

Gothic Literature and the Recontextualization of Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Moral
Philosophy

By

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Abstract

The Gothic genre creates cautionary allegories on the dangers of immorality by illustrating moral philosophy in narrative form. Through horrific scenes of murder, rape, and supernatural forces, this literature demonstrates how vice perverts the mind, creating madness and spiritual damnation. This study considers how three Gothic writers from the Romantic period – Matthew Lewis, Charlotte Dacre, and James Hogg – recapitulate the theories of three prominent moral philosophers – John Locke, David Hume, and David Hartley, respectively – to examine the perils of iniquity. Accordingly, the analyses reveal that the Gothic genre invokes seventeenth- and eighteenth-century moral philosophy to explore immorality through themes of personal identity, narrative styles, and multiple perspectives. As in other Gothic novels, the Devil haunts the primary characters of Lewis's, Dacre's, and Hogg's works by distorting the material world and manipulating sensory experience; in doing so, he exacerbates their immoral disposition and spreads his evil throughout the world. At the heart of this examination are questions about the origins, nature, and effects of evil, which Gothic literature investigates by delving into the darkest depths of the human mind and soul.

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Introduction: The Gothic Genre and Morality

In this study I will demonstrate how Romantic-era Gothic literature recontextualizes seventeenth- and eighteenth-century moral philosophy to create cautionary allegories on the psychological detriments of immorality. Contemporary critics note that the Gothic genre's tropes and themes frequently obscure its hidden implications. Fred Botting concedes that the genre appears to "promote vice and violence, giving free reign to selfish ambitions and sexual desires beyond the prescriptions of law or familial duty" (*Gothic* 3), while Maggie Kilgour notes that it is often regarded as "a transitional and rather puerile form which is superseded by the more mature 'high' art of the superior Romantics" (3). Based on these inferences, the genre assumes a vulgar appearance that often disheartens readers and critics through its descriptive brutality. Hidden beneath its guise of wickedness, however, lies an exploration of iniquity. Botting avers that Gothic literature is "less an unrestrained celebration of unsanctioned excesses and more an examination of the limits produced in the eighteenth century to distinguish good from evil, reason from passion, virtue from vice and self from other" (*Gothic* 5), and Kilgour declares that "[t]he emergence of the Gothic in the eighteenth century has also been read as a sign of the resurrection of the need for the sacred and transcendent in a modern enlightened secular world" (3). Despite the genre's immediate presentation, Gothic fiction maintains a unique position in the pantheon of English literature through its explorations of morality, which it illustrates in horrifying and gruesome detail. In its exploration of humanity's physical and spiritual precariousness, Romantic-era literature utilizes seventeenth- and eighteenth-century moral philosophy, which acts a precursor to the emerging field of psychology.

Consciousness and morality constitute moral philosophy's essence and psychology's genesis. Moral philosophy anticipates psychology by analyzing human nature through queries regarding physical and mental stimuli. Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, moral philosophers

relied on a “reflexive discourse,” which focused on “human nature, [and] ‘Mind’ and the Soul” by questioning “the nature of Virtue; the relations between the immortal soul ... and the body; whether all our ideas came from sensory experience or whether some were innate and self-evident; what kind of substance the mind was; ... [and] how to master one’s ‘passions’” (Richards 20). By committing their philosophical conjectures to the relations between the mind, soul, experience, and morality, these reflexive discourses establish the foundation for psychological examinations, and their adoption by psychologists during the latter half of the nineteenth century “is where the historical link lies” (Richards 20). Three analytical methods comprise traditional reflexive discourse: rationalism, which propounds “that basic metaphysical questions ... can be answered by reason acting alone”; associationism, wherein “all psychological phenomena originated in atom-like or ‘corpuscular’ sensations which were built up into complex ideas by a few simple ‘laws of association’”; and Scottish “common-sense” realism, which “accepted the existence of innate faculties or ‘powers,’ but espoused an empirical *non-reductionist* approach to the identification and study of these” (Richards 23, 24; emphasis in original). Psychology’s foundation, therefore, is a tripartite system of moral philosophies that explore the origins and principles of cognitive function in relation to its influence over mental, emotional, and ethical faculties. Literature from the Romantic period often illustrates this emerging scientific discipline, owing largely to the fact that several Romantic-era moral philosophers were also poets.

During the eighteenth century, writers began to recapitulate the philosophical and neurological implications of emotions in literary form. Contemporary critics note the Romantic period’s amalgamation between poetry and moral philosophy. David Vallins suggests that “poetic or artistic creativity involves a combination of active and passive elements, through

which spontaneous feeling is unified with the products of reflection,” which Romantic-era moral philosophy and poetry reflect, given that they “often an attempt to give rational form to intuition or emotion” (9). Alan Richardson, meanwhile, examines the Romantic period’s neurological breakthroughs that resulted in “Romantic psychologies,” which function as literary explorations of the mind: “It was a time when poets (like Coleridge) consorted with laboratory scientists and when philosophical doctors (like Darwin) gave point to their scientific theories in verse, when phrenology and mesmerism gained adherents across the medical community” (7). Lastly, Michelle Faubert provides an expansive analysis of poetry written by Romantic-era moral philosophers – including Nathaniel Cotton, James Beattie, William Perfect, Thomas Beddoes, Thomas Trotter, John Ferriar, Thomas Brown, and Erasmus Darwin – and suggests that “psychology, or moral philosophy, was perceived as the most comprehensive of the sciences during the Scottish Enlightenment and ... the cultural scene and intellectual products born of moral philosophy played a major role in forming the psychologist-poets’ tradition of verse” (15). These examinations demonstrate the complementary tendencies between Romantic-era poetry and moral philosophy by revealing their interchangeable inquiries regarding the mind’s complex machinations and psychological essence. While Vallins, Richardson, and Faubert elucidate Romantic-era moral philosophers’ fascination with literary representations of their inquiries, authors that precede these poets explore the moral implications that would have profound influence over the Gothic genre, with the most notable, arguably, being John Milton.

Following the publication of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1667), the Devil became a major source for the study of morality. In the epic poem, Milton presents a morally ambiguous Satan. Introduced as “[t]he infernal Serpent,” whom “the Almighty Power/ Hurlled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,/ With hideous ruin and combustion, down/ To bottomless perdition,”

Satan fosters evil and schemes against God's benevolence: "If then his providence/ Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,/ Our labor must be to pervert that end,/ And out of good still to find means of evil" (Book 1: 34; 44-47; 162-165).¹ Milton's representation develops moral ambivalence, however, through passages that garner sympathy for Satan. As he gazes upon the paradisiacal Eden, Satan laments his rebellion and is distraught at his punishment:

Horror and doubt distract
 His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir
 The hell within him; for within him Hell
 He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
 One step, no more than from himself, can fly
 By change of place. Now conscience wakes despair
 That slumbered; wakes the bitter memory
 Of what he was, what is, and what must be
 Worse; of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensue. (Book 4: 18-26)

Ruminations such as these render the fallen angel morally ambiguous because they allude to his previous potential for virtue and extend humanistic qualities to an otherwise divine entity; while his defiance against God remains sinful, Satan, like man, experiences anguish at the prospect of eternal suffering. While other genres champion the sympathetic Satan for his sentimental virtues, the Gothic genre revels in the Devil's depravity and implements his nefarious disposition to reveal man's precarious morality.

¹ Here and in all quotations for period texts, all capitalization and other oddities are the authors' own.

The Gothic genre creates analogies between the Devil and man to expound the perils of iniquity. Lucifer haunts Gothic characters because he represents the potential for damnation. Romantic-era Gothic writers, in particular, recognize the similarities between the Devil's and man's penchant for vice, and they concoct various incarnations of the fallen angel to exemplify this correlation: "The devils of the great writers, reflecting the time, the radical characteristics, the personal natures of their creators, are deeply symbolic. Each man creates the devil that he can understand, that represents him, for ... we can comprehend nothing of which we have not the beginning in ourselves" (Scarborough 144). Just as Lucifer fell from Heaven for his impertinence and vanity, humanity forever stands on the precarious brink of yawning perdition as sin consumes the mind and soul. The Gothic genre's analogy between Lucifer and man garners psychological inferences through the disparity between emotion and reason. Within the pages of Gothic literature, according to Botting, characters become "products of both reason and desire, subjects of obsession, narcissism and self gratification," which causes them to be "alienated, divided from themselves, ... [and] no longer in control of those passions, desires, and fantasies" (*Gothic* 8). Gothic characters possess desires and passions that defy convention and morality, which causes psychological turmoil and spiritual damnation. Indeed, the genre contains a plethora of methods by which to illustrate the perils of iniquity, and this study elucidates how three Gothic novels recontextualize elements from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century moral philosophy – particularly, the tradition of associationism – to explore how immorality psychologically distorts the mind.

The first chapter argues that Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) examines personal identity by incorporating elements of John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689). Locke's *Essay* theorizes that sensory perceptions establish consciousness and morality

within the mind. Personal identity is dependent on consciousness, as Locke argues that “it being the same consciousness that makes a man be himself to himself, personal identity depends on that only”; meanwhile, morality contains divine implications, as individuals should act ethically “[b]ecause God, who has the power of eternal life and death, requires it of us” (23, 24). In this context, an individual must maintain a consciousness that ensures divine benevolence through virtue. Lewis’s novel recapitulates Locke’s philosophy by showing how immorality distorts personal identity. Ambrosio, the titular monk, aspires to piety, but succumbs to sin; after engaging in sexual intercourse with Matilda – a demonic entity disguised as a woman – Ambrosio’s transgressions escalate to rape and murder, and Matilda’s concluding statements aptly summarize the novel’s moral implications

Think upon your crimes! Think upon your lust, your perjury, inhumanity, and hypocrisy!
 Think upon the innocent blood which cries to the throne of God for vengeance! and then
 hope for mercy! Then dream of heaven, and sigh for worlds of light, and realms of peace
 and pleasure! Absurd! (366)

Lewis reiterates Locke’s theories of sensory perception, consciousness, and the divine implications of morality by depicting the psychological and spiritual effects of vice, which perverts Ambrosio’s personal identity and dooms him to perdition. By echoing concepts from Locke’s *Essay*, *The Monk* demonstrates how Gothic literature reconceptualizes moral philosophy to examine the detriments of immorality.

The second chapter argues that Charlotte Dacre’s *Zofloya; or, the Moor* (1806) crafts a male Gothic plot while invoking concepts from David Hume’s philosophical texts. Hume argues that sensory perceptions stimulate passions in the mind, which contributes to moral distinctions and mental constitution. The passions enliven perceptions of good and evil, and the mind

associates these perceptions with various ideas: “The impressions, which arise from good and evil most naturally, and with the least preparation are the *direct* passions of desire and aversion, grief and joy, hope and fear, along with volition. The mind by an *original* instinct tends to unite itself with the good, and to avoid the evil, tho’ they be conceiv’d merely in idea” (280).

Religious deities, according to Hume, represent good and evil, and the mind identifies with them in accordance with its mental constitution; Hume writes, “Our natural terrors present the notion of a devilish and malicious deity: Our propensity to adulation leads us to acknowledge an excellent and divine” (“History” 31). For Hume, passions acquire moral implications, and individuals act in accordance with their subjective understanding of the principles of good and evil. In *Zofloya*, Dacre utilizes these philosophical stipulations to depict Victoria di Loredani’s passions and companionship with a demonic entity. After her mother abandons her, Victoria’s homicidal inclinations situate her in the presence of a demonic entity, which constitutes the novel’s allegorical lesson: “Over their passions and their weaknesses, mortals cannot keep a curb too strong. The progress of vice is gradual and imperceptible, and the arch enemy ever waits to take advantage of the failings of mankind” (268). By illustrating Victoria’s internal reflections, violent passions, and damnation, Dacre establishes themes of maternal abandonment, horror, and inexplicable supernatural phenomenon – which are male Gothic tropes – through inferences that demonstrate Hume’s theories of the association of ideas, the passions’ influence over behavior and morality, and the intersection between human emotions and religious concepts, respectively. *Zofloya* exemplifies how the male Gothic plot – whether written by a male or female – reconceptualizes eighteenth-century moral philosophy to explore immorality and its effects over the mind and soul.

The third chapter argues that James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) establishes narrative ambiguity by utilizing concepts from David Hartley's *Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations* (1749). The *Observations* presents Hartley's theories on sensory perceptions, morality, and divine reverence. Human behaviour, according to Hartley, is a physical response to external stimuli that enlivens notions of good or evil within the mind: "We are to consider all the moral Appellations of Actions is only denoting their Relation to natural Good and Evil, and that moral Good and Evil are only Compositions and Decompositions of natural" (60). As sensations furnish the mind, man develops a "Moral sense," which "carries us perpetually to the pure Love of God, as our highest and ultimate Perfection, our End, Centre, and only Resting-place, to which yet we can never attain" (497). Hartley's philosophy associates moral development with spirituality as divine reverence bolsters virtue and hinders vice. Hogg's *Confessions* invokes Hartley's suppositions through the character of Robert Wringhim, the titular "justified sinner." Told through multiple perspectives, the *Confessions* implies that Robert's religious fanaticism perverts his morality, which, from Robert's perspective, situates him in the presence of Gil-Martin, who may be a demonic entity: "My mind turned on my associate . . . , and the idea that he might be an agent of the devil, had such an effect on me" (92). In the *Confessions*, Hogg elucidates the implications of cultivating an immoral disposition by describing Robert as both a villain and a victim, while illustrating his psychological deterioration from two competing perspectives.

By analyzing Gothic literature's explication of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century moral philosophy, this project extends Satan's moral ambiguity to Gothic characters. Lewis, Dacre, and Hogg, like Milton, compare the characteristics of heroes and villains. While previous Gothic novels – most notably Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) and Ann Radcliffe's *The*

Mysteries of Udolpho (1794) – maintain an explicit distinction between protagonists and antagonists, *The Monk*, and several ensuing novels, create moral ambivalence through what Robert D. Hume refers to as the “villain-heroes of horror-Gothic” (282). To elaborate this designation, Robert D. Hume argues that Ambrosio, as well as Victor Frankenstein and Melmoth the Wanderer – the primary characters of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818) and Charles Maturin’s *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), respectively – “are men of extraordinary capacity whom circumstance turns increasingly to evil purposes” (285). Dacre’s and Hogg’s primary characters also embody this distinction. *Zofloya* distinguishes Victoria as a child “whom early education had tended ... to corrupt,” and who “required the most vigilant care, aided by such brilliant examples of virtue,” which “would have counteracted the evils engendered by the want of steady attention to the propensities of childhood” (40). The *Confessions*, meanwhile, attributes Robert’s malevolence to his misinterpretation of religious tenets; as Mr. Blanchard suggests to Robert: “you and he [Gil-Martin] are carrying your ideas of absolute predestination, and its concomitant appendages, to an extent that overthrows all religion and revelation together; or, at least, jumbles them into a chaos, out of which human capacity can never select what is good” (100). Ambrosio, Victoria, and Robert, like Satan, all possess the potential to embody virtue, but ultimately succumb to vice when external stimuli distort their morality. For Lewis, Dacre, and Hogg, the Devil exacerbates their characters’ immoral dispositions through demonic machinations, rendering them both victims and villains simultaneously.

1. Locke and Lewis: Moral Philosophy and Personal Identity

Gothic literature creates cautionary allegories regarding the insidiousness of immorality by utilizing elements of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century moral philosophy in their exploration of personal identity. In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), John Locke declares that impressions and ideas constitute mental development. This philosophy dictates that sensory organs relay information about the material world to the mind, wherein interconnected impressions and ideas create consciousness, personal identity, and a sense of morality. Locke's stipulations also contain religious intimations, arguing that God has given man both the material world and "those faculties our minds are endowed with" by which to comprehend it (474). Gothic literature, particularly novels from the Romantic era, reflect these philosophical inferences by illustrating the concurrent development of the mind and morality, with some writers, like Matthew Lewis, invoking Locke's philosophy to depict psychological turmoil. This chapter will summarize the *Essay's* theories of sensory experience, consciousness, and the divine implications of morality, and argue that Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) recapitulates these conjectures to delineate the deterioration of the titular monk's personal identity and his descent into madness and perdition. Through its representation of the psychological and spiritual effects of vice, *The Monk* demonstrates how Gothic literature examines personal identity by reconceptualizing moral philosophy in narrative form.

