LUND UNIVERSITY
Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology

Centre for Languages and Literature
English Studies

Gothic Masculinity: An Exploration of Masculinity in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *Uncle Silas*

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Abstract

By analysing two different Female Gothic novels, this thesis aims to explore the different ways in which masculinity is portrayed within the Female Gothic literary tradition, more specifically the Early Gothic and Victorian Gothic due to constraints in scope. The novels chosen, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *Uncle Silas* (1864), are in many ways representative and serve as typical Female Gothic narratives but differ in when they were written and how they utilise gothic tropes to discuss and critique the society within which they were written. Given the relatively little research done on this topic within the time period chosen, relevant historical background is presented and discussed accordingly. Furthermore, concepts such as fatherhood, sensibility, the missing mother, villainy, and fallenness are discussed and subsequently applied on the novels so as to highlight different forms of masculinity and how they are portrayed in relation to each-other and the ideals considered dominant at the time of the novels' release. By comparing the two novels, the Gothic's role as a transgressive literary form becomes all the more clear as its portrayal of masculinity serves to problematize the oftentimes simplified view of masculinity as purely dominant. The commonly discussed troubled heroine is not the only one affected by the dominant ideals heralded by hegemonic masculinity.

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Introduction

The Gothic has, since its initial conception, been a genre ripe with themes and allegories relating to social structures (Heiland 8). In *Gothic & Gender*, Donna Heiland suggests that Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), generally considered the first novel of the genre, along with the Gothic novels of the 1790s are non-subversive in nature as they 'make absolutely clear the genre's concern with exploring, defining, and ultimately defending patriarchy' (Heiland, 8). However, as has become clear since the feminist movement of the 60s provided a platform for feminist and gender studies, the motifs and symbols present in these early works serve as a means for discussing topics of gender and social injustice (Adams & Savran 1). A result of such research can be found in Ellen Moers' 1963 study *Literary Women* where she, by analysing various gothic texts such as Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), coins the term 'female Gothic': a subgenre of the Gothic wherein Gothic imagery such as marriage, the supernatural, and imprisonment serves as a window into patriarchal society from the perspective of a female protagonist (Byron & Punter 278).

The transgressive nature of certain gothic tropes may well have been a reason for the increase in 19th-century gothic inspired writing where the motifs and themes came to be used as a means of providing commentary on the restrictive social structures of the Victorian era; and the Victorian Gothic, as the form of writing came to be called, garnered much attention from scholars concerned with feminist and gender theory in the 1960s and 70s (Byron & Punter 30). Studies such as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) discuss texts such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892) and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), where tropes such as secluded mansions and madness as well as female Gothic motifs of female heroines, marriage, and imprisonment are used in order to provide an outlet for feminist topics.

Despite the increase in studies revolving around gender theory, masculinity as an object of study has received comparatively less attention until recently. Since feminism is rooted in the concept of women separating themselves and breaking free from the institutionalised patriarchy that has served to subjugate and oppress them over the course of history, there was an aversion to spending time and resources on masculinity studies within the movement (Carrigan, et al. 112). However, the concept of masculinity, just like other gender constructions, is multifaceted.

The dominant masculinity commonly associated with patriarchy (usually referred to as hegemonic masculinity) could be said to define itself in relation to what it is not, similar to the power relations between the East and the West highlighted by Edward Said in his 1978 study *Orientalism* (Carrigan, et al. 112). Said claims that the West as a cultural entity posits the East, or the Orient, as an opposite of the values promoted within Western culture as a means of devaluing that which is different. In other words, the Orient has to be feminine, so that the West can be masculine, similar to how femininity is what masculinity is not and vice versa. It is only natural to assume, then, that the dominant hegemonic idea of masculinity not only represses 'the other', in this case femininity, but also deviant masculinities, such as queer masculinity. Thus, masculinity becomes a concept encompassing both dominant and subjugated forms of gender expression which are all just as much social constructs as those of femininity (Carrigan, et al. 112). Despite this, as Tom Carrigan, Bob Connell, and John Lee point out in "Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity", that 'although most social science is indeed about men, good-quality research that brings *masculinity* into focus is rare' (99).

Due to the Gothic's connection to concepts such as sexual difference, desire, and power relations, along with a relative lack of studies on masculinity within the literary sphere, my aim in this thesis is through a comparative study of two Gothic novels, to analyse how these concepts have developed and taken shape within the Gothic as a genre and how masculinity has been portrayed at two different times in the genre's lifespan. Furthermore, I will posit that the way masculinity is portrayed within the novels evidences a change in the way the concept was viewed from the 18th to the 19th centuries. The novels chosen are intended each to represent one era of Gothic writing each. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Ann Radcliffe represents the early Gothic and *Uncle Silas* (1864) by Sheridan Le Fanu the 19th century/Victorian Gothic era. Both novels adhere to much of what can be traditionally found in the female Gothic but do so in slightly different ways. I choose not to discuss the late 19th century Gothic Decadence as it has been analysed and discussed to the point of saturation.

