private identities all become commodified, and if she sells one she must sell them all. From that point on, she ceases almost entirely from doing any work for her master. From that point on, she must either abandon servitude or passion.

That said, it is important to note that while Pamela does place an emphasis on the female servant's status as a sexual figure, she also manages to tame her considerably. For while the servant girl may be an image of sexual freedom when compared to the heroine, there are no Morettas or Amys among the Gothic servant girls of the post-*Pamela* literary landscape.[5] The sexuality the post-*Pamela* servant girls reflect is more sedate and suitable for the women they serve, and while their behavior may seem shocking to their mistresses, it is rarely overtly

inappropriate and never reflects the prostitution, thievery, and murder in which their predecessors engaged.

As a result, the servant girl managed to maintain a core link to her sexuality while simultaneously moving toward the ideal of female respectability which was evolving in the novels of the period. This respectability, according to Cynthia Griffin-Wolff, owes a debt to Radcliffe, who "invented a fictional language and a set of conventions within which 'respectable' feminine sexuality might find expression" (207). "Invented" is a dangerous term here, for, as the discussion above suggests, Radcliffe owes a debt to her predecessors, Samuel Richardson, Charlotte Lennox, Frances Burney, Frances Sheridan, and many, many other mid eighteenth-century writers who helped to construct and popularize conventional representations for "respectable" female sexuality and ultimately provided role models for Radcliffe. My point here is not to diminish the regard Griffin-Wolff expresses for Radcliffe or Radcliffe's significance in the construction of the conventions surrounding "respectable" feminine sexuality, for her work certainly perpetuates the model; instead my point is to focus on the fact that Radcliffe knew these previously existing models for sexuality well and exploited them in her texts not only as a means of invoking terror but also as a means of social commentary. In doing so, she engages in a conversation about the role of sexual expression in the household and the dangerous line women must walk if they are to gain power within that household. Of course, if she was engaging in a conversation started by earlier writers, we can assume that Horace Walpole would have been familiar with the conversation as well.

Yet, Walpole and Radcliffe do not merely participate in the conversation—they complicate it. We see not only the traditional discussions of love and sexuality in their work but also that the notion that the tyranny and isolation of the Gothic destroy woman's ability to rationalize on

her own. Because terror distracts her from her rational thought, she can no longer distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior and thus is left vulnerable to the exploitation of the household. This is not the case in earlier realistic novels. Both Pamela and Francis Burney's Evelina, for example, suffer from a lack of useful parental advice, yet both girls have the ability to maintain their sexual interest and behave appropriately. Pamela admits that despite her disappointment with Mr. B's behavior and her desire to escape him, she always felt an attraction to him that she would never have acted upon. The Gothic heroine does not have the same luxury. Like her novelistic predecessors, she lacks parental guidance, but unlike her predecessors, she is unable to maintain any connection to her love interest without outside support. She may talk of him or think of him, but often, she has little or no contact with him and worse, he is often replaced in the novel with another male who poses a sexual threat to her. As a consequence, the Gothic heroine is forced to repress all of her sexual desires and behave in an asexual manner.

This repression can take two different forms. In *The Castle of Otranto*, it is reflected in Matilda's complete absence of sexual interest and her desire to enter a convent rather than marry. Matilda's sexual repression seems to be a response to her father's tyranny over her brother Conrad and her proposed sister-in-law Isabella. She guesses, and rightfully so, that she will face the same fate of an unhappy marriage constructed by a tyrant, so she eliminates sexuality from her life. The second is reflected in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* with Emily, who is forced to leave her lover and enter a house of sexual horrors where she faces the constant threat of rape and forcible marriage. In both these cases, however, the heroines' sexual identities are restored through their interactions with their servant girls, Bianca and Annette, who take on the burden of

showing their ladies that control over sexual identity is the only means by which they may escape from the Gothic household.

Walpole's Bianca and "The Talk"

As he does with almost all other tropes common to the Gothic novel, Horace Walpole introduces the notion of the servant as sexual guide. In an eighteenth-century equivalent of "the talk," the servant girl Bianca explains both marriage and sexuality to the oblivious Matilda and Isabella. While it is true that throughout the literature of the period, conversations on the topic of love between servants and their mistresses are commonplace, those conversations primarily serve as comic relief; however, the encounters between Gothic heroines and their maids move beyond mere comedic encounters to offer the Gothic heroine avenues for self- understanding and salvation. In many instances, these conversations serve the larger purpose of allowing one isolated and defenseless woman to capitalize on the vulnerability of another, as it is often through these conversations that the sexually detached heroine learns to embrace proper notions of sexuality, finds an avenue for legitimate sexual expression, and thus escapes from the Gothic world.

In the case of *Otranto*, it is from Bianca that the audience receives an overview of Matilda's and Isabella's sexual knowledge, and it is from Bianca that those girls gain their first knowledge of sexuality. Soon after the death of Conrad, Manfred's only son and heir, Bianca offers an interpretation of Matilda's situation saying, "As you are to become his heiress, he is impatient to have you married: he has always been raving for more sons; I warrant he is now impatient for grandsons. As sure as I live, madam, I shall see you a bride at last" (39). Bianca's interpretation would seem normal in a regular household focused on sexuality as a means of growth and continuation, but after the death of Conrad, the household moves into Gothic sexual stagnation,

which manifests itself through Manfred's intended semi-incestuous marriage to his son's proposed bride and in the fact that he does not take the logical step Bianca outlines. Further, the Gothic stagnation Manfred introduces is reflected partially through the fact that Matilda wants to join a convent, thus cutting off all access to sexual identity or social power and condemning herself to a life of stagnation.

In response to both of those problems, Bianca introduces the idea that sexuality is not always sinful and that embracing it properly can and does lead to productive, happy households. She questions Matilda's logic, commenting "it is no sin to talk of matrimony . . . if my lord Manfred should offer you a handsome young prince for a bridegroom, you would drop him a curtsy, and tell him you would rather take the veil" (40). Bianca recognizes that it is only through embracing love and sexuality that Matilda will gain power: "I will have you a great lady . . . come what will. I do not wish to see you moped in a convent, as you would be if you had your will and if my lady your mother, who knows that a bad husband is better than no husband at all, did not hinder you" (40). Bianca's argument that a "bad husband is better than no husband" does not match with later Gothic conventions that prize companionate marriage, but her argument that the stagnation implied by a celibate life in the convent does hint at what will come in the Gothic. Bianca believes that in order to free herself from Gothic stagnation, Matilda must marry and create a life for herself. Denying her sexuality will only lead to a perpetuation of the Gothic world, so although Bianca's story may be slightly different than the one that Matilda and her predecessors ultimately embrace, the effects of her moral understanding are apparent nonetheless.

In the conversation between Bianca and Matilda that follows, Walpole uses Bianca to make a distinction between two types of desire— the desire for physical beauty and the desire for

virtuous beauty— and the conversation between the two women promotes the notion that there must be some compromise between the two. Bianca begins the discussion by saying,

> Suppose tomorrow morning [Manfred] was to send for you to the great council chamber, and there you should find at his elbow a lovely young prince, with large black eyes, a smooth white forehead, and manly curling locks like jet; in short, madame, a young hero resembling the picture of the good Alfonso in the gallery, which you sit and gaze at for hours together—Do not speak lightly of that picture, interrupted Matilda sighing: I know the adoration with which I look at that picture is uncommon—but I am not in love with a coloured panel. The character of that virtuous prince, the veneration with which my mother has inspired me for his memory, the orisons, which I know not why she has enjoined me to pour forth at his tomb, all have concurred to persuade me that somehow or other my destiny is linked with something relating to him. (40-41)

The two continue to disagree about what type of love is respectable for a young lady until Bianca finally announces, "my lady Isabella would not be so reserved to me: she will let me talk to her of young men; and when a handsome cavalier has come to the castle, she has owned to me that she wished your brother Conrad resembled him. Bianca, said the princess, I do not allow you to mention my friend disrespectfully" (41). Bianca's relation of Isabella's comments are untimely, given the fact that Matilda's only brother has just died suddenly, and they are thus poorly received by Matilda, but the comments illustrate two points to the audience. First, they show us that Bianca has not only introduced sexual discourse to Matilda, but also to Isabella, a point that becomes particularly important later. (The fact that Bianca's discussion with Isabella happens earlier and off stage is also significant because it reflects the fact that Isabella

was on the verge of becoming a wife and therefore would need to be introduced to sexuality sooner than Matilda, who until the point of becoming her father's heiress showed no clear signs of needing sexual knowledge.) Secondly, Matilda's response to Isabella's and Bianca's assertions about beauty and attraction allow Walpole to illustrate Matilda's understanding of the importance of romantic choice, for while she blames Isabella's unkind comments about Conrad on the gloom of the castle and the boredom it creates in its inhabitants, she does not deny the truth of Isabella's and Bianca's assertions. Her later attraction to Theodore, we remember, is based not on his virtuous behavior, but on the similarity of his physical appearance to that of Alphonso. Ultimately, when Matilda sees Theodore for the first time, Bianca is the only person in whom she can confide: "Heavens! Bianca . . . do I dream? or is not that youth the exact resemblance of Alfonso's picture in the gallery?" (54) She falls in love with him because of his physical appearance despite her earlier protestation against such shallow attractions, illustrating that Matilda's views of love and marriage may not be as steadfastly drawn as she presented in her earlier conversation with Bianca.

Their discussion about the merits of physical appearance and its relationship to marriage leads Matilda to open the window, thus inviting in the music of the young Theodore, who is imprisoned below. When the women first hear Theodore, Bianca does not encourage Matilda to acknowledge his presence, and in fact she suggests that they both flee from what she believes to be a ghost. The Gothic world thus to attempts interpose itself between the Matilda and sexuality. Here it is superstition and fear that encourages the maidservant to turn away from the discussion of Eros and the potential freedom that Theodore's voice offers her mistress. However, Matilda, having been initiated into the discourse of love by her previous conversation with Bianca, refuses to allow Gothic superstition to keep her from addressing the man and opens to window to pursue

a conversation with him. Once Bianca realizes that the musician is in fact a real man, she recovers herself and resumes her focus on love: "This is certainly the young peasant; and by my conscience he is in love!—Well, this is a charming adventure!—Do, madame, let us sift him. He does not know you, but takes you for one of my lady Hippolita's women" (43). As long as Theodore believes that Matilda is a servant, Bianca argues, she can behave toward him in a way that she would not be allowed if he knew her social status. When Matilda refuses, Bianca exclaims "How little you know of love! . . . Why lovers have no pleasure equal to talking of their mistress" (43). Despite all of Matilda's protestations and her supposed disdain for Bianca's view of love and her suggestions for the interaction with Theodore, Matilda ultimately takes Bianca's advice. She pretends to be a servant, she converses with a strange man even though she knows it is "not seemly for me to hold a converse with a man at this unwonted hour" (44), and she ends up becoming involved in a conversation that could place her in a position to betray her family and her social rank. Ultimately, she realizes that she has no capacity for such interaction and tells Bianca, "I had acted more wisely . . . if I had let thee converse with this peasant" (44). However, despite the fact that she knows her behavior is inappropriate and that she is incapable of responding as a woman in her position should, she cannot resist rejoining the conversation with him. It is only when the outside world intervenes that she is prevented from seeking out the peasant again.

With this scene Walpole introduces two notions that will become common to Gothic convention: that the Gothic heroine cannot maintain the sexless front that the Gothic world has imposed upon her and that the servant girl, who has a more advanced understanding of love relations, can help the heroine to recognize her own passions safely. Bianca's presence in this scene allows the audience to question Matilda's convictions that she will never marry and that it

is her choice to resign herself to the monastery. She also acts as a chaperone for Matilda to protect the heroine from behaving too badly. While Matilda's behavior may have seemed inappropriate to the "labourers . . . in the fields" who might "perceive [them]," to the audience it seems appropriate given the logic of the situation and the presence of another female monitor (45).

As the story progresses, Walpole illustrates that Bianca has introduced both Matilda and Isabella successfully to the sexual world by allowing them to discuss love on their own terms, and in the scene where they fight over Theodore, he illustrates that sexual knowledge does not necessarily destroy virtue. While the girls' conversation lacks sophistication and reflects their continued fear of losing social standing to the sexual knowledge they have gained, it starts a pattern of allowing them to behave in a manner that will ultimately lead them to sexual freedom and give them the opportunity to choose their own partners, rather than accepting the partners that have been chosen for them. We begin to recognize the transformation in a brief scene preceding the argument between the girls. When Matilda sees Theodore again, he is standing beside Isabella, and Walpole tells us—" Matilda blushed at seeing Theodore and Isabella together; but endeavoured to conceal it by embracing the latter, and condoling with her on her father's mischance" (80). Her knowledge of sexuality has changed the way Matilda interacts with her would-be sister and has taught her to hide her emotions in a way that she would have thought inappropriate before. Her behavior is mimicked by Isabella "who regarded Theodore as attentively as he gazed on Matilda" and "soon divined who the object was that he had told her in the cave engaged his affection" (80). Like Matilda's , Isabella's early response to a sexual situation encourages inappropriate behavior. Later when she is alone with Matilda and they discuss Theodore, Isabella lies to Matilda, telling her that Theodore is in love with another

woman. The girls' initial reactions to the sexualized encounters suggest that Bianca's introduction of sexuality to the girls had negative consequences; however, the girls' ability to quickly overcome their initial jealously and love each other as they had done before reinforces the positive outcome of the servant's introduction of sexuality into the Gothic world, for despite the girls' short disagreement, the outcome of the love relationship between Matilda and Theodore will be the destruction of the Gothic world and a change in the oppressive system that has confined them all.

