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Introduction

One of the crucial ingredients for the success of a book is definitely suspense (see Junkerjürgen 14). According to Hitchcock, it is the most powerful way to maintain the interest and involvement of the audience (see Truffaut 62). By capturing the reader's attention and keeping him or her enthralled throughout the whole story, suspense is an inherent part of the art of entertainment. This could also be the one of the reasons why literary studies have neglected it for a long time (see Langer 13, Wenzel 22-23, Junkerjürgen 28-29) – Wenzel even regards it as the "Stiefkind der Erzählforschung" (22). However, every piece of literature has to be suspenseful in some way in order to maintain the reader's interest (Irsigler, Jürgensen, Langer 8), which, of course, also concerns books considered to be part of a literary canon or so-called "high" literature.

In the course of the last few decades literary studies have developed an interest in the issue of suspense. Various scholarly enterprises have been attempting to justify and highlight the significance of an academic research into this field. Their individual approaches have not only covered the textual features which evoke suspense, but also extended to a psychological account of the reactions of the readership in order to describe what Langer has called the "Wechselspiel von Text und Leser" and its subsequent "›Doppelnatur‹ des Phänomens Spannung" (ibid. 13). Moreover, the study of suspense does not only include literature, but also other forms of media such as films.

This thesis analyses the creation of suspense in three particular works of narrative fiction, namely in *The Castle Of Otranto* (1764) by Horace Walpole, *The Monk* (1796) by Matthew Gregory Lewis and *Dracula* (1897) by Bram Stoker. This range of texts covers more than 130 years, starting with a text which is considered to mark the beginning of a whole literary genre (see Thomas 38) and ending with a work which constitutes a link between more traditional Gothic writings and modernity - not only because it was composed in the last decade of the nineteenth century, but also due to various textual features, as we will see later.

Cuddon claims that Gothic fiction consists of "tales of mystery and horror, intended to chill the spine and curdle the blood" (Cuddon 356). Based on this definition, it could be argued that this genre is suspenseful in itself (see Junkerjürgen 30). Therefore, a significant part of the analysis will also be devoted to Gothic genre conventions and their contribution to and influence in the creation of suspense.

Thereby, some other essential questions concerning those genre conventions will arise: Is there some sort of common core features which appear regularly in the three Gothic narratives? In how far are they invariable or subject to changes? How do alterations affect the creation of suspense? The answers to these questions shall be discussed in the course of this paper.

1. What is suspense?

As already mentioned, suspense is considered a hallmark of good entertainment. The term is familiar - in contrast to other literary concepts, the word suspense is no terminus technicus but part of everyday language. However, in the course of an in-depth analysis, it is important to find an accurate definition which specifies the concept and distinguishes it from similar literary phenomena.

Cuddon defines suspense rather roughly as a "state of uncertainty, anticipation or curiosity as to the outcome of a story or play" (883). In order to find out more about a story, the audience continues to consume a book or a film. Questions concerning plot developments arise, which are expected to be answered in the course of the story.

1.1 Defining features of suspense

In order to be able to formulate such questions, the text has to provide its readers with enough information on all relevant details. Hitchcock, who has often been referred to as the master of suspense (see Truffaut 11), has stated that the audience

has to know about the bomb under the table in order to feel suspense - if it simply explodes and the readers have not been aware of its existence, they do not experience suspense, but are merely taken by surprise (ibid. 64).

Surprise has been described as "die plötzliche Konfrontation des Rezipienten mit relevanten, nicht erahnbaren Informationen" (Junkerjürgen 72). The suddenness results in the fact that the reader has not received enough information to anticipate the event - thus, surprise depends on a "völlige Nicht-Informiertheit" (ibid. 19). As the readers are not even aware that they lack crucial pieces of information, they cannot make guesses or formulate questions about the outcome of a story - thus, it cannot be classified as suspense (ibid. 19).[1] Although surprise may be experienced as intense as suspense, it cannot last as long during the act of reading (ibid. 72).

If we consider the German term for suspense, "Spannung", Bonheim (3) has observed that it does not merely denote suspense, but also includes tension. Whereas suspense is focused on the dynamics of a story, tension can be described as static - it is created by contrary forces, differences and the equilibrium between opposites (see Wenzel 22). According to Koch, "suspense is more related to time" and tension to "space and structure" (*Spannung* 10). To put it simply, suspense creates the question as to what happens next, whereas tension focuses on the question "What is the import of this event?" (Bonheim 8).

I have already addressed the fact that literary studies have neglected to incorporate the phenomenon of suspense for a long time, since it has always been associated with entertainment based on "low" literature (ibid. 4). In the dichotomy of tension and suspense, "suspense [...] may be taken as a marker of badness" (ibid. 4), of inferior literary quality, whereas "*tension* represents a 'higher' literary and cultural value than [...] *suspense*" (ibid. 8). However, this theory does not account for the use of suspense in works of "high" or canonised literature as, for instance, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (see Cuddon 883; Irsigler, Jürgensen, Langer 8).

[1] Wenzel even states that surprise and suspense are "grundverschieden", as surprise is "kurz und gegenwartsbezogen statt von längerer Dauer und zukunftsorientiert" (27).

A similar instance of value judgement can be found if we take a closer look at the distinction between suspense and mystery. Mystery, or "Rätselspannung" (Langer 14), dominates the "eher schon kanonisierte[...] Kriminalliteratur" (ibid. 14). Thus, suspense again presents the "inferior" part of this binary pair - probably due to the fact that it is mainly an affective reader reaction (see Junkerjürgen 65). In contrast, mystery often lacks any emotional involvement (ibid. 67), but fully appeals to the intellect - the classical whodunit opens up a wide range of questions, not only concerning the identity of the culprit, but also his or her motives and plans (ibid. 66).

Those questions are rather open, they allow for multiple possible answers - usually correspondent to the number of suspects (see Wenzel 28) - and thus point towards a lesser degree of information (see Junkerjürgen 67). Moreover, they always concern itself with past events (ibid. 67).

Both mystery and suspense have been described in terms of sequence of events on the story level. Mystery starts with a “Wahrnehmungs- und Unbestimmtheitsphase” (Wenzel 29), which presents a riddle to the readers. It is followed by the "Reflexphase" (ibid. 29) in which feelings of bewilderment and dismay are expressed. The third phase is probably the most iconic one of detective stories - it is about formulating and assessing theories about possible suspects, motives and circumstances of a crime (ibid. 29). The attempts to find appropriate answers to these questions are impeded by the next phase. The resistance towards solving the crime presents a blocking in the sequence of events - the riddle seems impossible to solve (ibid. 30). However, the mystery usually ends in the resolving phase - the resolution is presented to the reader (ibid. 30).

The suspense schema differs in its structure, although it also shares some common phases with mystery. It starts with an initiating event which points towards upcoming danger (see Junkerjürgen 62). This can be realised explicitly by direct comments of the narrator or indirectly, such as via the description of a gloomy atmosphere or the exposition of a so-called Chekhov's Gun (see Wenzel 31).

The second phase aims to create an emotional involvement of the reader in the narrated events and wants establish empathy for the protagonists. The lexical level of

a text can play a crucial factor in this - Wenzel claims that suspenseful passages are often narrated "unter Verwendung eines von starken Emotionen geprägten Vokabulars" (31).

Moments oscillating between hope and fear determine the next phase, which is the hallmark of suspense. The reader is directly confronted with the binary set of possible outcomes - success or defeat. In order to contribute to and fully exploit the different emotions in the reader, this phase needs to be skilfully placed and paced within the narrative discourse (ibid. 31-32).

Similar to mystery, the fourth phase is characterised by retardation, which is marked by "ein[em] buchstäbliches Anhalten der erzählten Zeit" (Dolle-Weinkauff 132). This can be realised via cliffhangers - Dolle-Weinkauff has defined it as "de[r] Trick, die Erzähllinie just in dem Moment abzubrechen, in dem der Held in eine scheinbar ausweglose Situation geraten ist" (132).

The final phase presents the resolution of suspense - Wenzel calls it "Entscheidung" (32), as the outcome of the story is revealed: one part of the binary opposition is realised.

As we can see from this narrative pattern, suspense can also be realised on the discourse level of a text. In the course of analysing the three novels, I will particularly focus on two aspects - cataphora and retardation. As I have just illustrated, retardation forms a crucial part of the suspense pattern - but how do cataphora exactly contribute to an enthralling reading experience?

Junkerjürgen (34) believes that there are three conditions for suspense - a positive relationship between the reader and the protagonist, the reader's anticipation of unfavourable circumstances and the subjective estimation that they are probably going to happen. In order to realise the two last points, it is necessary to provide the readers with as much information as possible. The readers are only able to form hypotheses about future events if they encounter some hints towards possible plot developments and potential "danger, resistances and obstacles" (Wulff 7). This can be realised via cataphora or foreshadowing - devices which

> help to shape the viewers' scope of expectation. The cataphora are not primarily for the representation or the exposition of the narrative course of events, but rather for the manipulation of the anticipated course, the modulation of the area for problem solutions in which viewers move and orientate themselves. (ibid. 2)

There are various forms of how cataphora can be realised – Wulff mentions three types: narrative, thematic and atmospheric advance references (ibid. 4-7). Junkerjürgen (56-57), however, provides more specific examples of foreshadowing, such as explicit authorial comments, apprehensive thoughts or comments of a character and the establishing of dangers in a passing remark of the narrator. Generally, though, he claims that every textual element can serve as a cataphoric reference (ibid. 56).

Cataphora make up one of the foundations of suspense - Wulff (1) claims that "[t]here is no experience of suspense without anticipation." They serve a particular function in guiding the readers: "Sie [i.e. cataphoric references] fungieren als Aufmerksamkeits-Instruktionen für den Rezipienten, indem sie seine Konzentration auf eine mögliche oder bestimmte Gefahr fokussieren. Dadurch erhöhen sie seine Beteiligung und bereiten ihn optimal auf einen Affekthöhepunkt vor" (Junkerjürgen 59).

The anticipation can be expressed in a question concerning future developments in the plot - Koch even refers to the question as "the linguistic invention for manifesting '*Spannung*'" (*Spannung* 12). I have already mentioned before that mystery also raises questions during the story - usually they refer to past events, for instance about the person who committed a murder - and that there is a whole range of possible answers - often the number of answers is identical to the number of suspects.

However, the question in the suspense schema - Junkerjürgen also calls it "Entscheidungsfrage" (80) - is concerned with possible plot developments and thus future-related. Moreover, it always allows only a dichotomous pair as a possible answer (see Wenzel 28). Dolle-Weinkauff states that

> [s]*uspense* bedeutet daher stets die Alternative Erfolg oder Katastrophe, wobei die Möglichkeit der Katastrophe das eigentliche Spannungsmoment ausmacht. (130-131)

One possible answer needs to capture the impact and dangers of upcoming events in the course of the story - the high probability of a catastrophe. Thus, the audience also has to be made aware of the menace that lies in wait for the protagonists. As Koch states, "*Spannung* is highest when the values at stake are at highest" (*Spannung* 12).

A perfect example of such a suspense question would be "Will the protagonist survive?". As the choice of the grammatical tense already shows, the question is future-related. Moreover, as it can just be answered in the negative or affirmative, only a dichotomous pair of answers is possible. Finally, the question addresses a most fundamental issue - the concept of living and existence. Thus, its importance is obvious.

Hitchcock claims that "[d]ie Furcht vor der Bombe [ist] mächtiger [...] als die Gefühle von Sympathie oder Antipathie den Personen gegenüber" (Truffaut 63) - according to him, the depiction of danger makes up a greater part of suspense than the relation between the audience and the characters who are involved in the situation. However, he also admits that the emotional involvement of the audience is considerably higher if the character is likeable (ibid. 63).

There have been numerous debates about the kind of relationship between audience and fictional characters that contributes most effectively to suspense. Oatley claims that "identification is the main process of eliciting emotions in narrative" (65) - according to him, "the essence of enjoying a plot-based story is to take on the goals and plans of a character" (ibid. 69). Wilpert has defined identification as the

> Gleichsetzung […] des Zuschauers bzw. Lesers mit e[iner] Figur des Dramas, Films, Romans oder dem Ich e[ines] Gedichts. Sie beruht auf [...] Einfühlung, Bewunderung, Sympathie, Solidarisierung und lebhaftem und tiefenwirkendem Ergriffensein vom Wesen des anderen und wird Unwürdigen verweigert. (364)

From a classic psychoanalytical point of view, the protagonists in many popular stories can be regarded as the manifestation of a typical daydream – although they have to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles, they usually succeed in the end: "Ich meine aber, an diesem verräterischen Merkmal der Unverletzlichkeit erkennt man ohne Mühe – Seine Majestät das Ich, den Helden aller Tagträume wie

aller Romane" (Freud 14). When people fall in love with the protagonist, it is not a realistic depiction of life but simply a case of wishful thinking. Such stories encourage the reader to identify with the protagonist and thus live his or her daydreams which he or she would be otherwise ashamed to admit (ibid. 10, 13). Freud calls the identification with the protagonist "d[as] zum Helden gewordene[…] Ich[…]" (ibid 14).

An approach which presents a stark contrast to the notion of identification is Vorderer's theory of the "social-psychological concept of perspective-taking" (250). It claims that the readers "do not have to share the protagonists' emotions, they do not even have to fear for them, but can develop very different emotions from their own perspective" (ibid. 250).

Perspective-taking is influenced by two factors - the personal ability to understand and react towards other people and the kind of relationship towards the characters (ibid. 248). - However, he also claims that, under specific circumstances, suspense can develop "out of an interest in the progress of the story […] and not out of an interest in the protagonist's well-being" (ibid. 240). He argues that suspense can even arise when a wide distance between the text and the audience prohibits a high emotional involvement of the readers: "In these cases, the reader may not feel empathy with the protagonist, but instead think about the [story] from a rather aloof position and therefore lapse into an analyzing rather an involved mode of reception" (ibid 240).

However, what Vorderer calls an analyzing mode of reception could, in fact, be regarded as a different perspective on other forms of reader involvement such as curiosity, tension or even mystery which are, as already established, characterised by mild forms or even a complete lack of emotional involvement. For instance, the classical whodunit is described by Hitchcock as an intellectual puzzle that may trigger interest and curiosity, but no emotions, which are an essential part of suspense (see Truffaut 63).