One of the more crucial differences, apart from their distance in time, is the relationship between the gender of the author and the main protagonists. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is a traditional female Gothic story as both the writer and protagonist are women; whereas *Uncle Silas* has a female protagonist but was written by a man. These differences will allow for a more nuanced analysis by providing access to a wider array of perspectives.

The essay will be structured in three parts. The first section is the introduction where some background information regarding both the topic and the relevant gender theory has been covered. The second section is divided into a background segment, where historical context

will be presented and discussed, along with two smaller segments focusing on the concepts of fatherhood and villainy respectively. These smaller segments will consist of close readings with an emphasis on gender-related imagery and motifs as well as reflections on what separates the different eras of writing and whether or not this is noticeable within the texts themselves. Lastly, the third section will serve as a conclusion where the different aspects put forth in the body will be brought together.

Background

As the novel rose in popularity during the 18th century, a variety of different genres emerged among which was the Sentimental novel (Griffin Wolff 207). This mode of writing was heavily rooted in the moral views of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and dealt with 'the natural goodness of man and his belief that moral development was fostered by experiencing powerful sympathies' (Britannica N.D.). These ideas of empathetic susceptibility would eventually develop into what came to be known as 'the novel of sensibility' where elements such as the beauty and inherent goodness of nature were emphasised (Britannica N.D.). The Novel of Sensibility's focus on 'feeling above reason' and a cultural and social shift away from the Augustan belief in logic and reason above all else also paved the way for more transgressive developments (Byron & Punter 7). As Mary Ellen Snodgrass puts it, 'when literary trends fled the high-toned artificial sanctuary of the Age of Reason, the backlash against regularity and predictability sent literature far into the murky past' (xiii). This movement towards the past resulted in an offshoot of the novel of Sensibility in the form of the Gothic novel.

Up until the 18th century, the 'Gothic' was primarily used to denote the Northern European tribe of the 'Goths' but then gradually came to refer to most things considered medieval, as in pre-dating the 1600s (Byron & Punter 7). This change in meaning brought with it a myriad of additional connotations, however. As Punter and Byron state in *The Gothic*, 'if "Gothic" meant to do with what was perceived as barbaric and to do with the medieval world, it could be seen to follow that it was a term which could be used in structural opposition to "classical" (7)'. Thus, the term came to refer to the opposite of the ordered and pure nature of the 'classical'. The Gothic served as a reminder of the primitive and chaotic nature of the world and the undesirable and deviant corners of society which allowed for social critique and discussion outside of Augustan discourse. According to Augustan ideals, literature's role is to keep 'the barbarians at the gates at bay' (8) as it serves to 'maintain cultural defences against

this cultural encroachment' (7-8). The first truly Gothic novel was Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* from 1765 which was originally published with the subtitle *A Gothic Story* where Gothic simply referred to the medieval and dark setting of the novel. The tropes originally used by Walpole such as remote castles and supernatural hauntings would gradually be expanded upon over the course of the 18th century, culminating in Ann Radcliffe's seminal Gothic work *The Mysteries of Udolpho* in 1794 (Gothic novel, N.D.). Although several other female writers such as Sophia Lee and Clara Reeve wrote Gothic novels prior to Radcliffe, it was first after the release of *Udolpho* the genre reached its peak in popularity. Radcliffe became the best-selling author of the 1790s and publishing companies such as The Minerva Press published and printed Gothic novels of all shapes and sizes, and of varying quality. One of Jane Austen's earlier novels *Northanger Abbey* (finished in 1803 but published posthumously in 1817) even sought to make fun of the Gothic craze by portraying a protagonist obsessed with the genre and thus seeing the world through the lens of a Gothic heroine.

The Gothic can largely be divided into two subcategories: the Male and Female Gothic. Byron and Punter posit that the differences mostly amount to how 'they represent the relationship of the protagonist and to the dominant Gothic spaces depicted' (278). Seen in this way, the Male Gothic concerns itself with penetrating social and cultural spaces while the Female Gothic concerns itself with breaking free from them. Furthermore, the Male Gothic could be seen as being more transgressive than the Female Gothic. As Byron and Punter illustrate, it 'primarily focuses on questions of identity and on the male protagonist's transgression of social taboos' (278). These transgressions tend to be depicted through the use of excessive sexual violence, and an unstable narrative where conventions are constantly subverted. Additionally, the female characters tend to be relegated either to the sidelines or to a state of victimhood as 'their bodies, like the Gothic structures ... are to be broached by the transgressive male' (278). The Female Gothic, made popular by *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, on the other hand, mainly concerns itself with portraying the transgressive male and the objectified woman, but in alternate positions, with the woman being the protagonist and the male being the antagonist. It is important, however, to make the distinction that not all men in Female Gothic texts are of a transgressive or oppressive nature, but the sole antagonist is almost exclusively a dominant male figure. The focus is not on identity but on gender (279).

It naturally follows, then, that the Female Gothic, told from a female point of view, is a genre well-suited to the plights of women. As Ellen Moers posited when she first coined the term in 1976, the Female Gothic is a mode of writing within which 'woman is examined with a woman's eye, woman as girl, as sister, as mother, as self' (Heiland 58), or, more simply put,

it provides women with a space where they can represent themselves in literary form. Thus, the Female Gothic was primarily read and written by and for women (Wolff 207).