Unfortunately for Matilda, her part in the destruction of the Gothic is realized through her death; however, her brazen attempt to marry Theodore without her father's approval, her refusal to accept a mate other than the one of her own choosing, and her subsequent martyrdom reinforce the ideas that love and sexuality are the only means of destroying the Gothic world, and despite her death, she becomes an emblem of the successful transformation from Gothic victim to powerful woman. Ultimately, it is because of her conversation with Bianca that Matilda is introduced to the notions of love and sexuality and to Theodore, and it is because of that conversation that Matilda ends up in a position that would allow her father to come to his senses and renounce his claim to Otranto, thus freeing the inhabitants of Otranto from Gothic tyranny. Finally, it is because of her conversation with Bianca and the ensuing jealously that it caused between herself and Isabella that Matilda makes her enigmatic and highly melodramatic deathbed pronouncement: "Isabella—Theodore—for my sake—oh!" (112). Her comment suggests that she wants Isabella and Theodore to find happiness together, as they ultimately do, and since she was introduced to the sexualized world in the way that she was such a pronouncement on her part and such an act on the part of Theodore and Isabella becomes not only acceptable but inevitable.

Substituting for a Lost Lover in The Mysteries of Udolpho

While Walpole's work establishes the Gothic form and presents sexuality as a means of escaping that form, Radcliffe reenvisions both of those ideas in her novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho.* In fact, readers of Ann Radcliffe's best known novel have often tended to characterize it as a reluctant Gothic novel.[6] Radcliffe divided the novel into three distinct sections, Emily's life before Udolpho, her life at Udolpho, and her life after, and when we consider that Radcliffe severely limits the her presentation of traditional Gothic elements to the time Emily spends in Udolpho itself, a time which accounts for approximately a third of the text, it becomes very difficult to characterize it as a solely a Gothic novel at all. However, if Radcliffe is reluctant to allow her heroine to enter the Gothic household and eager to make her to leave, her reluctance stems largely from a hyperawareness of the construction of terror, which for Radcliffe is almost always expressed through comparison, and if there is any element of this novel which Radcliffe constructed carefully, it is comparison: the beauty and simplicity of the rolling hills and the country cottages set against the rugged darkness of the Pyrenees and Udolpho; the loving parents, St. Aubert and his wife, set beside the power- and money-hungry Montonis; the handsome and noble Valancourt set in contrast to the lustful and murderous Count Morano or the pathetic and frail DuPont. If it can be characterized as nothing else, it can be characterized as a novel of comparison, so it is not surprising that in addition to providing us with counterparts for every other character and setting in the novel, Radcliffe would also offer a counterpart for her heroine. Of course, Radcliffe presents the stories of several women in this novel that could, at any point, break away from the story to construct their own Gothic tale and take the role of heroine; however, of all the women that could take over the function of heroine in this story, the

woman that Radcliffe allows the most free rein and the most power in the story is, oddly, Annette, Madame Montoni's servant girl.

In the only definitively Gothic section of the novel, Radcliffe shifts the focus of the love story away from Emily and allows Annette to take on the role of lover and heroine. The decision to shift those duties from the novel's heroine to a servant girl seems at first preposterous; however, it is impossible to imagine that Radcliffe's decision to shift the focus of her love story from a mistress to her servant girl in the most Gothic segment of the novel was accidental or the result of poor planning. Radcliffe's point in this substitution was to illustrate, in sharp contrast, the dangers of encouraging passionlessness as a means of protecting women against the evils of the world. It is not enough for women to act virtuously, as Wollstonecraft would later argue, they must truly understand virtue. Emily is educated, but because her education lacks that one key component, a clear understanding of sexuality, she becomes an easy victim for Montoni. Emily must learn the difference between healthy, productive sexuality, as exhibited by Annette, and dangerous sexuality as exhibited by Madame Montoni, Lauraninti, and Livona.

In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Radcliffe illustrates the ultimate consequence of the Gothic household, passionlessness and sterility. Emily cannot engage in a companionate marriage with her lover Valancourt because she is in the possession of wealth and under the control of her aunt's new husband. As a consequence, Emily must engage a hyperawareness of her own sexuality and conform more strictly than other women to those modes society has prescribed to her. She must embrace a passionless persona, one that her uncle and his cronies are incapable of corrupting through rape or betrothal. However, in this story, Radcliffe presents the conundrum of the Gothic: the only escape from the Gothic world of decay is through sexuality, love, and companionate marriage. Without these things, the Gothic heroine is destined to rot in the Gothic

castle or even worse, as in the case of those women who are both inappropriately sexual and repressed, in a convent. To get around this problem, Radcliffe applies and innovative approach in *Udolpho*: she allows Emily's sexuality to move from the heroine to the heroine's servant girl, Annette, thus making Annette a sexual surrogate for Emily, and allowing the servant girl to engage in the acts of courtship that Emily cannot herself. During their time in Udolpho, Radcliffe allows Annette to become the heroine of the novel and her lover, Ludovico, to become the hero. In taking on these roles the two set up a contrast to the appropriate sexual mores presented by the gentry, as represented by Emily and Valancourt.

Throughout the novel, Emily has a difficult time comprehending and responding to matters relating to sexuality. Time and again, Emily miscalculates sexual relationships and the appropriateness of interactions between men and women. The outcome of Emily's ignorance and confusion is her movement from prized child to sexual commodity. As a result and to protect herself from the fate of all those who underestimate the dangers of sexuality, Emily must do what many heroines before her did, embrace passionlessness. Like many of her predecessors, Emily attempts to embrace passionlessness because her parents have not properly prepared her to deal with her own sexuality. Unlike most of her predecessors, however, her desire to mask her true feelings does not necessarily reflect a flaw in her education. In fact, Emily's education has been substantial for a Gothic heroine. Her father took great pains to teach her rationality and improve her intellect, and he attempted to control, but not entirely eliminate her sensibility. While explaining his educational theory, he tells her:

> I would not teach you to become insensible, if I could; I would only warn you of the evils of susceptibility, and point out how you may avoid them. . . . Always remember how much more valuable is the strength of fortitude, than the grace of

> sensibility. Do not, however, confound fortitude with apathy; apathy cannot know . . . virtue. (80)

At his death, St. Aubert seemed to have accomplished his goal of educating Emily in a manner that would leave her self-sufficient; however, as Kate Ferguson Ellis points out by way of John Milton, "St. Aubert thus leaves his daughter 'sufficient to [stand]', but like Milton's Adam and Eve, free to fall," by denying her the one piece of knowledge that she desperately needs in a world without her male protector, the knowledge of sexuality (113). When he dies, St. Aubert leaves Emily a small bag of money in which she finds a small portrait of a woman, not her mother. Upon seeing the portrait, she remembers having witnessed her father weeping over the image. Her discovery of this portrait, along with her memory of her father's mysterious behavior immediately preceding his death, leads Emily to believe that her father may have had an illicit sexual relationship with the portrait's original. Of course, her assumption turns out to be false, as the woman depicted in the image is none other than St. Aubert's dead sister, but the seeds of doubt concerning her father's sexual impropriety allow, as Ellis might say, the snake to enter the garden. From that point to the end of the novel, Radcliffe places Emily in numerous situations designed to test not only her reason but her moral acumen.

Despite her education, her lack of experience in the real world leaves her vulnerable in ways that women should not be. It falls, then, to her servant girl Annette to interpret the sexual world for her and to help Emily negotiate her place within it. Take Emily's encounter with the ill reputed Signora Livoa, for example. Montoni introduces the lady to his wife and niece during their stay in Venice. Emily, obviously not recognizing the lady's standing, thinks highly of her intellect and manners. It is only when Livona appears at Udolpho that Emily begins to question the woman's character, but then she quickly dismisses any bad thoughts that occur to her. Why

on earth would she come to Udolpho "of her own consent," Emily wonders, and though she begins to question Livona "the thought was so shocking to Emily, whose affection the fascinating manners of Signora had won, and appeared so improbable, when she remembered those manners, that she dismissed them instantly" (382). Radcliffe never clearly defines the shocking aspects of Livona's character, but she does fill in a few blanks when Annette enters the scene with news about the new visitors. When Emily argues that Livona must have been taken prisoner as she and had been, Annette answers incredulously,

> "Taken prisoners! . . . no indeed, ma'amseel, not they. I remember one of them very well at Venice: she came two or three times, to the Signor's, you know, ma'amselle, and it was said, but I did not believe a word of it—it was said, that the Signor [Montoni] like her better than he should do Then why, says I bring her to my lady? Very true, said Ludovico; but he looked as if he knew more." (382)

Here we have two interpretations of the same encounter in Venice, Emily's, completely devoid of any sense of sexuality or impropriety of any sort, and Annette's, more sexually imaginative, but still disbelieving. The difference in the two is clearly one of class and access to the sexualized gossip of the outside world, but it also comes from Annette's tie to the erotic world, through her social position as a servant and through her relationship with Ludovico. Ludovico clearly understands the character of Livano but is unwilling to corrupt his future bride with too much sexual knowledge; however, his sexualized relationship with Annette allows both the maid and the mistress to make more intellectual decisions about the women they surround themselves with and thus keeps them both from falling prey to their own sexual naiveté. Ultimately the women discover that Ludovico knew more than he told them, and that Signora Livona had been Montoni's mistress during their time in Venice. She does not openly show herself to be his

mistress until shortly after the death of Madame Montoni, but Emily's respect for her own ability to judge character is firmly shaken by the encounter.

The knowledge that Emily gains through Annette's relationship with Ludovico encourages her to reconsider her understanding of morality, but she does not immediately see the benefits of openly expressed love. Her fear of acting improperly becomes evident when she discusses Annette's relationship with Ludovico, as she does several times throughout the novel. During her discussions with Annette, Emily consistently encourages her servant be secretive about the relationship. On one meeting soon after they arrive at the castle, Annette introduces the subject of Ludovico by saying, "You remember Ludovico, ma'am—a tall, handsome, young man— . . . who always wears his cloak with such a grace, thrown round his left arm, and his hat set on so smartly all on one side, and— " "No" interrupts Emily who goes on to tell Annette, "I fear, to thy peril . . . for it seems his verses have stolen thy heart. But let me advise you; if it is so, keep the secret; never let him know it." "Ah—ma'amsell!—how can one keep such a secret as that?" asks Annette. (247) Much later in their time at Udolpho, Annette wonders at the upper-class capacity for concealment and remarks "how young ladies will disguise themselves, when they are in love!" (285). Emily and Annette's differing views on openly expressed sexuality provide us with a stark contrast, and when compared to their earlier discussions of Signora Livona, they suggest Radcliffe's moral. The contrast here is between open and honest love, as expressed by Annette, and the closed and deceitful lust, as expressed by Signora Livona. With these two presentations of sexuality, Radcliffe offers a critique of the type of love that Signora Livona and Emily presents to the world, that which is deceptively passionless, and the type of love that Annette present to the world, that which is open and honest. As the child of loving parents, Emily should be able to distinguish between the two types of love and recognize that open and

honest love is more morally appealing than secreted love; however, the death of Emily's father, her uncovering of the secret picture, and her ultimate suspicions about her father's potential for sexual impropriety encourage Emily to view love and sexuality as things that are shameful and should be hidden from the world.

While Emily presents a passionless front to the world in an attempt to protect herself from any claims of impropriety, she begins to learn from Annette's love relationship with Ludovico, and she is clearly not yet the apathetic woman her father warned her about becoming. When Montoni tells Annette that Ludovico has died, information that turns out to be untrue, Emily "shudder" in response (326) and braces herself for Annette's disappointment. However, though she is visibly shaken by the news of the doomed love, Emily still attempts to conceal her true emotions when the grieving Annette appears at her chamber door. To Annette's sobs and groans Emily responds "with a sigh that came from her heart," "We are continually losing dear friends by death. . . . We must submit to the will of Heaven—our tears, alas! cannot recall the dead!" (328). When Emily discovers that Ludovico is not truly dead, she shows happiness for Annette but is unable to express it openly. In this scene, Emily's unconscious and conscious responses conflict. Emily is clearly not the passionless woman she would present herself to be, and as she spends more time observing Annette and her love for Ludovico, Emily moves closer to being able to openly express her feelings. The "sigh that came from her heart" and the uncontrolled shudder that contorts her body when she learns of Ludovico's death both illustrate her natural instinct to express herself more passionately, but her language reflects her continuing unwillingness to do so.