Locke's *Essay* presents his inquiries regarding the neurological development of the human mind. Sensory impressions and their corresponding ideas create a comprehension of the material world. Locke suggests that "the first capacity of human intellect is, that the mind is fitted to receive the impressions made on it, either through the senses, by outward objects, or by its own operations, when it reflects on them," which is "the first step a man makes towards the

discovery of any thing, and the ground-work whereon to build all those notions which ever he shall have natural in this world” (61). Accordingly, the sensory organs maintain an imperative neurological function: “if these organs, or the nerves which are the conduits to convey them from without to their audience in the brain, the mind’s presence-room . . . , are any of them so disordered, as not to perform their functions, they have no postern to be admitted by; no other way to bring themselves into view, and be perceived by the understanding” (65). In this regard, the internalization of impressions – which are the sensations that the brain receives from the sensory organs – and the reflection of ideas initiates the development of the human mind. By analyzing and interpreting various ideas, the mind forms both simple and complex understandings of the material world. Perceptions, according to Locke, are “the first faculty of the mind, exercised about our ideas; so it is the first and simplest idea we have from reflection, and is by some called thinking in general”; the mind also possesses the ability to combine “several simple ideas into one compound one, and thus all complex ideas are made” (81, 96). This theory of sensory experience asserts that impressions of the material world create ideas and complex comprehensions of objective reality. Locke maintains the neuroscientific basis of his theory while describing how ideas interact in the mind, and he amalgamates these inquiries with metaphysical conjectures regarding personal identity.

While incorporating the various impressions and ideas of the material world, the mind develops consciousness by amassing interrelated thoughts. The mind consolidates ideas in accordance with their complimentary characteristics. This process initiates what Locke calls an “association of ideas,” wherein

ideas that in themselves are not at all of kin, come to be so united in some men’s minds, that it is very hard to separate them; they always keep in company, and the one no sooner

at any time comes into the understanding, but its associate appears with it; and if they are more than two, which are thus united, the whole gang, always inseparable, show themselves together. (284)

The mind, therefore, expands its knowledge of objective reality by associating simple and complex ideas. This association of ideas also contributes to personal identity by establishing perpetual consciousness. In analyzing the constituents of cognisance, Locke posits that personal identity is “the sameness of a rational being,” wherein “as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards, to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person; it is the same self now, it was then; and it is by the same self with this present one, that now reflects on it, that the action was done” (226). Consciousness, in this context, creates personal identity by retaining impressions, ideas, and perceptions. Locke’s conjectures regarding the association of ideas and personal identity also anticipate the *Essay*’s religious considerations by establishing the substructures of morality.

Locke correlates moral philosophy – roughly the equivalent of what we would call “psychology” today – with religion by describing morality’s relationship with the divine. The mind establishes morality through impressions and ideas of the material world. The *Essay* suggests that, amidst the plethora of sensations that impressions and ideas produce, pleasure and pain initiate the understanding of good and evil:

Things ... are good or evil, only in reference to pleasure or pain. That we call good, which is apt to cause or increase pleasure, or diminish pain in us; or else to procure, or preserve, us the possession of any other good, or absence of any evil. And, on the contrary, we name that evil, which is apt to produce or increase any pain, or diminish any pleasure in us; or else to procure us any evil, or deprive us of any good. (146)

Divine qualities distinguish the principles of good and evil, as “God has given a rule whereby men should govern themselves,” which is “the only true touchstone of moral rectitude,” wherein “men judge of the most considerable moral good or evil of their actions; that is, whether as duties or sins, they are like to procure them happiness or misery from the hands of the Almighty” (251). A reverence for divinity reinforces morality by conditioning the mind to pursue pleasurable sensations that foster a connection with God. Unfortunately, moral strictures are often ambiguous, which introduces a paradox wherein the very impressions and ideas that present a liberating compromise to the treacheries of existence are obscure and transient. As if to intensify these fearsome propositions, Locke depicts “madmen” as those who, “having joined together some ideas very wrong . . . mistake them for truths; and they err as men do that argue right from wrong principles: for by the violence of their imaginations, having taken their fancies for realities, they make right deductions from them” (94). Madness, in this regard, occurs when the mind misconstrues and internalizes impressions and ideas that cultivate an immoral disposition, which causes the afflicted to act irrationally and unscrupulously. In summation, Locke’s *Essay* combines moral philosophy with religious considerations to develop his theories of sensory experience, consciousness, and the divine implications of morality.

By the end of the eighteenth century, Locke would become one of Europe’s most influential philosophers, but criticisms haunted the *Essay*’s initial publication. While Locke’s peers at the Royal Society praised his attempts to realize Francis Bacon’s call for “a new LOGIC to achieve knowledge of the natural world,” the universities and clergy “saw it as a threat to standard theology, morality and traditional scholastic philosophy” (Rogers 282, 281; formal oddities in original). Locke’s controversial reputation also influenced detractions, as “[a]ll were aware that Locke had been expelled from Christ Church on the express order of Charles II in

1684 and that he was strongly associated with the Whig cause. Oxford had been for some time prior to 1688 a Tory stronghold” (Rogers 282). These historical inferences indicate that Locke’s intellectual peers admonished the *Essay* because of its philosophical and religious concepts in addition to their general disdain for the philosopher himself. Locke’s theories, however, did eventually gain support from the academic community. As the eighteenth century progressed, hostility towards Locke “became less overt and the number of books published either supporting Locke or drawing on his arguments to support similar positions increased” (Rogers 281). This support is conspicuous in the publication of Edward Bentham’s *An Introduction to Logick, Scholastick and Rational* (1773), which expounds the *Essay*’s theories, and was “widely used in Oxford ... until well into the twentieth century”; by the end of the eighteenth century, Locke had become “the country’s official philosopher,” and his inquiries became the foundation for English scholasticism (Rogers 283, 290). Locke’s *Essay*, therefore, is paramount to eighteenth-century European intellectualism and a notable addition to the pantheon of moral philosophy. Locke’s influence surpassed the philosophical community, as literary writers, particularly those of the Gothic variety, began to develop themes that invoke the philosopher’s theories.

Modern critics note correlations between Locke’s philosophy and Gothic literature. This genre benefits from Lockean analysis because of its characters who realize themselves through sensory experience and its fascination with evil. Maggie Kilgour contends that Locke’s queries are prone to thematic representation in Gothic literature because they represent “a gradual revolution from the older view that the child is born corrupt, needing to be redeemed through education, to the Rousseauian ideal, in which the child is born innocent and corrupted later by society”; Kilgour also implies that the genre’s inculcation of such concepts “raises questions about both personal identity and sexual identity” (34, 37). In a more direct fashion, Andrew

Smith applies Lockean analysis to Charles Brockden Brown's novel *Wieland* (1798), and describes how Brown places "emphasis on 'external nature' related to how ... [the protagonist] is used to develop ideas about the primacy of the senses" which is "in part, drawn from John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*," and "leads her [the protagonist] to argue, in true Lockean fashion, that 'evil' is based on false perception" (35, 36). Critics such as Kilgour and Smith demonstrate the parallels between Locke's philosophy and Gothic literature by revealing their common inferences pertaining to mental development and questions of morality. Despite the analytical capabilities of Locke's theories, many prominent authors of the Gothic genre have yet to receive such examination – authors which include a fellow Oxford attendee with a penchant for the supernatural.

Critics overlook the Lockean elements of Matthew Gregory Lewis's work, despite the author's academic background and penchant for artistic emulation. Lewis was born in London, England, on July 9, 1775, and received a formal education that may have exposed him to Locke's philosophy. After attending Westminster School, Lewis "entered Christ Church on April 27, 1790, aged fifteen, equipped with a smattering of polite studies" (Peck 8). While historical accounts reveal Lewis's admiration for Locke, his education at Oxford University – the very school that saw the philosopher humiliated, ejected, and ultimately redeemed following the exoneration of the *Essay* – places him in a scholastic environment predicated on the latter's philosophy. While at Oxford, Lewis gained an interest in foreign languages and writing, a combination that allowed him to create unique narratives using multiple literary styles. L.F. Peck describes Lewis as a man "to whom languages came easily," and who would eventually develop "his chief role in literary history" as a "purveyor of German materials to the English Romantic movement" (11, 14). To this end, Lewis wrote *The Monk*, which was "the work destined to win

him public notoriety, an enduring nickname [*i.e.* Matthew “Monk” Lewis], and a minor claim on the memory of posterity,” despite its ambiguous inspirations: “To name works Lewis may have read is easy – he read a great many; it is quite another matter to point out a scene or episode in *The Monk* which in detail corresponds to one in another work and which was not the common property of popular writers of the day” (Peck 19, 21). In exposing Lewis’s academic background, his expansive literary influences, and his penchant for artistic emulation, these historical insights create the potential for a Lockean analysis of *The Monk*, which adds depth to Lewis’s history by revealing his ability to recontextualize moral philosophy in narrative form. Indeed, *The Monk* garnered Lewis unprecedented notoriety, albeit through the ironic circumstance of infamy leading to success.

Contemporary reviews of *The Monk* indicate a mixed critical reception. Some reputable authors, such as Mary Wollstonecraft and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, condemn the narrative while commending Lewis, and other anonymous commentators praise the work in its entirety. In the *Analytical Review* (1796), Wollstonecraft asserts that “the language and manners of the personages are not sufficiently gothic in their colouring, to agree with the superstitious scenery, borrowed from those times,” despite stating that Lewis displays “no common powers,” and praising him “for not attempting to account for supernatural appearance in a natural way” (394, 395). In the *Critical Review* (1797), Coleridge admonishes the novel by declaring it to be “a romance, which if a parent saw in the hands of a son or daughter, he might reasonably turn pale,” while claiming that “[t]he sufferings which he [Lewis] describes are so frightful and intolerable, that we break with abruptness from the delusion, and indignantly suspect the man of a species of brutality”; Coleridge, however, also refers to Lewis as “no common genius” (400, 399). In contrast to these notable wordsmiths, an anonymous writer in the *Monthly Mirror* (1797), who

uses the pen name “A Friend to Genius,” applauds Lewis for being “endowed with nature’s best gift, genius,” while referring to the novel as a “beautiful romance ... well calculated to support the cause of virtue, and to teach her lessons to man” (Anon. 402). While these reviews suggest a varied response to *The Monk* through their combination of praise and reproach, the novel’s notoriety enticed the general public: while “the book sold well from the start,” its delineations of various blasphemies increased its notoriety, and “[b]y 1800 five London and two Dublin editions, to say nothing of pirated version and abridgements, were needed to supply the market” (Peck 24, 28). Lewis’s work continues to intrigue scholars and devotees of Gothic fiction, yet analyses tend to ignore *The Monk*’s theme of personal identity, which is an odd omission given the genre’s fascination with this concept.

Queries regarding personal identity permeate modern analyses of Gothic literature. Most notably, critics discern the genre’s interest in the concept of the self in conjunction with moral and mental development. Fred Botting posits that Ann Radcliffe’s “sentimentally-inflected Gothic romances” instigate a trend wherein authors “define and expunge vice in cautionary tales advocating virtue and family values,” and Botting offers Regina Marie Roche’s *Clermont* (1798) as an example: “At the end, when the various stories are pieced together, vice is revealed for what it is and virtuous aristocratic identities are finally seen in their true and innocent light” (*Gothic* 46). Botting expands his inquiries by suggesting that William Godwin’s *Caleb Williams* (1794) explores the titular character’s quest for the self, which the novel’s ending exemplifies: “Reduced to nothing, Caleb is left with no one with whom he is able to identify, no imaginary, romantic figure on which to secure some sense of identity”; alongside Caleb’s personal struggles, Godwin, according to Botting, also uses the novel to critique contemporary Britain’s understanding of identity: “*Caleb Williams*, traversing the boundary between fiction and reality,

discloses the frames that give shape to reality and identity, and breaks them” (*Gothic Romances* 117, 127). David Minden Higgins broadens the Godwin family’s interest in identity by positing that Mary Shelley – Godwin’s daughter – “ask[s] profound questions about identity” in her novel *Frankenstein* (1818), wherein “a ‘filthy mass’ of mismatched body parts becomes a *character* through experience, reflection and the learning of language” (61; emphasis in original). Based on these analyses, Gothic authors investigate the subject of personal identity through thematic representations of morality and sensory experience, often by replicating the work of their predecessors. Much like Roche, Godwin, and Shelley, Lewis explores the concept of personal identity in *The Monk*, and he does so by borrowing thematic elements from the prominent authors of his era.

Lewis broadens the exploration of personal identity by implying that sin cultivates an immoral disposition that is psychologically detrimental. Gothic literature that explores personal identity fascinated and inspired Lewis. D.L. Macdonald and Kathleen Scherf aver that Lewis enjoyed Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and Godwin’s *Caleb Williams* to the extent that “*The Monk* combined Godwin’s narrative drive, and his interest in crime and punishment, with Radcliffe’s preoccupation with the supernatural,” even though “Lewis rejected Godwin’s radical politics, and ... famously refused to provide Radcliffean rational explanations of the supernatural events in his novel” (10). Along with the inclusion of Radcliffean and Godwinian elements, *The Monk*, according to Christopher Maclachlan, “gives expression to deep disquiets of its time,” and “raises some of those fears and uses them as the oblique referent of its surface meaning” (xxii). These analyses demonstrate Lewis’s shared interests with his Gothic peers by explicating the authors’ mutual thematic representations and ambition for social commentary. Regarding *The Monk*’s delineation of personal identity, critics note a behavioral transition in

Ambrosio, the titular monk, which occurs at the end of the first volume. S.T. Joshi suggests that Ambrosio undergoes an immediate psychological transformation following his first transgressive sexual experience: “his one glimpse of a beauteous white breast has effected a radical change in his character so that it now becomes the driving motivation for his subsequent acts” (88). Kim Ian Michasiw similarly advocates for this radical change when he describes how “Lewis’s monk falls speedily and finally; once he has been seduced by Matilda what remains are the wriggings on the pin” (xxvii). Lewis, therefore, examines sin’s influence over the mind by presenting Ambrosio’s transgressions alongside the psychological regression of his personal identity. Within this cautionary allegory, Lewis describes Ambrosio’s perceptions, the deterioration of his mind and soul, and the consequences of his immoral disposition by invoking Locke’s theories of sensory experience, consciousness, and the divine implications of morality. By recapitulating Lockean moral philosophy in its exploration of personal identity, *The Monk* elucidates immorality’s effects over the mind and soul.

Locke’s stipulations regarding impressions, ideas, perceptions, and moral ambiguities are demonstrable in Lewis’s introduction to the titular monk. Through the visual and verbal cues that the citizens of Madrid bestow upon him, Ambrosio forms his personal identity. While listening to Ambrosio’s sermons, the citizens “threw themselves with confidence upon the mercy of their judge,” hanging “with delight upon the consoling words of the preacher” (21). Privately, Ambrosio assumes “an air of conscious superiority,” while his “imagination presented him with splendid visions of aggrandizement,” and he reflects: ““How powerful an effect did my discourse produce upon its auditors! How they crowded round me! How they loaded me with benedictions, and pronounced me the sole uncorrupted pillar of the church!”” (38, 39) By internalizing and reflecting on his impressions and ideas of Madrid’s populace, Ambrosio’s mind develops

perceptions of spiritual transcendence that constitute his personal identity, which the citizens of Madrid aptly summarize as “[t]he Man of Holiness” (19). Despite being predicated on religious convictions, which should ensure humility, these perceptions foster pride – the first of the monk’s deadly sins – and Ambrosio’s appellative epitomizes Locke’s queries on moral ambiguity: “The innate principles of morality, may, by education and custom, and the general opinion of those amongst whom we converse, be darkened, and, at last, quite worn out of the minds of men” (32). In this regard, Ambrosio misconstrues and internalizes his sinful perceptions because the citizens celebrate his personification of moral superiority. The distinction as the man of holiness acts as the foundation for Ambrosio’s personal identity, and he continues to cultivate an immoral disposition by retaining its corresponding impressions and ideas.

Having established the monk’s personal identity, Lewis describes how Ambrosio’s mind retains perceptions of spiritual transcendence by recontextualizing Locke’s stipulations regarding the association of ideas. Latent sexual desires threaten Ambrosio’s mental constitution. This is evident in his fascination with a painting of the Virgin Mother, which “for two years had been the object of his increasing wonder and adoration,” and in his yearning for sexual release:

Can the rose vie with the blush of that cheek? can the lily rival the whiteness of that hand? Oh! if such a creature existed, and existed for me! were I permitted to twine round my fingers those golden ringlets, and press with my lips the treasures of that snowy bosom! gracious God, should I then resist the temptation? Should I not barter for a single embrace the reward of my sufferings for thirty years? (39)

These musings reveal a weakness in his otherwise staunch affirmations, but Ambrosio overcomes temptation by reflecting on his piety: “[I]t is not the woman’s beauty that fills me

with such enthusiasm: ... it is the Divinity that I adore”; he also encourages himself to “[t]ake confidence in the strength of your virtue. Enter boldly into the world, to whose failings you are superior; reflect that you are now exempted from humanity’s defects” (40). By contemplating on his previous impressions and ideas, Ambrosio reinforces his personal identity and conquers his sexual desires. According to Locke, retaining previous impressions and ideas is an imperative function of the association of ideas:

our ideas being nothing but actual perceptions in the mind, which cease to be any thing, when there is no perception of them, this laying up of our ideas in the repository of the memory, signifies ... that the mind has a power ... to revive perceptions which it has once had, with this additional perception annexed to them, that it has had them before.