By making use of tropes first found in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* and expanded upon and popularised by Ann Radcliffe in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Italian*, the subgenre became the mode of choice for literary depictions of gender-related issues. The most prominent trope of the Female Gothic is that of the distressed heroine. Through her the intricate and malign aspects of patriarchal domestic control, the repression of women's sexual autonomy and their right to express themselves, are put to the test. Alongside classical Gothic conventions such as threats of metaphorical and/or physical imprisonment, dilapidated castles, and unrivaled domestic tyranny, the Female Gothic tends to center around a heroine who is powerless, orphaned, and without inheritance (Snodgrass 115-117).

The tropes commonly found in Female Gothic texts share a lot of similarities with those originally found in the Sentimental novel. Similarly to how the Gothic serves as a subversion of Augustan ideals, it also, according to Elizabeth McAndrew, serves as 'an expression of the other side of the benevolent ideas reflected in the Sentimental novel' (qtd. in Fleenor 9). McAndrew proposes that the Gothic acts as an offshoot of the structures found in the Sentimental novel. Both genres, as put forth by Juliann E. Fleenor in *The Female Gothic*, typically adhere to stereotypical essentialisms in their portrayal of gender. The women are sentimental and prone to emotional outbursts while the men are logical and emotionally repressive. Gothic characters are, further, 'frequently stereotyped into the evil/good dichotomy, with good and evil easily recognisable' (Fleenor 9). This dichotomy is less clear in the Gothic novel than the Sentimental novel however (Fleenor 9). Using dichotomies as a form of division is a deeply rooted means of maintaining power within hierarchical societal structures. Thus, when the Gothic is used to subvert these structures, the dichotomies come into question alongside them, causing the definitions to become less stable (Fleenor 15). Perhaps the largest similarity between the Gothic and the Sentimental novel (at least concerning the Early Gothic) is the society the novels portray and navigate within, which is a society of sensibility and sentimentalism.

The 18th century is frequently viewed as a period of sexual liberation when, as Karen Harvey put it, 'bodies were understood, sexuality constructed, and sexual activity carried out' (Harvey 899-900). This, like any historical process, is more multifaceted than it may at first seem. Although sexual liberation movements heralded by groups such as the promiscuous Libertines gained a lot of traction, similarly prominent views on sexuality and gender were, as argued by Anthony Fletcher, rooted in the debate between the Patriarchalists and Social

Contract Theorists (293). Patriarchalists represented traditional patriarchal values and believed all power should reside in patriarchal rule, both within society and the family (which serves as a microcosm of the former) (Fletcher 293). An extreme version of this can be found in Sir Robert Filmer's ideas on the inherent natural qualities of paternal rule and its subsequent justification by God (Fletcher 294). These extreme values quickly lost ground, however, to those proposed by John Locke. Locke believed in a separation between the domestic and the political and proposed that 'a mother exercises authority over her children as much as the father' (Fletcher 294) along with other progressive ideas such as allowing divorce. Locke's values were not as progressive in nature as one might first assume. He, similarly to Filmer, believed that women in the natural world were subservient to men and that 'only men had the characteristics of free and equal beings' (Fletcher 294). Men are, after all, 'in general, advantaged through the subordination of women' (Carrigan, Connell, & Lee 111). The pervasive nature of these ideas, in part, led to the gradual relegation of women to the domestic sphere in the 19th century. It was not until the 1830s, however, when women exercised full control over the moral education of their children that the question of men's role within the domestic sphere became a point of contention (Tosh 61). As 'all nurturing qualities' were now seen to be concentrated in the mother, the father had to navigate the domestic space a lot more carefully (69). He still had to discipline and instruct his son(s) in order to make sure they did not turn out too deficient in masculine qualities and become too feminized, but partaking in nurturing to a degree deemed too high might also reflect poorly on his 'manly vigour and familial authority' (70). It is important to note, however, that a man's authority was rooted in his ability to be the master of his own house and that any disruption of this basis of masculinity would be met with opposition (132). Furthermore, a way for men to counterbalance this domestic dilemma was to partake in homosocial activities. Such activities had a central role in boys' and men's performances of gender. By, for example, spending time with like-minded men at an Alehouse, a venue largely devoid of feminine influence, men could enact and confirm each other's masculinity through what Tosh calls a form of 'peer approval' that could both grant and revoke masculine status (Tosh 71).

So how, then, is masculinity to be defined: According to its political role, its domestic role, or something in-between? Gender is an ever-evolving concept with highly fluctuating definitions that change due to a variety of factors which are difficult to define. For example, among the upper reaches of 18th century society, what constituted masculinity was hard to pin down due to the presence of a wide variety of masculine expression. As Anthony Fletcher describes it, 'at one extreme stood the boorish homosociality of the hunting squire; at the other

the civility of the refined gentleman bent on improving his mind and his land' (64-65). These forms of masculinity differed widely and, yet, can both be described as equally masculine. It also stands to reason that not all men fit inside Fletcher's proposed spectrum.