In contrast to a narrow understanding of identification, whereby the audience places themselves in the very position of the protagonist and shares the same emotions, and

Vorderer's theories of a rather aloof reception mode, I will use the concept of empathy. Empathy is the reader's capacity to take over the perspective of a character (see Ringswirth 44). This does not only include cognitively understanding and labelling his or her affective states, but also to relate to his or her sentiments and to respond in an emotional way (ibid. 44).

Empathy can manifest in five different emotions – admiration, sympathy, pity, fear and hope (see Tan 23). It allows the reader to feel differently as the character (see Ringswirth 21) - for instance, in a passage of foreshadowing, some textual cues might hint towards upcoming danger. The reader might react with concern or even anxiety, whereas the character might be totally oblivious of the perils he or she is about to encounter and still be in good spirits.

There are various narrative devices which directly influence this relationship and try to direct the audience's sympathies towards specific characters. Whether the figure may be perceived as amiable or disagreeable is determined by certain features in the characterisation. Pfister (27) claims that the more similar a character is to the audience, the easier it becomes for them to understand his or her feelings, thoughts and actions. Thus, sympathy and antipathy towards figures is determined by similarities and differences between audience and fictional characters (ibid. 27). Similarities on levels such as gender, age, social class and cultural and ethnic background can make a character and his or her actions more memorable to the reader (Junkerjürgen 38). However, they can also be found on higher levels, such as typical human characteristics. Exposing specific particularities such as quirks and weaknesses and avoiding gigantism in the portrayals of characters are possibilities of making them appear more human and thus of heightening the readers' sympathies towards them (ibid. 135).

Physical appearance and social rank are other features which are used by the text to influence the readers' preferences (ibid. 144-147). Hoffner and Cantor (66), for instance, refer to research that has shown that physical attractiveness is often perceived to be related to social desirability. Characters which are socially accepted within the fictional world tend to evoke more positive emotions in the audience (see Junkerjügen 144).

As already mentioned, a characteristic feature of suspense are the questions that arise in the course of the story. In order to be able to formulate hypotheses about the outcome of specific situations, the reader needs to be provided with sufficient information. Amongst other things, the audience needs to know about the protagonist's character, his or her motivations, fears, feelings and views to be able to predict his or her reactions. Thus, transparency in the characterisation gives the reader the impression of thoroughly knowing a figure (ibid. 135). Stanzel claims that a psychological portrait of a figure is a rather powerful way of manipulating readers' preferences,

> weil dabei die Beeinflussung des Lesers zugunsten einer Gestalt der Erzählung unterschwellig erfolgt. Je mehr ein Leser über die innersten Beweggründe für das Verhalten eines Charakters erfährt, desto größer wird seine Bereitschaft sein, für das jeweilige Verhalten dieses Charakters Verständnis, Nachsicht, Toleranz usw. zu hegen. (173-174)

A detailed characterisation of a figure often requires a larger amount of discourse time devoted to him or her. The number and length of episodes in which certain characters play a significant role contributes to a better understanding of their inner feelings and thus play also a crucial part in influencing the reader's sympathies towards them (see Pfister 29).

Carroll (78-79) claims that morality is another crucial device in the portrayal of figures to ensure the readers' emotional involvement. The audience usually wants "the good" to triumph over "the bad". The notion of morality, the question of what is considered as morally right or wrong is implicitly defined by the text itself and may even slightly deviate from ethical standards shared by a certain community of readers. Even if a character makes a decision which the reader does not approve, some character traits or "striking virtues" (ibid. 79) can compensate for unfavourable actions:

> The virtues in question here – such as strength, fortitude, ingenuity, bravery, competence, beauty, generosity, and so on – are more often than not Grecian, rather than Christian. And it is because the characters exhibit these virtues – it is because we perceive (and are led to perceive) these characters as virtuous – that we cast our moral allegiance with them. (ibid. 79)

Another factor that plays a crucial role in the narrative construction of morality is the way supporting characters are treated. The figure with whom the reader is supposed to build up an empathic relation usually treats fellows and socially inferiors with respect and courtesy, whereas the intended villain often shows not only disrespect but also violence and contempt in social interactions (ibid. 79). Thus, protagonists are endowed with "democratic or egalitarian virtue[s]", whereas antagonists possess an "elitist vice" (ibid. 79).

In this context morality is not only defined by ethical standards, but mostly by certain virtues and the "mere opposition to natural evil" (ibid. 81). The dichotomy between good and evil is also expressed by the two possible outcomes of the story: according to Carroll, the outcome of the story that is preferred by the audience but unlikely to happen is at the same time "morally righteous", whereas the alternative that is more likely to come true is usually depicted as evil, as it symbolises the triumph over the good (ibid. 84). Audience involvement is achieved by imperilling the good, which is represented by characters classified as morally righteous and who are thus intended to evoke concern in the reader (ibid. 84).

This can even be intensified if the character is not always in charge of every situation. The depiction of vulnerability is another parameter in manipulating reader involvement. Junkerjürgen claims that vulnerable characters are more likely to evoke empathy in the audience, as they are prone to being in serious danger and harmed (177).

If we summarise the various aspects in the portrayal of characters who aim to establish a positive relation towards the reader, we come to the following conclusions: first, the perceived similarities and differences between the audience and the character determine the proximity of the relationship between them. Second, physical attractiveness and a certain degree of popularity creates sympathy in the reader. Third, transparency in characters helps the reader to comprehend their aims, thoughts and feelings. This can be achieved by a higher amount of discourse time devoted to a character, which forms the fourth point. Fifth, if a character conforms to the morality established by the text, he/she is more likely to involve the audience.

Finally, the character's vulnerability also has a great influence on the reader's empathy.

1.2 Koch's theory of the main drives

I have already mentioned that one characteristic feature of the suspense question is its relevance. In order to engage the reader, it has to address matters of high importance regarding the development of the story line. Koch (*Spannung* 12) states that "Spannung is connected to attention" - thus, it needs to fully engross the reader. Furthermore, he claims that human attention can be grasped by cathexis, which "is connected to values" (12).

In the former chapter I have addressed the importance of morality in establishing the difference between protagonists and antagonists. Readers experience suspense if they witness that the good is in peril. Moreover, it can be heightened "with the decreasing probability that the good ('positively charged') alternative [...] will come true" (ibid. 12). How can such a scenario be realised and how can "the good" be established in a text?

At this point I need to introduce Koch's theory of suspense. In order to explain the origin of the condition of "Spannung",[2] he refers to the three main drives that secure survival - "nutrition, reproduction, [and] defense" (*Spannung* 14). They motivate and trigger Spannung. Fructus, sexus and crimen are their respective formalised processes which emerge from ritualisations in human culture (ibid. 14). By triggering Spannung, they motivate both humans and animals to act, which should lead to attaining the aim of each of the drives (ibid. 14). However, not only attaining the aim is satisfying - Spannung is "highly self-rewarding" (ibid. 14), which becomes obvious in its manifestation in art (ibid. 14).

The three drives have been prevalent in narratives since the early beginnings (see Koch, *Biology* 45). Fructus is concerned with "states of eating, drinking, well-being,

[2] In this context, I have taken over Koch's more general term of "Spannung" in order to separate it from suspense, which shall be used exclusively for the literary phenomenon.

bliss, meditation", but also "care for offspring" (ibid. 45), sexus features "sexual adventures" and crimen manifests in detailed descriptions of "bloodshed" (ibid. 45). However, narratives that indulge in the consumption of the drives are largely considered as taboo nowadays, but still continue to exist in the underground (ibid. 45-46), such as, for instance, pornography, which focuses on the depiction of sexus and its consummation. Instead, literature mainly concentrates on the preceding phases, especially the exploratory phase, in which the aims of the three drives are set as well as long-term plans on how to achieve them (see Koch, *Spannung* 16). Thus, the drives tend to structure modern narrative instead of being its direct subject (see Koch, *Biology* 46).

Wenzel (25) has provided some typical literary motifs which reflect the main drives. Instances of violence, fight, escape, hunting, menace, revenge, murder are triggered by crimen. Fructus is reflected in the land of milk and honey, generational conflict and child abduction. The courting of a lady, rivalries concerning women, romance and forbidden love are examples of sexus. However, a number of literary instances feature various main drives, such as the Oedipus theme - killing his father involves both fructus and crimen, intercourse with his mother fructus and sexus (ibid. 25). Crossing the boundaries between the drives results in a physically highly intense form of suspense - thrill (ibid. 24-25).

1.3 Thrill

Wenzel explains that thrill is a prototypical type of suspense which is based on the three drives and has a strong physical aspect during its experience (25). Also Späth defines it as

> intensive, aber angenehme Empfindungen, auch solche körperlicher Art, die sich vor allem als Reaktion auf die Darstellung von Gewalt und Sex einstellen [...]. (155)

Thus, thrill is usually triggered by the appearance of crimen and sexus. Similar to suspense, sufficient information is a prerequisite for the reader to anticipate imminent events and create aggression, fear or sexual anticipation (ibid. 171).

Späth classifies thrill according to the choice of characters the audience relate to - active figures in a superior position evoke sadistic thrill ("Macht-thrill"), passive characters in an unfavourable position inspire masochistic thrill (ibid. 156). The latter variant can even be subdivided into "Angst-thrill" and "Rührungs-thrill", depending on whether angstlust or the desire to protect a weak and helpless character is the predominant emotion in the reader (ibid. 156). Both variants are often mixed. The readers enjoy the moment of superiority and the feeling of omnipotence - however, due to internalised moral norms, they also sympathise with the victim and are touched by his or her vulnerability (ibid. 172).

Thus, we can state that thrill is triggered by

> ein Machtgefälle zwischen zwei (selten mehr) Personen sowie eine unmittelbare körperliche, oft eine sexuelle Bedrohung des Sympathieträgers, die mit der Gefahr besonderer Erniedrigung verbunden sein kann. (ibid. 170)

I have stated that thrill is a special variant of suspense - in how far can these two concepts be distinguished? Why is thrill not merely suspense on a highly intense level? Unlike thrill, suspense follows a certain narrative five-act schema, which includes both the story and the discourse level of a text. Thrill, however, is exclusively expressed on the story level, as it is evoked by the depiction and the combination of the main drives. Similar to suspense, thrill evokes a high level of emotional participation during the reading process. This can in fact be experienced at such an extreme level that it even reaches a physical aspect (see Wenzel 24).

Another distinguishing factor is the involvement of fear – in the German translation of his book, Balint translates thrill with Angstlust to refer to pleasure of experiencing fear under certain conditions, such as the voluntary exposure to a seemingly fearful situation and the hoping that this situation is soon to be over and can be passed unscathed (Balint 20). Whereas suspense does not necessarily depend on fear (see Truffaut 62), thrill has been defined as "eine Form des Spiels mit der Angst" (Späth 173). However, Mikos's definition of thrill as "the hope for a happy ending […] even when a negative emotion of expectation such as anxiety or fear predominates during reception" (45) is in this context too vague and even misleading, as it merely focuses

on the transiency of thrilling moments by claiming that thrill is oriented towards future events of the story.

The notion of thrill as presented in this paper, however, is more related to the present: whereas suspense involves the emotionally charged guessing about possible future outcomes of a situation, thrill is deeply rooted in the confrontation with a present situation of transgression. Even if the depicted scene is perceived as abhorrent by the reader, we assume that his or her attention is strongly gripped by the fictional events in a way that he or she is very reluctant to divert it. There have been numerous debates among scholars as to the reasons of voluntarily consuming fictional situations that emotionally stress the audience. If we define thrill as the transgression of human drives and thus as the depiction of taboos, it could be argued that the extreme violation of cultural dogmas causes at once disgust and curiosity in the spectators, as they are both appalled at and enthralled of the events by some sort of inner sensationalistic drive.

In so far thrill can be regarded as the voyeuristic experience of the audience when confronted with the narrative depiction of transgressing human drives. Voyeurism entails being in a powerful position during the watching process (see Loidolt 52), as the spectator does not need to expose himself or herself in a situation and thus to become vulnerable. In this context Loidolt especially mentions the reader's possibility of watching "and enjoying privately and secretly" (57) passages featuring sensationalism, violence and sexuality "without getting involved" (57). However, whereas Loidolt restricts this feature to *The Monk* and describes it as a singularity of this novel (57), this thesis will show that this is not merely a feature of Lewis' text, but a phenomenon which can be encountered in many other narratives as well. As we will see later, particularly Gothic texts provide ample opportunities for readers to experience thrill, especially in terms of sexuality, violence and emotional excess (ibid. 52). Williams mentioned the affinity of certain novels towards the sadistic indulging in "female suffering, positioning the audience as voyeurs who, though sympathetic, may take pleasure in female victimization" (104). This directly corresponds to Späth's definition of thrill as an open display of differences in power.

1.4 Summary

In the course of this chapter numerous approaches to suspense have been presented which aim to identify and provide explanations for this literary phenomenon. Suspense is, in fact, a rather broad term - similar to its German equivalent "Spannung", it is a hypernym for mystery, tension, thrill and suspense. In this paper, I will focus on suspense in the sense of a particular narrative structure and therefore exclude mystery and tension.

If we finally want to summarise the main characteristics of suspense in the form of brief bullet points, we arrive at the following:

- Suspenseful narratives follow a five act structure.
- Suspense can be mediated through a question, which is formed by the audience during reception. It is future-related and allows only a binary pair of answers.
- The audience has to be provided with enough information in order to enable them to formulate this question.
- The binary set of answers has to include one answer which is preferred by the reader.
- Reader preferences can be influenced by providing the main characters with amiable qualities and/or making them vulnerable.
- Ideally, the characterisation should enable the audience to build an empathic relation towards the protagonist in order to facilitate their emotional involvement in the story.
- The depiction of transgressing main drives can create thrill, a variant of suspense.
- The use of thrill is a powerful way to stress imminent danger and threatened morality.

The definition of suspense that covers most of those areas is probably Zillmann's. He defines it as

> a noxious affective reaction that characteristically derives from the respondents' acute, fearful apprehension about deplorable events that

> threaten liked protagonists, this apprehension being mediated by high but not complete subjective certainty about the occurrence of the anticipated deplorable events. (*Psychology* 208)

Nevertheless, this definition mainly focuses on reader reactions. The term of suspense, however, does not merely refer to a certain response during reception, but also denotes certain narrative patterns and devices. This is a common feature suspense shares with the literary genre of Gothic, which shall be discussed in the course of the next chapter.