(86)

In this context, Ambrosio’s mind utilizes an association of ideas to maintain his impressions and ideas that constitute his perceptions of spiritual transcendence, which, successively, fortifies consistent consciousness. Ambrosio’s soul, in Lockean fashion, lends additional support to his mental constitution by internalizing the various ideas that furnish his mind.

In describing the relationship between Ambrosio’s mind and soul, Lewis echoes Locke’s postulations regarding personal identity. Ambrosio bolsters his distinction as a man of holiness by maintaining consistent consciousness. When a nun berates Ambrosio’s religious convictions after he exposes her secret love affair, the nun, petrified at her impending punishments, declares to Ambrosio:

‘You could have saved me; you could have restored me to happiness and virtue, but would not; you are the destroyer of my soul; you are my murderer, and on you fall the curse of my death and my unborn infant’s! Insolent in your yet-unshaken virtue, you

disdained the prayers of a penitent; but God will shew mercy, though you shew none.’

(46)

These impressions assault the monk’s sentiments by insinuating that pride renders him merciless to those subservient to him. In an attempt to “dissipate the unpleasant ideas which this scene had excited in him,” Ambrosio retreats to the monastery’s garden, wherein the “universal calm ... communicated itself to his bosom, and a voluptuous tranquility spread languor through his soul” (47). In this scene, Ambrosio reinforces his personal identity by dispelling impertinent considerations that accost his mental constitution. Lewis’s representation of the soul’s contribution to consciousness is akin to Locke’s insistence that the “[s]elf is that conscious thinking thing, whatever substance made up of (whether spiritual or material, simple or compounded, it matters not), which is sensible, or conscious of pleasure and pain, capable of happiness or misery, and so is concerned for itself, as far as that consciousness extends” (232). From this perspective, Ambrosio’s mind and soul simultaneously perpetuate his personal identity by enacting a reflexive correspondence wherein the sensations and reflections of the one influence the other. The nun’s insinuations prove factual, however, as a titillating admirer enthralled Ambrosio’s sexual desires beyond the capacity of his mental constitution and initiates the iniquitous temperament that distorts the monk’s sense of self.

Lewis expounds Locke’s stipulations on moral ambiguity by exposing the psychological detriments of Ambrosio’s sinful perceptions. Matilda – who is the model of Ambrosio’s favorite painting – arouses the monk’s erotic desires. Possessed of attractive physical features, Matilda enlivens sensations in Ambrosio’s mind that torment his mental constitution:

that was such a breast! The moon-beams darting full upon it enabled the monk to observe its dazzling whiteness: his eye dwelt with insatiable avidity upon the beauteous orb: a

sensation till then unknown filled his heart with a mixture of anxiety and delight; a raging fire shot through every limb; the blood boiled in his veins, and a thousand wild wishes bewildered his imagination. (60)

While he attempts to conquer these urges by reflecting on his previous impressions and ideas, Ambrosio, “[d]runk with desire,” succumbs to Matilda’s advances: “he forgot his vows, his sanctity, and his frame; he remembered nothing but the pleasure and opportunity” (81).

Ambrosio’s submission to Matilda reveals the fallacy of his perceptions of spiritual transcendence through his inability to dispel sexual desires. By depicting this submission as a transgression, Lewis typifies Locke’s statements regarding moral ambiguities:

since our voluntary actions carry not all the happiness and misery that depend on them, along with them in their present performance, but are the precedent causes of good and evil, which they draw after them, and bring upon us when they themselves are passed and ceased to be; our desires look beyond our present enjoyments, and carry the mind out to absent good, according to the necessity which we think there is of it, to the making or increase of our happiness. (175)

Based on these suppositions, Ambrosio’s pride blinds him to the deficiencies of his religious convictions, which renders him vulnerable to subsequent sins, such as lust, that pervert his mind further. By demonstrating immorality’s detrimental effects over consciousness, Lewis recontextualizes Locke’s theories of sensory experience, consciousness, and the divine implications of immorality. In this context, *The Monk* exemplifies how Gothic literature explores personal identity by recapitulating seventeenth-century moral philosophy to illustrate immorality’s psychological impairment.

With his latent sexual desires liberated, Ambrosio incorporates an increasingly immoral disposition, which Lewis propounds by invoking Locke's religious considerations. Matilda's sensuality creates new perceptions in Ambrosio's mind. While Ambrosio's first reaction to his lapse in abstinence renders "his heart despondent," and he refers to his partner as a "[d]angerous woman," Matilda reconciles these objections:

As she spoke, her eyes were filled with a delicious languor: her bosom panted: she twined her arms voluptuously round him, drew him towards her, and glued her lips to his.

Ambrosio again raged with desire ... while the fair wanton put every invention of lust in practice, every refinement in the art of pleasure, which might heighten the bliss of her possession, and render her lover's transports still more exquisite. (194)

Matilda also affects Ambrosio's mental constitution, as he "no longer reflected with shame upon his incontinence, or dreaded the vengeance of offended heaven: his only fear was lest death should rob him of enjoyments, for which his long fast had only given a keener edge to his appetite" (194). By internalizing and reflecting on the impressions and ideas of Matilda's sensuality, Ambrosio develops perceptions of sexual gratification that foster lust, his second deadly sin. From a Lockean perspective, Ambrosio's change in contemplation indicates a lapse in morality:

he that will not be so far a rational creature, as to reflect seriously upon infinite happiness and misery, must needs condemn himself, as not making that use of his understanding he should. The rewards and punishments of another life, which the Almighty has established as the enforcements of his law, are of weight enough to determine the choice against whatever pleasure or pain this life can show. (181)

From this perspective, lust bolsters Ambrosio's immoral disposition, which hinders his pious ambitions and warps his personal identity further. Enthralled by arousing sensations, Ambrosio pursues extreme measures to maintain his pride and lust while embodying his incongruous morality and psychological depravity.

Lewis elucidates the hypocrisy of Ambrosio's immoral disposition through transgressive proclivities that encapsulate Locke's inferences regarding sin's incompatibility with divine ordinance. Under the fear of social ignominy, Ambrosio dons a semblance of piety while privately enjoying his sexual frivolities. To avoid public exposure, Ambrosio assumes severe mannerisms: "what he wanted in purity of heart, he supplied by exterior sanctity. The better to cloak his transgression, he redoubled his pretensions to the semblance of virtue, and never appeared more devoted to heaven than since he had broken through his engagements" (196). Privately, he contemplates, "provided his irregularity was unknown, in what would his fault consist, and what consequences he had to apprehend? By adhering strictly to every rule of his order save chastity, he doubted not to retain the esteem of men, and even the protection of heaven" (196-197). This charade contrives Ambrosio's perceptions of spiritual transcendence while he revels in transgressive promiscuity. From a Lockean standpoint, Ambrosio's hypocrisy stands in defiance to God:

It is no wonder that esteem and discredit, virtue and vice, should, in a great measure, every where correspond with the unchangeable rule of right and wrong, which the law of God hath established; there being nothing that so directly and visibly secures and advances the general good of mankind in this world, as obedience to the laws he has set them, and nothing that breeds such mischiefs and confusion, as the neglect of them. (254)

In this regard, Ambrosio's personification is an affront to divine ordinance because it affords him the social regard of piety while embodying an immoral disposition. As evidence for the invalidity of his claims of spiritual transcendence increases – in Miltonian terms, Ambrosio's assumed virtue is “but a youngling in the contemplation of ... [evil], and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers” (*Areopagitica* 18) – Ambrosio's mental constitution and personal identity deteriorate under emotional turmoil that reflects his transgressions.

Lewis promulgates the psychological implications of immorality through assertions that are akin to Locke's conjectures on consciousness. A longing for tranquility nulls the satisfactions of Ambrosio's erotic exploits. His post-coital reflections fill his brain with “a confused chaos of remorse, voluptuousness, inquietude, and fear,” as he recalls “that security of virtue, which till then had been his portion” (196). Despite considering the infringements of his actions, memories of sexual gratification stifle his regrets: “Their very remembrance filled his soul with ecstasy: he cursed his foolish vanity, which had induced him to waste in obscurity the bloom of life, ignorant of the blessings of love and woman: he determined at all events to continue his commerce with Matilda, and called every argument to his aid which might confirm his resolution” (196). These lamentations disclose Ambrosio's emotional turmoil by showing the contrasting desires of his mind and soul. By establishing Ambrosio's despondency as such, Lewis explicates Locke's stipulations on consciousness, in that “if there be any part of its existence which I cannot, upon recollection, join with that present consciousness whereby I am now myself, it is in that part of its existence no more myself, than any other immaterial being” (233). From this perspective, Ambrosio's emotional turmoil creates a psychological duality wherein antithetical ideas of contrasting consciousnesses distort his personal identity. The remnants of Ambrosio's connection with God are the casualties of this psychological duality, and the monk's audience

with the Devil represents this disbandment while epitomizing the nefarious consequences of an iniquitous temperament.

By situating Ambrosio in the presence of the Devil, Lewis exemplifies Locke's postulations regarding divine reverence. In his desire for a new sexual partner, Ambrosio concocts a diabolical scheme. After growing weary of Matilda, Ambrosio pursues Antonia Dalfa, who bestows impressions that are "so sweet, so innocent, so heavenly" (208). Before long, sinister ideas pervert Ambrosio's admiration: having "[g]rown used to her modesty, it no longer commanded the same respect and awe," and "it only made him more anxious to deprive her of that quality which formed her principle" as "he waited for the opportunity of satisfying his unwarrantable lust" (220, 221). Ambrosio's attraction to Antonia epitomizes his psychological duality by revealing that impressions of divinity, which once inspired pious ambitions in the monk, now enliven nefarious sexual desires. Under the guidance of Matilda, Ambrosio is brought before Lucifer, who produces a "constellated myrtle," which "will procure access ... to Antonia's chamber," wherein a "death-like slumber will immediately seize upon her, and deprive her of the power of resisting" (238). Lust furnishes Ambrosio's mind with immorality to the extent that rape and satanic succour usurp any semblance of religious convictions. This drastic shift in predilections echoes Locke's statement that "[t]o talk of any other light in the understanding, is to put ourselves in the dark, or in the power of the prince of darkness" (537). In this context, Ambrosio entrenches himself in evil as vice perverts his mind and situates him in the presence of Lucifer. By implying that pride and lust distort Ambrosio's mind and motivate him to associate with demonic entities, Lewis typifies Locke's theories of sensory experience, consciousness, and the divine implications of immorality. In this regard, *The Monk* demonstrates

how Gothic literature examines personal identity by using moral philosophy in its explications of iniquity and its insidious effects over the mind.

The third volume of *The Monk* escalates the psychological detriments of sinful perceptions by revelling in Ambrosio's madness and its macabre consequences. Ambrosio begins his criminal mischief by attempting to rape Antonia. While gazing upon her sleeping figure, Ambrosio's desires become "raised to that frantic height by which brutes are agitated," and he "proceeded to tear off those garments which impeded the gratification of his lust" (260). Much to Ambrosio's dismay, Elvira, Antonia's mother, interrupts this assault and proclaims: "The whole city shall be informed of your incontinence. I will unmask you, villain, and convince the church what a viper she cherishes in her bosom" (261). The threat causes Ambrosio to be "worked up to madness," wherein he "endeavoured to put an end to her existence," and "succeeded but too well" (262, 263). Sinful perceptions, therefore, are the foundation of Ambrosio's crimes, given that lust motivates him to rape Antonia while pride influences him to murder Elvira. Lewis's use of the term "madness" is analogous to Locke's argument that madmen "put wrong ideas together, and so make wrong propositions" (94). Based on these suppositions, Ambrosio's perceptions of spiritual transcendence, which bolster his immoral disposition and fortifies his madness, cause him to murder Elvira to sustain his pride and ensure self-preservation. Left to his own discretions, Ambrosio, devoid of rationality, retreats from the scene to impose his lust upon the captive Antonia.

Lewis encapsulates Locke's inquiries on madness when describing Ambrosio's depravity and Antonia's death. Lust induces a decline in Ambrosio's mental faculties. After imprisoning Antonia in the sepulchres of the monastery, Ambrosio becomes invigorated by a "lust ... [that] was become madness," as he "stifled her cries with kisses, treated her with the rudeness of an

unprincipled barbarian,” and “desisted not from his prey, till he had accomplished his crime and the dishonour of Antonia” (326, 328). Afterwards, under the fear of public denouncement, Ambrosio, “without allowing himself a moment’s reflection ... plunged ... [a dagger] twice in the bosom of Antonia” (334-335). These graphic descriptions delineate a decline in Ambrosio’s mental faculties by asserting that lust and pride render him incapable of self-control. Lewis’s depiction of Ambrosio’s madness echoes Locke’s insinuation that those afflicted with madness lack reason: “madmen put wrong ideas together, and so make wrong propositions, but argue and reason right from them” (94). In a Lockean context, Ambrosio impetuously murders Antonia because madness blinds him to alternative solutions regarding self-preservation. Ambrosio’s criminal debauchery ends when he and Matilda are “conveyed to the prisons of the Inquisition,” but his emotional turmoil returns and distorts his personal identity to irrevocable degrees (337).

Lewis implies that sin destroys consciousness by replicating Locke’s stipulations on personal identity. Ambrosio questions his moral principles during his final encounter with Antonia. He comes to regard “his former eagerness ... with disgust; and a secret impulse made him feel how base and unmanly was the crime which he had just committed” (328-329). Shortly thereafter, while imprisoned by the Inquisition, Ambrosio “reclected that he deserved not Heaven’s protection, and believes his crimes so monstrous as to exceed even God’s infinite goodness,” while lamenting that the torments of torture “were far surpassed in anguish by the agitation of his soul” (360, 362). These scenes divulge the consequences of Ambrosio’s psychological duality through his inability to retain any former notions of divine absolution, which renders his mind and soul emotionally distraught. Ambrosio’s transitory consciousness exemplifies Locke’s postulations on personal identity, which suggest that “as far as any intelligent being can repeat the idea of any past action with the same consciousness it had of it at first, and with the same

consciousness it has of any present action; so far it is the same personal self' (226). From a Lockean perspective, Ambrosio's internalization of sinful perceptions perverts his personal identity by cultivating an immoral disposition that suppresses any previous religious convictions – he no longer considers himself to be a man of holiness. Ambrosio's suffering remains incomplete, however, and his final acts denote a mind that remains afflicted by the onslaught of evil.

In the novel's conclusion, Lewis describes Ambrosio's damnation through conjectures that invoke Locke's religious considerations. Ambrosio's spiritual punishment results from his inability to distinguish between good and evil. Before plunging the monk into the depths of Hell, Lucifer reveals that he warped Ambrosio's mind:

Know, vain man! that I long have marked you for my prey: I watched the movements of your heart; I saw that you were virtuous from vanity, not principle, and I seized the fit moment of seduction. I observed your blind idolatry of the Madona's picture. I bade a subordinate but crafty spirit assume a similar form, and you eagerly yielded to the blandishments of Matilda. Your pride was gratified by her flattery; your lust only needed an opportunity to break forth; you ran into the snare blindly. (375)

This passage reveals that the Devil relies on sensory experience to exacerbate Ambrosio's sinful disposition and psychologically manipulates the monk to assume an evil persona. Lewis's moral inculcations are analogous to Locke's, in which he declares that

a man may justly incur punishment, though it be certain that in all the particular actions that he wills, he does, and necessarily does, will that which he then judges to be good. For though his will be always determined by that which is judged good by his understanding, yet it excuses him not: because, by a too hasty choice of his own making,

he has imposed on himself wrong measures of good and evil; which, however false and fallacious, have the same influence on all his future conduct, as if they were true and right. (174)

Based on this consideration, Ambrosio's inability to distinguish between good and evil cultivates an immoral disposition that defies divine ordinance and renders him inescapably damned. By demonstrating how sinful perceptions pervert consciousness through evil sentiments, Lewis recontextualizes Locke's theories of sensory experience, consciousness, and the divine implications of morality. *The Monk* epitomizes how Gothic literature analyzes personal identity by utilizing Lockean moral philosophy to elucidate the damage that immorality inflicts upon the mind.

Locke's philosophy augments the literary analysis of Gothic texts by correlating the characters' sensory experience with their personal identity. The mind constitutes personal identity more than the physical body. For Locke, "consciousness always accompanies thinking, and it is that which makes every one to be what he calls self, and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things"; meanwhile, the association of ideas maintains this self, as "whatever has the consciousness of present and past actions, is the same person to whom they both belong" (226, 230). The divine qualities within ideas support consciousness by maintaining a consistent temperament: "if I have the will of a supreme, invisible, Law-giver for my rule; then, as I supposed the action commanded or forbidden by God, I call it good or evil, sin or duty" (256). In this regard, impressions, ideas, and perceptions create personal identity by establishing consciousness and cultivating a moral disposition. *The Monk* illustrates these conjectures through Ambrosio's inability to maintain consciousness amidst sinful perceptions. For Ambrosio, the obligations of piety conflict with his pride and lust, and when sensory impressions create

incompatible mental constitutions – that of the devout monk and the megalomaniac rapist – Ambrosio becomes psychologically distraught. Lewis, therefore, recapitulates Locke’s theories by associating Ambrosio’s loss of self with his sensory experience and propensity to evil. By considering the Lockean elements within such literary texts, critical analyses extract characters’ psychological development, or decline, in relation to their experience within the material world.