Of course, Emily's inability to openly express her horror at Ludovico's possible death illustrates not only her attempt to maintain a passionless persona, but also serves as a reminder

that Emily too has lost a love. The difference between Annette's possible loss and Emily's actual loss, however, is that Emily chose her path. Throughout the Udolpho section of the novel, Annette's relationship with Ludovico serves to remind us of the different track that Emily chose to take by leaving the safety of her love for Valancourt. In fact, the love scenes between Annette and Ludovico begin to take center stage after Emily formally renounces all thought of Valancourt describing them as something that would "stain" her mind and as an indulgent "wish so shockingly self-interested" (308). From the point of that pronouncement, Valancourt, who she had promised to remember every sunset, vanishes from the text for the next ten chapters, and the love story in those sections is provided by Annette and Ludovico. It is in these chapters that Annette is first locked up by Ludovico and that both Emily and the audience believe Ludovico has died.

Annette's imprisonment in this section is the first of two imprisonments she faces in the novel and on both occasions Radcliffe creates a humorous, but significant contrast between the type of confinement Emily faces because of her early unwillingness to trust in her love for Valancourt and the type of confinement Annette faces. When Annette is imprisoned, she is imprisoned by Ludovico who clearly understands the danger of the Gothic household in ways that Annette does not. While Annette complains of her confinement on both occasions, Radcliffe makes it clear that once the reasons for confinement are explained, Annette freely chooses the protective confinement that her love for Ludovico offers over the dangers of the larger prison, Udolpho. In these scenes, Radcliffe offers a comparison to Emily. Just like Emily, Annette is confined in the Gothic household, and just like Emily's, Annette's modesty is threatened by the immoral men of that household. However, Annette is not confined by the villain, but a hero, and the confinement is not mandatory, it is freely accepted. Annette's scenes of confinement are

clearly meant to counterpart Emily's difficult position, but they illustrate that when sexuality is expressed openly, it can be beneficial. It may, at times, lead to confinement of sorts, but that confinement is the confinement of love, not the confinement of economics, and when confinement is willingly chosen, it is less painful to bear and in fact, becomes appreciated.

By the end of their stay in Udolpho, Emily begins to realize how valuable Annette's relationship with Ludovico is and how her former injunctions for the maid to hide her love may, in fact, have been detrimental to all their safety had Annette listened. When Montoni's true character becomes apparent to both Emily and her aunt— Madame Montoni— both women begin to view Annette's love for Ludovico as an asset and as their only means for escape. Neither Emily nor her aunt has met Ludovico, but in a moment of extreme fear, Madame Montoni cries out to Annette "Assist us to escape. . . . Where is Ludovico?" (316). He cannot help Madame Montoni because he is busy fighting to protect the castle, but soon after this encounter, Emily meets Ludovico and he becomes her sole means of protection while she remains under Montoni's control. Ultimately, the openly passionate relationship which Emily had earlier criticized allows Ludovico becomes the hero of this section, and Annette's relationship with Ludovico takes center stage while the relationship between Emily and Valancourt recedes into the background. This recession is highlighted when Radcliffe briefly teases us with the possibility that Valancourt will return to save Emily; however, she reinforces the loss of that love relationship with the disappointing appearance of DuPont (the novel's fake Valancourt). Our disappointment soon fades, however, as Ludovico reasserts his newly acquired position as hero and steps in to rescue the group from Udolpho. As they leave the castle, Ludovico thinks fondly upon his accomplishments, and he

> congratulated himself, on having rescued his Annette and *Signora* Emily from the danger, that had surrounded them; on his own liberation from people, whose manners he had long detested; . . . on his prospect of happiness with the object of his affections. (453)

Although right before they leave the castle, Ludovico has provided Emily with another faux hero in the form of DuPont, DuPont proves to be inadequate, both as a lover and as a hero. Much of DuPont's inadequacy comes from the fact that he, like Emily, embraced concealment. We discover, soon after they are rescued, that DuPont has been obsessed with Emily since the beginning of the story, but she, like the audience, never even knew of his existence. His concealment makes him an ineffectual lover and hero, and rather than rescue Emily himself, as a true hero would do, he must *be* rescued by Ludovico who not only affects DuPont's escape but also takes on the role of economic provider for the entire group when he stumbles upon a bag of money, effectively assuring the possibility for their safe journey home. Therefore, even though Radcliffe offers us a substitute hero, in the upper-class DuPont, he is less effectual than the surrogate hero she has provided us in the lower-class Ludovico, whose success was guaranteed by his openness and practicality.

After they leave Udolpho, Annette and Ludovico recede into the background. Despite their move into the background, they remain significant characters in the work, and Radcliffe rewards them with marriage and a nice placement at the end of the novel, but once their stint as surrogates for Emily and Valancourt is finished, they are no longer necessary to either Emily's education or the continuation of the novel's romantic plotline. While the surrogacy is brief, Radcliffe expects Emily and the audience to learn an important moral from it. The passionlessness which Emily's world, and in fact the world in most realistic novels, requires

cannot help women to free themselves from patriarchal tyranny, and in fact, it only serves to perpetuate the problem. In order to gain control over their finances and their sexuality, women must gain unshakable inner understanding of virtue and must be willing to test their own understanding of virtue against that which society deems "respectable." Radcliffe argues here that parents *do* have responsibility for imparting this knowledge to their daughters, but she also places the burden on the women themselves, who must be willing to hazard social mistakes in order to achieve personal fulfillment. Ultimately, Radcliffe would like us to see that women who stand by idly and do not openly express their desires will be doomed to a life of stagnation and decay promised by the Gothic.

While the female servants play relatively small roles in both Walpole's novel and Radcliffe's, their impact is profound. As the only representative of the outside sexualized world and as the only characters with the ability to prove that such a world is not necessarily immoral or inappropriate, the female servants serve invaluable functions in these texts. They promote female independence and their intervention allows the heroines to move away from the stagnation of the Gothic world to create a new, more egalitarian society one in which the heroines' private and social identities can coexist peacefully with their sexual identities. By dispelling the heroines' ideas that passionlessness is an appropriate response to sexual threat, the Gothic servant girls pave the way for later incarnations of Gothic heroines, such as Jane in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Mrs. de Winter in Daphne DuMaurier's *Rebecca*, who, as servant/heroines, manage to expose and address directly, without the intervention of an additional surrogate or guide, the terror that can arise out of acknowledged desire.

Notes

[1] J. Jean Hecht discusses eighteenth-century perceptions of country servants in *The Domestic Servant Class in Eighteenth-Century England* :

> London servants were considered the worst of the lot. They were said to be wanton in habit and unscrupulous in practice. Moreover, urban living was supposed to have given them a sophistication characterized by a highly insubordinate spirit and an exceptionally self-interested attitude. It was therefore customary to compare them unfavourably with domestics in the country. . . . Indeed, so great was the prejudice against the domestics of the Metropolis that those who had lost their places would not infrequently leave the city and return again, posing as fresh arrivals. (11-12)

[2] See Introduction pages 9-15.

[3] With the obvious exception of Pamela, whose influence must be explored separately from the larger more typical characterizations of female domestics.

[4] See Chapter 1 for a discussion of the distinction between public and private identities and the dangers that such a distinction encourages.

[5] With the possible exception of Betsy in Smith's *The Old Manor House*, although Betsy is a minor character and she is merely wanton, not totally devoid of a moral center like Amy. Betsy does, however, help introduce the heroine of that novel, Monimia, to sexuality, but Betsy's role is to act as a warning and to reinforce Monimia's status as moral heroine, lest we question the propriety of Monimia's midnight rendezvous with the hero. See chapter 4 for a discussion of the Monimia as moral servant/heroine.

[6] See Terry Castle's discussion of this novel's Gothic status in her introduction to the work. Terry Castle. "Introduction" *The Mysteries of Udolpho.* Ed. Bonamy Dobrée (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998): xx-xxiii.

Chapter 4: Servants and the Criminalization of Aristocratic Identity in Charlotte Smith's *The Old Manor House*

> In a great house there are among the servants as many cabals, and as many schemes, as among the leaders of a great nation; and few exhibited a greater variety of interests than did the family of Mrs. Rayland. (*The Old Manor House* 52)

In the novels that I have explored in previous chapters, the Gothic household has been male dominated and servants have played an integral role in challenging that domination. They have worked with heroes and heroines to replace the male dominated household with a new, female-centered household, one that may still be headed ostensibly by a man, but one that reflects the influence of companionate love and that promises more freedom, or at least more acknowledgement, for the wife and mother. It would seem, then, that a household already governed by a woman— a woman with the freedom to choose her companion, with a firm grasp on her maternal and paternal history, and with no evil male to challenge her authority— might escape the pitfalls of the Gothic; however, there are, as the quotation above tells us, "many schemes" in Rayland Hall, all of which invite the Gothic into a household that would, on the surface, seem to reflect the type of household Gothic heroines and their servants have been striving to create.

Since *The Old Manor House* leaves us with none of the typical Gothic culprits to blame for Gothic dysfunction of Rayland Hall, we must look for a new villain. And as there is no male oppressor to blame, we find that we must blame the matriarch of Rayland Hall for the household's Gothic shortcomings, for it is in Mrs. Rayland's character that we find the failures which invite the Gothic into Rayland Hall. Katharine Rogers points out the contradictions apparent in Mrs. Rayland's character that help to encourage the terrors of the Gothic and explain

her inability to fill the role of matriarchal leader proscribed at the end of many other Gothic novels—"The contrast between her self-confidence and her ignorance, between her self-satisfaction and her total lack of good feelings, between the power she has and her unfitness to wield it, is both comic and appalling" (76). Mrs. Rayland is "unfit" to govern her household and by virtue of that "unfitness" rendered comic. Her "comic and appalling" appearance results largely from her promotion of social conventions that have been designed to limit all women's freedoms, the conventions of feudalism. Thus we see in Mrs. Rayland's household, the same class conflict and threat of servant usurpation I discuss in chapter one with *Caleb Williams* and *The Castle of Otranto*. What has changed in *The Old Manor House*, I will argue, is that the usurpation is not the result of a hypocritical gap between public and private identities, instead, it is the result of a woman trying to maintain power as a female using patterns that had not only failed for men but that had originally been constructed, in part, to restrict the rights of females. Mrs. Rayland extols the virtue of feudalistic tradition at every turn, but as Labbe argues, "Rather than promoting convention, *The Old Manor House* charts the cost— to families, individuals, and relationships—of relying on convention" (18). As a result Mrs. Rayland's home becomes a model for social decay not only of the individual household, but also of the social structure of England itself. Fletcher explains, "The gilding, the oak, the order, make the well-preserved central section a shrine of traditional values. The luxury . . . is suggested in the shining surfaces, but so is its fragility, and someone entering without due caution could knock everything over in venturing onto the 'nicely waxed' floor" (165). Through its focus on tradition and its incorporation of Gothic elements this novel questions the role of women in the household; it asks us to consider what a matriarch should look like and whether she is doomed to experience the same sort of usurpation patriarchs are doomed to face, and it asks us to consider the role of

women in the movement toward individualism as well as what responsibility women have to promote the ideals of revolution. To answer these questions, Smith returns to ideas she has expressed in previous novels, considers her own personal struggles with inheritance law that privileges primogeniture, and reevaluates traditional relationships between servants and their masters, ultimately proffering a new style of household, one that she believes reflects both the requirements of individualism and the desires of women for at least a modicum of equality.

The Function of the Political Gothic at Rayland Hall

Charlotte Smith's fifth novel, *The Old Manor House* (1793), is set at the time of the American Revolution and draws part of its action from that conflict, so, clearly, revolution is a central point of her conversation; however, and of course, it is not the American Revolution Smith seeks to explore in this novel. As she does in her fourth novel *Desmond*, Smith seeks to explore the philosophy of the French Revolution. In this chapter, I will argue that Smith uses servant characters in *The Old Manor House* to elaborate on arguments she made in *Desmond* and that she utilizes Gothic machinery in *The Old Manor House* as a means of furthering notions she expressed in *Desmond* dealing with the corruption of the aristocratic world and the responsibilities women to govern their households in a new way. To do so, I will further argue, Smith relies upon of one of eighteenth-century society's worst fears about their servants, that they will criminalize the household, and by virtue of doing so, ruin the family reputation. In chapter 1, I explored this fear of servant usurpation of power as it relates to economics and the construction of the master's public and private identity. In this chapter, I shall examine the ways in which Smith relies upon and then complicates that fear by creating a system in which the aristocratic values of Rayland Hall do not suffer from servant criminalization but in fact criminalize servants who might otherwise, if placed in the bourgeoisie household, serve

dutifully. Here, it is the aristocratic Mrs. Rayland who becomes an unwitting Gothic villain by unknowingly injecting the criminal element into this novel and unintentionally constructing the Gothic household. She does this not through any overt greed or evil on her own part, though she might well be considered vain and snobbish; instead, she injects the Gothic by promoting those ideals she has been bred to embrace, the ideals of feudalism. And here, we begin to see the flaw of the feminist plan discussed in the introduction of this piece: women want to gain control of the household, but if they are to do it, they must create a new pattern of governance.[1] They cannot repeat the feudalistic pattern for that system is a system that has traditionally excluded them, both legally and economically, so while they may set themselves up as kings, or queens, of the household, they will not do it isolation and any attempts to do so will be thwarted by outside influence—in the forms of both the legal system and the shifting social code. As a result, the female head of household risks creating her own version of the Gothic household which can imprison her just as certainly as it imprisons other weaker females.