2. What is Gothic?

When consulting Shaw's *Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Gothic is subdivided into three categories: besides an overall sketch of the literary genre of the Gothic novel, two more references are to be found there: the first one refers to

> a style of architecture […], characterised by ribbed vaults, pointed arches, flying buttresses, ornamental gables, and fine woodwork and masonry [...]. (175)

The second definition describes Gothic as meaning "anything pertaining to the […]Middle Ages and therefore erroneously considered crude and barbaric" (ibid. 175). Although the entry is divided into three subcategories, we will soon see that although the three sections on Gothic seem to be clearly separated notions, they are in fact closely intertwined. Similarly to the entry in Shaw's literary dictionary, this chapter consists of three parts: the first section concerns itself with the various applications of the term of Gothic during the eighteenth century, the second one deals with architecture that was classified as Gothic and the third illustrates the influence of Gothic in literature and the rising of a new genre.

2.1 Historical development of the notion of Gothic

Throughout the centuries, the term of Gothic was applied in a multitude of different contexts and was given both pejorative and positive connotations. In the last decades of the seventeenth century *Goth* and *Gothic* were ethnic terms applied to a people

that was closely related to the Germanic tribes[3] (see Haslag 22). The Goths were granted the status as the main ancestral people of all people of Northern Europe and thus became an essential part of the construction of English identity that prided itself with Germanic descent (ibid. 1, 26).

In a political context, the notion of Gothic was often attributed with positive values – the legal system and the parliament were said to derive from Gothic institutions (see Botting 42). Gothic constitution in the form of a constitutional monarchy was hailed as having survived all absolutistic and republican trends and was said to have proved to be the best form of maintaining a harmonic balance of power (see Haslag 32). By revaluing any relics of a past beyond the Roman occupation, an indigenous culture was celebrated that was said to treasure values of liberty and democracy:

> Any relics of a non-Roman past were taken as evidence of a native and enduring tradition of independence. […] Like the durability of Gothic buildings, these relics are reminders of the 'noble Strength and Simplicity' of the Gothic Constitution. (Botting 42)

From a Humanist and Renaissance point of view, however, the term Gothic was used synonymously with barbaric. The Goths were often referred to as one of the main tribes who were responsible for the fall of the Roman empire and the destruction of ancient cultures and thus opposed to everything civil and cultivated (see Haslag 41); they were said to have plunged civilisation into the Dark Ages. According to the Humanist ideal, the Middle Ages and their arts were characterised by ignorance and superstition. Blaming the Goths for the downfall of arts and civilisation, Renaissance attributed anything mediaeval that had to be overcome as Gothic, thus giving the term a highly negative connotation (ibid. 1, 36, 42).

In the field of arts, Gothic was a term applied not only to mediaeval craftsmanship, but also to anything that deviated from classical principles. In literature, for example, the so-called Gothic rhyme was another term for the end rhyme, which was said to derive from old Norse poetry and spread by the peoples of Northern Europe that were regarded as barbarous (ibid. 58-59). Thus, the end rhyme was considered

[3] There were many debates among scholars considering the exact relationship of the Anglos and Saxons with the Goths; some claimed that all Germanic tribes emerged from the Goths, others expanded the notion of Gothic in the sense of German or Teutonic, thus including the Anglo-Saxons (see Haslag 14-22). The common core of all historical and philological theories was a close relationship between English and Gothic history and language (ibid 15).

Gothic for two reasons: on the one hand, Gothic referred to the origins of the rhyme; one the other hand, it referred to the deviation from the classic ideal, as classic poetry did not make use of rhyme (ibid. 58). Thus, the notion of Gothic did not always automatically point towards a specific period in time; it was also commonly used as an insult or disapproval of contemporary phenomena. Rhetoric devices such as conceits, metaphors, puns, epigrams and antitheses were regarded as Gothic, as they were considered to be artificial and ornate and violated principles of clarity and simplicity (ibid. 108-109).

Similar expressions were used to describe Gothic architecture. In this field, the term referred to mediaeval buildings which were characterised by pointed arches, steepness and ornamental features. The vertical structures and detailed ornaments strongly contradicted the classical ideal of harmonic features and the expression of wholeness and unity through horizontal lines, symmetry and plain surfaces (ibid. 84). The vast number of angles, battlements, turrets and arches were said to mislead the spectator's gaze and confuse him or her, as he or she loses the general overview over the whole object (ibid 85). Ornaments were considered to be an indicator of primitive taste (ibid. 90) and the way the Gothic windows obstructed the intrusion of sunlight fostered the belief of the middle ages as a dark and gloomy era (ibid. 91). The general deviation from classic simplicity was regarded as Gothic fancy and extravagance and contradicted Humanist ideals such as "judgement, reason, nature, regularity, […] use, […] [and] necessity" (ibid 88). Thus, Gothic embodies

> the underside of enlightenment and humanist values. Gothic condenses the many perceived threats to these values, threats associated with the supernatural and natural forces, imaginative excesses and delusions, religious and human evil, social transgression, mental disintegration and spiritual corruption. (Botting 2)

As we see, the term of Gothic was not just limited to one particular field, but included various systems. The notions of classical and Gothic were used as a binary opposition and their positive and negative value often changed according to their use. Besides, they often had political implications, as they were polarised by the political factions of Whig and Tory (ibid 42, Charlesworth 14-15). In the persistent struggle over the term of Gothic,

> more than a single word was at stake. At issue were the differently constructed and valued meanings of the Enlightenment, culture, nation and

> government as well as contingent, but no less contentious, significances of the family, nature, individuality and representation. (Botting 42-43)

In the context of the rising pre-Romanticism, the word *Gothic* slowly but surely underwent an amelioration. It became a neutral term for a certain style that had its own rules and standards. Pre-Romanticism adored the naturalness, emotional authenticity and imagination of Gothic art and literature (see Haslag 117-118, 121). A paradigm shift in aesthetic norms occurred; there was a change from reason and serenity towards emotional arousal (ibid 122): "Den Kriterien von 'reason' und 'judgement' treten in der Gotik 'fancy' und 'imagination' gegenüber" (ibid. 122). Once scorned and rejected as deviation from classical norms, variety and grandeur were now hailed as the new features that made a piece of art more attractive (ibid 123-146).

2.2 The sublime and the Gothic locus

The increasingly positive attitude towards Gothic artefacts is rooted in both the admiration of the art of an area long ago and the fascination of objects that struggle with the ravages of time (see Botting 32). Many Gothic buildings, for instance, have survived more or less the process of dilapidation and thus proved to be timeless; on the other hand, time has not passed without leaving its marks on them. Therefore the Gothic ruin becomes emblematic for the destructive forces of time and is regarded as a bridge between the present and the past:

> Die Zeit als zerstörerische Kraft, von der die Ruine zeugt und der die gotische Burg getrotzt hat, führt von der Vergangenheit in die Gegenwart. Die Mittlerrolle der Gotik wirkt aber auch in umgekehrter Richtung. Sie leitet die Phantasie des Betrachters aus der Gegenwart in die Vergangenheit und suggeriert eine gotische Welt, deren poetische Reize man zu entdecken glaubt. (Haslag 123)

The ruin is in fact a manifestation of two binary oppositions. It does not only connect the past and the present, but also nature and culture. Nature has taken back a place formerly claimed by humans, which is depicted in the popular depiction of the "verfallenen, efeuumrankten und bemoosten Ruine" (ibid. 123).

The dialectic of nature and culture also finds its expression in another construction, though it serves a slightly different purpose. Once labeled as unnatural by its critics, the architecture of Gothic cathedrals was now compared to a forest, a "sylvan place of worship" (Warburton 227), as forests were considered to be the first temples, "und in den Wäldern haben die Menschen auch die erste Idee der Baukunst bekommen" (Chateaubriand 399). The arches of a Gothic cathedral allegedly resembled branches of trees, columns imitated trunks of trees and the natural lightning was as gloomy as in the high forest (see Warburton 227). In short, "alles in der *gotischen Kirche* ist den Irrgängen der Wälder nachgebildet, Alles [sic] läßt den religiösen Schauer, die Mysterien und die Gottheit fühlen." (Chateaubriand 399) Thus, the reference to nature was used to support the argument that Gothic actually does follow a certain structure.

This alleged naturalness of Gothic became one of the prime sources of admiration (see Haslag 118) and required a new understanding of the concept of nature. Many aspects of nature that were once neglected or even scorned by a classical point of view, especially mountainous landscapes, were now regarded as Gothic and evoking sublime in the spectator (see Botting 40). According to the classical ideal, their irregularity was perceived as a blemish and deformity of nature, but the Gothic gaze values mountains even as "the foremost objects of the natural sublime" (ibid. 38). – The following passage is taken from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. It perfectly illustrates the feelings nature was said to evoke:

> I remembered the effect that the view of the tremendous and ever-moving glacier had produced upon my mind when I first saw it. It had then filled me with a sublime ecstasy, that gave wings to the soul, and allowed it to soar from the obscure world of light and joy. The sight of the awful and majestic in nature had indeed always the effect of solemnising my mind, and causing me to forget the passing cares of life. (518)

In literature, however, Gothic landscapes have been characterised as "desolate, alienating and full of menace" (Botting 2). Astonishment and terror, two crucial emotional states often expressed in and caused by those settings, are connected to the sublime (see Burke 57). According to Burke, pain and pleasure are no longer two entities that exclude each other (see Klein 25). He claims that "terror is a passion which always produces delight when it does not press too close" (Burke 46). The implication is that terror as imminent danger is of course always experienced as an

extremely negative feeling. However, at distance and with modifications, danger and pain can be a source of delight (ibid. 40).

Sublime could not only be evoked by natural settings but also by certain objects. One of those artifacts that could trigger such a state was the Gothic cathedral. Chateaubriand, for instance, claims that "[i]n eine gotische Kirche kann man nicht ohne einen gewissen Schauer und ein unbestimmtes Gefühl der Gottheit eintreten" (398).

Interestingly, the fascination of Gothic design became so dominant that it even influenced contemporary architecture – some buildings were constructed to resemble mediaeval edifices in order to achieve the same effect as the Gothic cathedrals of former times. Authors such as Walpole and Beckford even designed their mansions according to the latest fashion (see Klein 90). "Strawberry Hill Gothic", named after Walpole's small castle in Twickenham near London, became an emblematic term for romanticised, fake mediaeval buildings (see Cuddon 356). Such housings were marked by a deep tension between the mediaeval and contemporary: on the one hand, their construction implied the conscious use of materials that aimed to evoke the ancient (see Klein 46); on the other hand, their owners did not want to miss the comforts of contemporary achievements:

> In truth, I did not want to make my house so Gothic as to exclude convenience, and modern refinements in luxury. The designs of the inside and outside are strictly ancient, but the decorations are modern. Would our ancestors, before the reformation of architecture, not have deposited in their gloomy castles antique statues and fine pictures, beautiful vases and ornamental china, if they had possessed them? - But I do not mean to defend by argument a small capricious house. It was built to please my own taste, and in some degree to realize my own visions. (Walpole, *Description* 286-287)

By this dialectic of the familiar and the uncanny, the inhabitants of such a "Wohnburg", as Klein (50) calls it, were able to enjoy contemporary luxury while dreaming of a romanticised Middle Age. Neo-Gothic architecture should invoke the lifestyle of a former world of romance, which was believed to be shaped by adventure and superstition and which was closely intertwined with the design of accommodations:

> The castles of the greater barons, reared in a rude but grand style of architecture; full of dark and winding passages, of secret apartements, of long uninhabited galleries, and of chambers supposed to be haunted with spirits; and undermined by subterraneous labyrinths as places of retreat in extreme danger; the howling of winds through the crevices of old walls, and other dreary vacuities; the grating of heavy doors on rusty hinges of iron; the shrieking of bats, and the screaming of owls, and other creatures, that resort to desolate or half-inhabited buildings: – these, and the like circumstances in the domestick life of the people I speak of, would multiply their superstitions, and increase their credulity; and among warriors, who set all danger at defiance, would encourage a passion for wild adventure, and difficult enterprise. (Beattie 145)

Thus, allegedly "Gothic" mediaeval attributes such as superstition, which were formerly used to condemn this style, were now subverted into aesthetically positive features (see Haslag 155). They were part of the mediaeval world of "romance", which was appalling to reason and judgement of Humanism, but nevertheless fascinating in a poetic way (ibid. 154-155).

The inspirationally sublime effect of a Neo-Gothic building proved to be fruitful in the case of Horace Walpole – sixteen years after starting his ominous enterprise of redecorating a cottage into Strawberry Hill (see Pevsner 275), the replica of a mediaeval castle, he wrote to a friend to whom he had sent a copy of a book, a "romance" written by Walpole himself:

> Your partiality to me and Strawberry have, I hope, inclined you to excuse the wildness of the story. You will even have found some traits to put you in mind of this place. When you read of the picture quitting its panel, did you not recollect the portrait of Lord Falkland, all in white, in my Gallery? Shall I confess to you, what was the origin of this romance! I waked one morning […] from a dream, of which all I could recover was that I thought myself in an ancient castle […], and that on the uppermost banister of a great staircase I saw a gigantic hand in armour. In the evening I sat down, and began to write, without knowing in the least what I intended to say or to relate. The work grew on my hands, and I grew fond of it […]. (Walpole, *Letter* 282-283)

The result was the birth of what most scholars agreed to call the first Gothic novel in English literature – *The Castle of Otranto*. It was an enormous success (see Cuddon 356) and proved to be the beginning of both an important and successful literary genre.

A different understanding of nature and the revaluation of Gothic ruins and architecture were effects of Burke's concept of sublime (see Botting 39-40). Irregularity, grandeur, ornamentation and durability inspired feelings of terror and awe that were said to "expand or elevate the soul and imagination with a sense of power and infinity" (ibid. 38). In contrast to the concept of beauty, the sublime could not be processed by rationality but solely via excessive emotion (ibid. 39). Considering these factors, it becomes clear that the notion of the sublime as a key element of the Gothic was constructed by a clear difference to classical ideals:

> Associated with wildness, Gothic signified an over-abundance of imaginative frenzy, untamed by reason und unrestrained by conventional eighteenth-century demands for simplicity, realism or probability. (ibid. 3)

This aesthetic excess does not just find its expression in architecture, but also in literature. The new literary productions are characterised by a fascination of "transgression and the anxiety over cultural limits and boundaries" as well as "objects and practices that are constructed as negative, irrational, immoral and fantastic" (ibid. 2), as we will see in the next chapter.