In conclusion, by describing the influence that Ambrosio’s sensory perceptions have over his consciousness, Lewis invokes Locke’s postulations regarding the development of the mind and soul. The novel also represents Locke’s religious implications by describing how Ambrosio succumbs to madness and perdition by cultivating an immoral disposition that weakens the monk’s connection with God and perverts his personal identity. While other theorists suggest that Lewis was familiar with the literary, political, and psychological predilections of his era, this analysis proposes that Lewis may well have been knowledgeable about the moral philosophies of the seventeenth century, as well. By implementing a literary representation of the *Essay*’s stipulations, *The Monk* propounds the dangers of sin and immorality in horrific detail, complete with rape, murder, and a confrontation with the embodiment of evil. The success and notoriety of Lewis’s novel, moreover, suggests a cultural ethos that revels in the vicarious experience of Ambrosio’s lust, psychological turmoil, and spiritual damnation, while recognizing the accursed implications of embodying such characteristics. Indeed, both Locke and Lewis would have profound influence on succeeding writers, having planted the seeds of philosophical and literary perusals regarding immorality’s capacity to instill chaos within the mind.

2. Hume and Dacre: The Passions and the Male Gothic Plot

By the mid-eighteenth century, European moral philosophy developed theories on human behaviour that challenged previous suppositions. David Hume is a notable example of this phenomenon as he posits that the passions, which enliven the sensations of pleasure and pain, influence human behaviour. While Hume's theories received some criticisms, his philosophy would eventually garner notoriety, and today "[m]ost English-speaking philosophers ... acknowledge Hume as among the greatest of British philosophers" (Jones 1). Through its conjectures regarding sensations and mental development, Hume's philosophy offers literary analysis the prospect of exploring analogies between characters' emotions and behaviours. While authors seldom state that Hume inspired their work, Romantic-era Gothic fiction contains narrative styles that invoke Hume's philosophical and psychological conjectures. One such style is the male Gothic plot, which reflects Hume's philosophy through its emphasis on sensations, and contrasts the female Gothic plot, which emphasizes sensibility. These contrasting styles create a contemporary debate regarding Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya; or, The Moor: A Romance of the Fifteenth Century* (1806), which divides theorists on its gender-based classification because of its themes, tropes, and emulation of Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796). This chapter will argue that *Zofloya* embodies the male Gothic plot in its themes of maternal separation, horror, and inexplicable supernatural phenomenon, which Dacre develops through inferences that are akin to Hume's theories of the association of ideas, the passions' influence over behaviour and morality, and the intersection between human emotions and religious concepts. By arguing that Dacre's novel reconceptualizes Hume's philosophy in literary form, this analysis divulges how the male Gothic plot uses eighteenth-century moral philosophy to illustrate the psychological repercussions of negative sensations and emotions.

In *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), Hume describes his understanding of human reasoning as based on perceptions of the material world. These perceptions may be impressions, which Hume describes as “all our more lively perceptions, when we hear, or see, or feel, or love, or hate, or desire,” or ideas, which are “the less lively perceptions, of which we are conscious, when we reflect on any of those sensations” (13). These perceptions constitute human reasoning as an individual begins to comprehend objective reality through sensory experience and mental reflection. To establish expedient reasoning, the mind compounds varying ideas through their correlating characteristics. This initiates an “Association of Ideas” wherein the principles of “*Resemblance*, *Contiguity* in time or place, and *Cause or effect*” connect ideas in the imagination and memory (16); furthermore, causation maintains the most imperative function as it determines the authenticity of perceptions: “All reasonings concerning matter of fact seem to be founded on the relation of *Cause and Effect*. By means of that relation alone we can go beyond the evidence of our memory and sense” (19). The mind, therefore, develops reason, which is a cognitive comprehension of the material world based on substantiated perceptions, by internalizing sensory impressions and creating a consortium of corresponding ideas. Armed with this cognitive mechanism, an individual begins to understand the complexities of objective reality.

While the *Enquiry* provides a framework for reasoning, Hume’s previous work, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739), explains how the passions function in the mind. The *Treatise* describes how impressions of the material world reveal the qualities of objective reality while furnishing the mind with sensations and emotions. There are two categories of impressions: original impressions, which “arise in the soul, from the constitution of the body, from the animal spirits, or from the application of objects to the external organs,” and secondary impressions,

which “proceed from some of these original ones, either immediately or by the interposition of its idea”; furthermore, Hume ascribes “all bodily pains and pleasures” to the former category, and “the passions, and other emotions resembling them” to the latter category (181). The principles of causation associate these passions, much like ideas, and reveal the subjective self, which Hume describes as “that individual person, of whose actions and sentiments each of us is intimately conscious” (187). Hume summarizes this implication by stating:

supposing that there is an immediate impression of pain or pleasure, and *that* arising from an object related to ourselves or others, this does not prevent the propensity or aversion, with the consequent emotions, but by concurring with certain dormant principles of the human mind, excites the new impression of pride or humility, love or hatred. That propensity, which unites us to the object or separates us from it, still continues to operate, but in conjunction with the *indirect* passions, which arise from a double relation of impressions and ideas. (280-1)

Impressions uncover the material world’s attractive and repellent qualities by enlivening the mind with the sensations of pleasure and pain alongside their corresponding passions and emotions. This is the foundation for Hume’s famous declaration that “[r]eason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them,” which stands in direct contrast to his philosophical predecessors who maintain reason’s precedence over the passions (266).

Alongside the postulation that impressions constitute sensations and emotions, Hume’s *Treatise* ascribes behaviour and morality to their constitutive functions. The passions, rather than reason, motivate individuals to pursue or avoid objects of the material world based on the emotions they enliven in the mind. While reason distinguishes the effective means to obtain or

evade these objects, “when we have the prospect of pain or pleasure from any object, we feel a consequent emotion of aversion or propensity, and are ... [carried] to avoid or embrace what will give us this uneasiness or satisfaction” (266). Human behaviour, in turn, develops moral distinctions, as Hume describes how “[m]orality is a subject that interests us above all others: We fancy the peace of society to be at stake in every decision concerning it,” and

nothing is ever present to the mind but its perceptions; and ... all the actions of seeing, hearing, judging, loving, hating, and thinking, fall under this denomination. The mind can never exert itself in any action, which we may not comprehend under the term of *perception*; and consequently that term is no less applicable to those judgements, by which we distinguish moral good and evil. (293)

In this context, the passions motivate human behaviour in accordance with the obtainment or avoidance of pleasure and pain, respectively, which creates moral implications through the subjective distinction between good and evil in relation to social interactions. While the *Enquiry* and the *Treatise* present a paradigm for the mind and human behaviour, Hume expounds his philosophy by analyzing religion in other works.

Hume’s philosophical departures go beyond his theory that the passions influence behaviour. Despite maintaining a religious scepticism – which “made him a difficult, often frustrating target for defenders of religion” (Priestman 18) – Hume, in “The Natural History of Religion” (1757), recognizes similarities between human emotions and religious concepts. The “History” acknowledges that humanity’s insistence on a natural symmetry of the universe “could never possibly entertain any conception but of one single being, who bestowed existence and order on this vast machine, and adjusted all its parts, according to one regular plan or connected

system” (4). Hume refutes this implication, however, by describing the universe’s natural phenomena as follows:

the conduct of events, or what we call the plan of a particular providence, is so full of variety and uncertainty, that, if we suppose it immediately ordered by any intelligent beings, we must acknowledge a contrariety in their designs and intentions, a constant combat of opposite powers, and a repentance or change of intention in the same power, from impotence or levity. (5)

Despite recognizing humanity’s natural tendency towards the belief in God(s), these passages demonstrate Hume’s scepticism through his contempt for the inconsistencies within religious proclamations. To expand his historical analysis, Hume notes the similarities between sentiments and divine conceptions. The “History” describes how humanity “hang[s] in perpetual suspense between life and death, health and sickness, plenty and want,” and that it is “[n]o wonder, then, that mankind, being placed in such an absolute ignorance of causes, and being at the same time so anxious concerning their future fortune, should immediately acknowledge a dependence on invisible powers, possessed of sentiment and intelligence” (6, 7). Moreover, Hume suggests that religious deities arose “from a concern with regard to the events of life, and from the incessant hopes and fears, which actuate the human mind” (5). The “History,” therefore, posits an intersection between human emotions and religious concepts by describing how individuals project their feelings onto divine abstractions. Hume’s tenets – the association of ideas, the passions’ influence over behaviour and morality, and the intersection between human emotions and religious concepts – serve as the foundation for Hume’s philosophy, and would garner him notoriety in his contemporary Europe by intriguing and displeasing his philosophical peers.

Despite a turbulent introduction, Hume's philosophy would eventually prove successful. The *Treatise* received the worst reception of all of his works, and some of its most notable detractors were Hume's philosophical peers. In reference to the *Treatise*, Thomas Reid states that Hume "hath built a system of scepticism, which leaves no ground to believe any one thing rather than its contrary," and he proclaims that Hume "ventured into a serious examination of the principles upon which this sceptical system is built; and was not a little surprised to find that it leans with its whole weight upon an hypothesis which is ancient" (*Inquiry* viii, xi). James Beattie expresses more vociferous critiques, insinuating that Hume is "not much acquainted with human nature and therefore not well qualified to write a treatise upon it," while questioning: "why is this author's character so replete with inconsistency! why should his principles and his talents extort at once our esteem and detestation, our applause and contempt!" (10). Hume even acknowledges the *Treatise*'s inadequacies in his autobiography, *My Own Life* (1776), wherein he states that "[n]ever literary attempt was more unfortunate than my Treatise of Human Nature. It fell *dead-born from the press*, without reaching such distinction, as even to excite a murmur among the zealots" ("My Own" 170); furthermore, Hume includes an advertisement in the *Enquiry*, which reads: "not finding it [the *Treatise*] successful, he was sensible of his error in going to the press too early, and he cast the whole anew in the following pieces, where some negligences in his former reasoning and more in the expression, are, he hopes, corrected" ("Advertisement" 2). The self-admonishment and alterations proved effective, according to Hume, as his philosophy became "the subject of conversation," while his sales were "gradually increasing, and ... new editions were demanded" ("My Own" 171). Based on these inferences, Hume experienced failure in the form of personal attacks and derision originating from irreligious convictions, as well as success through a revitalized philosophical interest. Hume's theories remain a source of

intrigue for modern philosophy and have even proven useful in analyzing Gothic literature's themes of causation and mental development.

While it is a rare occurrence, some critics have used Hume's inquiries in their literary analyses of Gothic novels. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Gothic novels demonstrate Hume's stipulations through historical inferences and philosophical inquiries. In a comparison between Hume's *The History of England* (1754) and Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Jonathan Dent suggests that both authors "were interested in re-configuring history for the demands of an increasingly historical age" (50). Paul Gilmore juxtaposes Hume's *Enquiry* with Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland* (1798) and states that both authors "detail the faculties in order to elaborate the way base cognitive features might be transformed or instantiated in ways distinct to a particular historical moment" (119). Monique R. Morgan similarly applies the *Enquiry*'s stipulations to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) because "the creature's method closely resembles David Hume's description of how we all infer causation through our sensory experience of the constant conjunction of two things"; accordingly, she argues that "the creature is eventually able to infer cause and effect once 'he has acquired more experience'" (n.p.). Hume's philosophy benefits Gothic literature by establishing analogies between historical and fictional texts, and by introducing philosophical inquiries to psychological analysis. While Walpole's, Brown's, and Shelley's novels have deservedly received Humean analyses, many prominent authors of the same period remain unexamined, however.

Little is known about the history of Charlotte Dacre. An underappreciated contributor to the Gothic genre, Dacre wrote numerous works and developed a literary notoriety during her career. Aside from her novels – *The Confessions of the Nun of St Omer* (1805), *Zofloya; or the Moor* (1806), *The Libertine* (1807), and *The Passions* (1811) – Dacre, "[t]ogether with her poet

and novelist sister Sophia, ... published *Trifles of Helicon*, a volume of poems in 1798,” and “occasional verse in the London daily newspaper *The Morning Post*” (Michasiw xi). These works often received critical praise from her peers, and Dacre became “well known in her day, well enough that a number of Byron’s friends could tease him by claiming to believe that his anonymous ‘Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte’ (1814) was in fact the work of ... [Dacre]” (Michasiw xiii). Dacre’s admiration for Matthew Lewis is also a notable characteristic, as she uses the pen name “Rosa Matilda” in “a clear reference to the Satanic *femme fatale* of Lewis’s *The Monk*” (Craciun 9); furthermore, Dacre pens a dedication to Lewis in *The Confessions*: “Allow me to dedicate to you [Lewis] the following pages, written at eighteen; not from any similarity they can boast to the style or subject of your writings, but simply as a slight tribute for the pleasure I have experience in perusing them, and the admiration I entertain for your very various and brilliant talents” (2). Despite her achievements, nineteenth- and twentieth-century literary canons seldom reference Dacre, an exclusion that Michasiw attributes to her narrative styles and misogynistic intimations: “her political comments are not easily assimilated to later twentieth-century norms; she is conventionally associated with male Gothic; her novels are populated by sexually predatory, physically violent, mother-hating women of whom the narrations appear to approve” (xiv). While Dacre experienced success in her literary endeavours, her critics often lambasted her work, with *Zofloya* receiving particularly condescending condemnations.

Contemporary reviews for Dacre’s *Zofloya* were generally negative. While several detractors emphasize Dacre’s emulation of Lewis and her inability to recapitulate *The Monk*’s achievements, others digress into absurd insults. A review in the *Monthly Literary Recreations* (1806) refers to the novel as a “very humble imitation of *The Monk*, possessing in an eminent

degree all the defects of that wild performance, but entirely destitute of all its beauties,” whilst advising Dacre “to keep to the humble walk of versifying for the newspapers, and to leave the profession of romance writing to females who possess more delicacy of mind, more facility of style and purity of sentiments” (Anon. 261, 262). A similar evaluation is found in *The General Review of British and Foreign Literature* (1806), wherein the narrative is described as “so closely imitated from Lewis’s *Monk*, as to force the reader upon a comparison between the two works incomparably to the prejudice of the one before us,” and concludes by stating, “thus ends this mass of unqualified vice and unqualified mischief, begun without plan, continued without preparation, and terminated by death in all its several parts, with little of contrast and still less of judicious arrangement” (Anon. 263). In a bizarre transition from these reviews, an anonymous author in the *Literary Journal* (1806) suggests that both Dacre and her novel’s protagonist suffer from a “disease of maggots in the brain,” which renders “the brain putrid and corrupt,” with a “particular partiality for the agency of the devil, whom they cause to think, speak and act” (Anon. 265). By admonishing Dacre for incompetent writing, lack of imagination and femininity, and a penchant for Satanism, these reviews show the negative assessments that plagued *Zofloya* at the time of its publication. The novel has never escaped its comparisons to Lewis’s work, and this connection situates Dacre in a unique position amongst her contemporary female Gothic peers.

Dacre’s critics and their contempt for *Zofloya* foreshadow gender-based classifications in Gothic literature. Amidst the panoply of themes in Gothic fiction, patterns emerge that often coincide with the author’s gender. Ellen Moers was the first to use the term “Female Gothic,” which refers to “the work that women writers have done in the literary mode that, since the eighteenth century, we have called the Gothic” (90). While Moers never explicitly designates

Ann Radcliffe and Lewis as the representative writers of their respective genders, she argues that Radcliffe's writings inspired novels "in which the central figure is a young woman who is simultaneously persecuted victim and courageous heroine," while Lewis and his male peers initiate "the literature of the overreacher," wherein

the superman ... breaks through normal human limitations to defy the rules of society and infringe upon the realm of God. In the Faust story, hypertrophy of the individual will is symbolized by a pact with the devil. Byron's and Balzac's heroes; the rampaging monks of Mat[thew] Lewis and E.T.A. Hoffmann; the Wandering Jew and Melmoth the wanderer; the chained and unchained Prometheus: all are overreachers, all are punished by their own excesses – by a surfeit of sensation, of experience, of knowledge and, most typically, by the doom of eternal life. (94-5)

Robert Miles, similarly, creates "a series of antitheses: terror/horror; sensibility/sensation; poetic realism/ irony; explained/unexplained supernatural; Radcliffe/ Lewis" ("Ann" 97). Anne Williams expands this dichotomy by suggesting that, while the female Gothic plot "demands a happy ending," the male Gothic plot "has a tragic plot," which contains an "early separation from the mother," a specialization "in horror – the bloody shroud, the wormy corpse," and the acknowledgement of "the supernatural as a 'reality,' a premise of this fictional world" (103, 107, 104). These analyses demonstrate the Gothic genre's gender-based classification by describing the contrasting tropes and themes that culminate in specific narrative functions. In this regard, *Zofloya* situates Dacre in opposition to her female Gothic peers through its development of the male Gothic plot.