Although not governed by an oppressive male, Rayland Hall is undeniably a Gothic household, yet, although this novel is often proclaimed to be Charlotte Smith's best work of fiction, *The Old Manor House* has not merited mention in most critical surveys of Gothic literature, and when it does appear, it is discussed only briefly. That is not to suggest that Smith's other novels are absent from critical discussion of the Gothic. In fact, both *Emmeline* and *Desmond* are often explored. Critical focus on these two novels is understandable given the fact that both of these works nod toward the Gothic with their representations of towering castles, evil uncle/husbands, and marauding banditti. However, of the three novels, *The Old Manor House* seems most clearly Gothic in that it does not merely nod toward the Gothic, as do *Emmeline* and *Desmond*, but it illustrates patterns that promote the construction of the Gothic

and seeks to challenge the Gothic world directly. The absence of this text from most general discussions of the Gothic is troubling not only because Smith seems to have taken such pains to illustrate the construction of the Gothic in this piece but also because her purpose for the construction of the Gothic makes this piece as politically charged as *Desmond* and therefore as significant to the understanding of Smith's philosophy as her other work.

Certainly, *Desmond* is Smith's great political novel, but critics have long viewed *The Old Manor House* as similarly, yet less overtly, political. As such, it reflects what Chris Jones calls Smith's "indirect radical comment on seemingly conventional situations" (167). Her commentary in *The Old Manor House* is more "indirect" but understandably so, given the fact that she was roundly criticized for her discussion of politics in *Desmond*.[2] In fact, her contemporary Thomas James Mathias accuses Smith of "too frequently whining and frisking in novels, till our girls' heads turn wild with impossible adventures and are now and then tainted with democracy" (56).[3] However, despite the criticism, Smith continues, though a little more cautiously in *The Old Manor House*, to promote her cause.[4] The mixed response to the political representations in *Desmond* may have encouraged Smith to displace her fifth novel in time to the 1770s, thus allowing her to deal with the political issues of class that were so important in *Desmond* in a less inflammatory fashion; yet though Smith may have displaced *The Old Manor House* to the time of the American Revolution, she continues at least one of the strains she begins in *Desmond*, her discussion of the relation between masters and servants, and as such, an examination of Desmond's take on those relations will provide us with a means of reading Smith's intentions in *The Old Manor House*.

The feudalistic situation Mrs. Rayland constructs at Rayland Hall can be best understood through a conversation between Desmond and a French count. During a debate about the nature

of nobility, the Count asks Desmond "So Sir! I must from all this, conclude, that you consider your footman upon an equality with yourself. — Why then is he your footman?" (138). To this question, Desmond responds:

> I happen to be born heir to considerable estates; it is his chance to be the son of a labourer, living on those estates. – I have occasion for his services; he has occasion for the money by which I purchase them: in this compact we are equal so far as we are free.—I, with my property, which is money, buy his property, which is time, so long as he is willing to sell it. – I hope and believe my footman feels himself to be my fellow-man; but I have not, therefore, any apprehension that instead of waiting behind my chair, he will sit down in the next.—He was born poor—but he is not angry that I am rich—He knows that he never can be in *my* situation, but he knows also that I can amend *his*.—If, however, instead of paying him for his services, I were able to say to him, as *has* been done by the higher classes . . . —"you are my property—and you must come to work, fight, die for me, on whatever conditions I please to impose;"—my servant, who would very naturally perceive no appeal against such tyrannical injustice, but to bodily prowess would, as he is probably the most athletic of the two, discover that so far from being compelled to stand on such terms behind my chair, he was well able either to place himself in the next, or to turn me out of mine. (139)

Of course, Mrs. Rayland does not *force* her servants to work, but in viewing her household as a feudal realm, she establishes the system which Desmond fears—one in which her servants will try to sit alongside her or turn her out of her chair. Further, Mrs. Rayland may not force her servants to work for her, but she does believe that they are compelled, and this aristocratically

skewed interpretation leads her servants to behave as Desmond fears they will. In Mrs. Rayland's world view, God's grace has placed her and her family in a position of power and because of that they are innately superior in every respect to those around them. Similarly, God has placed the servants in their position, so they are innately inferior. To Mrs. Rayland, their position as servant is a cosmic punishment. Her servants are her servants because God willed it to be so, and although she is fairly benevolent to her inferiors, she imagines no dignity in their social positions, has no respect for their labor, and certainly does not see them as her "equals," a point which Desmond promotes. Like Manfred and Falkland in *The Castle of Otranto* and *Caleb Williams* respectively, Mrs. Rayland embraces and promotes feudalistic class construction, and, like those two Gothic villains, she faces the threat of usurpation.

The Gothic in general has long been linked with political attacks on the aristocracy, but, as Kate Ferguson Ellis recognizes in her discussion of *Desmond*, Smith's uses of the Gothic to further political ideals are more pronounced and reflect her desire to reach a highly targeted audience:

> It is by adding "terror" to the sentimental formula that Smith made room for the expression of radical ideas inside a genre, the novel, that was scrupulously watched over by reviewers for possible corrupting influences. It was not the only way of using the novel as a vehicle for "dangerous" sentiments, but it was one particularly suited to women writing for a female audience. (85)

Ellis's focus on *Desmond* as a representative of the overtly political Gothic is understandable since *Desmond* clearly reflects Smith's political agenda, and as such, elicits more discussion in terms of politics; however, the categorization of *Desmond* as a Gothic novel is tenuous at best, as

it includes only brief instances of Gothic encounters, and as such, *The Old Manor House* seems to serve as a better example of Smith's political Gothic agenda.

If the purpose of *The Old Manor House* is to expose the construction and destruction of aristocratic values through the Gothic, then readers should look to the instruments by which Smith fulfills that purpose. Critics addressing *The Old Manor House* tend to focus on the hero's education of the heroine as the genesis of the destruction, and there is no denying that Orlando's relationship with Monimia helps to remove the Gothic;[5] however, Smith carefully illustrates the construction of the Gothic in this piece, so in order to understand the significance of that which Orlando destroys, we must first understand that which the aristocracy (as represented through Mrs. Rayland) constructs.

Troubles with the Aristocracy and the Inheritance System

Rather than focus overtly on the French Revolution, as *Desmond* does, *The Old Manor House* represents the injustice of the aristocratic mode through its relation to the inheritance and legal systems of her time. The novel addresses the tribulations of Orlando Somerive, the cousin of Mrs. Grace Rayland, an aristocratic matriarch who manipulates Orlando and his family with hints of inheritance. Orlando's uncertain inheritance is complicated by his secret love of one of Mrs. Rayland's servants, Monimia, and by the machinations of Monimia's fellow servants who compete with Orlando for Mrs. Rayland's affections in the hopes that they will become her heirs. In true sentimental, Gothic terms, the novel includes a girl imprisoned in a turret, possible ghosts, a missing will, smugglers, and a perilous trip which includes a captivity.

The central focus of the novel is the system of inheritance based on the aristocratic, patriarchal model, and it is no wonder that the novel presents such a scathing indictment of these systems given Smith's own legal battles over her children's inheritance and her tendency to

consider her battle as one against aristocratic tradition. Although born into a fairly affluent family, Smith faced financial difficulties in adulthood as a result of an unsuccessful marriage. At the age of sixteen, she was encouraged by her father and her proverbially unpleasant step-mother to marry Benjamin Smith. She would later regret the choice as Benjamin Smith was regarded not only by Charlotte but also by his own father, Richard Smith, to be highly irresponsible and brutal.[6] Although Benjamin Smith held little regard for the safety and well being of his wife and nine children, Richard Smith, in order to alleviate some of the problems his son had caused, willed the majority of his fortune to Charlotte and Benjamin Smith's children, bypassing Benjamin, his second son, as well as his eldest son and several daughters. Unfortunately for Charlotte Smith and her children, Richard Smith drafted a fairly ambiguous will without legal assistance, which allowed the will to be contested by his children and which left Charlotte Smith and her children without access to the family fortune. The legal wrangling over the will lasted for thirty-seven years, seven years beyond Smith's own life, and consumed most of her time and energy. Certainly, the battle had an effect on Smith's writing of *The Old Manor House*, as she points out in her letter to Joseph Cooper Walker, an Irish antiquarian who arranged to have her books sold in Ireland:

> I have been ill & perplex'd with the cruelty of my Children's tyrannical Aristocratic relations, who will not allow me a shilling for them or even tell me what they have done with their property, & these torments, which often affect my spirits & drive me almost to despair, have prevented my going on with the Novel so rapidly as I hoped to have done. (Stanton 53)

It is not surprising, then, that the main conflict in *The Old Manor House* centers on the flawed inheritance system or that her novel places responsibility for the faults in this system squarely at

the feet of the aristocracy. Both the legal battles over Mrs. Rayland's will and Mrs. Rayland's idea of tradition and familial bonds, distortedly reflected back through the dysfunctional Somerive family, hint at her personal crisis with the "Aristocratic relations" and their father's will.

Smith's distaste for her "Aristocratic relations" reverberates through *The Old Manor House* in the words of Mrs. Rayland— "the last of a race . . . which within a few years, perhaps a few months might be no more remembered" (16). Through Mrs. Rayland's character, Smith offers an indictment of a social system that places emphasis on the paternalistic role of the upper classes, and she presents the horrors emanating from such a system, particularly those that encourage the lower classes to engage in immoral and illegal acts to make a place for themselves with in a system that marginalizes their significance. Mrs. Rayland's obsession with her family line leads her to promote dead or dying social systems. She refuses to compromise her social values and in fact attempts to construct what Jacqueline M. Labbe calls a feudal realm,[7] a point the narrator makes clear when she compares Mrs. Rayland to Queen Elizabeth I:

> Her attachment to [Orlando] had been long insensibly increasing; and though, like another Elizabeth, she could not bear openly to acknowledge him her successor, she was as little proof as the royal ancient virgin, against the attractions of an amiable and handsome young man, whom she loved and considered a child of her bounty, and the creature of her smiles. Though determined to keep him dependent during her life, and even to send him out a soldier of fortune, she really meant to give him, at her death, the whole of her landed property. (228)

Like Elizabeth, Mrs. Rayland selfishly places her household in jeopardy to protect her own pride and power. In framing herself as "another Elizabeth" Mrs. Rayland chooses virginity over

motherhood and personal power over family security— we see the consequences of Elizabeth's similar choice played out in Sophia Lee's *The Recess*, discussed in chapter three of this document – and in doing so, Mrs. Rayland sets up a house that is doomed to fail. Her obsessive focus on her patriarchal family history, as illustrated by her willingness to take anyone who will attend her to the family hall of portraits and then detail the exploits of each member ad infinitum, and her blind conviction that others endorse feudalistic traditions she does encourages those who work for her to behave immorally—to sit down beside her, as Desmond might say—as a result, she fails as a matriarch.

Her view of class associations appears evident in her conduct toward her nearest (and only) relations, the Somerive family. Mrs. Rayland refuses to associate with the family on equal terms because their ancestors chose to marry below their social ranks.[8] The narrator suggests that this punishment results not merely from "prejudice" but from jealousy, as Somerive's father chose to marry Mrs. Rayland's companion rather than herself or one of her sisters (4). While Mrs. Rayland revels in tradition and appropriate class behavior, with this character Smith presents a woman who ironically promotes a tradition that would choose to exclude her. For in a traditional sense, the Rayland family property, which Mrs. Rayland selfishly uses to taunt her socially inferior relatives, should never have descended to Mrs. Rayland in the first place, and the fact that her father had no sons and thus had to leave his property to daughters suggests decay and ultimate dissolution of the family line Mrs. Rayland so vainly parades. In his 1766 *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, William Blackstone explains,

> The seventh and last rule or canon is, that in collateral inheritances the male stocks shall be preferred to the female; (that is, kindred derived from the blood of the male ancestors shall be admitted before those from

> the blood of the female)—unless where the lands have, in fact, descended from the female.
>
> Thus the relations on the father's side are admitted *in infinitum*, before those on the mother's side are admitted at all; and the relations of the father's father, before those of the father's mother; and so on. (II. 178)

Mrs. Rayland's father had no choice but to leave his estates to daughters. His only male heirs appear to be the descendants of his father's sister, thus negating the claims of the Somerive family, at least in Blackstone's opinion. Therefore, both Mrs. Rayland's ownership of the house and her consideration of giving the home to Orlando (who as a second son should not inherit it anyway) challenge the aristocratic tradition she holds so dear. Despite the break in tradition that her ownership of the property and her resolution to pass it on to Orlando suggests, however, Mrs. Rayland has been "educated with such very high ideas of [her] own importance, that [she] could never be prevailed upon to lessen, by sharing it with any of those numerous suitors, who for the first forty or fifty years of [her] life surrounded [her]" (3). In doing so, she seems to be ensuring that the Rayland property will not pass from her father's line into the line of another man, thus upholding Blackstone's legal assessment, but the result is already unavoidable. Rayland family history is destined to become merely maternal history,[9] as Mrs. Rayland's continuous recounting of her family history as a way of reinforcing her own importance suggests. Throughout the novel, Mrs. Rayland laments the change in class structure and revels in her own family line, but as she is doing so, she is reveling in a line that is extinct.