2.3 The Gothic novel

Many definitions of the literary genre of Gothic focus on two particular elements, namely the intended reactions of readers and certain narrative conventions. The aim of Gothic texts was to heighten the emotional response of its audience: "Gothic produced emotional effects on its readers" (Botting 4). Botting describes Gothic fiction as “designed to quicken readers’ pulses in terrified expectation […] [and] to promote a sense of sublime awe and wonder which entwined with fear and elevated imaginations” (44). Ellis also stresses the importance of emotions in the genre, both by depicting the characters’ thoughts and feelings as well as by evoking emotional reactions in the audience: "[t]he principle of pathos, arousing feelings in the reader, is established as the primary pattern for consumption of these works" (9). In contrast to literary works of Humanism and the Enlightenment, Gothic texts "chilled [the readers’] blood, delighted their superstitious fancies and fed uncultivated appetites for marvellous and strange events, instead of instructing the readers with moral lessons" (Botting 4). Heavy criticism followed soon – Gothic literature was accused

of subverting moral and social values, causing excesses of emotions and giving free reign to personal ambitions, sexual desires and violent behaviour (ibid. 4).

The other aspect to which numerous definitions of Gothic refer is the repeated use of certain narrative devices, such as settings, plot elements and characters: "dark, subterranean vaults, decaying abbeys, gloomy forests, jagged mountains and wild scenery inhabited by bandits, persecuted heroines, orphans, and malevolent aristocrats" (ibid. 44), "a gloomy castle replete with dungeons, subterranean passages, and sliding panels, […] ghosts, mysterious disappearances and other sensational and supernatural occurrences" (Abrams 72), or

> wild and desolate landscapes, dark forests, ruined abbeys, feudal halls and mediaeval castles with dungeons, secret passages, winding stairways, oubliettes, sliding panels and torture chambers; monstrous apparitions and curses; a stupefying atmosphere of doom and gloom; heroes and heroines in the direst of imaginable straits, wicked tyrants, malevolent witches, demonic powers of unspeakably hideous aspect, and a proper complement of spooky effects and clanging spectres…" (Cuddon 356)

The mere enlisting of narrative props has been criticised as a too vague definition (see Thomas 34-35). Nevertheless, it shows that the genre operates with highly conventionalised narrative elements.

However, it is not only the recurring use of these conventions that has lead to the derogatory reputation of triviality and trash in Gothic writing (see Botting 22). New possibilities of literary production and a reorganisation of the established social class system resulted in a larger reading public – through technological advancements in the fields of literary production and publication, such as cheaper printing processes and the invention of circulating libraries, new trends in literature became accessible to a greater number of potential readers (see Thomas 32, Botting 46). Moreover, the rise of the middle class favoured the expansion of a reading audience and literary market. Being excluded from public life and spatially limited to domestic spheres, middle class women had the time and leisure to indulge in reading novels, the emerging literary genre (see Thomas 32, 52).[4] As a consequence, authors no longer wrote for a single patron but had to adapt to the taste and preferences of a growing

[4] In this context, Botting mentions the "feminisation of reading practices and markets" (4).

literary market (ibid. 32-33). Therefore, the Gothic novel is regarded as the "earliest genuinely popular literature" (Norton).

As a reaction to the rather marginalised status of Gothic literature,[5] Botting enumerates the various intertextual relations in Gothic texts and stresses the importance of this genre for the whole literary history:

> Articulating different, popular and often marginalised forms of writing in periods and genres privileged as Romanticism, Realism or Modernism, Gothic writing emerges as the thread that defines British literature. In the United States, where the literary canon composed of works in which the influence of romances and Gothic novels is far more overt, literature again seems virtually an effect of a Gothic tradition. Gothic can perhaps be called the only true literary tradition. (16)

As already mentioned, Gothic has often been reduced to and exclusively defined in terms of certain narrative conventions, which definitely has lead to its marginalisation. However, this prejudice is easily refuted - denying a development among Gothic narrative devices and to claim that the same stereotypes have been used from Walpole's *Otranto* until recent literary productions would be wrong. As Botting states, "it is impossible to define a fixed set of conventions" (15). Gothic is a form in which "cultural fears and fantasies are projected" (ibid. 20). Changing social and cultural conditions find their expression in narrative devices - thus, they differ from those of an earlier period. In how far Gothic conventions change from the eighteenth to the late nineteenth century will be addressed both in the following subchapters as well as in the course of comparing Gothic novels from different publication dates.

2.3.1 Settings

If we compare the three quotes from Botting, Abrams and Cuddon at the beginning of chapter 2.3, it becomes obvious that one of the most characteristic features of Gothic texts is the setting – a significant number of Gothic conventions can be categorised into the field of space: "Das gesamte gothic genre wird von räumlichen Strukturen, Tropen, Motiven und Bildern dominiert" (Thomas 40). This is realised in

[5] "Gothic productions never completely lost their earlier, negative connotations to become fully assimilated within the bounds of proper literature" (Botting 22).

the frequent occurrence of architectural constructions such as castles, dungeons and labyrinths (ibid. 40). They are so prominent that they are even eponymous of the narratives, as titles like *The Castle of Otranto*, *Northanger Abbey* or even *The Mysteries of Udolpho*[6] show.

A characteristic spatial feature of the Gothic is the frequent occurrence of hiding and hidden places (see Thomas 33-34). They embody and harbour numerous secrets and repressed wishes, desires and fears. Constructions such as secret rooms, chests, letter boxes as well as whole areas of a building and even castles and manors hold back secrets that either have to be discovered under opposing forces and difficult circumstances or that break out by themselves (ibid. 33-34). The hidden objects are always directly connected to the self of the protagonist. Either the character himself or herself is locked or other crucial information is kept away that directly affect a character, such as family relations and inheritance (ibid. 34). Thus, spatial constructions always have a direct connection to the characters' identity:

> Die verschiedenen Räume […] stehen daher in einem engen Zusammenhang mit dem entwurzelten und fragmentierten Subjekt, das auf einer Reise durch diese unterschiedlichen Räume eine Selbstwerdung durchläuft (ibid. 34).

Closely connected to the frequent occurrence of secret hiding places is the use of confined space. The places are often described as extremely restricting – they are dominated by a sense of imprisonment and isolation (ibid. 40-41). Thus, limitations and barriers are also prevalent themes of the Gothic.

At the beginning of Gothic fiction, the castle was the dominant setting among the buildings described in texts (see Botting 2). Characterised as "[d]ecaying, bleak and full of hidden passageways" (ibid. 2), it is inhabited by numerous threats and undiscovered mysteries (see Thomas 95). In this way, it mirrors the character of its owner, the villain (ibid. 96). The ruinous and decaying castle can therefore be seen as a symbol of the conservative and corrupt patriarchal system (ibid. 96, 98) which poses an imminent threat to the heroine – her defenceless situation is revealed (ibid. 97).

[6] The estate of Udolpho is the primary setting of Ann Radcliffe's novel.

Castles in early Gothic fiction stand in the tradition of Gothic design and architecture that has been discussed in chapter 2.2 - they were described as inspiring feelings of awe, confusion, and sublime. As I have already mentioned before, the art of Gothic buildings stands in clear opposition to Humanist ideals of beauty – ornamental details mislead the observing gaze. The whole building is no longer easy to overlook, the spectator is subjected to the building. In Gothic texts, this concept is exaggerated to the extreme. Apart from the threats that lurk in the dark chambers of the castle, in some instances it seems as if the building itself wants to harm its inhabitants. As it will become obvious in the analysis of *Otranto*, the architectural design can impede the heroine's escape and increase her fear. Thus, Gothic edifices often prove to be an obstacle the Gothic protagonist has to overcome.

2.3.2 Plot

As already mentioned, the use of certain narrative conventions is a defining element of Gothic literature. Thomas claims that they appear in "nahezu jedem konstituierenden Aspekt des Romans" (3) – in the course of this paper, I will mainly focus on three levels of a Gothic texts that heavily draw from stereotypical elements: plot, characters and settings.

In many cases, the plot strictly follows a certain pattern – it tells the story of the

> verwaiste und unschuldige Heldin, die eingesperrt in einem mysteriösen und zerfallenen Schloss die Angriffe einer bösen und zutiefst patriarchalischen Vaterfigur abwehren muss. An der Peripherie der Erzählung findet man für gewöhnlich einen tadellosen, aber ineffektiven Helden, der [...] die Heldin am Ende in den wohlverdienten Hafen der Ehe führen wird. (Thomas 4)

This narrative schema which is said to have originated from the works of Ann Radcliffe (ibid 4) has often been criticized as "a rigidly formulaic plot" (Williams 102) – even in Gothic narratives of the nineteenth and twentieth century it has undergone only very few and slight alterations (Thomas 4). Even though it is presented by Thomas as a typical plot structure of the so-called "female Gothic", we will see in the second part of this thesis that it can also be applied to Walpole's *Otranto* and to some degree even to Lewis' *The Monk* and Stoker's *Dracula*.

Klein describes the starting point of a Gothic plot as being marked either by some sort of uncanny and mysterious event or, more generally, a stable situation being shaken by evil forces (see Klein 144). The way those forces will affect and threaten the main characters at later stages is an essential component in the Gothic creation of suspense (ibid. 145).

The typical ending can be reduced to two crucial elements – the rewarding of virtuous and the punishment of morally dubious characters. The latter does not just include the villain but also various figures that have transgressed social laws, such as sexually active women that violate norms of absolute chastity (see Loidolt 23). Her moral counterpart, the Gothic heroine, is rewarded by a promising marriage that re-establishes her into society – the union with the romantic hero ensures financial, social and moral security (see Thomas 85).

The villain, however, has to face the terrible consequences of his hubris – his own destruction. The punishment may be executed by the sudden and highly dramatic appearance of a supernatural being, which Loidolt even regards as a characteristic feature of the Gothic world: "rolling thunder announces the coming of real devils and saints […] who decide on Man's damnation or salvation" (180). The occurrence of the supernatural is, according to Williams (104), a feature of male Gothic fiction which "demands our acceptance of a supernatural realm far beyond us (the Super-Law of the Super-Father who exacts terrible punishment)" (ibid.145) – the female plot ends with a rational explanation of allegedly mysterious and supernatural occurrences (ibid. 145).

The presence of a spirit often does not only ensure the punishment of the villain, but often also prompts another crucial point in the Gothic plot, namely the revelation of unknown family secrets or relations (see Thomas 3, Williams 45). Long-forgotten branches of family trees, hushed-up hereditary titles and carefully concealed parentages always turn out to be a vital source for potential plot-turnings. Thus, the dramatic revealing of the characters' biographical backgrounds often combines different plot lines and serves as an explanation of preceding events. Therefore the characters' lineage and descent create a considerable impact on plot lines and in many cases, "Gothic plots are family plots" (Williams 22). According to Williams,

the importance of individual ancestry combines Gothic settings with typical narrative structures:

> The latent pun of "house" as a "structure" and as "family line" is a crucial link between Gothic conventions of setting and those of plot. Occurring in spaces associated with particular families, Gothic plots are also structured according to the ramifications of the family tree. Resolution of the conventional Gothic mystery coincides with the revelation of a particular family secret, usually a hitherto unrecognized aspect of family relationship […]." (ibid 45)

Loidolt observes that, according to the rules of the Gothic world, the main characters can only face three different outcomes at the end: "As a result the characters either have to die at the end of the novel […] or they return to their world of virtuous happiness […] or they are murdered and therefore become the perfect image of the elevated, angelic woman" (18). The first two possibilities have already been discussed before – evil is punished and virtuousness rewarded. The latter type is, however, slightly more complex. This category includes figures that are no antagonists but nevertheless have to suffer a tragic ending, such as "fallen" women. In contrast to the "femme fatale", who is an active and powerful figure, the "fallen" woman "suffers profoundly because she is socially ostracised" (ibid. 35).

2.3.3 Characters

Apart from various minor figures there are usually two major characters in the classic Gothic novel that oppose each other – the villain and the heroine. Similarly to certain types of setting, these two characters are emblematic of the Gothic genre.

The main character trait of the Gothic villain is his aggressive "[s]triving […] for power and masculine self-realisation" (Loidolt 174). His megalomania, immorality and passion corrupt him and pervert him into a depraved, sadist monster that violently imposes his will on others but that finally leads himself towards his own destruction (ibid. 174). He consciously represses good virtues in order to maintain or gain power, being convinced that the end justifies the means (ibid. 175). Being unable to face his own atrocities, the blame is put on others to avoid or soothe a guilty conscience (ibid. 182).

Thus, the Gothic villain has been regarded as a fictional experiment of releasing the dark and morally rejected sides of the human psyche: "[T]he fascination seems to lie in the depiction of Man uncontrolled, obsessed and powerful, frantically rebelling against social norms and moral conventions for the sake of individualism, self-preservation and dominion" (ibid. 177).

On the one hand, the villain mirrors the fascination of breaking social and moral boundaries and rebelling against personal limitations; on the other, he represents the fear of anarchy and chaos and their disastrous social consequences (ibid. 179). Descriptions about his character often draw a connection to lunacy, as he excessively indulges in his destructive drives and thereby seems to abandon reason completely (ibid 183). As already mentioned, the villain usually faces a horrible end – his deviational behaviour cannot be tolerated without severe punishment and fatal consequences for himself.

Many fall prey to the infamous plotting and vicious character of the villain, but the most iconic victim is undoubtedly the Gothic heroine. In many ways, she can be regarded as his counterpart.[7] Innocent, fragile, virtuous and inexperienced with the dangers of the Gothic world, she is threatened by the villain who plans her destruction. In most cases, the heroine is on her own – protective characters such as parents are absent, either due to spatial remoteness or nonexistence.[8]

Thomas terms this state of abandonment the *motherless space*, thereby focussing on the absence of the mother as someone who protects her daughter from the dangers of the outside world, who serves as a role model and who facilitates the transition into adulthood and the initiation into society (5, 7-8, 46-48). On the one hand, this situation opens up various possibilities and grants the heroine a certain amount of freedom and autonomy, but on the other it makes her even more vulnerable and exposed towards Gothic menace. Being described as the prototypical "angelic woman" (Loidolt 22), the heroine hardly actively opposes the villain. As a defence, she often resorts to passive resistance – thereby she does not need to break with

[7] Loidolt, for instance, argues that the Gothic heroine is the villain's "mirror-self or his double", as she embodies all virtues which are considered to be specifically feminine and which the villain thus consciously represses and rejects in his own character (60).
[8] I will later on comment on the absence on the heroine's mother and its impact on the heroine's life.

socially determined female role patterns. Instead, she can cunningly utilise her weakness as a means of escaping perilous situations (see Thomas 80). A deviation from that role pattern is punished harshly, as it becomes obvious regarding the figures of "fallen women" and *femmes fatales*.