There is a current discourse that debates *Zofloya*'s gender-based classification.

Proponents for the female Gothic categorization often focus on the narrative's representation of

female liberation. Carol Margaret Davison argues that “critics have often failed to recognize her [Dacre’s] conscientious engagement with the female Gothic and *Zofloya*’s unique and pivotal role in the female Gothic tradition,” while suggesting that the novel “constitutes a strategically crafted and singular work of *complex* female Gothic that speaks to its time by challenging various established views regarding women’s nature and roles” (34, 35; emphasis in original). Meanwhile, advocates for *Zofloya*’s male Gothic categorization champion Dacre’s incongruity with her female peers. Adriana Craciun implies that “Dacre’s female characters provide an important contrast to those of better-known Romantic women novelists,” while declaring that “Dacre’s revision of *The Monk* in *Zofloya* challenges gender-complementary models of the Gothic” and that “Victoria is not a female Gothic heroine, nor is *Zofloya*’s plot that of the female Gothic: Victoria’s character and her quest are those of the male Gothic” (10, 11). By analyzing the author’s unique mixture of female and male themes and motifs, these contrasting inferences reveal the discourse surrounding Dacre’s placement within the Gothic’s gender-based classification. While arguments for *Zofloya*’s female Gothic categorization hold merit, the novel’s themes of maternal separation, horror, and inexplicable supernatural phenomena distinguish the narrative as belonging to the male Gothic. In creating these themes, Dacre illustrates Victoria’s sensations, her violent propensities, and the presence of demonic forces – which, according to Moers, Miles, and Williams, are male Gothic tropes – by invoking Hume’s theories of the association of ideas, the passions’ influence over behaviour and morality, and the intersection between human emotions and religious concepts. While no historical account explicitly states that Dacre was familiar with Hume’s work, *Zofloya* displays how the male Gothic plot contains constituents of eighteenth-century moral philosophy in its elucidation of the psychological effects of negative sensations and emotions.

The male Gothic theme of maternal separation is demonstrable in *Zofloya* through Laurina di Modena's abandonment of her daughter, Victoria. The novel's opening pages establish that Laurina influences Victoria's personality. The former is described as "a female of unexampled beauty," with "rare and singular endowments," whose only flaw "arose from vanity, from too great a thirst of admiration, and confidence in herself" (39); meanwhile, the latter is "as beautiful and accomplished as an angel," as well as "proud, haughty, and self-sufficient – of a wild, ardent, and irrepressible spirit," with "an implacable, revengeful, and cruel nature ... bent upon gaining ascendancy in whatever she engaged" (39, 40). These similarities are attributable to Laurina's rearing given that "[t]he youthful parents little comprehended the extent of the mischief they were doing," as "lavish and imprudent was the fondness bestowed ... upon their idolized offspring" (39, 40). This familial paradigm echoes inferences from Hume's *Enquiry*, which suggests that individuals develop prototypical customs "whenever the repetition of any particular act or operation produces a propensity to renew the same act or operation," which is "the great guide of human life," and "renders our experience useful to us, and makes us expect, for the future, a similar train of events with those which have appeared in the past" (32). From this perspective, Victoria's vain disposition is the result of her associating impressions of extravagance with pleasurable sensations, which Laurina's conceited and overindulgent conduct cultivates. By attributing Victoria's personality to Laurina's example, *Zofloya* initiates the theme of maternal separation, which expands through Laurina's infidelity and its influence over Victoria's immoral constitution.

Dacre's depiction of Laurina's infidelity and narcissism recapitulates Hume's theory that the passions influence human behaviour. A travelling rogue seduces Laurina and convinces her to abandon her family. Described as being "cast in nature's finest mould," and endowed with

“every grace and every charm,” Count Ardolph first tempts Laurina by revealing “the passions with which she had filled up his heart” (43, 45). In response to these advances, Laurina experiences “feelings excited in her bosom,” which “whispered to her the triumph of captivating such an heart as his,” while stimulating “the only foible of her nature” (46). This incident suggests that passions motivate behaviour by implying that Laurina and Ardolph begin an affair because they enliven each others’ pleasurable sensations. Hume’s *Treatise* lends insight into this affair by postulating that “[t]is evident, that pride and humility, tho’ directly contrary, have yet the same OBJECT. This object is self According as our idea of ourself is more or less advantageous, we feel either of those opposing affections, and are elated by pride, or dejected with humility” (182). By pampering Laurina’s vanity, Count Ardolph furnishes her mind with pleasurable sensations and influences her infidelity. The affair renders Victoria resentful towards her mother, which fortifies an aggressive, homicidal temperament.

Victoria’s despair at Laurina’s abandonment reflects Hume’s queries regarding the emotional characteristics of the passions and exemplifies *Zofloya*’s theme of maternal separation. In conjunction with her vain disposition, Victoria develops violent propensities because of Laurina’s conduct. After Victoria expresses disdain towards her mother’s affair, Ardolph imprisons her and absconds with Laurina. Once incarcerated, Victoria indulges in an emotional tirade that expresses the pain she feels towards her mother’s abandonment:

There, casting herself upon the floor, her passion vented itself in a violent paroxysm of tears; . . . while rage and the most deadly hatred against those who had thus dared to dupe and to betray her, took possession of her swelling heart. An ardent desire of revenge followed; and thus from the conduct, misjudging and inexcusable, that had been pursued

towards, did every violent and evil propensity of her nature become increased and aggravated. (72)

Victoria's despair at Laurina's abandonment is evident through vivid descriptions of her rage, hatred, and a desire for revenge. Victoria's tirade also reflects Hume's postulation that "[t]he only proper object of hatred or vengeance is a person or creature, endowed with thought and consciousness; and when any criminal or injurious actions excite that passion, it is only by their relation to the person, or connexion with him" (*Enquiry* 71). In this regard, Laurina, as both a tangible entity and an idea, furnishes Victoria's mind with hatred and bolsters her immorality by inspiring an aggressive temperament. By demonstrating how sensory perceptions and mental reflections of Laurina's abandonment enliven sensations that distort Victoria's morality, Dacre creates the theme of maternal separation while recontextualizing Hume's theory of the association of ideas. *Zofloya* shows how the male Gothic plot expounds the psychological effects of negative emotions through narrative representations of eighteenth-century moral philosophy.

Homicidal inclinations constitute *Zofloya*'s theme of horror while invoking Hume's theory of the passions' influence over behaviour and morality. Victoria's violent proclivities intensify amidst the presence of a potential lover. After escaping imprisonment and wedding Count Berenza, Victoria meets her brother-in-law, Henriquez, who becomes "the subject of her thoughts by day," and "employed her fancy by night," as "daily, nay momentarily, her unchecked passion acquired strength" (143). Victoria also meets Lilla, Henriquez's fiancée, for whom "she cherished the most unprovoked and bitterest hate," culminating in her

secretly wishing that Berenza, that Lilla, nay, even the whole world (if it stood between her and the attainment of her object,) could become instantly annihilated. Her bosom ached with the exhausting conflict of the most violent passions; death and destruction

entered her thoughts Horrible images possessed her brain, and her heart seemed burning with an intense and unquenchable fire. (143, 145)

These ruminations reveal the motivation behind Victoria's homicidal inclinations by establishing her desire for Henriquez and hatred for Berenza and Lilla. The menacing implications of Victoria's internal reflections typify Hume's conjectures regarding malice, which "imitates the effects of hatred," and creates a "desire of producing evil to another, in order to reap a pleasure" (*Treatise* 240, 243). From this perspective, Berenza and Lilla enliven Victoria's passions of hatred and her homicidal inclinations because they obstruct her obtainment of Henriquez's affections. In defining the constituents for Victoria's desires and antipathies, *Zofloya* maintains its representation of the association of ideas, the passions, and morality while initiating its theme of horror, which expands through the novel's depictions of murder.

While illustrating Victoria's sadism – which, according to Hume, indicates a lack of sympathy – *Zofloya* expands its horror theme through the depiction of Berenza's death. As reflections of Berenza and Lilla furnish her mind with hatred, Victoria becomes acquainted with the titular Moor, who encourages her to commit murder. By manipulating her desire for Henriquez, *Zofloya* convinces Victoria to pursue her homicidal inclinations:

'When barriers oppose the attainment of a favourite object, the barriers must either be laid low, or the object remain unattained. To remedy an evil, it is necessary to strike at the root. . . . Thus, should you resolve to overstep common boundaries, and that which is termed female delicacy by openly declaring your passion to Henriquez, . . . how do you imagine, that while the wife of another, you could enjoy unrestrained delight with the choice of your soul?' (161-2)

Accordingly, Victoria poisons Berenza with the Moor's alchemical concoctions, and an "allotted week had not expired, ere change sufficient was visible in the unfortunate Berenza, to satisfy even the soul of Victoria, thirsting as it was for his innocent blood" (175). By describing her joy amidst Berenza's suffering, this scene demonstrates that Victoria derives pleasure from murder. This implication, moreover, lends insight into Victoria's immorality, as Hume suggests that "we have no such extensive concern for society but from sympathy; and consequently 'tis that principle, which takes us so far out of ourselves, as to give us the same pleasure or uneasiness in characters which are useful or pernicious to society, as if they had a tendency to our own advantage or loss" (370). In this context, Victoria's lack of sympathy fosters an immoral – one might say, evil – constitution by rendering her insensitive to the suffering of others. The pleasure that Victoria derives from murder falters, however, as the fruition of her violent proclivities produces despondency and nullifies her prospective romance with Henriquez.

At the height of its descriptive brutality, *Zofloya* maintains the male Gothic categorization by reveling in the gruesome consequences of Victoria's passions and immorality. While Berenza's death is slow and meticulous, Henriquez's and Lilla's are fraught with gore. After sleeping with Victoria under the intoxication of a drug that produces "a partial mania," Henriquez "snatched a sword ... and, dashing its hilt on the floor, threw himself, in desperate agony, upon its point!" (217) Enraged at the loss of Henriquez, Victoria withdraws from the scene to inflict her fury on Lilla, who boldly proclaims to her assassin: "you murdered Henriquez, because he loved me more than he did you" (220). In response,

Victoria, no longer mistress of her actions, nor desiring to be so, seized by her streaming tresses the fragile Lilla, and held her back. – With her poignard she stabbed her in the bosom, in the shoulder, and other parts: – the expiring Lilla sank upon her knees. –

Victoria pursued her blows – she covered her fair body with innumerable wounds, then dashed her headlong over the edge of the steep. (220)

This incident displays Victoria's exacerbated hatred for Lilla through its descriptive ferocity, and echoes Hume's postulations that "if our ill-will to another proceed from any harm or injury, it is not, properly speaking, malice, but revenge," and that "[b]esides good and evil, or in other words, pain and pleasure, the direct passions frequently arise from a natural impulse or instinct Of this kind is the desire of punishment to our enemies" (*Treatise* 238, 281). From this perspective, Victoria's savagery is an impetuous compulsion that arises from violent passions associated with her despair at Henriquez's suicide and heightened animosity towards Lilla. Through the implication that passions constitute Victoria's lack of sympathy and homicidal inclinations, Dacre buttresses the theme of horror while rearticulating Hume's theory of the passions' influence over behaviour and morality in narrative form. From this perspective, *Zofloya* exemplifies how the male Gothic plot recontextualizes eighteenth-century moral philosophy to illustrate how negative sensations and emotions psychologically distort the mind.

Hume's theory of the intersection between human emotions and religious concepts coincides with *Zofloya*'s initiation of the theme of inexplicable supernatural phenomena. The novel implies that *Zofloya* is supernatural by describing his mystical aura. Victoria often remarks on *Zofloya*'s enigmatic person, referring to him as an "[a]stonishing being," a "strange, mysterious, . . . indefinable being," and "a sorcerer," while marveling at his abilities: "As he retreated into the thick gloom of the forest, a vivid flash now and then revealed his swift moving figure to her view – emerging from among the trees – now scaling the pointed rock, and now appearing a figure of fire upon its lofty summit" (181, 223, 213). *Zofloya*, moreover, acknowledges these characteristics and states that Victoria attracts his machinations: "your very

thoughts have power to attract me,” Zofloya states to Victoria, “[and] they convince me that you partake of myself, and that you are worthy of my present devotion” (181). These instances imply that Zofloya is an inexplicable supernatural phenomenon through the description of his uncanny faculties and haunting presence. The implication that Victoria’s thoughts attract this entity coincides with Hume’s notion that “in order to carry men’s intention beyond the present course of things, or lead them into any inference concerning invisible intelligent power, they must be actuated by some passion,” such as “the dread of future misery, the terror of death, the thirst of revenge” (“History” 6). From this perspective, Victoria’s immorality attracts Zofloya because her hatred for Berenza and Lilla, and her lack of sympathy resembles his malevolent agency. The titular Moor initiates *Zofloya*’s theme of inexplicable supernatural phenomena through his preternatural description, and his diabolical machinations prove detrimental as Victoria’s thoughts grow increasingly execrable following her crime spree.

Hume’s inferences regarding the psychological detriments of fear elucidate *Zofloya*’s infernal landscapes that are synonymous with Hell, which augments the theme of inexplicable supernatural phenomena. While describing Victoria’s murders, the novel establishes an analogy between madness and damnation. As “the demons of evil raged with such fury in her bosom,” and she calls upon Zofloya to “soothe the burning madness of my brain!,” Victoria’s environments assume ominous features, including “steep rocks,” “inaccessible mountains,” and “huge precipices down, which the torrent dashed, and foaming in the viewless abyss with mighty rage,” all of which “seemed to suit the dark and ferocious passions of her soul” (180). The analogy continues following Lilla’s murder, as Victoria, “in a state of mind ... possessed rather with the madness and confusion of hell,” finds herself imprisoned in Hell:

Immense mountains, piled upon one another, appeared to encompass her, and to include within their inaccessible bosoms the whole of the universe. Beyond their towering walls, ... the imagination, suddenly thrown back and staggered at its own conceptions, could not presume to penetrate. – Mighty rocks, and dizzying precipices at their base, in which the water, falling from an immeasurable height, frantically battled gloomy caverns, which seemed the entrance to Pandaemonium. (221, 226)

Within this landscape is the omnipresent Zofloya, whose “native grandeur shone in its full glory,” while “[c]ommon objects seemed to shrink in his presence, the earth to tremble at the firmness of his step” (226). These passages create an analogy between madness and damnation as fear entrenches Victoria within Zofloya’s diabolical landscape. Hume’s “History” lends insight into this analogy by describing how “[a] panic having once seized the mind, the active fancy still farther multiplies the objects of terror while that profound darkness, or, what is worse, that glimmering light, with which we are environed, represents the spectres of divinity under the most dreadful appearances imaginable” (31). From this perspective, Victoria’s fear imprisons her in Hell by cultivating madness and fortifying her dependence on Zofloya. These supernatural phenomena – Zofloya and Hell – converge in the novel’s finale as Victoria literally falls into perdition, psychologically and physically.

Hume’s conjunction of madness and demonic entities is demonstrable in Victoria’s damnation, which epitomizes the novel’s theme of inexplicable supernatural phenomena. Victoria’s fear situates her in the presence of the literal embodiment of evil. Amidst the dizzying precipices and insurmountable terrains, “[t]error and despair seized the soul of Victoria,” and Zofloya unveils his true identity:

Behold me as I am! – no longer that which I appeared to be, but the sworn enemy of all created nature, by men called – SATAN! ... Few venture far as thou [Victoria] hast ventured in the alarming paths of sin – thy loose and evil thoughts first pointed thee out to my keen, my searching view, and attracted me towards thee, in the eager hope of prey! ... [T]hou hast damned thy soul with unnumbered crimes, rendering thyself, by each, more fully mine. (254)

This finale concludes the novel's analogy between madness and damnation by describing Victoria's emotional turmoil alongside a confrontation with the Devil. The depiction of this encounter invokes Hume's insinuation that "[m]adness, fury, rage, and an inflamed imagination, though they sink men nearest to the level of beasts, are, for a like reason, often supposed to be the only dispositions, in which we can have any immediate communication with the Deity" ("History" 15). In this context, Victoria's passions, immorality, and fear – all of which constitute her madness – situate her in Satan's presence by influencing her evil behaviour. By implying that violent passions and emotional turmoil expose Victoria's mind to mental derangements that resemble spiritual damnation, Dacre establishes the theme of inexplicable supernatural phenomena through inferences that echo Hume's theory of the intersection between human emotions and religious concepts. In doing so, *Zofloya* demonstrates how the male Gothic plot utilizes constituents of eighteenth-century moral philosophy to illustrate the detrimental effects of negative sensations and emotions within the mind.