An important concept in the public debate at the time was that of sensibility. Sensibility in its purest form refers to someone's ability to empathise and feel emotion but grew to be 'imbued with spiritual and moral values' and became inextricably linked with masculine portrayal of femininity as it was generally believed that 'women's nerves were more delicate and more susceptible than men's' (Barker-Benfield xviii). The notion that it is strictly the domain of women has been problematized in more recent research as men also partook in the new culture of sensibility and this at least to some extent led to shared experiences between the sexes (Barker-Benfield 37). This is not to be confused as a platform for mutual understanding, however. As Claudia Johnson points out, 'sentimentality did not feminize men so much as it masculinized feeling' (qtd. In Heiland 12), thus, '[t]he affective practices associated with [sentimentality] are valued *not* because they are understood as feminine, but precisely and only insofar as they have been recorded as masculine' (12). Although sentimentality led to a closer relationship between what was considered masculine and feminine, said relationship could be argued to have led to further dilution of the female spheres of influence. George Haggerty, on the other hand, claims that men and women both could benefit from this new idealisation of sentimentality by becoming 'equivocal beings' and that this process must be seen as a positive due to its potential to 'disrupt the binary gender system that defines patriarchal culture' (12). Heiland further elaborates on this by stating that Haggerty's beliefs are rooted in the idea that sensibility or, rather, the dissolution of the stigma surrounding emotional vulnerability served as 'a "symptom" of what a culture has repressed'. It threatened the hegemonic values in a fashion similar to that of the Libertine ideals. Sensibility allowed for barriers, both internal and external, to be questioned and gradually broken down (12). It allowed for both men and women to redefine what it truly meant to be male and female.

Whenever well-established ways of being are disrupted, in this case the values present within hegemonic structures, a crisis occurs. In other words, previous parameters used to define what manhood is may become blurred and less easy to adhere to (Tosh 45). This disruption is a common theme in a slightly more modern form of the Gothic, namely the Victorian Gothic.

After the Gothic had started to decline in popularity during the early 19th century, the tropes and themes commonly found within the genre came to be repurposed to fit the social climate of the Victorian Era. The Victorian era saw unrivaled socio-political change that disrupted the very core of the traditional gender roles present within society (Davison 125).

This unraveling of gender norms together with Victorian ideals, put into words by John Stuart Mill in *The Subjection of Women* (1869), where gender was considered an inborn quality rather than a social construct was, as Davison puts it, a natural fit for Gothic transgression (125). The Victorian Gothic, as this form of the Gothic came to be named, is, as put forth by Alexandra Warwick, a form of the Gothic 'that escapes anything but the loosest definitions' (Warwick 29). It is not so much a coherent genre as what results from adapting familiar Gothic tropes to popular genres of the time (Byron & Punter 26). The Victorian Gothic makes itself clear, however, in how it embraces the transgressive elements of the Early Gothic but moves them into the domestic space, away from the 16th-century remote castles and into the homes and urban landscapes of Victorian England (26). This new emphasis on domestic discourse places a larger emphasis, according to Wolfrey, on the Freudian concept of the uncanny. Where the domestic admittedly served as an arena for hardship in previous forms of the Gothic, the Victorian domestic sphere is an unfamiliar and perverted form of the former. It became 'the site of troubled sexual secrets, so that far from guaranteeing safety, the domestic becomes the space through which trauma is generated' (Wolfrey 4). The unreal merged with the real (Wolfrey 5).

Despite the vast array of literature that could fit within the Victorian Gothic label, Warwick manages to break it down into two distinct forms: the domestic and the urban. The domestic could be viewed as an extension of the Female Gothic as it elaborates on the plight of the Early Gothic heroine within the Victorian home in works such as Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847). The domestic rigidity is called into question through the use of moral ambiguity in its characters, literal and figurative imprisonment, and uncanny hauntings. The urban, on the other hand, largely pioneered by Charles Dickens, concerns itself with public perversions through the use of criminality and social deviance (Buswell).

In her essay "The Victorian Gothic and Gender", Carol Margaret Davison divides the Victorian Gothic's genre influences into three separate time periods: the 1840s, the 1860s, and the 1880s-90s (Davison 124). While the 1840s was a period of social realism where social institutions and values were frequently shown to repress identity and self-expression and the 1880s and 90s made use of supernatural sensationalism to criticise and showcase the gender crisis caused by the emergence of more subversive forms of masculinity and femininity, the 1860s saw a mixture between the two (128, 136).

Similar to the Gothic, the so-called Sensational fiction of the 1860s sought to excite and thrill its readership. As a result, it both saw immense popularity and intense critique. The Victorian era saw a large increase in urban mobility, and as cities increased in size and density,

so did the anxieties surrounding criminality and moral disease. The social climate was, thus, ripe for sensation fiction to discuss and portray these issues through the use of Gothic motifs (132). An example of this, as brought forth by Davison, is how sensation fiction might portray criminal behaviour as a last resort for women to gain agency within marriage in order to visualise the destabilization of gender roles that followed the ratification of the Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act that served to provide women with more leeway with regards to property rights and divorce (133).