Thomas and Loidolt mention several other prototypical figures of early Gothic fiction, such as good fathers, servants, sisters and the romantic hero. They are just briefly mentioned in this chapter to demonstrate the number of conventional figures – in the course of the analysis of the Gothic texts they will receive greater attention.

2.4 Summary

So far, I have mentioned various approaches towards the notion of Gothic in its various facets, thereby putting particular emphasis on architecture and buildings, as this field reveals various parallels to literature and has a tremendous influence on Gothic writing, which has been described by Thomas as the "Dominanz des Räumlichen" (33).

However, space is just one major issue in Gothic fiction. In the course of this chapter I have touched various manifestations and characteristics of Gothic and, unlike in the previous theoretical chapter about suspense, I have refrained from trying to find one common definition that should capture the essence of the term. As I have illustrated, the notion of Gothic is context-dependent, thus making an all-encompassing definition nearly impossible.

> Die große Fülle an Manifestationsformen und die generelle Offenheit des Konzepts sorgen dabei sowohl für die andauernde Attraktivität von *gothic* als auch für die verwirrende Vielfalt von Definitionsvorschlägen. Ist *gothic* ein historischer Begriff, ein gesamtästhetisches Konzept oder bezieht es sich ausschließlich auf die Literatur? (Thomas 32)

Despite the fact that all the various meanings of the term are closely connected to each other, we must always keep in mind in which historical context it is used. In the eighteenth century Gothic referred to earlier historical periods such as Runic or Old Icelandic, Germanic, and, most of all, mediaeval (see Haslag 160). If the term is used in a modern literary context, however, it denotes "eighteenth-century fiction

modelled on mediaeval romance, as well as later works growing out of the tradition thus established" (Carter 5).

This distinction is based on a conception of Gothic that perceives it as a historically independent tendency. I strongly support Botting's view that understands

> Gothic writing as a mode that exceeds genre and categories, restricted neither to a literary school nor to a historical period. The diffusion of Gothic features across texts and historical periods distinguishes Gothic as a hybrid form, incorporating and transforming other literary forms as well as developing and changing its own conventions in relation to newer modes of writing (14).[9]

Therefore, definitions of Gothic that *exclusively* list particular props such as old castles, dark woods, hidden passages and damsels in distress are superficial and irrelevant for further critical study, as they only enumerate the various realisations of common Gothic motifs in a certain context.

3. Approach towards the analysis of suspense in Gothic fiction

Basically there are two methods to research into the topic of suspense - the analysis of the audience or the text (see Ringswirth 18). This paper exclusively focuses on the latter. Studying reader reactions can definitely provide equally interesting insights, but it would require a completely different approach. Thus, a text-based analysis excludes certain aspects, such as the dispositions of the reader which intensify the relations towards characters (see Ringswirth 32-36) and also the experience of suspense based on individual (see Mikos 38-39) or situational factors (see Vorderer 243-245). Instead, it concentrates on narrative devices which aim to engage the audience and heighten their emotional reception. This chapter will explain my approach to describe and analyse these techniques in Gothic novels.

Comparing the systems of Gothic and suspense, it may have become obvious that they share some similarities. Both have been defined in terms of various textual

[9] For the twentieth and twenty-first century, it even would be necessary to enlarge the concept of Gothic to other forms of media such as graphic novels, films and computer games.

aspects - as already mentioned, Gothic and suspense manifest in certain characteristics on the story level of a text. One instance of that is the presentation of characters, which serves as a medium of directly influencing reader reactions and also represents a vital part of the Gothic repertoire. The actual story is another layer on which both the Gothic as well as suspense are expressed. Suspense is commonly structured according to a five-act model and also Gothic novels often follow a similar sequence of events and make use of particular motifs. Even the narrative use of locations can be a common denominator - similar to the presentation of characters, it can be counted among typical Gothic conventions. However, it is also used in the creation of suspense (see Wulff 9).

The three aspects I have just mentioned - the presentation of characters, story and settings - can thus be considered as a common ground of Gothic and suspense. I have chosen to focus on them as they are most likely to provide answers to the question as to how suspense is realised and shaped by the Gothic in works of fiction. *Otranto*, *The Monk* and *Dracula* will serve as representatives of the Gothic novel and its development from the early beginning until late nineteenth century.

I have already mentioned that Gothic has been described as the manifestation of cultural fears and anxieties (see Botting 2). In order to account for possible changes in use and realisation of the three aspects of story, characters and settings, it will therefore be necessary to provide occasional historical and cultural footnotes. Furthermore, it is crucial to bear in mind that the chapters analysing these three factors do not provide an ultimate or fixed set of determining features of the Gothic per se. They should rather be regarded as a number of possible Gothic forms which are subject to constant change.

I have adopted Späth's notion of thrill in the analysis of the plot and its motifs. The issue of transgression is a distinct feature of all three Gothic novels - not only as a motor which propels the story, but also as a source of suspense. However, the approaches to suspense I have presented so far fail to cover this area in its totality. Of course, we could argue that by showing a character who actively and deliberately violates the moral standards in order to pursue his/her plans, he or she is

automatically established as an antagonist - he or she is not only a threat to the protagonist(s), but also to the social system. Therefore, the stakes are raised as well.

However, do the mere facts that the antagonist is presented as a threatening and powerful villain and the heightening of the stakes really account for the enormous reader involvement created by the depiction of the most atrocious crimes? In fact, those explanations seem rather weak and scrape only the surface of this phenomenon. Moreover, they cannot fully grasp the nature of the various transgressions - they merely acknowledge the existence of the violations against norms, but they fail to distinguish between those violations and to offer explanations why they produce this kind of involvement. Späth's approach, however, is able to analyse this area and categorise the motifs which lead to the experience of a very intense form of reader involvement.

Based on the works of Wulff and Fill I have also chosen to consider the impact of the discourse level of a text. A closer inspection of cataphora and retardation does not only grant a more holistic view on the use of suspense, but can also grasp the peculiarities of a text and a large part of its reading experience. To neglect these areas would mean to ignore a vast source of suspense and reader involvement created by the novels.

Thus, I have chosen five different points for the analysis of suspense in the Gothic novel - three of them are part of the story level, two should cover the discourse level of the texts. Based on the theories already mentioned, we can expect them to be the major sources of the creation of suspense. Their realisation as well as their development throughout the course of the three novels shall be the main focus of this paper. Based on that, I shall ultimately try to find an answer to the question if there is a certain type of suspense which emerges from the Gothic novel.

However, at this point I want to emphasise that the object of this paper is not a detailed historical analysis of suspense in the sense of Ackermann. This would require the research into three major areas: firstly, the text per se, secondly, the contemporary readership, and thirdly, the contemporary status of suspense (see

Ackermann 37-38). Naturally I will discuss the text in question, but to cover the other two areas would go far beyond the scope of this paper.

Moreover, this thesis consciously does not employ Ellen Moers's distinction between "male" and "female" Gothic. I disagree with Williams, who claims that "male" and "female" Gothic texts employ a completely different set of conventions. Due to numerous intertextual relations,[10] it is hard to find features that are exclusively employed in either male or female Gothic fiction. Considering this issue and the fact that features of both categories are relevant for the creation of suspense, I will neglect the distinction between male and female texts in this thesis. Nevertheless I will touch some of the theory of feminist/gender studies approaches (e.g. Thomas), as they provide valuable explanations for the source and impact of some textual issues.

After having provided an overview of the most important areas in the theory of suspense and the concept of Gothic in the former chapters, I will now begin with the analysis of the three novels. They are presented according to their chronological release dates, which means that *Otranto* will be the first novel to analyse, *The Monk* the second one and finally *Dracula*. Each of the three texts will be examined according to the following pattern.

A short introduction about the text is immediately followed by a closer inspection of the plot and structure of the text. Thereby the plot structure is compared to the typical five-act suspense schema in order to see which parts are dominant and rather elaborate. Then the text is analysed according to Späth's theory of thrill - motifs which correspond to the three main drives described by Koch (crimen, fructus, sexus) are highlighted and explained. Special attention is dedicated to cases in which those drives are intertwined and which thus address taboos.

The next step will be to focus on the depiction of characters with regard to their impact on the reader. In what ways does the text create empathy in the audience?

[10] For instance, Walpole's *Otranto*, a text considered as typically male, highly influenced the work of Ann Radcliffe, which has often been considered as a hallmark of female Gothic. Matthew Lewis' *Monk* was inspired by Ann Radcliffe (see Peck 22), who again wrote *The Italian* as a response to Lewis' scandalous work (see Botting 76).

Which characters are marked as antagonists and how is distance created? What are similarities and differences in the presentation of stock characters such as the Gothic villain or the Gothic heroine in comparison to the other novels?

At this point I want to refer again to the fact that there are various theories about the nature of the relationship between the audience and literary figures and about the qualities a character must possess in order to establish such a relation. In the course of the analysis of the texts, I will focus on empathy and its textual features.

The next aspect which will be discussed is the use of settings. Basically, nature as well as artificial constructions will be addressed - however, the latter category will receive greater attention. As I have already illustrated in the previous chapters, the fields of Gothic architecture and literature are closely intertwined. Therefore, examining the roles of edifices and architecture in general in the texts will not only render a new perspective, but will also address a defining issue of the relation of suspense and Gothic narratives. Settings, especially artificially constructed sites play a crucial role in the development of suspense in Gothic narratives.

There are many factors that determine the influence of Gothic settings in the creation of suspense. One major issue is the relation between spaces and characters – in what way do certain places pose a threat to the protagonists? Which textual features stress the power differences between a character and his or her surroundings? Which secrets do certain places guard that may determine the fate of one or even more characters? In which ways are they revealed? These questions merely serve as some sort of general guidelines that aim to analyse the type of relation between Gothic locations and suspense. Every text has its own specialities in this field, which will naturally be addressed in the course of the analysis.

Finally, the impact of features on the discourse level on the creation of suspense will be examined. Thereby the main focus lies on the use of retardation and cataphora. Similar to the previous chapters about suspense on the story level, I will point out similarities and differences to the other novels and developments of particular features in these areas. Generally, the endeavour to compare and contrast the texts with each other will be constantly pursued throughout the course of the whole thesis.

4. Suspense in *The Castle of Otranto*

> The gentle maid, whose hapless tale
> These melancholy pages speak;
> Say, gracious lady, shall she fail
> To draw the tear adown thy cheek? (1-4)

At the very beginning of *The Castle of Otranto*, a sonnet dedicated to the "RIGHT HONOURABLE LADY MARY COKE" (*Otranto*,[11] 15) prepares the reader for a moving tale. It already anticipates possible reader reactions, particularly a heightened emotional involvement.

In 1764, when the novel was first published, Walpole used the pseudonym of William Marshal. Moreover, he denied authorship and claimed to be merely the translator and editor of an alleged Italian manuscript found in the library of a Catholic family in Northern England (see *Otranto* 8). This kind of "Herausgeberfiktion", as Trautwein (21) calls it, is in fact a rather common narrative device in fiction of the eighteenth century (see Ellis 28).[12] It derived from the fascination of remnants from the past - the same impulse which was also responsible for the popularity of ruins - and which should establish the text as genuine and authentic (see Kilgour 21).

However, in the preface to the second edition, Walpole finally confirms the authorship and excuses himself for misleading the readership - he originally wanted to distance himself from the text, as he feared severe criticism (see *Otranto* 11). Obviously he did not foresee the popularity and success of his work - about thirty years later, *Otranto*'s ninth edition had already been published (see Ellis 27). This chapter analyses the use of suspense in this novel - an ingredient which has certainly contributed to the popularity of the initiator of a new literary genre.

[11] Due to practical reasons, I will abbreviate the title of the novel to *Otranto* from now on.
[12] For more examples of Gothic novels which deny their fictitiousness and pretend to be historical fragments, see Gordon (59-68).

4.1 A "hapless tale"[13] – the story

4.1.1 Plot structure and suspense schema

Conrad, Manfred‘s only male heir, is slain by a giant helmet on his wedding day. Fearing his lineage might become extinct, Manfred wants to marry his son‘s fiancée, Isabella. However, she manages to flee and hides in a nearby church. In the meantime Theodore, a young peasant, is falsely accused of being Isabella’s lover, whereupon Manfred plans his execution. However, in the last moment Father Jerome notices a mark on Theodore’s shoulder and recognises him as his own lost son. He pleads Manfred to spare Theodore's life. Manfred agrees under the condition that Jerome should turn Isabella over to him. Suddenly Frederic, Isabella’s father, appears and challenges Manfred to a battle, claiming that he is the rightful heir of Otranto. Manfred, however, refuses to fight and instead invites the whole party to dinner. Meanwhile, Matilda and Theodore fall in love; in a secret meeting between the two lovers Manfred mistakes Matilda for Isabella and stabs her. A heavy thunderstorm arises and the walls of the castle are destroyed by a mighty force. The ghost of Alfonso, the founder of Otranto, appears in the form of a giant and reveals that Theodore is the true heir of all possessions. Manfred, realising that the death of his children has extinguished his family, meets the consequences of his vanity and ambition. He confesses that his ancestors have usurped Otranto and the story of the true heir is revealed. Manfred signs his abdication for the principality and he and his wife, Hippolyta, enter a convent. After a very long time of grieving for Matilda, Theodore and Isabella finally become a couple and thus fulfil Matilda’s last wish.

Otranto has been described as "tightly drawn, fitting into a strict structure that is not allowed to dissipate or become uncontrolled" (Ellis 30). Indeed it is the shortest of the three texts which are analysed in this thesis - nevertheless, it contains a rather ample plot, considering all the analeptic episodes which should uncover and explain family relations and titles. Thus, it is marked by fast pacing.

[13] *Otranto* 15.