Within the male Gothic plot, Hume's philosophy discloses causal relations that lend insight into characters' psychologies. Victoria distinguishes herself as a male Gothic overreacher – complete with an abundance of sensations, horrific experiences, and eternal perdition – through her internal reflections in the final chapters. Prior to her confrontation with Satan, Victoria

concludes that Laurina's abandonment produces her emotional turmoil and is directly responsible for her spiritual damnation:

Ah, mother, mother!' she cried, 'all is attributable to thee; why did'st thou, when in early youth, – when my passions were strong, and my judgement weak, why did'st thou imprudently bring before my eyes scenes to inflame my soul, and set my senses maddening? – It was thou first taughtest me, to put nor check, nor restraint, upon the incitements of unholy love. ... I regret only the state to which circumstances have reduced me. – Wretch! that I am, Zofloya, – oh, Zofloya! thou hast helped on my destruction – yet I am now so bound, so trammelled to thee ... that though at this moment I feel strong wish to fly thee, yet it is counteracted by conviction that the attempt is impossible. (237)

These lamentations reveal the novel's intricate causal relation between the themes of maternal separation, horror, and inexplicable supernatural phenomena by collating Laurina's abandonment with Victoria's passions and immorality, which subsequently attract Zofloya's haunting presence. Victoria's sentiments, moreover, are indicative of Hume's philosophy:

The generality of mankind never find any difficulty in accounting for the more common and familiar operations of nature It is only on the discovery of extraordinary phaenomena ... that they find themselves at a loss to assign a proper cause, and to explain the manner in which the effect is produced by it. It is usual for men, in such difficulties, to have recourse to some invisible intelligent principle as the immediate cause of that even which surprises them, and which, they think, cannot be accounted for from the common powers of nature. (*Enquiry* 50-51)

In this context, Victoria's internal reflections act as metacommentary for the novel's male Gothic categorization by alluding to the psychological consequences of Laurina's abandonment in relation to the perversion of morality and the diabolical machinations of the titular moor. In *Zofloya*, Dacre executes an elaborate philosophical scheme to illustrate Victoria's mind, passions, and morality while establishing a causal relationship between the natural and supernatural.

In conclusion, *Zofloya* embodies a male Gothic plot through its themes of maternal separation, horror, and inexplicable supernatural phenomena, which invoke Hume's theories of the association of ideas, the passions, and the intersection between human emotions and religious concepts. While reason remained an imperative cognitive function for eighteenth-century moral philosophy, Hume's insistence that the passions motivate human behaviour offers an opportunity for literary analysis critics to examine characters' actions in relation to the machinations of their emotions. Victoria di Loredani is an apt specimen for this introspective perusal, as her violent proclivities and homicidal inclinations produce macabre results, complete with demonic entities. By attributing Victoria's unruly passions and subsequent perdition to the influence of her mother's conduct, Dacre exemplifies the key elements of the male Gothic plot while recapitulating constituents of eighteenth-century moral philosophy. In this regard, Dacre extends Lewis's paradigm wherein Gothic writers of the Romantic period use moral philosophy to present admonitory tales against the detriments of immorality from a female perspective. In doing so, Dacre situates herself within a unique Gothic canon that, through the tenets of moral philosophy, explores how immorality is analogous to spiritual damnation. While *Zofloya* remains obscure in the pantheon of Gothic fictions – particularly in comparison to *The Monk* – Dacre's

narrative style and philosophical inferences allude to a cultural ethos wherein the psychological implications of iniquity perturb the reading public.

3. Hartley and Hogg: Narrative Perspective and Malevolence

By the mid-eighteenth century, the theory that the mind internalizes sensory perceptions of the material world was paramount to European moral philosophy. Following John Locke and David Hume, David Hartley wrote *Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations* (1749), which expounds Locke's implications on the functions of the nervous system through the theory of so-called "vibratiuncles," while maintaining the postulations regarding the association of ideas and morality. Hartley also incorporates religious considerations by describing how faith in God cultivates virtue. Unlike Locke and Hume, Hartley's philosophy is frequently applied to literary analyses of literature from the Romantic period – this owing to Samuel Taylor Coleridge's admiration for Hartley's philosophy, which is apparent in Coleridge naming his first-born child after the philosopher – and his theories are useful when examining the Gothic genre's use of narrative ambiguity through unreliable narrators and competing perspectives. This chapter will outline the *Observations*' concepts regarding the development of the mind, morality, theopathy, and madness, and propose that James Hogg establishes narrative ambiguity in *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) by invoking Hartley's philosophy through multiple perspectives on malevolent dispositions. Through this analysis, the *Confessions* demonstrates how Gothic literature recontextualizes eighteenth-century moral philosophy to explore the psychological effects and subsequent implications of an immoral temperament.

In the *Observations*, Hartley theorizes that the mind develops perceptions and ideas through sensory vibrations in the brain. Impressions of the material world initiate mental development. All impressions, according to Hartley, convey, "*first in the Nerves on which they are impressed, and then in the Brain, Vibrations of the final, and, as one may say, infinitesimal,*

medullary Particles,” which, upon repetition, “*beget, in the medullary Substance of the Brain, a Disposition to diminutive Vibrations, which may also be called Vibratiuncles,*” that the brain converts into ideas through the process of association “when the impressions are either made precisely at the same instant of Time, or in the contiguous successive instants” (Vol. 1, 11, 58 65). These conjectures establish the *Observations*’ neuroscientific foundation by suggesting that the nervous system converts impressions of the material world and their vibratory sensations into ideas, which create objective comprehension, through the process of association. Aside from introducing an understanding of the material world’s tangible properties, impressions also furnish the mind with passions. According to Hartley, the passions are “Aggregates of simple Ideas united by Association,” which contain “Traces of the sensible Pleasures and Pains,” and “are excited by Objects, and by Incidents of Life”; these passions also influence behaviour, as “the Things which we pursue do, when obtained, generally afford Pleasure, and those which we fly from affect us with Pain” (Vol. 1, 368, 371). In conjunction with his neuroscientific postulations regarding the association of ideas, Hartley contends that impressions motivate human behaviour by enlivening the physical and emotional sensations in the brain. The mind, therefore, is a cognitive apparatus that develops through sensory perceptions of the material world and dictates behaviour in accordance with the sensations of pleasure and pain.

While sensory perceptions furnish the mind with impressions and ideas, the corresponding passions initiate an understanding of morality. The cultivation of ethical passions and the abolishment of unethical passions constitutes morality. Hartley writes:

It is of the utmost Consequence to Morality and Religion, that the Affections and Passions should be analyzed into their simple compounding Parts, by reversing the Steps of the Associations which concur to form them. For thus we may learn how to cherish

and improve good ones, check and root out such as are mischievous and immoral, and how to suit our Manner of Life, in some tolerable Measure, to our intellectual and religious Wants. (Vol. 1, 81)

These statements present a compromise to Hartley's supposition regarding the passions' influence over behaviour by restricting the pursuance of pleasurable sensations under the premise of virtuous morality. Accordingly, Hartley advocates a sociological paradigm that produces universal goodwill. In outlining his "Rule of social Behaviour," Hartley compounds the principles of virtue and vice with the sensations of pleasure and pain, as "Good-will, Generosity, ... [and] Compassion ... are rewarded with Returns of the Same, with the Pleasures of Sociality and Friendship," while "Sensuality and Intemperance subject Men to Diseases and Pain, to Shame, Deformity, Filthiness, Terrors, and Anxieties" (Vol. 1, 495). In abiding by this paradigm, Hartley proposes that the mind acquires "a Moral Sense," which leads "to the Love and Approbation of Virtue, and to the Fear, Hatred and Abhorrence of Vice" (Vol. 1, 497). Despite imposing restrictions on pleasurable pursuits, Hartley's rule of social behaviour advocates for universal benevolence by promoting virtuous morality and abolishing unethical passions. To ensure the success of this sociological paradigm, Hartley implores that individuals fortify their minds with spirituality through the admiration and love of God.

Hartley's religious considerations are discernable in the *Observations*' queries regarding spirituality and morality. To ensure virtuous morality, the mind must inculcate divine reverence. Hartley defines theopathy as "The affections excited in us by the Contemplating of the Deity," which creates a Love of God through "the Contemplation of his Bounty and Benignity to us" (Introduction, iii; Vol. 1, 489). This reverence towards God "regulates, improves, and perfects all the other Parts of our Nature, and affords a Pleasure superior in Kind and Degree to all the rest,"

and becomes “our primary Pursuit, and ultimate end,” he adds (Vol. 2, 309). Theopathy is imperative to morality because it furnishes the mind with pleasures predicated on ethical passions. Divine reverence is also a defensive mechanism against encroaching unethical passions that threaten to produce vice. Amidst a plethora of sensory perceptions that produce varying sensations, “the Moral Sense requires a perpetual Direction and Support from the Love of God, in order to keep it steady and pure,” as “[w]hen Men cease to regard God in a due measure, and to make him their ultimate End, having some other End, beyond which they do not look, they are very apt to relapse into Negligence and Callosity, and to act without any virtuous Principle” (Vol. 2, 311). Religious considerations coincide with Hartley’s neuroscientific postulations given that devout ideas produce pleasures in the mind that correspond to virtuous morality and influence the pursuit of ethical passions. The mind, however, remains prone to violent agitations, and the threat of mental deterioration is ever present amidst the inescapable despondencies of existence.

Alongside the inherent benefits of virtuous morality, theopathy, according to the *Observations*, is the best defense against neurological maladies. Madness threatens the mind and morality. Hartley states that those afflicted with madness “judge wrong of past or future Facts of a common Nature,” while “their Affections and Actions are violent and different from, or even opposite to, those of others upon the like Occasions, and such as are contrary to their true Happiness” (Vol. 1, 390). This malady is a universally experienced phenomenon, as “all violent Passions must be temporary Madnesses,” while “frequent Recurrencies of them, must, from the Nature of the Body, often transport Persons, so that they shall not be able to recover themselves, but fall within the limits of the Distemper called Madness emphatically” (Vol. 1, 399). Madness, in this view, is a degenerative neurological disorder, which results from the repetition of violent

passions in the mind and causes those afflicted to act immorally. Theopathy, along with the maintenance of virtuous morality, protects the mind against this malady. According to Hartley:

Religious Considerations are the best Preservative in hereditary or other Tendencies to Madness: as being the only sure Means of restraining violent Passions, at the same time that they afford a constant indefinite Hope, mixed with filial Awe and Fear; which things are eminently qualified to keep up a Steadiness and Sobriety of Mind, and to incite us to such a Course of Action, as adds incessantly to the Hope, and diminishes the Fear. (Vol. 1, 403)

A reverence for God, therefore, is psychologically beneficial because spirituality influences the pursuance of pleasurable sensations predicated on virtuous morality. In summation, Hartley's philosophy suggests that the mind develops through sensory perceptions of the material world, which foster or hinder morality depending on the cultivation of virtue or vice in relation to benevolence or malevolence, respectively, and a relationship with God.

Receptions to Hartley's *Observations* were varied. While some of his peers praised his originality, others admonished his critical perspective and neurological propositions. Joseph Priestley's admiration for the *Observations* is evident when he declares himself to be "more indebted to this one treatise, than to all the books I ever read"; he also bestows fervent praise upon its philosophical implications: "It will be like entering upon *a new world*, afford inexhaustible matter for curious and useful speculation, and be of unspeakable advantage in almost every pursuit, and even in things to which it seems, at first sight, to bear no sort of relation" (xix). In contrast to Priestley, Thomas Reid writes that "[p]hilosophy has been in all ages adulterated by hypothesis; ... by systems built partly on facts, and much upon conjecture," and that "[i]t is a pity that a man of Dr Hartley's knowledge and candour should have followed

the multitude in this fallacious tract”; regarding the theory of vibratiuncles, Reid asserts that “we have no proof of their existence, to apply them to the solution of phaenomena, and to build a system upon them, is ... building a castle in the air” (*Essays* 130, 131). Samuel Taylor Coleridge presents an ambivalent consideration for Hartley’s work as he describes his “intense study of Locke, Hartley and others who have written most wisely on the Nature of Man,” which allows him “to see the point of possible perfection at which the World may perhaps be destined to arrive”; later in his career, however, Coleridge writes that he “would endeavour to destroy the old antithesis of Words & Things,” which includes “[a]ll the nonsense of vibrations,” in reference to Hartley’s theory of vibratiuncles (“To George” n.p., “To William” n.p.). These responses suggest a diverse reception to Hartley’s inquiries through their mixture of positive and negative commentaries on *Observations*. Coleridge’s early admiration for Hartley introduces an opportunity for Hartleyan-literary analysis, yet other authors of the Romantic period – such as the Godwin family – also demonstrate Hartleyan intimations within their narratives.

Contemporary readers benefit from Hartleyan analysis because it illumines the philosophical inferences present in literature from the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Literary theorists generally use Hartley’s philosophy to reveal recurring imagery and themes related to sensory perception, the association of ideas, and theopathy. Peter Knox-Shaw argues that Coleridge’s poetry reflects Hartley’s philosophy by stating that “Coleridge’s practice could conform to the philosopher’s belief that sense impressions act as a spur to the ideational ... as early as ‘The Eolian Harp’ where the scent off a bean-field, snatched by a breeze that carries sounds from the sea ... , sets the stage for a series of rhapsodic abstractions”; Knox-Shaw also states that “the poet’s ideal in ‘Kubla Khan’ rests as much on Hartley’s psychology, as does the vocational goal outlined in ‘Religious Musings’ ... with explicit reference to Hartley: progress

towards a selfless state of ‘theopathy’ that enables vision of ‘the all in all’” (435). Regarding Gothic fiction, Eric Parisot proposes that William Godwin’s *Caleb Williams* (1794) is “indebted to the associationism principles of John Locke and David Hartley” given the philosophers’ contributions to psychic dissection, which details “the delineation of mental processes and their formative contribution to character and identity” (17). Jonathan C. Glance further explores the Godwin family’s use of Hartleyan concepts when he suggests that Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818) exemplifies the philosopher’s theory of the association of ideas in its titular character’s dreams; regarding a particular sequence wherein Frankenstein’s fiancée transforms into his recently-deceased mother, Glance asserts that “the dream episode ... contains images which the text has previously established as closely associated in Victor’s mind, and so it would be natural for Victor to dream of these two women” (35-36). These theorists establish the analytical capabilities of the *Observations* by revealing the Romantic period’s inclusion of philosophical conjectures such as sensory perception, the association of ideas, and theopathy. While Coleridge, Godwin, and Shelley have deservedly received such analyses, other writers of the Romantic period remain unexamined from a Hartleyan perspective.

James Hogg, who frequently depicts his contemporary Scotland, is a noteworthy Gothic author. Political dissensions were an inescapable aspect of Hogg’s life. According to Douglas S. Mack, Scotland had three political factions during the eighteenth century: the Tories, “who were supporters of the status quo”; the Whigs, “who advocated measured and moderate reform”; and the Radicals, “who sought fundamental changes that would create a society based on the French Revolution’s principles of liberty, equality and fraternity” (64). Amidst this turmoil, notes Mack, Hogg was raised in “the traditional oral culture of the peasantry of Ettrick Forest,” which was considered a society “under the spell of absurd ancient superstitions about witchcraft, and still in

awe of supernatural creatures such as ghosts”; accordingly, Hogg “had a Tory dislike of the tendency of self-confident modernisers,” and wrote various works that maintained “the traditional customs, values and beliefs of the old oral peasant culture” (65, 66). To reflect his Ettrick origins, Hogg began signing his writings under various pseudonyms, such as “Ettrick. A Shepherd,” “the Ettrick Shepherd,” and “James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd,” all of which resulted in ridicule from some of his contemporaries:

The trend of marginalising Hogg intensified throughout the 1820s, thanks largely to the appearance of the ‘Ettrick Shepherd’ in the popular series ‘Noctes Ambrosianae,’ which ran from 1822 to 1835 in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*. ... Wilson’s characterisation of the Shepherd as a naturally poetic buffoon certainly distorted Hogg’s brand. (Gilbert 39, 41)

Hogg’s writing career reflects the political turmoil of his contemporary Scotland by demonstrating how the traditional customs and beliefs of previous generations fall under scrutiny of modern reform. Despite his contemporaries’ disdain for his conservative predilections, Hogg experienced a noteworthy career, owing largely to the publication of his most (in)famous work.