From what has been said above, it may seem unclear what separates the Victorian Gothic novel from the Sensation novel. Some critics consider the Victorian Gothic simply a form of sensational fiction rather than a separate, though heavily influenced, entity while others consider them separate endeavours entirely, similar to that of the Early Gothic and the novel of sensibility. Which of these viewpoints rings true is not entirely agreed upon but for the purposes of this essay, simply recognising their influences on each other will suffice.

The Father

The concept of the absent mother has been a staple of Gothic literature from its very inception and serves as a perversion of what was seen as the natural familial order where the mother performed the role as the primary caretaker and educator. As Ruth Bienstock Anolik points out in her article 'The Missing Mother: The Meanings of Maternal Absence in the Gothic Mode', it is commonly used to highlight the feminine state of non-being in which women are not allowed to express themselves fully or even at all (25). Furthermore, the lack of a mother can also serve as a narrative device which disrupts the familial order and invites deviancy and disorder into the life of the heroine (Ruth 27). In typical Gothic fashion, this absence usually takes the form of death and it is this expression we find in both *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *Uncle Silas* (Ruth 25). Both Emily's and Maud's mothers are either absent from the beginning or die very early on in their respective novels. In each case, the absence of the mother sets the Gothic narrative in motion, it is the catalyst that allows for social disorder in the narrative. One effect is that this loss of a maternal figure forces the heroine to look elsewhere for parental guidance, sometimes in the form of a different maternal figure or, perhaps more importantly, a paternal one.

As Tosh explains in *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth Century Britain*, during the 18th century, the father was usually the one tasked with educating his children as opposed to the 19th-century ideal where women were the caretakers of everything domestic (48). In

Udolpho then, it is natural that Emily's primary source of guidance and comfort after her mother's passing is her father M. St. Aubert (henceforth referred to as St. Aubert).

St. Aubert separates himself from men commonly found in Gothic texts by his relation to the ideals of Sensibility. As Sensibility grew in influence, traits such as 'self-control and discipline over one's conduct and manners' as well as seeking to distance oneself from the barbaric and rude masculinity of yore (Cohen 313) became more desirable within masculinity. As discussed earlier, this move towards effeminacy may have caused the traditional barriers between masculinity and femininity to become less pronounced; some saw it as an oxymoron given that, as Cohen puts it, 'a man could not, at once, be both refined and manly' (313). By the end of century, the masculinity proposed by Sensibility was seen as having become '"feminized" and "domesticated," and by the early 1800s, its emphasis on pleasing, on "consider[ing] others more than [oneself]," on self-effacement, "annihilating, as it were, ourselves," had become naturalized as characteristics of femininity"' (Cohen 318). This increased emphasis on emotional vulnerability and self-refinement, then, serves as a contrast to the murkier and less-refined domains of the typical Gothic setting.

Sensibility positions itself as natural. It seeks raw emotion. But as is frequently shown in Gothic writing, and not least in *Udolpho*, excessive emotion, regardless of intention, leaves your mind vulnerable to suggestion and violation. This excess of emotion is most commonly found in stereotypical female characters who swoon at the thought of danger or let out a haunting shriek at the sight of a villain. In Radcliffe's novel, Emily's servant, Annette, embodies this potentially debilitating aspect of sensibility perfectly. It is she who lends credence to Emily's sensibilities and allows her imagination to run wild.

Annette believes and retells all the stories told by the servants, stories usually dismissed by the gentry as mere old wives tales. Emily upbraids her for her superstitious nature telling her 'you love the wonderful; but do you know that, unless you guard against this inclination, it will lead you into all the misery of superstition?' (Radcliffe 197). Emily's apprehensiveness can largely be attributed to her father, who warns her of the dangers of sensibility early on. We learn that 'a well-informed mind ... is the best security against the contagion of folly and of vice' and '[St. Aubert] endeavoured, therefore, to strengthen her mind; to inure her to habits of self-command; to teach her to reject the first impulse of her feelings, and to look with cool examination upon the disappointments he sometimes threw in her way' (4). Education, then, in a way, serves as a counterweight to the natural sensibilities. In order to protect oneself from the vulnerability that excessive sensibility lends itself to, you need to be aware of its pervasive nature and actively guard against it. His warnings prove to be pertinent, when later in the novel

Emily finds herself giving way to her superstitious nature while being confined within the walls of Udolpho.

Whether *Udolpho* is in fact a novel for or against the ideology of Sensibility is not the point here. However, I would like to emphasise how a greater acceptance of emotional vulnerability led to new forms of masculinity emerging; the most relevant of which being that of 'The Man of Feeling', a label coined by Henry Mackenzie in 1771 in his novel of the same name. The man of feeling was in many ways a reaction to the sentimental hero. This hero figure, according to Barker-Benfield, is usually characterised as 'benevolent, compassionate and humane' and acts in the interests of women (248). These qualities, naturally, made him agreeable to women at the time. The inclusion of the man of feeling, then, into the literary consciousness of 19th-century Britain served, according to Barker-Benfield, as a means to 'echo the eighteenth century's own criticism of the effects of sentimental fiction on women' (247). In other words, he serves as a means for the author to discuss the effects of a market oversaturated by sentimental fiction. He inherited a lot of the qualities of the sentimental hero, however, such as his favourable attitude towards emotional vulnerability and stark opposition to societal vices such as gambling and excessive cruelty along with a great appreciation for nature (Barker-Benfield 248).