Concerning the classic suspense pattern, the initiating event is displayed in a rather prominent way. Conrad's death is a bombshell. The audience shares the same kind of reactions with the wedding guests in the story who are "struck with terror and amazement" (*Otranto* 17-18). The incident is both shocking and surprising, no textual clues have predicted the tragic event. However, it is not merely the fact that the bridegroom was killed shortly before his marriage which startles the audience, but also the unusual circumstances of his death - he was slain by a giant helmet. This creates a numinous atmosphere, establishes the existence of the fantastic and serves as a cataphoric reference towards the ensuing catastrophe.

The next phase of the suspense schema, the involvement of the reader, is present in the portrayal of the female figures. Their good nature stands in contrast to the hardships they have to face and their suffering. By confronting the reader with their emotional outbreaks, their subject role and the perilous and unfortunate situations they bump into, the novel influences the reader's empathy.

This tension between the fragility and naïveté of the protagonists and the constant menace creates numerous oscillating moments between hope and fear. On the one hand, Isabella's flight through the subterranean vaults opens up the possibility of escape and freedom. On the other, it also poses a great risk, as Isabella is unacquainted with this part of the castle and the threats of losing her way or slipping put her in grave physical danger. Moreover, she is pursued by Manfred, who has already been established as vengeful, cold-hearted and hot-tempered - if she was caught, he would certainly vent his anger on her.

Another instance of this suspense phase is the scene of Theodore's impending decapitation (see *Otranto* 43-45). Manfred is moved by Jerome's story and guarantees his son's freedom if the friar obeys Manfred's commands. However, this hope is obliterated in the next moment, as he keeps Theodore hostage to ensure that Jerome will return Isabella to him. Thus, Theodore's life depends on Manfred's mood swings.

Interestingly, this scene is not only an example of the oscillation between hope and fear, but it also features retardation. Theodore's punishment is interrupted by the sudden appearance of Frederic and his knights:

> [E]re Manfred could reply, the trampling of horses was heard, and a brazen trumpet, which hung with the gate of the castle, was suddenly sounded. At the same instant the sable plumes on the enchanted helmet, which still remained at the other end of the court, were tempestuously agitated, and nodded thrice, as if bowed by some invisible wearer. (ibid. 44)

As the whole chapter ends in this way, it can be classified as a cliffhanger. Frederic demands the surrendering of Otranto and Isabella's freedom, but Manfred cunningly manages to avoid a direct confrontation by hosting a banquet. He even tries to evade Frederic's demands by offering him his daughter's hand. - In fact, the whole banquet can be regarded as a form of retardation. Frederic falls prey to Manfred's distraction, he nearly gives in to worldly pleasures and forgets about his original intentions. However, when he looks for Hippolita to seduce her, he only finds a skeleton that exhorts him to remember the true cause of his visit and to forget Matilda (ibid.74-75).

From this moment, the events rush towards the final resolving - after Matilda's murder the ghosts of Alfonso and St Nicholas appear and proclaim Theodore as the true heir. After that, the missing pieces of personal biographies are narrated that support Theodore's claim to Otranto. The last passage only describes the scattering of the family and the sad rest of the protagonists' lives.

All in all, the suspense pattern of *Otranto* is marked by a rather distinct initiating event which immediately catches the reader's attention and involvement. However, also the resolving is presented in a highly dramatic scene. The suspense does not merely reside but culminates into a huge horrific climax. Besides, various moments of hope and fear during the novel form a significant part of the creation of suspense.

4.1.2 "[M]y bloody hands to the heart of my child"[14] - motifs and thrill

One of the motifs which is most prominently represented in the novel is the issue of succession and its negative and violent counterpoint - usurpation. Striving to preserve his family lineage, Manfred is determined to produce an heir, whatever it may cost. He is greatly affected and anxious due to an ancient prophecy which is already presented at the beginning of the novel and which clearly also conveys a cataphoric reference:

> [T]*he castle and lordship of Otranto should pass from the present family, whenever the real owner should be grown too large to inhabit it*. (*Otranto* 17)

It soon turns out that the "real owner" is not Manfred, as his grandfather has usurped the title. Instead, it is "peasant prince" Theodore (Ellis 34), whose true origins are only revealed at the very end. *Otranto* is full of revelations about ancestry and individual backstories - Jerome turns out to be Theodore's father and Theodore Alfonso's grandson and the rightful heir of Otranto. Thus, some of the main themes are "usurpation and bastardy contest" as well as "primogeniture" (ibid. 34). As Ellis states,

> although this gothic novel is about dreams of ghosts and monstrous calamities, it is actually about families and children. (34)

However, this familial theme soon becomes a source of thrill. Manfred is a model of a tyrant patriarch - ruthless and hot-tempered, he abuses his power to get his way. In his rage he even stabs Matilda, his own daughter and sole offspring. This theme of filicide crosses the boundaries between two drives, namely fructus and crimen. Even if this combination is most dominant in this passage, it pervades the whole story. It includes the usurpation as well as Manfred's cruel behaviour towards his family members.

Also crimen in its pure form can be found in the novel. Wenzel mentions that “Verfolgung und Flucht, Gewalt, Kampf und Gefahr, Blutrache, Mord und das große Duell zwischen unversöhnlichen Feinden” (25) can be categorised as crimen. Most of those instances can easily be identified in the story. Conrad's death, Matilda's

[14] *Otranto* 76.

murder and Theodore's impending execution fall into the category of bloodshed and Frederick's appearance at the start of the third chapter resembles the typical beginning of a fight between adversaries.

An instance of persecution and flight and perhaps the most iconic example of crimen in *Otranto* is Isabella's escape from the castle. The text frequently alludes to her disadvantaged position - she is aware that Manfred knows the castle better than she does. She hopes to reach the altar of the church through the secret vaults before Manfred, as she assumes that he would refrain from indulging in his violent passions in a sacred place. Motivated by these thoughts, she flees into the subterranean passages. However, during her escape she does not only risk to fall prey to Manfred's wrath. There is also the possibility of getting hopelessly lost without anyone noticing it. Thus, she is fully subjected to her surroundings. In fact, the text frequently alludes to differences in power in various ways - not only characters, but also certain locations seem to have the upper hand and potentially pose a threat towards other figures. Due to ample depictions of power imbalance, Späth's definition of thrill can be fully applied.

Späth also mentions a "sexuelle Bedrohung des Sympathieträgers" (170) as a possible trigger of thrill. In the novel, this is realised by Manfred forcing Isabella to marry him. His justification is the preservation of his lineage, he is determined to "use the human means in [his] power for preserving [his] race" (*Otranto* 23) - even without Isabella's consent. Thus, if he took measures to produce an heir, it would definitely lead to raping Isabella. Ellis states that "[h]is threat to marry Isabella is a covert, and legal, attempt to rape her" (37). In this instance, two drives are combined and transgressed: sexus (procreation) and crimen (violence).

However, this is not the only instance of sexual deviance Manfred would fall guilty if he married her. Originally, Isabella has been intended to marry his son Conrad, which makes her Manfred's daughter-in-law. By marrying her, Manfred does not only commit adultery and bigamy (he is already married to Hippolyta), but also incest, which is a combination of fructus and sexus. He is even made aware of his transgressions by Jerome when he refers to Manfred's "incestuous design on [his] contracted daughter" (*Otranto* 39). However, he does not let go of his plans - he even

gets more and more entangled in the web of his temper, his tyranny and his desperate measures to produce an heir, which finally culminates in the murder of Matilda.

Ellis claims that sexuality is a "significant motivating force" in *Otranto* and "passions are heightened to the extent that they become ruling passions." (35) However, even if some sexual transgressions are addressed, sexuality per se is never explicitly mentioned or depicted in a scene. The text only addresses marriage and procreation for the sake of preserving a lineage - even if sexuality plays a decisive role, the reader has to infer it.

Nevertheless, *Otranto* offers a number of passages for the experience of thrill. Transgression is a main issue which manifests in motifs as filicide, usurpation, rape and incest. Moreover, differences in power between the villain and the heroine are frequently addressed, which builds up a "prey and predator theme" (Loidolt 32). In how far this is fostered by means of characterisation will be discussed in the course of the next chapter.

4.2 "Exquisite villainy"[15] – characters

Otranto employs the typical Gothic dichotomous constellation of the main characters - the villain versus the heroine, good versus evil, male versus female. The two gender polarisations can be directly compared to the two binary opposites of morality - in contrast to the other novels which will be analysed, *Otranto* is the only one which links femininity directly and invariably to virtuousness (see Loidolt 107).

Indeed, each of the three female main figures are unambiguously portrayed in positive terms - they are characterised by their good-heartedness, amiability, naïveté and gentleness. Right from the beginning, the text establishes their close relation towards each other: Hippolita, her mother-in-law, has treated Isabella like her own daughter. Isabella "returned that tenderness with equal duty and affection" (*Otranto* 19) and also shares with Matilda a deep amicable relationship. The shock of Conrad's

[15] *Otranto* 31.

death displays the mutual warm affection as they care for each other and try to soothe their grief as well as calm their nerves.

Moreover, they are nearly constantly put into dangerous situations to highlight the contrast between their own fragility and physical weakness and the gravity of the menacing threat they have to face, which intensifies the reader responses in terms of feeling sympathy and "Rührungsthrill" (Späth 156).

However, in the course of the novel it soon becomes apparent that the three women also differ from each other. A generational gap is depicted between Hippolita and the two younger women. When they complain about Manfred's ruthless determination and his plans for their future, they are refused any active support from her: "It is not ours to make elections for ourselves; heaven, our fathers, and our husbands, must decide for us. [...] Heaven may interpose and prevent the rest" (*Otranto* 65).

In order to fully comprehend this reaction, let us have a closer look at the character of Hippolita. Basically, the text describes her as flawless, even Manfred asserts that she is "a faultless woman: her soul is set on heaven, and scorns the little grandeur of this world" (ibid 38). She is a woman who is deeply devout - in her case, this entails full passivity and obedience towards male authorial figures, such as fathers and husbands, but also clergymen. She holds a highly deterministic view: "heaven does nothing in vain: mortals must receive its divine behests with lowliness and submission. It is our part to deprecate its wrath, or bow to its decrees" (ibid. 59). Instead of actively shaping her destiny and opposing negative forces, she passively waits for them: "What new calamities has fate in store for us?" (ibid. 65).

Both Matilda and Isabella hold Hippolita in high regard, but at the same time detach themselves from her extreme passivity. In speaking their mind and actively crossing their father's wishes, they try to take up the reins of their own lives - Isabella refuses to marry Manfred and flees and Matilda falls in love with Theodore, frees him and secretly meets him. Thus, I have to disagree with Loidolt who claims that "Matilda is a perfect example for the eighteenth century ideal of filial obedience" (111) who "proves to be an ardent disciple of Hippolita's lectures on submission" (112). If it were so, she would not have acted against her father's commands and enabled

Theodore's escape. Instead, she and Isabella prove that "it is possible, and even valid, for young women to rebel against autocratic fathers" (Ellis 34) and thus to "maintain[...] the independent moral agency of women" (ibid. 35).

Their struggles are even more impressive as the young women are depicted in a highly fragile way - especially Isabella. At the beginning of the story, she is believed to be an orphan; her mother died in her birth and her father was said to have died in a crusade. As soon as this is known to Manfred, he bribes her guards and leads her to Otranto to marry her to his son. Therefore, the first and most dangerous threat already appears in the same moment as the new situation of orphanhood presents itself to Isabella: the moving to Otranto, where Isabella is left unprotected and at the mercy of her host. When she realises the increasing danger she flees from the castle to avoid the constant danger of sexual assault.

Her perilous situation is fostered by her mother-in-law's inability to protect Isabella. Thomas categorises figures like Hippolita into the group of substitute mothers who "verstärken die schutzlose und isolierte Position der Heldin im mutterlosen Raum" (63); in the case of Hippolita, it is due to her extreme submissive behaviour and her dedicated passivity. As already mentioned, she is well-disposed towards her daughter-in-law and treats her like her own child. However, Hippolita refrains from actively intervening into present events – even if they directly affect herself, as in the case of her planned divorce. She seems to have internalised patriarchal structures to a degree in which she even places them above her maternal protective instincts. Moreover, she is highly delusional, as she believes Manfred's "heart is good" (*Otranto* 64), thereby denying his dangerousness and violence. Thus, Isabella cannot expect any protection or help from her. Mother figures such as Hippolita perfectly illustrate the dependant and powerless position of women in the patriarchal Gothic society (see Thomas 64).

The characterisation of Matilda and Isabella bears numerous similarities, especially regarding their good-hearted nature and their role as a victim; both have been denied the possibility of choosing their husbands by themselves. Their planned marriage is arranged and exploited by Manfred to secure his own status as prince of Otranto. Matilda, however, proves to be the more active figure, as she chooses her lover and

pleads her mother to spare her from a marriage with Frederic, whereas Isabella fully resigned to marrying Conrad, although she "conceived little affection" towards him (*Otranto* 18) and was fully aware that this

> marriage […] promised her little felicity, either from her destined bridegroom, or from the severe temper of Manfred, who, though he had distinguished her by great indulgence, had imprinted her mind with terror, from his causeless rigour to such amiable princesses as Hippolita and Matilda. (ibid. 19)

This short passage already fully captures the whole characterisation of the main figures – Hippolita and Matilda are explicitly described as being likeable and Manfred as their antagonist, which should directly influence the reader's judgement of these figures right at the beginning of the story.

If the female characters embody virtuousness, Manfred can definitely be described as their evil counterpart. Megalomaniac, choleric and ruthless, he maltreats his family to pursue his own goals. As Ellis states, he is a model of "both political and domestic tyranny" (37). Whereas his female family members comfort each other in a time of crisis, he rejects their company, seeks isolation and commences his infamous plotting. He sends Matilda away in a rather abusive way and constantly blames Hippolita for her inability to give birth to more heirs. He abuses his wife's affection for him and relies on her submissiveness to consent to a divorce. Moreover, he even expects her to exert her influence over Isabella and influence her to marry Manfred. Thus, he is also completely indifferent to the consequences of his actions - he does not spend one single thought on the fact that he is tearing apart his family and plunging his wife and daughters into misery.

As I have already pointed out, by choosing his son's fiancée as his second wife Manfred practically falls guilty of incest, of which he is also warned by Jerome. Manfred, the corrupt and malevolent father figure, increases the problems of the heroine, as he abuses his family status and the trust and affection directed towards him to impose his will onto others and harm the heroine.