Hogg’s contemporary critics were, at best, intrigued and, at worst, appalled by his novel *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. Reviews admonished the novel for its multiple narrative perspectives and theological implications. Despite acknowledging that the *Confessions* contains “a few redeeming passages,” an anonymous write in *The Westminster Review* (1824) opines that Hogg “has managed the tale very clumsily, having made two distinct narratives of the same events,” and describes the author as “uselessly and disgustingly abusing his imagination, to invent wicked tricks for a mongrel devil, and blasphemous lubrication for an insane fanatic” (299, 297). The reviewer in *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*

(1824) was equally vociferous, calling the novel “singularly dull and revolting,” and declaring that “it is altogether unfair to treat the reader with two versions of such extraordinary trash as the writer has given us in ‘the Editor’s narrative,’ and the Confessions themselves” (Anon. 300). Finally, a reviewer in *The British Critic* (1824) condemns the novel as “uncouth and unpleasant,” while suggesting that “there is a diseased and itching peculiarity of style ... which, under every disguise, is always sure to betray Mr. Hogg”; the reviewer also declares that “if his intention be to expose the absurdity of principle and the atrocity of conduct into which the unqualified adoption of the doctrine of absolute election may plunge its followers, we fear he has not succeeded in this attempt without exposing religion itself, in some degree, to the malice of the scoffer” (Anon. 303, 304). As these reviews show, critics lambasted Hogg’s *Confessions* by deriding the author’s skill as a writer and as a theological inquirer. Despite the admonishments, Hogg’s use of multiple narratives puts him in company with some of the Gothic genre’s most revered contributors, such as Godwin, Shelley, and Charles Maturin.

Gothic literature of the Romantic period often uses contradictory implications and contrasting perspectives to create narrative ambiguity. David Punter avers that Godwin’s *Caleb Williams* includes narrative ambiguity, given that “Caleb certainly is persecuted, but we find ourselves looking through the cracks in his account of the persecuting universe,” which results in the reader questioning whether “Caleb himself is an exaggerator, given to misinterpreting and overdramatising his situation, or whether the informing consciousness behind the whole novel is transgressing realist conventions and producing a world of deliberately heightened dimensions” (122). Maggie Kilgour argues that Shelley’s *Frankenstein* contains a similar narrative ambiguity because the novel’s competing perspectives are reducible to an “outer frame and inner narrative,” which correspond to Frankenstein’s “trajectory of the revolutionary male gothic, which tells of

the isolation and ultimately complete alienation of the hero,” and “Walton’s outer story ... of exile and return, of a circular defamiliarization and refamiliarization that is typical of the conservative Radcliffean female gothic” (213, 215). Lastly, Chris Baldick states that Charles Maturin’s *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) contains “some unusual features in its construction,” and conveniently compares these features to “the narratives of *Caleb Williams* and *Frankenstein*” because the three novels rely on “a distinctive narrative strategy which wraps its central horror in protective or transitional layers of secondary and tertiary report” (x). Punter’s, Kilgour’s, and Baldick’s analyses show the function of narrative ambiguity in Gothic literature by referring to the genre’s equivocation resulting from unreliable narrators and competing perspectives. Like his predecessors, Hogg applies similar techniques to the *Confessions*, albeit with contrasting effects.

Within the *Confessions*’ competing perspectives and narrative ambiguity, Hogg crafts an allegory for the psychological detriments of immorality. An Editor and Robert Wringhim, the eponymous “Sinner,” act as the *Confessions*’ primary narrators. The Editor presents a third-person account of Robert’s crimes that “has been handed down to the world in unlimited abundance,” while Robert presents a first-person account of what he refers to as “[m]y life,” which the Editor supplants by declaring it to be “a religious parable, on purpose to illustrate something scarcely tangible” (5,7, 188). Hogg establishes his narrative’s equivocation through contrasting perspectives, which, for Robert Miles, create “a strong centripetal pull created by the ‘infinite regress’ of the narrative method,” as well as “narrative repetitions eliding difference and driving doubtful wedges” (*Gothic* 125). The common inference between these narratives, however, is the danger of religious fanaticism. Ian Duncan observes that the “key tenet of Calvinism at stake in Hogg’s novel is that of unconditional election,” and argues that the Wringhims “press this logic to the conviction called antinomianism, that the elect are exempt

from the moral law” (xxviii). Adrian Hunter expands this argument by suggesting that “the portrait of evil in the book ... is shown to originate, albeit perversely, from good and Godly intentions,” and that “Robert finds it impossible to refute Gil-Martin [possibly the Devil] because the latter’s logic never conflicts with his own understanding that he is justified, and so beyond reproach” (16). Based on Duncan’s and Hunter’s conjectures, Robert’s religious misconceptions pervert his morality and render him malevolent. Hogg, therefore, diminishes the narrative’s equivocation by providing a common assessment on the detriments of immorality, which he formulates through stipulations that exemplify Hartley’s theories on the association of ideas, morality, theopathy, and madness. While no historical account explicitly states that Hartley inspired Hogg, the *Confessions* demonstrates how Gothic literature utilizes eighteenth-century moral philosophy to explore the sentiments associated with cultivating a malevolent temperament.

Hartley’s theory of the association of ideas is demonstrable in the Editor’s depiction of sensory perceptions. The Editor establishes Robert as a villain by ascribing antagonist qualities to the titular sinner. He describes Robert as “an acute boy,” with “ardent ungovernable passions, and ... a sternness of demeanour from which other boys shrunk” (17, 18). He also admonishes the Wringhims’ religious convictions by insinuating that “the boy was early inured to all the sternness and severity of his pastor’s arbitrary and unyielding creed,” which perverts Robert’s personality:

He was taught to pray twice every day, and seven times on Sabbath days; but he was only to pray for the elect, and ... doom all that were aliens from God to destruction. He had never ... heard ought but evil spoken of his reputed father and brother; consequently he held them in utter abhorrence, and prayed against them every day, often ‘that the old

hoary sinner might be cut off in the full flush of his iniquity, and be carried quick into hell.’ (17)

The Editor’s descriptions display a disdain towards Robert by referring to his upbringing and theological beliefs in negative ways. The Editor attributes Robert’s constitution to the tutelage of Reverend Wringhim, Robert’s adopted – possibly, biological – father, which is a discernment that Hartley’s inquiries regarding the association of ideas explicate in that “it seems reasonable to expect, that, if a single Sensation can leave a perceptible Effect, Trace, or Vestige, for a short time, a sufficient Repetition of a Sensation may leave a perceptible Effect of the same kind, but of a more permanent Nature” (Vol. 1, 57). In this context, Reverend Wringhim perverts Robert’s personality by furnishing his mind with the tenets of exaggerated Calvinism, which includes a hostility towards those considered to be reprobates. After propounding that sensory perceptions contribute to Robert’s temperament, the Editor illustrates how Robert’s ideas bolster his immorality.

Hartley’s suppositions regarding morality help the reader construe the Editor’s depiction of Robert’s wicked disposition. The Editor establishes Robert’s immorality by detailing the persecution of George Colwan, Robert’s older brother. Wherever George goes, “the same devilish-looking youth attend him as constantly as his shadow; was always in his way as with intention to impede him, and ever and anon his deep and malignant eye met those of his elder brother with a glance so fierce that it sometimes startled him,” to the extent that “[t]he attendance of that brother was now become like the attendance of a demon” (20, 31). Alongside this antagonism, Robert assumes vile characteristics, with the general population fearing the “moody, and hellish-looking student,” who possesses “a face as demure as death,” as “his dark deep eye flashed gleams of holy indignation on the godless set” (20, 28). The Editor’s descriptions expand

his perspective of Robert's villainy by attributing malevolence and a haunting aura to his personality. By positing a correlation between Robert's propensity for harassment and revolting appearance, the Editor's narrative coincides with Hartley's moral suppositions. Hartley claims: "The great Suitableness of all the Virtues to each other, and to the Beauty, Order, and Perfection of the World, animate and inanimate, impresses a very lovely Character upon Virtue; and the contrary Self-contradiction, Deformity, and mischievous Tendency of Vice, render it odious, and Matter of Abhorrence to all Persons" (Vol. 1, 496). In accordance with these conjectures, Robert embodies an immoral disposition through his unseemly appearance and malevolence towards George. Consumed with vice, Robert continues to torment George with his sinful proclivities and a lack of benevolence, which further distinguishes him as a villain.

The Editor invokes Hartley's principles of theopathy to explore Robert's relationship with a mysterious companion. Robert's persecution of George develops supernatural implications through demonic intimations. As Robert continues to torment his brother, George grows "utterly confounded; not only at the import of this persecution, but how ... this unaccountable being knew all his motions, and every intention of his heart," which results in George being "constantly harassed with the idea, that the next time he lifted his eyes, he would to a certainty see that face, the most repulsive to all his feelings of aught the earth contained" (30, 31). This harassment culminates in Robert following George to a secluded mountainside, wherein Robert claims that "a friend" discloses George's private thoughts and intentions; in response, George refers to Robert as "a limb of Satan," and states: "'wretch, confess that the devil was that friend who told you I was here, and who came here with you? None else could possibly know of my being here'" (37, 36). These scenes suggest that Robert's malevolence situates him in the Devil's presence by cultivating a complementary immoral disposition.

Hartley's inquiries regarding theopathy lend insight into Robert's newfound companionship, in that "Malevolence always appears to us under the Idea of Imperfection and Misery; and therefore infinite Malevolence must appear to us to be infinitely inconsistent with the infinite Power and Knowledge proved ... to belong to the Divine Nature" (Vol. 2, 20). In this context, Robert situates himself in the Devil's presence by fostering an evil temperament that is incompatible with divine reverence. Robert's relationship with the mysterious companion proves detrimental to his psychological wellbeing, and the Editor demonstrates this by describing how violent passions afflict his mind and render him homicidal.

While the Editor never explicitly states that madness causes Robert's behaviour, he echoes Hartley's conjectures regarding the influence of violent passions. The Editor posits that Robert's criminal aspirations flourish under violent passions. Bell Calvert, a prostitute who witnesses the murder of George, details a conference between Robert and his mysterious companion, wherein the former is "in violent agitation and terror," while the latter is "urging him on to some desperate act," which he states is "God's work which you [Robert] are commissioned to execute"; accordingly, Robert murders George by delivering, in the words of Calvert, "two deadly wounds in the back, as quick as arm could thrust" (58, 60). Robert displays similar behaviour when he proclaims to his companion that "there is an old strumpet who lived with my unnatural father, whom I hold in such utter detestation, that I stand constantly in dread of her, and would sacrifice the half of my estate to shed her blood!" (67). These instances correlate violent passions with crime by illustrating Robert's homicidal inclinations in conjunction with his heightened emotional state. In the *Observations*, Hartley states: "Violent passions must ... disorder the Understanding and Judgement, while they last; and if the same Passion returns frequently; it may have so great an Effect upon the Associations, as that the

Intervention of foreign Ideas shall not be able to set things to rights, and break the unnatural Bond” (Vol. 1, 398). Based on these conjectures, exaggerated religious tenets, which Reverend Wringhim and the mysterious companion reiterate, influence him to commit murder by furnishing his mind with violent passions. Within the Editor’s narrative, Hogg invokes Hartley’s theories on the development of the mind, morality, theopathy, and madness to distinguish Robert as a villain who revels in iniquity. In this context, the *Confessions* recontextualizes eighteenth-century moral philosophy to develop perspectives on the cultivation of malevolent disposition.

Hartley’s theory of the association of ideas elucidates the origins of Robert’s misinterpreted religiosity. Robert establishes his spiritual inclinations by describing his apprehensions towards damnation. He states that he “missed no opportunity of perfecting ... [himself] particularly in all the minute points of theology,” which instills the fear of “living in a state of reprobation, subjected to the awful issues of death, judgement, and eternal misery” (76, 77). Reverend Wringhim alleviates these anxieties by declaring Robert to be “a justified person, adopted among the number of God’s children,” wherein “no bypast transgression, nor any future act of ... [his] own, or of other men, could be instrumental in altering the decree” (88). These premonitions entrance Robert in malicious joy: “An exaltation of spirit lifted me, as it were, far above the earth, and the sinful creatures crawling on its surface; and I deemed myself as an eagle among the children of men, soaring on high, and looking down with pity and contempt on the grovelling creatures below” (88). Through his range of emotions, Robert shows that theological ideas enliven his mind with sensations of pleasure and pain through their association with salvation and damnation, respectively. Robert’s ruminations epitomize Hartley’s religious conjectures, which state that:

Novices in the Ways of Piety and Devotion are frequently ... affected with spiritual Aridity and Dejection; but then this seems to be either from Pride, or spiritual Selfishness, *i.e.* from the Impurity of their Love to God. They give themselves up perhaps to Raptures, and ecstatic Transports, from the present Pleasures which they afford ... ; or they think themselves the peculiar Favourites of Heaven on account of these Raptures; and despise and censure others, as of inferior Classes in the School of Piety. (Vol. 2, 314)

For Robert, the proposition of predestination enlivens pleasure because his mind associates these principles with salvation; however, unbeknownst to the titular sinner, it also instills a debased love of God through spiritual pride, which is demonstrable in the malevolence that follows his enlightenment. Despite his relief, Robert's growing malevolence situates him in the company of a sinister entity, who exacerbates his misconstrued religious inclinations further.

Hartley's suppositions on immorality explicate Robert's companionship with a supernatural being. A mysterious doppelganger, who shares Robert's religious beliefs, affects his sense of morality. After receiving the news of his purported infallibility, Robert befriends this mysterious entity: "What was my astonishment, on perceiving that he was the same being as myself! ... The form was the same; the apparent age; the colour of the hair; the eyes; and, as far as recollection could serve me from viewing my own features ... , the features too were the very same" (89). This uncanny double, who refers to himself as "Gil-Martin," advocates for "the infallibility of the elect, and the pre-ordination of all things that come to pass," which fortifies Robert's belief that he is "the Sword of the Lord," whose mission is to "cut off the enemies of the Lord from the face of the earth" (98, 96, 114, 93). By reiterating the principles of predestination alongside homicidal prospects, Gil-Martin heightens Robert's immorality. While these prospects enthrall Robert, Gil-Martin's notions of infallibility reinforce civil disobedience,

which, according to Hartley, corresponds to vice: “as Part of our Notions of, and Regards to, the Deity, are taken from the Civil Magistrate; so, conversely, the Magistrate is to be considered as God’s Vicegerent on Earth; and all Opposition to him weakens the Force of religious Obligations, as well as of civil ones” (Vol. 2, 296-297). Based on these theological inquiries, Gil-Martin’s defiance of man-made and divine laws, under the guise of spiritual justification, bolsters Robert’s immorality. Robert, meanwhile, begins to doubt his absolute impunity as his mysterious companion grows increasingly sinister.

By compounding the ideas of murder and spiritual damnation, Robert’s narrative exemplifies Hartley’s conjectures regarding malevolence and its incompatibility with theopathy. Robert realizes his religiosity’s incompatibility with divine ordinance. Amidst Gil-Martin’s insistence to murder various citizens – including George and a local minister – Robert questions “if the elect were infallible, and if the Scripture promises to them were binding in all situations and relations,” while considering “the awful thing of plunging a fellow creature from the top of a cliff into the dark and misty void below – of his being dashed to pieces on the protruding rocks, and of hearing his shrieks as he descended the clouds, and beheld the shagged points on which he was alight” (118, 122). The prospect of murdering George is particularly turbulent for Robert as he reflects on its damnable implications: “It is a doubt that on all these emergencies constantly haunts my mind, that in performing such and such actions I may fall from my upright state. This makes fratricide a fearful task” (125). Robert’s apprehensions towards his religious doctrines are demonstrable in these lamentations given that his mind is now compounding ideas of murder with spiritual damnation. The change in Robert’s mental reflection, moreover, coincides with Hartley’s postulations that

We often desire and pursue things which give Pain rather than Pleasure. Here it is to be supposed, that at first they afforded Pleasure, and that they now give Pain on account of a Change in our Nature and Circumstances. Now, as the Continuance to desire and pursue Objects, notwithstanding the Pain arising from them, is the Effect of the Power of Association, so the same Power will at last reverse its own Steps, and see us from such hurtful Desires and Pursuits. The Recurrency of Pain will at last render the Object undesirable and hateful. (Vol. 1, 372)

In this context, Robert recognizes the fallacy of his notions of infallibility by contemplating the sinful nature of his malevolence – in other words, he considers how his immorality is averse to the word of God. Unfortunately for Robert, his mind has already succumbed to the effects of violent passions, and he experiences a madness that is analogous to spiritual damnation.

Robert's decline in mental faculties echoes Hartley's suppositions regarding madness. Through his companionship with Gil-Martin, Robert descends into emotional and spiritual turmoil. Amidst gaps in his memory – which consist of fraudulent business transactions and rape – Robert finds himself “sojourning in the midst of a chaos of confusion” as he becomes “excited to terrors and mental torments hardly describable” (136, 137). Additionally, Robert begins to suspect that Gil-Martin possesses “some supernatural power,” and that he is “a powerful necromancer,” whose voice resembles “the sounds of the pit, wheezed through a grated cranny” (137, 141). These ruminations culminate in Robert's assertion that his “vitals have all been torn, and every faculty and feeling of ... [his] soul racked, and tormented into callous insensibility,” while he laments: “If the horrors of hell are equal to those I have suffered, eternity will be of short duration” (178). Robert's narrative associates emotional turmoil with madness by illustrating the sinner's despondency alongside a decline in mental faculties. This conjunction,

moreover, coincides with Hartley's condemnation of the associative powers of those afflicted with madness, in that they are "destitute of the proper voluntary Powers over their Affections and Actions" (Vol. 2, 54). Robert's religious convictions, therefore, afflict him with madness by cultivating malevolence, which produces violent passions and situates him in the presence of evil. Within Robert's narrative, Hogg invokes Hartley's theories on the development of the mind, morality, theopathy, and madness to distinguish his justified sinner as a victim of misinterpretation and demonic machinations. Like other Gothic texts, the *Confessions* recontextualizes eighteenth-century moral philosophy to elucidate perspectives on the fostering of an iniquitous constitution.