St. Aubert arguably possesses a lot of the qualities inherent in the typical man of feeling. He is repeatedly described as a man capable of great emotion and as early as page two we are told that if two of the large trees in their estate's garden were to fall 'he believed he should have been weak enough to have wept' (Radcliffe 2). Not only does this showcase his reverence for nature, a trait closely associated with sentimentalism and which Emily comes to inherit and find comfort in throughout the novel, but also how St Aubert differs from traditional masculine characters. Furthermore, as discussed earlier, the masculinities fostered within Sensibility leaned towards more traditionally feminine traits. An idea commonly associated with this, as expressed by Hume and Smith (qtd. in Barker-Benfield 248), is that in order to cultivate this femininity, men needed to intermingle with the opposite sex. This, of course, counteracts the homosociality commonly used as a means to enforce and cultivate hegemonic masculinity. In other words, the idea of a man who was 'hard-hearted' and 'unfeeling' to women and who thought 'it proof of a manly spirit, to show himself an utter stranger to the gentle passions' was now put into question (249). The fact that St. Aubert, then, chose to remove himself from city life, a world 'where selfishness, dissipation, and insecurity supply the place of tenderness, simplicity, and truth' (Radcliffe 35-36) in favour of 'the pure delights of literature and to the

exercise of domestic virtues' (1) shows how his worldview has been influenced by sentimental values such as eschewing vice and overindulgence and favouring the simplicity found in nature.

Uncle Silas is not so clear in its discussion of fatherhood but does present a similarly important historical representation. Maud, like Emily, finds herself without a mother early in her life with a major difference being that Emily has already received most of her education by the time the novel starts. Maud is only nine years old at the start of the novel, meaning she has a lot to learn still. As Maud herself tells us, however, she barely spends time with her father, who is mostly off engaging in affairs where both the homosocial aspects of masculinity along with the Victorian emphasis on religious virtues are emphasised. In other words, unlike St. Aubert, Austin Ruthyn (henceforth referred to as Mr. Ruthyn) does not take an active role in his daughter's upbringing.

Although Mr. Ruthyn, similarly to St. Aubert, has chosen to retire from society almost entirely, he does not do so in order to partake more actively in his domestic duties. Instead, he is described as being a shell of his former self, a mere 'phantasm' (Le Fanu 5), who spends most of his time either alone in his study or with one of his Swedenborgian acquaintances, away from Maud. It is important to note, however, that Victorian fatherhood emphasised and expected different things from men than what had previously been the norm. In *Manliness and Masculinities in 19th-century Britain*, John Tosh puts forth three types of Victorian fathers. The first one is the domestic tyrant who takes an active role in the household by making use of his patriarchal status to repress and control those within his sphere of influence. The second type is the absent father who for one reason or another is either incapable or unable to perform their paternal duties. Finally, there is the nursing father who partakes in duties commonly associated with the feminine, such as educating and caring for his children (129). Mr. Ruthyn seems to fit the mold of the Absent Father best, given that he relegates most, if not all, parental duties to the servants and, later, the governess. The only time Mr. Ruthyn actively engages in Maud's upbringing is to ensure she will do what is best for their family legacy. However, as Maud tells us, 'I am sure my father loved me, and I know I loved him. With the sure instinct of childhood I apprehended his tenderness, although it was never expressed in common ways' (Le Fanu 2). Apart from silently caring for his daughter, Mr. Ruthyn actively practices Swedenborgian teachings which lead him to forgive his ostracized brother Silas. It is her father's disregard for his domestic duties that leads to Maud not having access to education at an early age and to the fact that when she does get access to it, her education comes in the form of Madame de la Rougierre, a grotesque French governess who, similarly to Montoni, comes to serve as a physical manifestation of the Early Gothic fear of the unknown and foreign.

The Villain

Humans tend to deal in dichotomies, opposites, and binaries. High and low, life and death, hot and cold, and good and bad are commonly occurring binaries. These are, naturally, no less common in literature where comparisons form the basis for discussions and critique. Thus, most stories have a protagonist, a main character, and an antagonist, someone or something which opposes the protagonist. According to the Cambridge Online Dictionary, *antagonist* simply refers to 'a person who is strongly opposed to something or someone' which coincides well with its literary function ("Antagonist"). However, Gothic antagonists are usually described using a different term, namely *villain*. The term *villain*, as opposed to *antagonist*, holds a more specific meaning. Villains are not only antagonistic in the traditional sense but are further branded as evil-doers, criminals, and malevolent people ("Villain"). However, as MacAndrew argues in *The Gothic Tradition in Fiction*, Gothic villains are not evil for the sake of being evil. They are representations of 'the nature of human frailty' with their susceptibility to deviant behaviour such as gambling, drinking, and promiscuity serving as cautionary tales (81). The main antagonists of the novels seem to fit both the label of antagonist and villain. Not only do they represent the antithesis of the femininity of the heroine, but they also engage in criminal behaviour in the form of theft and murder. It is worth noting that most Gothic villains, if not villains in general, are patriarchal men. A possible reason for this, as put forth by Sara Martín in *Masculinity and Patriarchal Villainy in the British Novel From Hitler to Voldemort*, is that hegemonic masculine molds lend themselves well to gaining and abusing power (7).