Teaching the Servants to Steal

Mrs. Rayland's flaw as a governing force is her application of a distinction that the rest of her family refuses to accept. She may have constructed a feudal world, in which she sees herself as

"another Elizabeth," but the rest of the characters in the novel adhere to the rules of feudalism in name only. It is this fault in her feudalistic vision that leads the narrator to observe, "In a great house there are among the servants as many cabals, and as many schemes, as among the leaders of a great nation; and few exhibited a greater variety of interests than did the family of Mrs. Rayland" (52). In her management of her servants, Mrs. Rayland consistently demeans their social and economic position. Further, her emphasis on the importance of constructing and maintaining her own family name encourages the servants to attempt to make money and names for themselves, thus prompting their attempts to sit beside her and act as "leaders of a great nation." While Mrs. Rayland simultaneously demeans her servants and emphasizes their powerlessness, she resigns the running of her kingdom to her servants without monitoring their behavior. Such thoughtless acts, according to Desmond, destroy the master/servant bond and encourage a competitive relationship among the classes.

We can see the flaws in Mrs. Rayland's system when it is compared with that of her cousin Mr. Somerive. Although Somerive lacks many of the qualities that would make him a good parent, he seems to understand the management of servants in a way that Mrs. Rayland cannot. In explaining Somerive's rationale for avoiding the nouveau riche Mr. Stockton's home, the narrator adds among the reasons his fear for his servant's perceptions of Stockton's lifestyle. Smith writes, "[Mr. Somerive's] servants, plain and laborious, were at present content with their portion of work and of wages; but were they once introduced into such a servants' hall as that of the Castle . . . he knew they would immediately become discontented, and of course troublesome and useless" (146). Mr. Somerive, like Desmond, believes that he has created a balance between "work" and "wages" and that balance allows him to govern his household appropriately. Mr. Somerive married for love, not for title or money, and his liberal attitude

toward money and rank permits him to maintain the position of master in his household. Of course, he has his flaws, particularly in that he attempts to persuade two of his children to marry for money rather than love, but he is not the one of the "[t]yrannical fathers who insisted their children marry according to the necessity of 'alliance' [thus] resembl[ing] the feudal remnants attacked by Jacobins" that Robert Miles warns us of because Mr. Somerive's desire to see his children well matched seems to stem more from fear of their poverty than from purely selfish motivations (48). In contrast, Mrs. Rayland's focus on money, title, and the power that such distinction can provide encourages her servants to obtain money and power by any means.

We see this in action during the tenants' feast. Mrs. Rayland generally believes herself too important and too old to interact with the tenants, so she leaves the party to Patterson and Lennard. Smith writes:

> Mrs. Lennard and Mr. Patterson, who had long presided at them, loved the gaiety of the scene, and the consequence they had in it, as they were considered as the master and mistress of the feast; for, though Mrs. Rayland once used to go down to honour it with her presence for ten minutes, she had now left off that custom, from age and infirmity; and her servants, to whom it was attended with some trouble and loss of time, had persuaded her that she was always ill after such an exertion. (282)

Lennard and Patterson enjoy the power and prestige they receive from hosting such a fancy affair and have learned to manipulate Mrs. Rayland into placing them in charge of it. They, and the other servants of the household, have learned to take pleasure in the types of extravagance Mr. Somerive hopes to keep his servants from viewing; as a result, Mrs. Rayland's servants behave

duplicitously to achieve their fantasies of upper class domination, and so Rayland Hall is overrun with "cabals" and "schemes."

The "cabals" and "schemes" perpetrated by the servants at Rayland Hall reflect a larger eighteenth-century fear of criminality in the servant class. As I noted in chapter one, Andrea Henderson argues that representations of servants in the eighteenth century often focus on the servant's connection with the outside world and the servant's resulting ability to inject outside immortality into the household. Take for example Daniel Defoe's fear of the servant maid's connection to the outside world:

> [M]any [servants] rove from place to place, from bawdy-house to service, and from service to bawdy-house again, ever unsettled and never easy, anything being more common than to find these creatures one week in a good family, and the next in a brothel. This amphibious life makes them fit for neither, for if the bawd uses them ill, away they trip to service, and if the mistress gives them a wry word, whip they are at a bawdy-house again, so that in effect they neither make good whores or good servants. (*Everybody's Business is Nobody's Business* 7)

Indeed, Defoe's concern about the servant maid's ability to bring crime into the household from the outside world is supported by eighteenth-century records of servant criminal activity. Peter Linebaugh points out:

> Professor Malcolmson found that of sixty-one defendants tried for infanticide at the Old Bailey between 1730 and 1744, thirty-five were servant maids, a figure explained by the prohibition of pregnancy among servants. . . . Of the sixty-two servants who were hanged between 1703 and 1772 we know that twenty-one received this penalty for robbing their masters. (248)

As these statistics suggest, servants were certainly involved in crimes during the period, and they were involved in crimes against their masters. However, what is interesting about these statistics is that while some of these servants were convicted of crimes against their masters, others were convicted not of crimes against the master but of crimes against themselves, and their crimes resulted not from greed but from the hierarchical, paternal rules of the family, rules that are reflected in the social structure Mrs. Rayland creates in her household. In these non-fictional cases, the female servants committing murder were not perpetrating crimes because they were sullied by the outside world but instead they were doing so as a means of complying with the dictates imposed by their masters. If they wanted to keep their jobs and their homes, they had to remain childless, virginal members of the household. In order to live up to the demands of the household, they were unwittingly encouraged to murder.[10]

While servants did indeed present the possibility of introducing immorality into the household, masters had an ethical, and indeed, legal responsibility to dissuade servants from behaving immorally by setting an example. As Steven Shapin argues:

> Servants—by definition—were dependent and subject to the will of another. Courtesy books, and practical guides to domestic management, routinely commented on the unreliability and mendacity of servants and advised how they should be selected, managed, and supervised. The gentleman's treatment of his servants was deemed important both as a practical and as a moral matter. His 'family' included his residential servants. In the Puritan literature especially, the gentleman was urged to make himself responsible for their moral management, just as servants were responsible for his economic affairs and safekeeping of his secrets. (91)

The class system of the eighteenth century often placed servants in a legal position of a child, thus giving them very few rights with regard to their masters. It was not "dangerous or unlawful," according to Frank McLynn, to beat a servant, and nor would a master "be found guilty of either murder or manslaughter unless [he] used an 'unusual implement', for example a club" to kill a servant (37). Indeed, as McLynn further points out, after the Coventry Act, which increased penalties for rioting, "to maim a servant was a capital offence but to beat him to death was not" (38). Certainly, it seems that legally the servant's position was much more precarious than the master's. And while the fear that servants would perpetrate crimes within the master's household was great, the chance that the servant would receive any legal support against his master was not always a given. Of course, there are cases in which servants' rights were protected, most famously that of Lord Ferrers, who killed his steward in a fit of anger and was hanged for the murder; however, on a daily basis and for all practical purposes, the legal and moral standard for the household was set by, and upheld by, the master and the hierarchy he created, and the servant's position within that household would reflect the environment established by the master.

This fact is reflected in the laws governing the behavior of servants while under their master's supervision. According to Blackstone:

> As for those things which a servant may do on behalf of his master, they seem all to proceed upon this principle, that the master is answerable for the act of his servant, if done by his command, either expressly given, or implied: *nam qui facit per alum, facit per se* [he who acts by an agent, does it himself]. Therefore, if the servant commit a trespass by the command or encouragement of his master, the master shall be guilty of it: not that the servant is excused, for he is only to obey

> his master in matters that are honest and lawful. If an innkeeper's servants rob his guests, the master is bound to restitutions: for as there is a confidence reposed in him, that he will take care to provide honest servants, his negligence is a kind of implied consent to the robbery. . . . So likewise if the drawer at a tavern sells a man bad wine, whereby his health is injured, he may bring an action against the master: for, although the master did not expressly order the servant to sell it to that person in particular, yet his permitting him to draw and sell it at all is impliedly a general command. (73)

The legal position of servants relative to their masters was tenuous, but as Blackstone points out, the master has an obligation to ensure that servants abstain from engaging in illegal activities. Mrs. Rayland does not fulfill this obligation, and as a result, the feudalistic structure of her household combined with her limited supervision encourages her servants to engage in illegal activities as a means of obtaining power and prestige and places the Rayland family reputation in jeopardy. The behavior of the Rayland servants becomes an indictment of Mrs. Rayland, her status as matriarch, and the entire class system.

Mrs. Rayland's elitist views place her in a position of weakness in relation to her servants, and by refusing to share the contents of her will with Orlando, Mrs. Rayland creates an atmosphere of secrecy which further promotes the illegal actions of her servants. As a result the non-servant characters in the novel become subject to the will of the servants and have to depend upon the servants to resolve conflicts. While Mrs. Rayland thinks herself astute and sophisticated –"another Elizabeth"— for refusing to acknowledge her heir, she unwittingly turns herself into a dupe and a criminal. The consequences of Mrs. Rayland's matriarchal failure are most evident in her three upper servants, Patterson, Snelcraft, and Lennard, all of whom try to

create mini kingdoms for themselves so that they can sit beside Mrs. Rayland. The failure is further illuminated by three less powerful servant conspirators, Jacob, Betty, and the heroine of the piece, Monimia. With the "cabals" and "schemes" of these servants, Smith argues that in encouraging secrecy and capriciousness, the class system, as reflected by Mrs. Rayland, leads to lawlessness, the failure of the matriarch, and introduces the Gothic into the female governed household.

First among those to bring lawlessness into Rayland Hall is Mrs. Rayland's butler, Mr. Patterson, described by the narrator as "a perfect Turk in morals" with a "propensity to libertinism" (53). Although Patterson is of lowly birth, beginning his career with the Rayland family as a ploughboy, he manages to manipulate the Rayland women until they promote him to the post of butler and over his twenty-five years of service accumulated a "great sum of money" with which he "had bought two or three small farms in the country" (53). Patterson wants nothing more than to be seen as the head of the Rayland household. Through manipulation and fear tactics, he controls his fellow servants, including the intimidating Mrs. Lennard, and encourages them to act illegally and immorally because he knows that regardless of the other servants' ill will toward him, none will report his activities to Mrs. Rayland. The power position he creates for himself allows him to seduce the servant girls and set up a smuggling ring in the Rayland Hall, thus turning Rayland Hall into a personal bordello and a gathering place for banditti. In doing so, he helps to create and encourage the myth that Rayland Hall is haunted, thereby adding a Gothic element to the story. It is not, of course, in fact haunted by anything other than smugglers, but the horror that he creates moves the Hall into the Gothic realm and introduces the disruption and decay of the Gothic world into an otherwise sentimental story.

Not only does Patterson's introduction of smugglers into Rayland Hall turn the ancient family seat into a house of murder and intrigue but it also leads Mrs. Rayland's chosen heir into a relationship with a murderous thief. Jonas Wilkins is introduced to the reader as "an outlawed smuggler, famous for his resolution, and the fears in which he was held by the custom-house officers." (129). When Orlando sees him, Wilkins is "something like horror," with a "fierce and wild expression in his eyes" wearing a "dirty round frock stained with ochre which looked like blood" (131). Despite Wilkins's wild and murderous appearance, Orlando decides to befriend the villain and sets up a plan to ensure that Patterson's and Wilkins's illicit activities will not interfere with Orlando's own. When Orlando agrees to keep Wilkins's and Patterson's secret, he too becomes complicit in turning Rayland Hall into a seat of criminal activity. Far from behaving as the young aristocrat, the second of Sir Orlando Rayland that Mrs. Rayland believes him to be, he aligns himself with common thieves. Further, if we follow Blackstone's logic, by virtue of knowing of the thievery, Orlando becomes a thief himself. The end result of Orlando's association with Wilkins, and ultimately Patterson, is that while the system Mrs. Rayland has established encourages Patterson to try to sit down beside her, it results in Orlando sitting down beside Patterson. While Patterson's actions reflect a flaw in his own moral center, Mrs. Rayland's promotion of class distinctions encourages Patterson's immoral activity and places Orlando in a position to be corrupted by the servant.

Ultimately, Patterson's illegal acts come to light, but he does not receive the punishment he deserves or should expect. He was "dismissed from the Hall for good; but for certain not like a disgraced servant; for Madam gave him a power of good things, and his farm as he took was stocked from the Hall, and sure enough he had feather'd his nest well one way or other, for he died worth a mort of money" (410). Patterson lost influence over Mrs. Rayland and therefore

lost his seat at the table, but despite the fact that his actions introduced thieves and murderers into Rayland Hall, he prospers on his farm, and in the tradition of the rich and greedy, dies of gout, an atypical ending for a rebellious class climber.