The epilogue of the *Confessions* reveals that supernatural implications contribute to the narratives' discrepancy, and Hartley's conjectures regarding inexplicable phenomena elucidate this disparity. Following the conclusion of Robert's narrative, the Editor presents concluding remarks in a semi-epistolary format. The epilogue contains an article – written by a character named James Hogg, depicted as a shepherd – which details the local history of Robert's death: according to the character, Hogg, a travelling herdsman "perceived something like a man standing a strange frightful position at the side of one of Eldinhope hay-ricks. ... [H]e first called, but receiving no answer, he went up to the spot, and behold it was the ... young man, who had hung himself in the hay-rope that was tying down the rick" (180). This account garners supernatural implications through its description of Robert's suicide:

every one said, if the devil had not assisted him it was impossible the thing could have been done; for, in general, these ropes are so brittle, being made of green hay, that they will scarcely bear to be bound over the rick. And the more to horrify the good people of this neighbourhood, the driver said, when he first came in view, *he could almost give his*

oath that he saw two people busily engaged at the hay-rick, going round it and round it, and he thought they were dressing it. (180)

Hogg, the character, fashions his perspective in the style of local history, and he supports the preternatural claims of Robert's narrative through the presence of demonic entities. Such claims coincide with Hartley's stipulations regarding inexplicable supernatural phenomena:

Since the Qualities of Benevolence and Malevolence are as opposite to one another, as Happiness and Misery, their Effects, they cannot coexist in the same simple unchangeable Being. If therefore we can prove God to be benevolent, from the Balance of Happiness, Malevolence must be intirely excluded; and we must suppose the Evils, which we see and feel, to be owing to some other Cause, however unable we be to assign this Cause. (Vol. 2, 14-15)

In accordance with these theological inquiries, demonic entities, like Gil-Martin, haunt Robert because they correspond to his malevolence, immorality, and separation from God, all of which originate in the sinner's religious misinterpretations. While these conjectures align with the traditions of local superstition, the Editor presents a contrasting conclusion void of supernatural inferences.

Along with his philosophical inquiries, Hartley offers critiques on narrative reliability, which clarify the Editor's condemnation of Robert's and Hogg's accounts. The Editor derides supernatural claims. He maligns Hogg's account by adhering to the scepticism of another shepherd, who claims in dialect, "there was hardly a bit o't correct," and "added that it was a wonder how ... [Hogg] could be mistaken there, who once herded the very ground where the grave is, and saw both hills from his own window" (184). In addition to this contradiction, the Editor discredits Robert's claims by describing him as "a religious maniac, who wrote and wrote

about a deluded creature, till he arrived at the height of madness” (189). These remonstrances besmirch Robert’s and Hogg’s assertions by condemning the authors as unreliable narrators with frenzied imaginations. The Editor’s insinuations, moreover, coincide with Hartley’s insights regarding narrative reliability in that “we do not ever find, that forged or false Accounts of Things superabound ... in Particularities,” and that “[a] Forger, or a Relater of Falshoods, would be careful not to mention so great a Number of Particulars, since this would be to put into his Reader’s Hands Criteria whereby to detect him” (Vol. 2, 101, 102). In this context, Robert’s and Hogg’s perspectives foster the Editor’s scepticism through the intricate and absurd particularities regarding inexplicable supernatural phenomena. These scepticisms disclose the foundation of the narratives’ discrepancy: within his rational, enlightened recapitulation of regional history, the Editor refutes the existence of demonic entities, which invalidates Robert’s sympathetic claims and renders him a villain.

Despite their discrepancies regarding demonic entities, the competing narratives concur that Robert’s misinterpreted religiosity perverts his morality. The Editor and Robert both concede that the atrocities committed against George and the local communities are the result of religious fanaticism. While the Editor decries the Wringhims’ religious convictions as an “arbitrary and unyielding creed,” whose “whole system of popular declamation ... [is] to denounce all men and women to destruction, and then hold out hopes to his adherents that they were the chosen few,” Robert questions “whether or not I really had been commissioned of God to perpetrate these crimes in His behalf, for, in the eyes and by the laws of men, they were great and crying transgressions” (17, 45, 119). Despite their contrasting conclusions regarding supernatural forces, both narratives allude to the detriments of religious misconceptions. The

narratives' acquiescence, moreover, corresponds to Hartley's theological propositions, in that a faith in Christ requires man to have

a Sense of our Sins, to be humble and contrite, and in this State of Mind to depend upon Christ as the Mediator between God and Man, as able and willing to save us, which is true Faith And if our Faith falls short of this, if it does not overcome the World, and shew itself by Works, it is of no Avail; it is like that of the Devils, who *believe and tremble*. (Vol. 2, 408)

Following Hartley's postulations, the *Confessions* acts as an allegory for the dangers of presumed moral superiority through its depiction of murder, madness, and spiritual damnation. While the two narrators present the justified sinner through contrasting characterizations as a villain and victim, Hogg uses both narratives to expound the psychological implications of iniquity by invoking Hartley's philosophy. In doing so, the *Confessions* epitomizes how Gothic literature inculcates constituents of eighteenth-century moral philosophy to explicate the inferences that a malevolent disposition creates.

In conclusion, Hogg's *Confessions* recontextualizes elements of Hartley's *Observations* to explore the implications of cultivating a malevolent disposition through various narrative perspectives. While Hogg presents Robert as a villain who adheres to religious extremism, he also illustrates the justified sinner as a victim of misinterpretation and demonic entities. Hartley's theories on the association of ideas, morality, theopathy, and madness are demonstrable in Hogg's writing through the depiction of Robert's mental development, the evolution of his iniquitous disposition, and his descent into mental and spiritual turmoil. In metacommentary fashion, Hogg juxtaposes Enlightenment rationality with supernatural implications through the contrasting accounts of the Editor and Robert, respectively. Despite their discrepancies, both

narrators concede that Robert's misinterpretation of religious doctrines pervert the eponymous sinner's morality and fosters homicidal inclinations. In constructing his novel as such, Hogg initiates a narrative ambiguity that renders both accounts potentially unreliable while, simultaneously, providing a common psychological inference for the reader to consider regarding Robert's characterization. Like Lewis and Dacre, Hogg crafts a novel that alludes to a cultural ethos wherein questions of morality are paramount to social, psychological, and spiritual inquiries, and the *Confessions* expands such considerations by revealing that malevolence produces both contemptuous and sympathetic perspectives.

Conclusion: The Devil Made Me Do It

The Gothic genre utilizes moral philosophy to explore morality and its various psychological effects and implications. In *The Monk* (1796), Matthew Lewis recontextualizes John Locke's conjectures from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689) to explore personal identity through the titular monk's immoral disposition and lapse in consciousness; in *Zofloya; or, the Moor* (1806), Charlotte Dacre recapitulates David Hume's philosophy, particularly his inferences regarding the passions' influence over behaviour and morality, to show how negative sensations and emotions psychologically warp the mind in the male Gothic plot; and James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) echoes David Hartley's *Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations* (1749) to establish narrative ambiguity and explore the implications of a malevolent personality. By invoking philosophical theories that expound immorality's psychological effects over the mind and soul, Gothic writers develop themes, plot structures, and sentiments that lend literary representation to the philosophical stipulations of moral philosophers. These novels, moreover, allude to an expansive consideration that humanity struggles with: what is evil and how can we identify it?

Historically speaking, the Devil is the embodiment of evil. In his seminal series of works on the Devil, Jeffrey Burton Russell explains the history and implications behind the various incarnations of the fallen angel. In *Satan: The Early Christian Tradition* (1981), Russell establishes the Devil as "the personification of the principle of evil," in that "the Devil is not a mere demon, a petty and limited spirit, but the sentient personification of the force of evil itself, willing and directing evil" (23). In *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* (1984), Russell explores Christian diabolology in the medieval period, and offers insights regarding the era's

religious orientations in relation to legal procedures: “If the cosmos is in fact a battleground between the forces of good and evil, the criminal must be regarded as a follower of Satan: he has lost his free will to the power of evil”; moreover, Russell describes how certain crimes “were regarded as particularly heinous and subject to diabolical inspiration: theft, sex crimes, murder, and maleficent magic” (87). In *Mephistopheles: The Devil in the Modern World* (1986), Russell divides evil into two categories: passive evil, or “the suffering that a sentient being feels,” which includes “the conscious sense of fear, dread, terror, agony, depression, or despair that may accompany pain or the threat or memory of pain”; and active evil, or “the willingness of a responsible sentient being to inflict suffering upon a fellow sentient being” (17-18). From this perspective, the Devil is the embodiment of evil, who afflicts his acolytes with wickedness and his victims with agony. Russell’s stipulations regarding active evil posit man’s potential to personify evil, which alludes to a phenomenon of psychological inquiries that examine mental proclivities in conjunction with criminal intent.

Since the eighteenth century, legal ordinances have considered mental disposition in relation to criminal conduct. In 1700, John Brydall referred to the Latin term *non compos mentis* to describe individuals who suffer from mental impairment. Brydall’s use of the nomenclature is in particular reference to four types of individuals: “He that is an Idiot Born”; “He that by Accident afterwards loseth his Wits;” “A Lunatick, that hath sometimes his Understanding, and sometimes not”; and “He which by his own act depriveth himself of his right mind for a time, as a Drunkard” (5). In accordance with these parameters, Brydall argues that “No Felony, or Murder, can be committed without a Felonious Intent, or Purpose,” which alleviates criminal culpability from those considered destitute of reason: “That a Man who is deprived of the use of Reason and Understanding, shall not lose his Life for Felony or Murder” (75). Brydall’s

inferences introduce a predominant legal defense that exonerates the mentally ill from common litigations based on their inability to demonstrate rationality. Stipulations such as Brydall's lend a humanistic conduct to the Western judicial system, but proving such claims is difficult given the statutory implications. As Brydall argues:

the Law presumeth every Man to have the use of Reason and Understanding, unless the contrary be proved; which being proved accordingly, then he is presumed in Law to continue still void of the use of Reason, and Understanding; unless the Testator were besides himself, but for a short time, and in some peculiar Actions, and not continually for a long space, as for a Month, or more. (67-68)

The onus, therefore, falls on the individual to prove mental derangement to achieve the legal edict of *non compos mentis*. Brydall's stipulations, though over three hundred years old, remain a stringent consideration in Western law, particularly given the plethora of incidents – both historical and modern – wherein individuals attempt to exculpate themselves through claims of demonic interference.

The Salem Witch Trials exemplify the historical implications associated with the Devil while alluding to the iniquitous powers of terror. In 1692, panic gripped the inhabitants of Salem Village, Massachusetts. Amidst “the constant danger of Indian attacks, serious illness, and political upheaval,” villagers believed that demonic forces were constantly present: “Devils and spirits were not abstract ideas but creatures dwelling all around them” (Hill 9, 40). The collective fear proved detrimental when several young women – all of whom cultural conditioning rendered “susceptible to hysteria” (Hall 38) – displayed fits and spasms, resulting in unsubstantiated claims of witchcraft and satanic worship with catastrophic consequences: “Nineteen men and women had been executed, one man pressed to death, one hundred fifty

people languished in prison, and about two hundred more were accused” (195). The Salem Witch Trials epitomize the historical implications associated with the Devil by demonstrating collective terror, the judicial system’s adherence to religious proclamations, and the citizens’ inclinations towards imposing physical harm on the accused; they also typify fear’s psychological ramifications, as modern analysts, such as Frances Hill, suggest that “[m]any of the accused witches suffered from some form of dementia,” rather than demonic possession. Events like the Salem Witch Trials reveal mankind’s inherent evil through its hysteria, suffering, and malevolence, and though legal ordinances annul unsubstantiated claims of criminal conduct, the Devil remains a potential catalyst for horrendous incidents.

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, claims of demonic possession invoke the stipulations of *non compos mentis*. While it is an uncommon occurrence, individuals claim that the Devil, or demonic forces, influence them to commit crimes through physical possession and verbal encouragement. In 1981, Arne Cheyenne Johnson, who was accused of murdering Alan Bono, pleaded innocent under the auspice of demonic possession; Deborah Glatzel, Johnson’s girlfriend, claimed that “the killing was literally the Devil’s work – that Mr. Johnson had become possessed while trying to help free her younger brother from being possessed,” while said brother insisted “he had seen the beast go into Cheyenne’s body ... and it was the beast who had committed the crime” (Clendinen, B6). In 2012, Yoselyn Ortega, a nanny, murdered Leo and Lucia Krim, two and six years old, respectively, in a bathtub at her employer’s home; while Ortega claimed that she “was in such a state of extreme psychosis – hearing Satan command her to kill – that she did not comprehend her actions or even remember them,” prosecutors argued that “her actions that day show she planned to kill the children because she resented their mother and felt overworked” (Ransom n.p.). Finally, in 2015, Latisha Fisher murdered Gavriel Ortiz-

Fisher, twenty months old, in a restaurant bathroom in Manhattan, New York; Ortiz-Fisher, who “was diagnosed with severe paranoid schizophrenia in 2011” said ““the devil made her put him to sleep”” (McKinley, Jr. n.p.). Through their insistence on the Devil’s existence and influence, these cases demonstrate how questions of demonic possession remain prevalent in the contemporary legal system and reinforce the necessity for psychological evaluation. Despite placing the Devil on trial, figuratively speaking, indemonstrable claims of Satanic influence fail to prove his existence and align wanton acts of cruelty with individuals rather than demonic forces.

While the legal system struggles to provide evidence for the Devil’s influence, society attributes physical artifacts and social activities to Devil-worship. During the 1980s, North America witnessed a plethora of individuals enthralled with Satan. The majority of these individuals were adolescents seeking entertainment, while others delved into the deepest depths of depravity. Colin A. Ross describes a segment of Satan enthusiasts as “[i]solated criminal deviants,” who “do not belong to any established organization or cult,” but engage in “the trappings of Satanism for kicks, as part of a psychosis or simply for the shock value”; to expand his point, Ross describes how innocuous activities became the vice of “disaffected teenagers who want to be different: since long hair, beads, and pot-smoking are insufficient for this purpose in the 1980s and 1990s, heavy metal fills the gap as counterculture” (63). Others, however, engage in more sinister activities. In June of 1984, Ricky Kasso tortured Gary Lauwers “for three hours, gouged out his eyes, and forced him to say ‘I Love you Satan, before killing him’”; in September of 1985, Sean Sellers, who “built a Satanic altar in his bedroom and was briefly involved in blood-drinking ceremonies,” murdered his parents and a convenience store attendee; and, in February of 1986, Lloyd Gamble was murdered by his brother, who was discovered to have

owned “ceremonial robes, an inverted crucifix, and Satanic materials” (Ross 64). Beyond the delectations of heavy-metal music, Kasso, Sellers, and Gamble elucidate society’s apprehension towards Satanic enthusiasm by engaging in torture and murder under the premise of appeasing a demonic entity. While legal stratagems, juvenile gratification, and religious worship espouse the influence of demonic forces, stipulations from literature, moral philosophy and psychology depict individuals’ affinity with evil, which equates them with the Devil.

Through its exploration of the psychological implications and effects of iniquity, the Gothic genre investigates the genesis, essence, and functions of evil and amalgamates the Devil with man. In the modern era, scientific inquiry alleviates the fear of demonic entities. As Russell states in *Mephistopheles*, “[t]he fact that most people today dismiss the idea as old-fashioned, even ‘disproved,’ is the result of a muddle in which science is called on to pass judgement in matters unrelated to science” (21). In this regard, the Devil ceases to exist when scientific inquiry renders his corporeality speculative. Gothic literature, meanwhile, resurrects the Devil by integrating its characters with iniquity. While the Devil cannot exist in a scientific sense, “he can exist in a theological sense, in a mythological sense, in a psychological sense, and in a historical sense,” which the Gothic literature exemplifies through illustrations of an unconscious iniquity that equates man and the Devil:

It is true that there is evil in each of us, but adding together even large numbers of individual evils does not explain an Auschwitz, let alone the destruction of the planet. Evil on this scale seems to be qualitatively as well as quantitatively different. It is no longer a personal but perhaps a transpersonal evil, arising from some kind of collective unconscious. (Russell, *Mephistopheles* 298)

Through this conjecture, individuals become synonymous with evil through their penchant for chaos. Therein lies the Gothic genre's allegorical message: the Devil is the personification of evil, and he exists through individuals who personify an immoral constitution.

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