Montoni, the antagonist of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, is often used as the template for the stereotypical Gothic villain. He is logical, reasoning, and not particularly prone to anger, unlike the Italians in his entourage, and he engages in homosocial activities such as drinking and gambling with his male companions. Furthermore, as has become a major part of Early Gothic writing, he serves as an external and foreign threat who challenges the domestic stability promised to Emily, driving a stake through her future prospects of happiness. Additionally, he belittles her superstitious nature and belief in the benefits of sensibility claiming that:

> When you are older, you will look back with gratitude to the friends who assisted in rescuing you from the romantic illusions of sentiment, and will perceive that they are only the snares of childhood, and should be vanquished the moment you escape from the nursery. (Radcliffe 142)

In other words, he is a perfect representation of the 'hard-hearted' and 'unfeeling' men whom sentimentalists strongly opposed. He is a relic of a bygone era, a manifestation of traditional masculinity.

Unlike the early Gothic villain, Silas, the antagonist who gives his name to LeFanu's novel, is not merely a cautionary tale. Victorian masculinity is a fragile thing. Having been constructed upon a multitude of rigid and unquestionable values, most of which were based on a mixture of essentialisms attributed to science and Christian ideals, deviation from the established mould would find you heavily criticised and scorned (Gallant 274**)**. It is no wonder then, that Silas, a gambling libertine and opium addict, finds himself disgruntled with and rejected by society. As Tosh argues, the Georgian Libertine is the greatest antagonist to the ideal Victorian man: sexual, loud, and non-conforming. As Maud's cousin Monica tells her about Silas, 'he was fond of his pleasures' and was 'a most expensive and vicious young man' (Le Fanu 57), in other words the complete opposite of the collected and reserved Victorian gentleman. Additionally, he is thought to have murdered someone over a gambling dispute, in this way causing further damage to his reputation and social standing. Thus, Silas is not simply a bandit who seeks to regain lost wealth, but a man whose frailty has led him down a path of addiction and, as a result, social ostracism, and makes use of the patriarchal molds of the time in order to conjure up a façade as a means to regain some social leverage. The Victorian Gothic villain, then, could be argued to be more nuanced than his predecessor, not so much an external threat to society as a by-product of it, a manifestation of society's failings. Rather, Silas is not evil; he is desperate and at a loss for options, and it could therefore be argued that he serves as a representation of a different aspect of Gothic villainy not present in Montoni. MacAndrew claims that the true monstrosity of Gothic villains is in them having the capacity for good but being denied the means to attain it. This 'struggle between their good nature and their evil propensities' is what makes them truly terrifying (81).

This internal doubling is a common trope in Gothic literature, the most common example of which is found in Robert Louis Stevenson's seminal 1886 Gothic novella *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, where Jekyll represents the titular characters' logical and emotionally reserved side and Hyde represents and serves as an outlet for Jekyll's repressed emotions. This doubling, usually manifested through the use of oppositions, may be either internal or external. I would argue that Silas deals with internal doubling more than external whereas Montoni is the opposite. Silas' serves as his own antithesis in the sense that he both represents Victorian patriarchal norms in how he exercises absolute authority over his house

and those within while simultaneously suffering the consequences of being undesirable in the eyes of society. Montoni's primary narrative role is to serve as the antithesis and the ideological other to the sentimentalist values embodied by St. Aubert and Emily. He is what MacAndrew calls an 'embodiment of the darkness opposing the light' (82). However, underneath the haunting guise of the oppressive Gothic villain, Montoni is no more than a bandit, a common crook, who makes use of the societal advantages given to him in order to accrue wealth. Similarly to Silas, he lost a great deal of his livelihood as a result of indulging in expensive vices and now seeks to regain it any way he can. The supernatural elements and the hauntings at Udolpho are shown to simply be figments of Emily's imagination. Domineering and oppressive no more, Montoni is shown to be just another man. A wicked man, but a man nonetheless.

All Maud knows of Silas is his façade. She has only heard his father's descriptions of him alongside the charming portrait hanging in Knowl, her childhood home. As Maud tells us about the painting, '[t]here was a remarkable elegance and a delicacy in the features' but also 'a masculine force in that slender oval face, and a fire in the large, shadowy eyes, which were very peculiar, and quite redeemed it from the suspicion of effeminacy' (Le Fanu 10). But despite the charming exterior there is still something mysterious and uncertain about the picture. Maud eventually comes to momentarily describe the image as depicting a 'sickly child' before returning to complimenting its resolute handsomeness (56, 60). However, upon arriving at her uncle's home, the titular Bartram-Haugh, Maud finds out that Silas is bed-ridden and weary, spending most of his days in and out of opium induced inertia. Despite this, he still manages to maintain an appearance of decency by refuting Maud's worries that he simply wishes to claim her inheritance by treating Maud with kindness and warmth.