Mrs. Lennard, in her attempt to establish a higher position in Mrs. Rayland's feudal system, also helps to challenge Mrs. Rayland's authority and introduce the Gothic into Rayland Hall. The highly-educated daughter of a failed merchant, Lennard reflects the type of class climber Mrs. Rayland hates; however, she hires her into service because she "was gratified in having about her the victim of unsuccessful trade, for which she had always the most profound contempt" (10). Mrs. Rayland's contempt for Lennard's association with trade and her mistreatment of her servant companion encourage Lennard to use her education and intelligence to manipulate Rayland and take control of Rayland Hall. Lennard was

> so much superior to her mistress in understanding, that she soon governed her entirely; and while the mean pliability of her spirit made her submit to all the contemptuous and unworthy treatment, which the paltry pride of Mrs. Rayland had pleasure in inflicting, she secretly triumphed in the consciousness of superior abilities, and knew that she was in fact the mistress of the supercilious being whose wages she received. (11)

In response to Mrs. Rayland's aristocratic cruelty, Lennard usurps control of Rayland Hall and satisfies herself in the notion that she, not Mrs. Rayland, is mistress of the place, again reflecting Desmond's fear. However, she carefully protects her control of Mrs. Rayland and the Hall by indulging Mrs. Rayland's class consciousness. In taking Monimia— the daughter of a poor relation—to live with her, Mrs. Lennard risks lowering her status with Mrs. Rayland. To satisfy her mistress's obsession with class, she allows Mrs. Rayland to call the girl by a different name

(the name Monimia is too romantic for Mrs. Rayland's tastes) and she keeps the girl out of sight, thus constructing the typical Gothic heroine scenario—young, orphan girl, hidden away in a turret.

Although Patterson brings smugglers into the household, Mrs. Lennard more deviously threatens the Rayland family. She knows her place with regard to Mrs. Rayland, but she is more capable of manipulating that place than Patterson is. As the narrator points out, Mrs. Lennard "had more sense and more art than Patterson" and "opportunities more closely to observe her lady" (228). Unlike Patterson, who believes Mrs. Rayland will split her money among her servants, Mrs. Lennard "knew that she should herself possess a very considerable legacy; and she thought it better that Orlando should inherit the bulk of the fortune, than either his father, who had always considered the old servants about her as his enemies, or any public charity" (228).

Further, in her attempt to keep Monimia in the place Mrs. Rayland has set out for her, Lennard is as responsible for the introduction of ghosts into Rayland Hall as Patterson, for if Patterson's smuggling introduces the eerie noises heard by the servants, Lennard's stories reinforce their Gothic fears. When relating the presence of the ghosts to Orlando, Monimia explains "my aunt has often told me that ghosts always appeared to people who were doing wrong, to reproach them; and, alas! Orlando, I am too sensible that I am not doing right" (42). Monimia's fear that she is "not doing right" comes from her knowledge of her secret relationship with Orlando, whom she has been forbidden by her aunt to see because Mrs. Rayland's sense of aristocratic propriety would deem Monimia an inappropriate and even scandalous match for her supposed heir. In this way, Lennard's introduction of the Gothic serves the aristocratic purpose. Orlando explains Lennard's addition of the Gothic, telling Monimia "like all other usurped

authority, the power of your aunt is maintained by unjust means, and supported by prejudices, which if once looked at by the eye of reason would fall" (44). He further instructs:

> She has taken care to fetter you in as much ignorance as possible; but your mind rises above the obscurity with which she would surround it. She has however brought in supernatural aid; and, fearful of not being able to keep you in sufficient awe by her terrific self, she has called forth all the deceased ladies of the Rayland family, and gentlemen, too. (44)

Although she is not aristocratic, Mrs. Lennard uses the terrors of the aristocracy to control her niece. In this way, she mimics the behavior of her mistress, who in her attempts to keep Orlando and his family in line continuously dredges up the ghosts of the Rayland clan. Jones points out: "Orlando's education of Monimia is an assault on the prejudices that sustain the Rayland empire and monarchical government, full of condemnation of that usurped authority which cannot meet the eye of reason and has to defend itself by imposition, illusion, and coercion" (168). In Lennard, we see examples of both that usurped power and the "monarchical government."

Mrs. Lennard imagines that upon Mrs. Rayland's death she will receive substantial sums from the Rayland estate and envisions herself heiress during Mrs. Rayland's lifetime, relishing her chance to play hostess at the tenant's ball and working to elevate her status by marrying up. Her desire to become an heiress allows her to help hide Patterson's illegal activity, encourages her to offer to sell her niece to a dubious Lord, enables her to abuse her feeble and dying mistress, and finally, persuades her to destroy the will which proves Orlando's inheritance and which was given to her in trust by Mrs. Rayland. Of course, Mrs. Lennard later regrets this decision and when she luckily finds a duplicate copy of the will she is smart enough to keep it in case she needs to use it to her advantage. Her ultimate presentation of the will only serves her own

purposes because were it not for her unhappy marriage, which her interactions with Mrs. Rayland encouraged, she would have been content to keep the inheritance given to her in Rayland's original will and would seem to have been satisfied keeping Orlando and Monimia from receiving any money.

Just as Smith's *Desmond* informs our understanding of Mrs. Rayland's feudalistic interaction with her servants, her first novel, *Emmeline*, offers insight into Mrs. Lennard's dealings with the will, for Mrs. Lennard is not Smith's first servant to present a long-lost will. Mrs. Lennard is, in fact, an inversion of Le Limosin in Smith's *Emmeline*. In this novel Le Limosin provides the will and a family history allowing Emmeline to gain her inheritance. Ultimately, Mrs. Lennard provides a service similar to Le Limosin's, but rather than seek to proclaim family history, like Le Limosin, Mrs. Lennard presents Orlando with a will that she has kept hidden and she reveals it only for her own selfish reasons. Like her mistress, Mrs. Lennard chooses to suppress the truth of Orlando's inheritance, and the significance of her action further reflects feudalistic sentiments she may have learned from Mrs. Rayland, as Diana Hoeveler points out: "The older era—feudal, Catholic, and European based—relied on orality and human witnesses to verify truth. The new era—Protestant and technologically more sophisticated—relies instead on the veracity of written documents to prove claims and assert ownership of the estate" (44). Hoeveler is referring to actions that take place in *Emmeline*, but her analysis works for *The Old Manor House* as well. Smith illustrates that the aristocratic maternal history cannot be women's only means of governing the household. Maternal history works to establish background and social position for Emmeline, and for Edmund and Ellena as I discuss in chapter two, but Mrs. Rayland as the matriarch of Rayland Hall should promote her own history, not leave it to servants to guard for her. For while maternal history is important, its tradition as oral history leaves it subject to

corruption and omission on the parts of servants who chose to rebel against masters who have taught them to be unhappy in their social position. This is a point that the Rokers know all too well when they try not only to do away with the written copy of the will but also call Mrs. Lennard's sanity into question, thus "putting it out of Mrs. Roker's [Lennard's] power to give her testimony against the will that had been proved, by making her a lunatic" (493). Although the legal document represents Orlando's only means of obtaining the property, the Rokers want to ensure that the older, aristocratic method of servant testimony is also undermined. Mrs. Lennard is content to keep up the appearances of her position in the hopes that she can gain more power and wealth through cunning, manipulation, and patience. Although she does not want to see her niece married to Orlando, she ultimately benefits from the relationship and inherits wealth despite her machinations. Before she can do so, however, she must encounter her own Gothic confinement and rumored insanity, at the hands of the greedy husband for whose sake she manipulated and abused the dying Mrs. Rayland. The Gothic comes full circle to Mrs. Lennard, and once again, Orlando must destroy the Gothic by disproving her insanity and convincing her to share her knowledge.

Working in conjunction with Patterson and Lennard and also hoping to receive notice in Mrs. Rayland's will is Mrs. Rayland's coachman, Mr. Snelcraft. Like Patterson, Snelcraft "possessed an infinite deal of cunning and knew how to get and keep money" (53). Snelcraft is also engaged in "dealings in contraband goods" (53). Beyond his illegal dealings, Snelcraft has greater ambitions than either of his cohorts. He has learned the value of name and rank from Mrs. Rayland, and his sole objective is to marry one of his daughters to the Rayland heir apparent, Orlando. The narrator relates, "in the dotage of his purse-proud vanity, he believed it not only possible but probable: for, though he knew that Mrs. Rayland would have disinherited

her own son for entertaining such an idea for a moment, yet he saw that Mr. Orlando had no pride at all" (54). His plans, however, are disrupted when Mrs. Rayland puts him back in his place by criticizing his daughter's dress. Upon seeing the proud Miss Snelcraft for the first time, Mrs. Rayland asks Mr. Snelcraft what gave the girl the inclination "to dress herself out like a stage-player, like a mountebank's doxy" (54). Here, Snelcraft is swatted away from the table by Mrs. Rayland's insistence on class; however, that same insistence encouraged his greed and his desire to live beyond his means in the first place, and her unwillingness to name Orlando as her heir encourages Snelcraft's illegal activity by leading him to believe that if he were only to become wealthy, he could convince a man of title to marry his daughter, and although he knows that Orlando may not be her heir and thus might have the title but no money, Snelcraft is comfortable linking his daughter to a man who has name alone, for he knows that he can always obtain money through his illegal activities.

In his attempt to improve the social standing of his daughter, Snelcraft risks creating another Mrs. Lennard, a woman who was educated above her class and fortune and who has been taught to hold out aristocratic hopes. Snelcraft's daughter serves as a stark contrast to Monimia, who is of the same class, and through examining her position, we can see the flaws in Snelcraft's design. Monimia is comfortable with her social position. Although she has been surrounded by the trappings of the aristocracy, she has never been given any expectations of them. Part of her comfort with her social position comes from the fact that Orlando, her only childhood friend and teacher, has always treated her as an equal and has never taught her to resent her status. He knows her social position and has respected her regardless of it. Mrs. Rayland has never paid much attention to her, and she has grown up isolated from the society that might teach her to be dissatisfied with her lot. The irony of Monimia's position, however, is that since she does not

seek name or fortune, it finds her. Her comfort with her own rank attracts Orlando to her. Snelcraft's daughter, on the other hand, has been taught from her childhood to expect more than she has, and thus, like Lennard, she runs the risk of falling short and having to manipulate those around her in order to gain power. We never see this scenario played out in her character, of course, but in presenting Snelcraft's daughter, Smith reminds the reader of the perpetual nature of this cycle.

Patterson, Lennard, and Snelcraft drive much of the servant action in this novel, but the lower servants participate in the upheaval as well. Particularly, Jacob and Betsy fall into a smaller category of servants who are tempted to act illegally and/or immorally in response to the feudalistic system Mrs. Rayland constructs. Both of these characters misbehave sexually and introduce sexual intrigue into Rayland Hall. Betsy wants nothing more than to be a woman of quality, in the fashion of the mistress of her household. She spends all of her money on clothes and engages in an inappropriate relationship with Patterson in the hopes of gaining access to some of his money and the money he will inherit. She wants to rise in the world and sees no problem having Patterson and the rest of the house believe that she is engaging in an affair with Orlando, a rumor which he does nothing to denounce for it helps protect his relationship with Monimia. Further, when she sees an opportunity to raise her station in life, she runs away with Orlando's older brother, Philip, and becomes his mistress. In this way, she and Philip become the antithesis of Monimia and Orlando. As two people who have been taught to relish title and fortune, they cannot move beyond attempts to attain it or feign goodness. In both their cases, they spend beyond their means and behave recklessly. However, their behavior is the result of the world that Mrs. Rayland has created, one which encourages the class climbing hopes of the lower classes while simultaneously punishing them for those hopes.

Jacob, too, is drawn in by the desire to benefit from a relationship with an upper class figure. Although Jacob seems trustworthy to Orlando, and Orlando in fact believes that Jacob "would not say or think any harm of an innocent young lady" (242), Orlando repents his decision to inform Jacob of his relationship with Monimia as it becomes clear that Jacob's lust for money and power is as acute as that of all of the other servants in Rayland Hall. Orlando sees Jacob's interest in the situation as one of kindness, and in fact "Jacob entered in to his situation with an appearance of intelligence and interest with which Orlando was well satisfied" (242); however, Jacob's interest in the relationship seems to be a power play on his part, for as soon as Orlando leaves to go to war, Jacob betrays Orlando's secret of both the relationship with Monimia and the secret passageway by bringing Monimia letters of seduction from Belgrave. Jacob chooses to align himself with the more elite (and more present) Belgrave in an attempt to improve his social standing. He does not seem to understand that his actions are illicit because he thinks of Monimia as he thinks of Betty, in terms of the typical servant seductress, so he cannot fathom Monimia's refusal of Belgrave's advances. Her refusal makes no sense in a household full of servants who do anything and everything to advance their social and financial status, and Jacob seems taken aback by her refusal to participate in a ploy that can gain him such financial and social advantage. His act transforms him, in Orlando's eyes, from honest to "mercenary and insolent" (376).