It has been argued that the negative portrayal of the father figure is a symptom of a critical glance upon a society that fosters "male egotism, abuse of authority and patriarchal domination" (Loidolt 172). The depiction of an extreme father-tyrant,

who abuses his power but fails at the end, points towards the ancient system of feudality that was closely associated with Gothic. The dangers of these social structures were the usurpation of body and property as well as the refusal of security by the exclusion of the social system (see Thomas 79), which is experienced by Isabella. The villain who embodies this corrupt aristocratic system stands against the female protagonist that represents the rising middle class with its values of monogamy, honesty, fidelity and decorum (ibid. 79). This is another factor which draws the sympathies of the reader towards the heroine - aristocracy, as embodied by Manfred, is clearly depicted as "other", as a source of corruption and danger.

However, in what ways does Manfred really pose a threat to Isabella? Is it merely her fragility and defenselessness against all kind of social and physical attacks which make the audience shudder for her safety or can the villain really be described as a dangerous man? - Probably the most iconic character trait of Manfred is his hot temper. He is easily provoked and constantly irritated, which already becomes obvious at the beginning - when confronted with his son's death, his first reactions are not grief and/or shock, but an inquisitive amazement, followed by annoyance. Usually he vents his full anger on the first person that crosses his way - at the beginning, it is Theodore, as he is the first person who speaks out publicly after the incident:

> Villain! What sayest thou? cried Manfred, starting from his trance in a tempest of rage, and seizing the young man by the collar: How darest thou utter such treason? Thy life shall pay for it. […] The young peasant himself was still more astonished, not conceiving how he had offended the prince: yet recollecting himself, with a mixture of grace and humility, he disengaged himself from Manfred's gripe, and then, […] he asked with respect, of what he was guilty! Manfred, more enraged at the vigour, [...] ordered his attendants to seize him, and, if he had not been withheld by his friends whom he had invited to the nuptials, would have poignarded the peasant in their arms. [...] Manfred grew perfectly frantic; and, as if he sought a subject on which to vent the tempest within him, he rushed again on the young peasant, crying, Villain! monster! sorcerer! 'tis thou hast slain my son! (*Otranto* 19-20)

His rash temper becomes his tragic flaw - it turns him into a murderer. Only in the moment of Matilda's death he realises his wrongdoings and curses himself. This final moment of clarity, however, comes too late - the murder has already been committed.

Despite his choleric fits, Manfred is a cunning plotter. Instead of risking his life in an open battle between him and Frederick, he invites him as a guest to his castle, planning to influence him and change his mind. When the knights demand of him to release Isabella, he distracts them by narrating his own story, playing the grief-stricken father and husband in order to move them to tears and show compassion. Finally, Manfred even plans to give away his daughter, Matilda, to Frederick in order to appease him. His plan seems to be quite successful: "That weak prince [i.e. Frederick], who had been struck with the charms of Matilda, listened but too eagerly to the offer. He forgot his enmity to Manfred" (ibid. 68). Thus, Manfred is fully negligent of his family members' opinions and feelings - for him, they are merely pawns in his game of power and succession.

Manfred repeatedly suppresses upcoming feelings of remorse and pity, as they threaten his plans to maintain his power and weaken his will. His conscience grows weaker and weaker and facilitates his own self-delusion, which makes him even more determined to pursue his immoral plans:

> Ashamed too of his inhuman treatment of a princess, who returned every injury with new marks of tenderness and duty, he felt returning love forcing itself into his eyes – but not less ashamed of feeling remorse towards one, against whom he was inwardly meditating a yet more bitter outrage, he curbed the yearnings of his heart, and did not dare to lean even towards pity. The next transition of his soul was to exquisite villainy. […] Coming to himself, he gave orders that every avenue to the castle should be strictly guarded, and charged his domestics on pain of their lives to suffer nobody to pass out. (ibid. 31)

Interestingly, the very moment Manfred remembers Isabella's subservient and loving behaviour that contrast his incivilities, he immediately falls to back to negative feelings. Loidolt has closely examined the Gothic villain's attitude towards the innocent woman and has come to a conclusion that explains Manfred's seemingly illogical reaction towards Isabella's virtue: "[P]recisely these virtues [i.e. patience, subservience, chastity etc.] enrage and madden the male protagonist, because Woman's very innocence increases Man's feeling of guilt. His crisis is her purity, which makes him continuously aware of his own evil" (ibid. 176).

He is fully aware that by actively opposing a fragile, passive and virtuous character he will always be in a morally inferior position. Acknowledging his thusly predetermined moral failure, he blames women for his downfall – Manfred accuses his wife Hippolita of her infertility and Isabella of infidelity – and directs his aggressions towards them, thus enforcing a vicious circle of violence and suffering and, as a consequence, confirming the readers' negative attitude towards him.

However, at the sight of his dying daughter who tries to reunite and bless her family, Manfred can no longer suppress his bad conscience. He nearly despairs when he realises his horrible deeds and even tries to commit suicide.[16] The façade of the tyrant patriarch suddenly breaks down and Manfred appears as a deeply desolated man – he has lost his children, his social status and material goods. Moreover, he is certain of eternal doom and the rejection of a happy afterlife: "[O]ur doom is pronounced", "Heaven ejects us" (*Otranto* 79).

Manfred begins narrating the story of the true succession of Otranto with the words, "List, sirs, and may this bloody record be a warning to future tyrants!" (ibid. 79). In fact, this utterance could be regarded as some kind of motto for the whole novel – although the text is classified "as a matter of entertainment" (ibid. 7) in the preface to the first edition, its "lessons of virtue" (ibid. 8) should heighten the quality of the text and preserve it from censorship "to which romances are but too liable." (ibid. 8) Indeed Walpole tries to find a morally correct ending – Otranto is turned over to its rightful owner, the good wins over the evil and the villain even realises his wrongdoings and repents. As we will see later, this kind of ending is not the norm of every Gothic text. However, it shifts the reader's perspective towards the villain: the original source of terror, the victimiser, now suddenly changes into a victim, as he is terribly haunted by supernatural forces and nearly despairs in the purgatory-like moment of self-realisation. Thus, Manfred even evokes some kind of pity towards the end.

Manfred is not the only male character in *Otranto*; two other men who are important for the development of the story are Frederic, Isabella's father, and Theodore, Jerome's son. Both are easily to be categorized as "good" characters that wish to

[16] "[T]he rest prevented Manfred from laying violent hands on himself." (*Otranto* 76)

support Isabella and Matilda; however, it is not always clear if they are truly helpful. Frederic's first mistake that endangered Isabella's situation was his decision to go on a crusade after her mother's death, leaving his young daughter alone in the care of some servants and guards. Motivated by a warning dream, he sets out to protect Isabella and regain Otranto, but soon becomes distracted from his former plans by his attraction towards Matilda, which proves to be his second mistake. Frederic, often described as a brave and gallant knight, turns out to be a good father figure who delivers crucial insights into matters of heritage and ascendancy but who fails to protect his daughter successfully from the dangers of the Gothic world (see Thomas 75-76).

The character of Theodore can be regarded as a similar case. From the beginning his manners are described as bold, "a mixture of grace and humility" (*Otranto* 19) and his register is strangely eloquent for a young peasant. This positive depiction draws the audience's sympathies towards him and attentive readers might even notice the foreshadowing towards his real identity. Theodore strives to protect Isabella from Manfred's rage, in which he also succeeds when he shows her a secret escaping route in the subterranean vault.

However, when we take a closer look we notice that his further attempts are by no means as fruitful as his first one - he lets himself be caught by Manfred. Therefore, Matilda sets out to free him from the black tower, thereby endangering herself by acting against her father's will and command. Moreover, Theodore wants to protect Isabella by defending her against any intruders of the cave she uses as a secret hiding place. However, he accidentally wounds Frederic – therefore Isabella sees herself forced to return to the castle to provide medical help for her father.

Similar to Frederic, Theodore possesses numerous positive qualities, but fails at rescuing or protecting the heroine or even defeating the villain. He embodies the eighteenth century concept of "feminised masculinity" (Ellis 63) and can be categorised into what Loidolt calls the "romantic hero" (171). He would serve as an ideal husband, as he is both by his gender and his noble descent securely established in the social system and thus could offer the heroine a high social rank – moreover, his character traits such as courtesy, elegance and sensibility identify him as a "non-

oppressive male" (ibid. 171) that could be easily controlled by the heroine and would not interfere with her self-confidence (ibid. 171, Thomas 76).

Frederic describes Theodore as "modest", "one of the bravest youths on christian ground", "warm" and honest (*Otranto* 61); however, he involuntarily proves to be a force of the tragic events and the reason why Matilda falls in love, thus indirectly causing her death. Therefore, Theodore is an ambivalent figure in terms of reader reactions. On the one hand, he is undoubtedly a supporting figure who draws sympathies on his side, on the other, he complicates the situation for the heroines, which gives him a unique status in the creation of suspense.

In summary, we can categorise the main characters into three groups. The first one consists of Isabella and Matilda. They are virtuous characters with rather modern ideas - they refuse to be controlled by parental figures for the sake of maintaining the feudal system. They are portrayed in positive terms in order to draw the reader's sympathies towards them. The Gothic heroines are opposed by Manfred, the villain. He aims to realise his plans to assert his potency. The third group contains characters who mean well and want to protect the heroines, but in fact create even more obstacles. Hippolita is not willing to aid Isabella and Matilda, Frederick has left Isabella on her own and nearly forgets about his mission and duties and Theodore does not offer active opposition against Manfred and even accidentally wounds Frederick.

Otranto has been criticised for its flat characterisation (see Nelson 40, Loidolt 32). Admittedly, the characters are portrayed in rather simple, unambiguous terms. Right from the start the text assigns clear roles in terms of positive figures and antagonists. However, whereas the Gothic heroines assert this first impression, Manfred even repents in the end. Realising the harm he has done, he decides to spend the rest of his life in a convent to atone - a chance the villains of many succeeding Gothic narratives will not be given any more.

4.3 "That long labyrinth of darkness"[17] – settings

Otranto can definitely be regarded as the archetypical Gothic castle - it is bleak, uncanny and partly ruinous. It harbours plenty of dangers and mysteries for the protagonists. The most prominent and memorable description of the castle and its peculiarities is presented in the passage of Isabella's escape:

> The lower part of the castle was hollowed into several intricate cloisters; and it was not easy for one under so much anxiety to find the door that opened into the cavern. An awful silence reigned throughout those subterraneous regions, except now and then some blasts of wind that shook the doors she had passed, and which, grating on the rusty hinges, were re-echoed through that long labyrinth of darkness. Every murmur struck her with new terror; yet more she dreaded to hear the wrathful voice of Manfred urging his domestics to pursue her. (*Otranto* 24)

A characteristic feature of this text is the parallel depiction of the setting and the heroine's frightful reactions. Her emotions and thoughts are openly displayed - references towards her high agitation, such as "[h]er blood curdled" (ibid. 24) or "[w]ords cannot paint the horror of the princess' situation" (ibid 24) vividly illustrate her inferior position and also heighten the reader's involvement. Isabella is caught between wrathful Manfred and the dangers of an ancient and unknown part of the castle. However, the possibility of escape and safety motivates her to gather all her courage and venture deeper into the subterranean maze.

Interestingly, labyrinths in *Otranto* do not only appear as a constructed design, but also in the form of caves shaped by nature. Nevertheless, they are equally dangerous – the "caves which […] formerly served as a retreat for hermits, and [are] now reported round the country to be haunted by evil spirits" (ibid. 54) are chosen by Isabella as a secret hiding place. They are not described as vividly and in such great detail as the vaults underneath the castle, but the quoted sentence above summarises the atmosphere this place should evoke and effectively points towards upcoming danger. The caves have an alternate meaning for Isabella and Theodore – whereas Isabella chooses them as a hiding place, possibly due the abandoned location and the numerous possibilities of concealment, Theodore stumbles upon this place on a walk and, encouraged by the rumours, regards it as a test of his courage and fighting skills. Being a modern gentleman, he does not believe in ghosts, but rather suspects

[17] *Otranto* 24.

criminals as the true inhabitants of the caves who scare passers-by away from their shelter.

Both labyrinthine structures have in common that they appear in situations of menace. They are used as a means of escaping Manfred's wrath - however, they do not provide total safety, but also present various dangers to the person invading them. One of them is the total separation from the "upper" social world, which includes morals, social conventions, and, most importantly, help from others (see Botting 81) – Isabella soon realises that her flight from Manfred has led her to "a place where her cries were not likely to draw any body to her assistance" (*Otranto* 24). Thus, the labyrinth is a place marked by "fear, confusion and alienation" (Botting 81): "The horror of the labyrinth and its confusion of fears and desires lies in its utter separation from all social rules and complete transgression of all conventional limits" (ibid. 81).

The denial of rules of the normal world is also expressed in the appearance of malice supernatural forces – the subterraneous vaults of the castle are said to be influenced by witchcraft: "Talk not to me of necromancers; I tell you she must be in the castle; I will find her in spite of the enchantment," (*Otranto* 26) Manfred shouts to his servants, reprimanding them for their superstitious beliefs.

In both mazes Isabella and Theodore accidentally meet each other; Isabella always being on the run and noble Theodore trying to help her. Thus, Loidolt even claims that "the labyrinth also stands for Isabella's repressed desires, because there she also meets Theodore, her future husband" and points towards "the sexual undertones of the scene" (33). The mazes clearly represent the subconscious and irrational as well as "the dark forces of the psyche" (ibid. 229), the protagonist's "fears and desires" (ibid. 229) – they are said to be haunted and intruders are highly endangered of getting lost. The labyrinths seem to follow their own rules and regulations and people are subjected to their mercy, which becomes clear when Isabella's torch is extinguished by a gust of wind - the crannies of the walls and roof direct the rays of moonlight to reveal both Theodore and a trapdoor, thus supporting Isabella's escape. Therefore, those constructions highlight the characters' vulnerability and exposure to the mercy of higher forces and thus influence the readers' empathy.