A concept connected to that of the use of façades is *the fallen man*. As Stephanie King argues in her essay, *Devious, Dashing, Disturbing: Fallen Men in Victorian Novels, 1860-1900*, fallen men are literary figures who 'represent shifting anxieties about masculinity' and disrupt the rigid gender roles present in Victorian society through deviant behaviour (1). Once more we are faced with the dichotomy of gender as the concept of the fallen man is a masculine manifestation of the much more pervasive fallen woman. As Linda Nochlin argues in her article "Lost and Found: Once More the Fallen Woman", traditional masculine fallenness concerns itself with honourable deaths in love or war whereas feminine fallenness is attributed to having 'given over to a particular kind of vice' (139). This vice is commonly understood as engaging in sexually promiscuous activities such as adultery or prostitution (139). Given that many forms of masculine expression were similarly considered to not conform to the gender values of the

time, for example libertinism, masculine fallenness could also be attributed to a fall from the patriarchal values enforced upon them. Thus, Silas, engaging in sexually promiscuous behaviour through his libertinism and subsequently being looked down upon for it lays the groundwork for his subsequent ostracism. However, fallenness is further defined as 'a downward spiral' that leads to 'loss of social position, ruin, and death' ("Rescue of Fallen Women"). Silas does not become truly fallen until after his behaviour spirals into crippling drug abuse and gambling. These vices, along with a gambling related murder charge, cause him to lose a lot of money, further tarnish his reputation, and contribute to his eventual death. Although Silas may not be the primary source of his suffering, the fact that he continues to act in his own self-interest only contributes to his downward spiral. However, as King posits, Silas' opium addiction may also be a means of escape from his troubled conscience (21). Thus, the dichotomy between good and evil that was a staple of the Early Gothic gets put into question.

Silas embraces the visage of a Victorian gentleman but does not embrace its virtues, as his opium addiction and violent tendencies show (16). This emphasis on appearances is further discussed in Oscar Wilde's 1891 novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* where a similarly pleasure driven Dorian Gray sells his soul in order to be able to maintain an outward appearance of beauty and grace while engaging in frivolous vice at the expense of the withering of his soul, symbolised through the decay of his portrait. This troubled and divided manifestation of masculinity which became prevalent during the Gothic Decadence of the late 1800s dates back to the Victorian Gothic fiction of the 1860s and, to some extent, even the Early Gothic where villains such as Montoni makes use of societal expectations and values to gain leverage within and abuse the very same structures that allow them to achieve their goals.

Whether villains such as Montoni and Silas should be sympathised with or even be forgiven is not important in this context. What is important is, as MacAndrew claims, that the monstrosity of villains 'lies in their being embodiments of spiritually misshapen humanity with the unfulfilled potential to have shared natural grace and beauty' (81). This applies more to Silas than to Montoni, but both disregard their own aristocratic status and compromise their dignity and integrity in favour of pleasure and furthering their own selfish goals. After all, 'these men of pleasure, who have no other pursuit, use themselves up mostly, and pay a smart price for their sins' (Le Fanu 235).

Conclusion

The aim of this essay has been to investigate how masculinity is portrayed in the Female Gothic and how it corresponds to the expression of masculinity at the time. This was done by analysing and comparing the Early Gothic novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and the Victorian Gothic novel *Uncle Silas*. The analysis was divided into two sections with a focus on fatherhood and villainy respectively. Given the prevalence of the absent mother within Gothic narratives the father is given more space within the Gothic and is, thus allowed to influence the heroine's ideals and values to a large extent. In *Udolpho*'s case, St. Aubert comes to represent a form of sensibility which, in some ways, acts as the ideological opposite to the dominant patriarchal male and, subsequently, the Early Gothic villain. Additionally, in *Silas'* case, Mr. Ruthyn serves to elucidate the shifting role of the father in how Victorian fatherhood can be characterized through an increasing disregard for fatherly duties among men by largely disregarding his role as caretaker and educator for his daughter, delegating said roles to servants and a governess instead. As for villains, the traditional Gothic villain is embodied in how they represent the antithesis to the desirable aspects of the Gothic heroine or hero. The Victorian villain is more nuanced as is shown in their greater use of the gothic trope of doubling. Although present in the Early Gothic, it is problematized to a greater extent in the Victorian Gothic where the troubled villain either opts or is forced to employ a façade in order to not be completely excluded from society. Both Silas and Montoni make use of such façades as a means to re enter society but for different reasons. While both seek monetary gain, Silas also struggles with his fallenness and falls victim to a mixture of societal neglect and his own desires serving as a troubled reminder of the hegemonic chokehold on gender politics.

Further research could be conducted by bringing the male Gothic into the equation and, thus, the perspective of the male protagonist. Simply extending the eras covered past the Gothic Decadence of the late 1800s and into the more modern Gothic Revival of the early 1900s or the Modern Gothic of the 70s to present day could also serve to further highlight the Gothic's role in the portrayal of different masculinities within literature. One could also elaborate on the Gothic Fallen Man and whether the concept has been carried into present-day Gothic and what a supposed fall from modern day values and ideals would look like and entail.

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