As the least illicit of the servants in the Rayland household and the only servant who actually does get to sit at Mrs. Rayland's table, Monimia further reflects the atmosphere of falsity constructed in the Rayland home. Monimia is the orphaned niece of Mrs. Lennard, and unlike most Gothic heroines, she is an orphan of the lower class throughout the novel—her parents never show up to claim her and neither is an old book or servant found to tell us of her noble

heritage. Unlike almost every other Gothic heroine, she is who she thinks she is. Through the course of the novel, Monimia does not break any laws beyond the laws of the household, and then she only sneaks out of her turret/prison at night to take reading lessons from Orlando; however, she is complicit in hiding the truth from Mrs. Rayland, both in the cases of Patterson's smuggling and in the case of her aunt's conniving behavior which ultimately leads to the loss of Orlando's will, actions she laments throughout the novel. Further, her illicit relationship with Orlando undermines the rules of the household, threatens the well-being of Orlando and his family, and encourages all of the other illicit actions to continue, actions which include the firing of her only friend. Because Monimia and Orlando are in a relationship, Orlando cannot do his duty to the household and inform Mrs. Rayland of her servant's ill behavior. Instead, he is forced to behave as one of the servants and help to hide it. In her knowledge of the illicit actions, Monimia, like Orlando, becomes complicit in them.

By strictly enforcing her elitist ideology, Mrs. Rayland ensures that her heir is morally aligned with the lower classes of her household. In fact, Orlando wishes that he could be one of them: "A thousand times he wished that he had been born the son of a day-labourer; that his parents, entertaining for him no views of ambition, had left him to pursue his own inclinations (219). Rather than encouraging Orlando's generosity within his rank, Mrs. Rayland's system causes him to wish to renounce it. He never desired to be the second of his ancestor Sir Orlando Rayland. He wants the inheritance only in order to secure his family's financial position.

Further, Mrs. Rayland's secrecy and her feudalistic notions of class force Orlando sycophantically to manipulate and mislead her with regard to his relationship with her servant. However inappropriate Orlando's behavior might seem throughout the course of the novel, the effects of the class system she constructs is magnified by those most closely aligned to her.

Bourgeois values of sentiment are threatened by the fact that Orlando is a questionable representative of sentimentalism, at least during his time at the castle. He is neither sentimental nor violent and excessively emotional. In this sense, Orlando seems a reiteration of Smith's earlier characters in *Emmeline.*[11] He is a blending of Godolphin, whose forgiving acceptance of his adulterous sister and calmly sympathetic response to her plight make him the perfect match for the heroine, and Delamere, whose dueling and mad obsession drive Emmeline away and him to his own death. Orlando is caught between his aristocratic heritage and his bourgeoisie morality. The contrasts are reflected in his own character, in his inappropriate pursuit of Monimia and his willingness to accept the crime taking place in his cousin's household. His bourgeois morality informs him that his actions are morally repugnant, but he cannot bring himself to relinquish his aristocratic pride, and it manifests itself in the violence of a proposed duel and in the partial seduction of a young, helpless heroine. Hoeveler points out: "In the new bourgeois order, very different values will be crucial: fidelity, monogamy, passivity, and decorum. To be sexually loose, violent, and prone to gossip is to be not only self-destructive but destructive of the social and economic fabric" (43) Ultimately, Orlando and Monimia face multiple accusations of sexual impropriety, some of which have foundation in the truth, and their behavior forces their family to become the subject of the aristocratic gossip and violence Hoeveler discusses. While Orlando's actions may suggest a crack in his moral center, the behavior of Mrs. Rayland's servants often suggests that in the class system she has created, there is no place for a moral center.

In the end of the novel, Orlando takes control of Rayland Hall, which had been left abandoned and largely forgotten after Mrs. Rayland's death. To acquire the home and family fortune, he must relinquish the name Somerive and take on the name Rayland. As a result, the

hall is once more occupied by an Orlando Rayland; however, Smith presents us with a very different version of Orlando Rayland than the Sir Orlando Rayland Mrs. Rayland venerates throughout the novel. This version is not the aristocratic patriarch who values name and feudalism, but the product of a marriage that crossed class lines and the husband of a servant girl. When Orlando takes over the hall, he invites Mrs. Lennard to join the family and allows her to keep the wealth she had originally stolen from Mrs. Rayland. This act on Orlando's part has elicited much criticism from readers of this novel. According to these troubled readers, Mrs. Lennard should receive some sort of punishment for her behavior, and her reinstatement to Rayland Hall reflects a flaw in the text. However, if Smith's point is to expose and denounce Mrs. Rayland's aristocratic failings, then we cannot blame Lennard for her actions because they are merely a byproduct of the Mrs. Rayland's feudalistic ambitions. Although the woman was merciless to her niece and dying mistress and although her actions brought the Gothic to Rayland Hall, Lennard has merely behaved in a manner that reflected the notions of the society Mrs. Rayland created. Lennard is no longer a danger to Rayland Hall and its inhabitants because Mrs. Rayland's system has ceased to exist. Smith offers no hint that Mrs. Lennard will become repentant or loving toward her niece, but in allowing Lennard to return to the household, Smith suggests that the horrors of aristocratic abuse can be overcome and proposes that the system which replaces it will be one of tolerance and equality.

The tolerant, equality-based household Orlando and Monimia construct seems finally to offer a stable, mother-centered household, something that Mrs. Rayland's feudalistic, Elizabeth inspired, female leadership could never offer. With Monimia as servant/heroine, we see a female head-of-household who knows her history, is in control of her sexual identity—she gives birth to a son in the end—and who need not fear usurpation for the household she and her companionate

husband create is founded on the ideals of individualism and equality. However, while Monimia's position seems to offer a promising example for future generations of women, we see women continuing to struggle with the Gothic household in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Monimia will offer an important role model for these women, but she is merely a starting point.

Notes

[1] See pages 13-15.

[2] Anticipating criticism, Smith writes in her preface to *Desmond*:

> But women it is said have no business with politics. –Why not?
>
> –Have they no interest in the scenes that are acting around them, in which they have fathers, brothers, husbands, sons, or friends engaged!
>
> –Even in the commonest course of female education, they are expected to acquire some knowledge of history; and yet, if they are to have no opinion of what *is* passing, it avails little that they should be informed of what *has passed*, in a world where they are subject to such mental degradation; where they are censured as affecting masculine knowledge if they happen to have any understanding; or despised as insignificant triflers if they have none. (45)

[3] Thomas James Mathias in his *The Pursuits of Literature: A Satirical Poem in Four Dialogues, with Notes*. 11th Ed. T. (Becket: London, 1801), accuses Smith of "too frequently whining and frisking in novels, till our girls' heads turn wild with impossible adventures and are now and then tainted with democracy" (56). Quoted in E.J. Clery *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction: 1762-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995):134.

[4] Smith's need to present her argument against aristocratic tyranny must have seemed overwhelming, particularly considering three of her sons were in the military and one was crippled for life during service.

[5] See Jones, Chris. *Radical Sensibility: Literature and ides in the 1790s* (New York: Routledge, 1993): 168.

[6] Charlotte Smith sums us the tumultuous relationship in a letter to her friend Joseph Cooper Walker:

> Tho infidelity, and with the most despicable objects, had rendered my continuing to live with him extremely wretched long before his debts compelld him to leave England, I could have been contented to have resided in the same house with him, had not his temper been so capricious and often so cruel that my life was not safe. Not withstanding all I sufferd, which is much too sad a story to relate (for I was seven months with him in The Kings Bench Prison where he was confin'd by his own relations,) I still continued to do all that was in my power for him; I paid out of my book money many debts that distress'd him & supplied him from time to time with small sums so long as he gave me leave, but it is now about seventeen months since I have heard from him, and the few people who know . . . have received his instructions not to let me know where he is; I believe he has another family by a Cook who liv'd with him, and has hid himself in Scotland by another name; so that if I were disposed to commence any process against him to compel him to allow me my own income for his children's support, I know not where to find him. (79)

[7] See Labbe 20-26

[8] The narrator explains:

> Various reasons , or rather prejudices, had concurred to occasion this coolness on the part of the ladies toward their cousin.—Their aunt, who had married his ancestor, had, as they had always been taught, degraded herself extremely by giving herself to a man who was a mere yeoman.—The son of this union had however been received and acknowledged as the cousin of the illustrious heiresses of the house of Rayland; but following most plebeian-like the unaspiring inclination of his own family, he had fallen in love with a young woman, who lived with them as companion; when it as believed that, as he was a remarkably handsome man, he might have lifted his eyes with impunity to one of the ladies, his cousins: this occasioned an estrangement of many years, and had never been forgiven. (4)

[9] See Chapter 2 for a full definition of maternal history and a discussion of Mrs. Rayland's reliance on maternal history in this novel.

[10] Of course, female servants sometimes broke the rule of the household by engaging in sexual relations, thus often leaving them in a position where they were forced to admit their wrongdoing or add the crime of murder to their illicit behavior; however, their sexual positions were often very tenuous and as Bridget Hill argues, female servants in the eighteenth century "became morally, economically, financially and . . . even sexually dependent on their masters and wholly confined in the isolated and tight little world of one household" (111).

[11] For a discussion of the conflict between the sentimental hero and his antithesis as presented in Charlotte Smith's *Emmeline*, see Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The*

Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës. (University Park, Pennsylvania : The Pennsylvania State UP:, 1995): 41-43

Conclusion

I opened this exploration with a discussion of the impermanence of servant labor and pointed to Adam Smith's assertion that servants' work generally goes unnoticed and leaves no permanent residue.[1] While Smith's observation correctly defines servant productions, here I have focused on moments when servants' actions within the household become visible, when servants challenge authority, relate history, promote sexuality, and reveal social flaws, and I have argued that in doing so servants help to construct a new household where their labor can once more go unnoticed by their employers.

Over the course of this discussion, I have examined the ways in which servant characters contribute to the establishments of these new households by either revealing faults in the master/mistress identity that prevent the household from escaping the bonds of feudalistic secrecy or by appropriating roles their beset mistresses cannot in order to push the story toward its comic conclusion. Further, I have argued that they assist their mistresses by maintaining and revealing her maternal history or helping her establish her sexual identity. I also explored the social concerns servants' employers face, concerns that necessitate servant visibility, including the disconnect between public and private identity as reflected through their master's apprehension over an evolving sense of social hierarchy and the recognition of the porous boundary between the home and the outside world. In doing so, I claimed that servants in the Gothic novels of Walpole, Godwin, Lee, Reeve, Radcliffe, and Smith are ideally suited to help their masters and mistresses face the consequences of these problems because they are tied to both the family and the outside world, and as a third person in the room, they monitor the actions of their families with a perspective that their employers, isolated from the world, cannot offer. Certainly, these servants are trapped in the Gothic world, just as their masters and mistresses are,

but their remaining ties to the outside world give them more freedom than any of the other characters in the novels and thus allow them to bring the secretive, corrupt Gothic household into public view.

With the exception of *Caleb Williams* and *The Recess*, the works that I have covered in this piece all end with the promise of a new household, one that reconsiders social order and promises women greater control over their lives. It would seem, then, that both the Gothic and the servants' interposition in the private lives of their masters would disappear once women gained greater control of the household and became the keepers of domestic tranquility in the nineteenth century, but, as students of the Gothic know, the Gothic does not disappear; it merely transforms. Once the Gothic moves beyond the eighteenth century, we see the consequences of servant interaction in the eighteenth-century Gothic novels as nineteenth and twentieth century novels incorporate the Gothic to reveal flaws in the female-governed households that Reeve, Radcliffe, and Smith offered as rewards to Gothic heroines as part of the comic resolution to their novels.

A Shift in the Gothic

Many critics of the Gothic point to *Melmoth the Wanderer* as the last true Gothic novel and discuss the Gothic beyond *Melmoth* in terms of its use as mode. They claim that authors merely pick up Gothic conventions for effect and then drop them at will. A familiar example of this strategy occurs in *Jane Eyre*, which moves deftly between the haunted world of Thornfield and the more realistic outside world. However, while it may be true that full-fledged Gothic novels in the tradition of Radcliffe were not as popular after 1820, the Gothic certainly does not disappear after that point.[2] For even though women gain control of the household in the nineteenth century, control that some eighteenth-century feminists believed would allow them

more power in society,[3] the ghosts did not go away. Women in the nineteenth century and beyond may have gained, with the help of their servants, control over maternal history and sexuality, and they may have even reconfigured the feudalistic model as it applied to their labor in the household, but we still see, in the nineteenth century and beyond, women haunted. What changes for them, however, is that they are no longer haunted by the sins of a murderous uncle but by the sins of their supposedly companionate husbands and by the realization that while they now ostensibly govern the household, they are still prisoners. In the nineteenth century, the Gothic household is as confining as it ever was, only the warden has changed. Consequently, just as we see a change in novelists' understanding of confinement, we see a change in the mistresses' interaction with her servant girl. In fact, we see a complete reconfiguration of the eighteenth-century servant character as the haunted heroines in the novels of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries no longer merely depend on the assistance of servants, but, in many cases, they become the servants.

This transformation becomes apparent in two of the most widely read Gothic novels of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, *Jane Eyre* and *Rebecca*. In both, servant girls become heroines and mistresses of their households. While the presence of a servant/heroine is not new to the Gothic novel— Charlotte Smith's Monimia is a servant/heroine— the Gothic servant/heroine evolves significantly in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and in them, we see the results of feminine desire to control domestic space not through pretended obedience but through genuine equality.

The creation of the servant/heroine in the nineteenth and twentieth century novels seems, at first, problematic, from the perspective of the relationship between the servant and her mistress, for as I have pointed out in this work, the goal of the Gothic servant characters is to return to her

former, invisible state. In a well ordered household, we should never see them. For once servants have helped to correct the errors of feudalism and reestablish a new household, one that embraces the female desire to gain control over any facet of life, their mistresses should have no further use for them. Most Female Gothic novels of the eighteenth century support this assertion. They present joyous, comic endings. They often conclude with celebrations and weddings, and there is always the promise that things will be better than before. The servants, if they are present in the end at all, prepare to move on with their own lives, either returning to service in the new household or going off to start a family of their own. But, if this is the case, if servants have done their job, if the household is now in the governance of the female and her companionate spouse, why are *Jane Eyre* and *Rebecca* still haunted and why have their authors embraced not the traditional heroines of the Female Gothic but the servant girls? For an answer to these questions, we must return to Rayland Hall, the home of our first Gothic servant heroine.

From Rayland Hall to Manderley Where Three become Two

I titled this work *The Third Person in the Room* because we see in the eighteenth-century Gothic novel a world in which outside monitoring of the household offers the only hope that it might be reconstructed, the Gothic household must have a "third wheel" as it were. However the need for a third person in the room diminishes after the eighteenth century, and the three become two when the servant transforms from an outside observer to a participant in the main action. We see this movement in some of the most famous Gothic novels and short stories of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, not only in *Jane Eyre* and *Rebecca* as I have just mentioned but also in Elizabeth Gaskell's "The Old Nurse's Story" and Henry James's "The Turn of the Screw" to name a few. The movement from three to two does not begin in the nineteenth century, however; it begins with Smith's *The Old Manor House*. Smith, as I point out in the

fourth chapter, argues that the appropriation of feudalism in the female household encourages servant revolution; however, servant revolution in Smith's novel results from Mrs. Rayland's attempt to appropriate the feudalism of her fathers, rather than from her desire to create one in which she can access her feminine claims to household authority. Although Smith is critical of Mrs. Rayland's attachment to feudalistic tradition, she offers no hope that women will find a voice in the household that replaces Mrs. Rayland's.

With Monimia, Charlotte Smith presents Gothic readers with their first look Gothic servant/heroine and in Monimia's happy ending, we see the first suggestions that Gothic heroines will not find the power they desire in the new home they have created for themselves. Like the other Gothic heroines of her time, Monimia has played out her role in the story locked away by an evil aunt, threatened by inappropriate lovers, and separated from her future husband. However, unlike the Gothic heroines that have come before, Monimia is never legitimized with the revelation of a hidden, upper class heritage. She is born and remains, until she marries Orlando, lower class. While Smith's decision to let Monimia's pedigree stand marks Monimia as an emblem of bourgeois liberality—she is equal to Orlando regardless of her upbringing—Smith's progressivism stops there. Although Monimia has been a driving force behind Orlando's quest for his family fortune and name, despite the fact that she has maintained their secret and allowed herself to be tormented and imprisoned by her aunt on his behalf, even though she has been chased across the countryside and has offered to work to earn money to support them both when he is destitute, she disappears from the narrative as soon as they are married. He moves her, and her evil tormenting aunt, back into Rayland Hall, and Monimia lives out her days, presumably silently, as "his beloved Monimia" a "charming mother . . . dear to all around her" (533). She has no action in the final scene and though her life is presumably happy, she is

no longer part of the action. She fades into the background and is only considered referentially in terms of the happiness she brings to other people in the household, most notably her husband and son. She has become the angel in the house. While her quiet life may be preferable to a life spent fleeing from unwanted suitors or pining away in a castle turret, Monimia's character reflects the future horror that the female servant character will express, a horror that becomes the centerpiece of both Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* and Daphne DuMaurier's *Rebecca*.

The horror that becomes the centerpiece of those novels is a recognition that, as Monimia's end suggests, the "genuine equality" eighteenth-century Gothic novels promise their heroines, the equality that allows for the establishment of a stable family and for the servants to recede back in to the background, is not as liberating as it first seemed. For as readers of the eighteenth-century Gothic often complain, in the end, eighteenth-century Gothic heroines may have discovered their histories, become wives and mothers, and been placed in positions of companionate power, but in order to accept those roles, they trade one sort of confinement for another, often turning over their newly discovered family inheritance and name to a hero who has proven himself over the course of the story to be loving yet weak and sometimes illogical. After marriage Gothic heroines cede their adventure, their voice, to their husband and they, too, like their servants, seem to recede into the background, no longer noticed by the outside world. The revision of eighteenth-century formula—heroine assisted by servant—to the later formula—heroine as servant—seems logical, for why bother to separate the servant girl from her mistress when in the end, they both face the same fate, silence and exclusion, "seldom leav[ing] any trace behind them," as Adam Smith says in his discussion of servant labor (333).

Jane Eyre and Mrs. de Winter illustrate examples of the servant/heroine character blending and of the servant/heroine's new quest to leave a trace of herself. Like Monimia, Jane and Mrs.

de Winter begin their stories as girls in reduced circumstances but move up in the social ranks over the courses of their novels. Also like Monimia, Jane and Mrs. de Winter must face the challenges of marrying masters and becoming angels of the house. While such a movement toward female control of the household might have seemed an appealing option to women during Smith's time, in the case of Jane, we see rebellion against and avoidance of such a lifestyle, the consequences of which are reflected in the insane Bertha. For Jane, the promise of marital silence and protection is not enough. She must live with a companionate spouse, one with when she can govern equally. Of course, Rochester becomes a companionate spouse only once he is maimed and unable to care for himself. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar point out "when they were physically whole they could not, in a sense, *see* each other because of the social disguises – master/servant, prince/Cinderella – blinding them, but now that those disguises have been shed, now that they are equals, they can . . . see and speak even beyond the medium of the flesh" (368). However, their relationship still has no place in the Victorian world. Jane and Rochester may be able to construct a new household where they are legitimate equals and move beyond the feigned equality promised by the eighteenth-century Gothic, but their relationship must exist outside society. In their discussion of Jane and Rochester's new home at Ferndean, Gilbert and Gubar explain:

> The house itself, set deep in the dark forest, is old and decaying: Rochester had not even thought it suitable for the loathsome Bertha. . . . As a dramatic setting, moreover, Ferndean is notably stripped and asocial, so that the physical isolation of the lovers suggests their spiritual isolation in a world where such egalitarian marriages s theirs are rare, if not impossible. True minds, Charlotte Brontë seems

> to be saying, must withdraw into a remote forest, a wilderness even, in order to circumvent the strictures of a hierarchal society. (396)

Although Jane and Rochester establish an egalitarian lifestyle, one in which wife and husband, servant and master can live in harmony, Ferndean still suggests the Gothic. Ghosts no longer reside in this household, but it is not the Ellis's "new Eden"; it remains the decaying Gothic household, possibly in recognition of the tenuous nature of the world they create for themselves. In the end, however, Jane is able to embrace her servant roots by caring for her master, while simultaneously exerting her power in the household as the only able-bodied and a financially independent member.

Like Jane, Mrs. de Winter must embrace and move beyond her servant roots in order to construct a new egalitarian life for herself and her husband. However, Mrs. de Winter has none of the internal confidence and tenacity Jane brings to her novel. Her position is decidedly more difficult than Jane's in that she is already married to Mr. de Winter when she realizes the haunting, and her information about the late Mrs. de Winter is limited. When Jane discovers the truth of the haunting, she discovers the whole truth. Rebecca haunts the current Mrs. de Winter for a longer duration because the current Mrs. de Winter is denied the whole truth of Rebecca's story. To add to the terror of her situation, Mrs. de Winter also is haunted by her own insecurity and the knowledge that Rebecca's sophisticated, upper-class identity is something that she, as a former servant girl, cannot match. As a servant who becomes mistress, Mrs. de Winter is in constant search of her role within the household. When she arrives at Manderly she is told that Mrs. Danvers handles the household. What then is Mrs. de Winter's role? If women gain their power in the family through the governance of their servants and their children (of which Mrs. de Winter has none), then what is the current Mrs. de Winter to do with her time? Of course, the

former Mrs. de Winter, Rebecca, knew to spend her time constructing correspondences and primping; however, as we learn over the course of the novel, Rebecca, too, had difficulty with her role and rebelled against it by engaging in an illicit affair. Further, we see the pathetic truth of Rebecca's social position when we realize that she has encouraged her husband to kill her rather than face the shame of a terminal illness which would inevitably cause her to fall short of the perfection her role in society demands. The demands of wifehood push Rebecca to immorality and suicide, and at first, the current Mrs. de Winter does not seem to possess any qualities that would improve her chances for surviving wifehood, except possibly her servant background, which initially seems a liability. After breaking and then hiding an expensive decoration that is in fact her own now that she has married Maxim, she says of herself "I am like a between-maid" and laments the fact that her servant girl Clarice announces "It's not like being with a lady, Mum, it's like being with one of ourselves" (137).

Although Mrs. de Winter sees her servant connections as a detriment to her ability to govern the household, her attempted movement away from her servant background illustrates both the danger in moving away from the role of female domestic and the perils that embracing the role of wife suggests. Like Monimia, Mrs. de Winter faces the danger of being silenced in her movement from servant girl to wife and, like Jane, she must embrace her inner rebelliousness to overcome social expectations for her class and gender. However, unlike both of these women, Mrs. de Winter encounters the Gothic only after she is married, and while she, like Jane, must overcome a ghostly wife, her persecution comes at the hands of another servant. She lives in constant fear of the memory of Rebecca, the former Mrs. de Winter, and she is faithfully reminded by her servants that her social status does not reflect her current position as the head of Manderly. Holly Blackford explains, "These housekeepers are, in a way, doing the newcomers a

favor by demonstrating what being married to a house – and all it signifies—is like. It is rather like being dead or in a trance . . ." (234). It may be hard for fans of *Rebecca* to give Mrs. Danvers any credit, but readers also realize that unlike Monimia, Mrs. de Winter cannot be "dead or in a trance." She must find her own voice, and to do so, she must remove what she sees as the ghost of the appropriate lady of the manner, while simultaneously avoiding the "trance" of wifehood and succumbing to the pressures of the social world she now inhabits. What she must assert is the woman's new companionate authority in the household, one that eighteenth-century Gothic heroines were promised readers never really saw play out.

Like Jane, Mrs. de Winter finds true companionship with her husband only after the relic of the ancient, feudalistic social order, the Gothic house, is destroyed. Also, like Jane's, Mrs. de Winter's companionate relationship only truly manifests once her husband is weakened by the destruction of that house. However, unlike Jane, Mrs. de Winter and her husband are not forced to hide their companionate relationship in a distant, semi-Gothic home. They spend their time traveling the world and attempting to forget their Gothic encounter.

It is in the burning of Manderly that the Gothic servant comes full circle. Everything that eighteenth-century Gothic servants represent, their ability to maintain family history, to protect the mistress's sexuality, to reflect the master's promotion of individualism, and the ability to shine a light on feudalistic injustices is questioned, inverted and destroyed. In the eighteenth-century Gothic novels, servants help establish a framework for heroines to build happy, companionate lives upon, but in the minds of female authors from later generations that framework is unsound. The home no longer stands as an adequate compensation for the heroine's Gothic experience, as the heroine must find some other recompense for her suffering, one that will allow her a voice in society. She does this by joining forces with her servant girl as

a means of reflecting the confinement of the home and in a quest to interact with the outside world on her own terms, and once she finds that voice in the outside world the new servant/heroine must learn to let go of the servant side of her persona. It must be excluded, and she must see the house destroyed before she can truly move on to the comic ending her eighteenth-century Gothic predecessors promised her.

Notes

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[1] I quote the following passage in the introduction:

> The labour of the manufacturer fixes and realizes itself in some particular subject or venerable commodity, which lasts for some time at least after the labour is past [....] The labour of the menial servant, on the contrary, does not fix or realise itself in any particular subject or vendible commodity. His services generally perish in the very instant of their performance, and seldom leave any trace or value behind them. (332-333)

[2] I would argue, and do in my third chapter, that the nineteenth-century tendency to use the Gothic as mode was not new to the nineteenth century and that it has always been a tendency of the Gothic to glide in to and out of seemingly realistic works at will. Even the most widely-read and well-known Gothic novel of the eighteenth century, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, seems a bit reluctantly Gothic, as I point out in chapter three, with Radcliffe taking her time to get to the haunted castle and then leaving it relatively quickly.

[3] See the discussion of eighteenth-century feminist viewpoints in the introduction pages 13-15.

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