Klein states that a vital ingredient of the suspense in Gothic novels is the depiction of certain settings, especially "die Angst in unbekannten, oft unterirdischen Räumen, Höhlen und Gängen" (144). The dread experienced in those loci, which Walpole has portrayed in a highly engaging and evocative manner, was not only a topic of eighteenth century literature, but has also found its expression in contemporary art. The *Carceri*, Giovanni Battista Piranesi's famous series of etchings, reflect the same mood - Klein describes them as a "Dialektik von Fluchtwegen und deren Negation" (85). This mirrors also the third phase of the suspense schema - the oscillation between hope and fear, which is probably most prominently displayed in the passage of Isabella's flight through the subterranean complex of Castle Otranto.

The places described in the story draw heavily on common conceptions of Gothic architecture – the castle, which is the building that features a most detailed description, is vast and contains even areas that are unknown or long forgotten. It is by no means a safe place and a real home – Thomas calls it the “Negativ-Version des sicheren Zuhauses” (96), as forces in the castle strive to scare its inhabitants and even harm them. It could even be described as the antithesis of a classicist building – people are subject to it, they are no longer in control. Otranto stands for the eighteenth century connotation of ancient castles as the seat of aristocratic tyranny: “castles are associated with the oppression of ordinary people by the powerful” (Charlesworth 15). They are not just symbols of power and endurance, but they also serve the purpose of intimidation (ibid. 16).

Therefore, Thomas regards the castle as a representation of patriarchal society (98) and a place of menace and unsolved mysteries (95). It can be interpreted as the externalisation of the villain’s psyche: “the irregular castle is identified with the villain’s distorted mind, while its collapse signifies its downfall” (Loidolt 229). This becomes obvious in the moment after Matilda’s death when a mighty thunderstorm breaks:

> A clap of thunder at that instant shook the castle to its foundations; the earth rocked, and the clank of more than one mortal armour was heard behind. Frederick and Jerome thought the last day was at hand. […] The moment Theodore appeared, the walls of the castle behind Manfred were thrown down with a mighty force, and the form of Alfonso, dilated to an immense magnitude, appeared in the centre of the ruins. Behold in Theodore, the true

> heir of Alfonso! said the vision: and having pronounced those words, accompanied by a clap of thunder, it ascended solemnly towards heaven, where the clouds parting asunder, the form of saint Nicholas was seen; and receiving Alfonso's shade, they were soon wrapt from mortal eyes in a blaze of glory. (*Otranto* 78-79)

The horrible destruction of the castle abruptly ends Manfred's rule; he has to reveal the true story of his grandfather's usurpation of Otranto and admits his guilt. Thus, the term house uncovers its double meaning: the "Metapher eines materiell basierten systemischen Bestandes, welcher invariant ist gegen die einzelnen Repräsentanten einer Adelslinie" (Klein 129). The building, externalisation and display of Manfred's despotic reign, falls with its owner.

4.4 "Alas, I dread the worst!"[18] – Suspense on the discourse level

I have now mentioned several features of the characterisation, the presentation of settings and the depiction of human drives. They all play an essential part in the creation of suspense in *Otranto*. However, the novel also employs some other strategies that contribute to an enthralling reading experience. Some narrative techniques on the discourse level will be presented in the course of this chapter.

4.4.1 Cataphora

There are various instances in *Otranto* which create that feeling of "*acute, fearful apprehension about deplorable events*" in the reader to which Zillmann (*Anatomy* 140) has been referring. There are explicit authorial remarks such as "a place where her cries were not likely to draw any body to her assistance" (*Otranto* 24) - this alludes to possible scenes of upcoming accidents or dangers as well as the impact they would have on the heroine's situation. Also the characters themselves are aware of dangers and verbalise them - Matilda knows that Theodore's "blood, which I may preserve, will be on my head" (ibid. 53) if Manfred finds out about Theodore's

[18] *Otranto* 21.

escape and gets hold of him again. Moreover, the prophecy about the fate of Otranto is already presented to the reader at the beginning of the novel.

Apart from direct verbalisations about future developments of the story, the text uses other ways of foreshadowing. A powerful and impressive means of cataphora is the depiction of visual imagery, such as the drops of blood which fall from the statue of Alfonso the Great. Another instances of this kind of foreshadowing are the helmet which crushes Conrad and the other gigantic body parts which are found in the course of the novel. They point towards a strong antagonistic force which rises and drives the plot towards a catastrophe.

Other cataphoric references in *Otranto* are realised on the level of characterisation. In the beginning, Theodore is described as "a young peasant", as one of the "senseless crowd" (ibid. 19) that observes the accident and Conrad's death. However, he soon distinguishes himself from them by directly addressing Manfred and providing an answer to the question of the helmet, which enrages Manfred. His manner of speech is both elegant and courteous – a quality that is definitely rare in a common farmer.

Soon it becomes obvious that the "youth", as he is constantly referred to, is not just a minor character – he helps Isabella in her escape from Otranto and is afterwards recaptured by Manfred. The remarkably wide gap between his alleged profession and his actual manners allows speculations about the character's true background. One of the strongest examples of foreshadowing regarding this aspect is the moment when Matilda recognises the similarity between Conrad's face and a painting of Alfonso:

> The prisoner soon drew her attention: the steady and composed manner in which he answered, and the gallantry of his last reply, which were the first words she heard distinctly, interested her in his favour. His person was noble, handsome and commanding, even in that situation: but his countenance soon engrossed her whole care. Heavens! Bianca, said the princess softly, do I dream! or is not that youth the exact resemblance of Alphonso's picture in the gallery? (ibid. 41)

Later the reader will find out more about his background. A few moments before his imminent decapitation Jerome reveals that he is the count of Falconara and Theodore is in fact his son and thus of noble descent. Only at the end the audience is informed that Theodore is the grandson of Alfonso and therefore the true heir of Otranto.

However, until this point of the story several clues point toward the major role of Theodore and enforce speculations of the reader as to his real identity.

The description of a suspenseful atmosphere as a way of presenting cataphora can be found in the following passage:

> Manfred rose to pursue her; when the moon, which was now up, and gleamed in the opposite casement, presented to his sight the plumes of the fatal helmet which rose to the height of the windows, waving backwards and forwards in a tempestuous manner, and accompanied with a hollow and rustling sound. (ibid 22)

The helmet which has killed his son turns out to be the first indicator of Manfred's downfall. It belongs to the giant that inhabits Otranto and who frightens its inhabitants, symbolising the injustice caused by the usurpation of the principality by Manfred's ancestors. His appearance indicates that the guilt can no longer be suppressed. In the scene quoted above the plumes of the helmet almost seem to threaten and to warn him not to pursue his plan any further. Thus, they point towards ensuing misfortune.

4.4.2 Retarding elements

The instances of retardation in *Otranto* can be found on various levels. I have already mentioned the cliffhanger at the end of the second chapter - the scene of Theodore's punishment is interrupted by Frederick's appearance. In this case, a whole plot line is interrupted and rests unsolved for a short time - the banquet shifts the reader's attention away from the supernatural events and instead focuses on more worldly concerns.

A similar instance of plot retardation can be found at the beginning of the story, when Manfred speaks to Isabella about his plans of marrying her. The situation remains unresolved, as Manfred's speech is interrupted by the movements of the giant helmet, a moving portrait and the apparition of a ghost. Isabella seizes the opportunity to escape while Manfred is distracted. Thus, this scene is the mirror image to the one mentioned before - the disruption of a rather profane plot line (the

conversation about marriage and procreation) is caused by the appearance of the supernatural.

In the same passage there is another instance of retardation. Manfred speaks to the ghost which has appeared and enquires about its intentions towards him:

> Speak, infernal spectre! Or, if thou art my grandsire, why dost thou too conspire against thy wretched descendant, who too dearly pays for - Ere he could finish the sentence the vision sighed again, and made a sign to Manfred to follow him. (*Otranto* 23)

The retardation here is realised on the syntactical level - a piece of information is missing. Casually placed at the end of a relative clause, Manfred does not lay too much emphasis on it. The reader, however, wonders why Manfred has to pay for something - mainly because it is hard to imagine that he suffers and is in the role of a victim, but also because the significant fact has not been revealed. Apart from the retardation of Manfred's utterance, it also serves a cataphoric function, providing the reader with the information that he suffers the consequences of an act (the usurpation, as it is revealed later).

Another type of withholding crucial information is the narration of events by highly agitated characters. Due to their extreme nervousness they are unable to speak coherently - their utterances do not make any sense and the significant piece of information is not immediately revealed. An example of this phenomenon can be found already at the beginning of the novel. The reader is only provided with the highly emotional and terrified reactions of the bystanders - the actual tragic event is withheld from the reader. The audience has the same amount of knowledge as Manfred, who tries to elicit what has happened. Only when he himself looks down at the courtyard, the event is also revealed to the audience.

The servants' narration of the giant leg in the great chamber (ibid. 28-29) follows the same principle. Diego and Jacques are extremely upset and fail to provide a coherent and clear account of their sightings. Only after one and a half page the reader finds out about the reason of their agitation. This results in a heightened interest in the audience, as they can also conclude from the servants' behaviour and nervousness that they must have encountered something dreadful.

4.5 Conclusion

Generally, *Otranto* is marked by excess of emotions. The characters amply and deeply indulge in verbal depictions of their conditions - culminating in Matilda's cry as she feels Manfred's dagger: "Ah me, I am slain!" (*Otranto* 76) However, despite this profound insight, her lifespan is not yet over, as she still has enough vitality to reprimand Theodore for his words against Manfred, to bless her parents, inquire after Hippolita, explain the reasons of her visit to the church, demands forgiveness for meeting Theodore and express the wish of Theodore marrying Isabella.

This extreme intensity is also mirrored in the narrative style - most of the time Manfred does not simply speak but cry, and he is described to be constantly in a rage. When a servant runs to Manfred to report Conrad's death, he is described as "breathless, in a frantic manner, his eyes staring, and foaming at the mouth" (ibid. 17). All these markers of urgency and intensification should heighten the reader's involvement - however, as the examples show, they are sometimes carried to the extremes in a way that they can reach the point of ridiculousness.

The portrayal of the characters is another issue which does not always fulfill the original intentions. Hippolita, for instance, is described in terms of the most faultless and virtuous behaviour - numerous passages in the text stress her gentleness and moral superiority. However, to a modern audience her extreme submissiveness can be a negative trait that may lessen the sympathies towards her. Her passivity is reminiscent of brainwashing - at least, it seems highly bizarre that she regards social rules higher than her daughters' well-being.

In contrast to that, the characterisation of the villain is more fleshed out, as it sketches the changes and nuances in the figure. His evilness grows in proportion to his determination to produce an heir, but he still has moments of compassion, such as in the scene of Theodore's execution in which "his heart was capable of being touched" (ibid. 43). At the end he realises his mistakes and cruelties and repents.

Generally, the text narrates the fate of individuals which has already been formed by their ancestors and thus establishes an interesting dialectic between the present and the past. Previously I have mentioned the fascination of ruins that arose in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. The ruin was regarded as a symbol both for transience and endurance, as it was formed by the ravages of time, but withstood complete decay (see Haslag 123). Thus, the ruin was said to form a bond between the present and the past, making the past no longer closed, distanced and completely shut-off from the present, but still something that could be experienced in contemporary days. The same message is being made in *Otranto*: the past cannot be clearly separated from the present, it still has a massive impetus on present events.

However, the ruinous state of the castle already serves as a signifier towards the fact that the glorious days have already expired long ago. Similar to its home, the family lineage has considerably weakened and is about to collapse. As already pointed out, the term of house can be understood ambiguously (see Williams 45). The fate of an ancestral line and its designated residence are inextricably linked.

Otranto is a novel which places high emphasis on the presentation of its main setting. The role of the castle even exceeds the mere evocation of suspenseful atmosphere. It actively interferes in the characters' plans by obstructing or supporting their actions and even reveals a secret that has been covered up for a long time. Thus, it also participates in shaping the plot, which is certainly one of the most remarkable features of the novel.

5. Suspense in *The Monk*

> Go then, and pass that dangerous burn
> Whence never Book can back return:
> And when you find, condemned, despised,
> Neglected, blamed, and criticised,
> Abuse from all who read you fall,
> (If haply you be read at all)
> Sorely will you your folly sigh at,
> And wish for me, and home, and quiet. (11-18)

Starting with a poem entitled “Imitation of Horace” (*The Monk* 161-162), the author directly addresses his novel and thereby mainly speculates about its reception. Line 10 in the first stanza expresses the vain hope of achieving such a high status as “Stockdale, Hookham, or Debrett”, three major publishers of the eighteenth century – thus expressing the wish of becoming successful and of being part of the contemporary literary canon. The stanza quoted above ponders about possible negative reactions towards the book – line 27 even suggests it might be “doomed to suffer public scandal”.

Lewis had neglected what Walpole had prudently done - he had not published the first edition of his novel under a pseudonym. Walpole was aware that he had created a new kind of narrative fiction by blending the romance and the novel - he waited for the public reactions to decide whether he should reveal himself as the true author of the novel or "let it perish in obscurity" (*Otranto* 13). Lewis, however, has never denied the authorship of his own work. Similar to *Otranto*, his novel was an innovative blending of different literary trends, the Gothic and libertine writings, which proved to be more problematic.

The novel's reception was "extensive, heated and detailed" (Ellis 106). Lewis's position as a Member of Parliament (ibid. 108) and the fact that *The Monk* was labelled as a Gothic novel, which meant that a large amount of its readership was female, caused a closer and sterner examination of the critics (ibid. 108). In order to avoid public scandal, Lewis was forced to revise certain passages considered to be highly blasphemous, sexually explicit and morally corrupting (ibid. 109).

Narratives of such kind were not altogether uncommon in that period - in fact, there was even a whole movement which indulged in the depiction of explicit eroticism and that strove towards a liberation from moral restraints. However, the literature of libertinism, as the movement was called, was still a niche product and restricted to an aristocratic male audience (ibid. 89-96). On the contrary, Gothic literature had a rather broad readership and among them a high percentage of young women (ibid. 115). *The Monk* crossed the genre boundaries, opening up libertine notions to a significantly larger audience - the book has been referred to as the "gothic libertine novel for young ladies" (ibid. 96). The scandal it caused even lead to debates

reconsidering the general issues of female reading, the moral responsibilities of fiction writing and the Gothic novel (ibid. 113).

Despite the novel's prosecution and repression, it was a huge success. Numerous copies of the unaltered and original version were sold under the counter and highly enjoyed due to Lewis's great storytelling (ibid. 109-110). This chapter tries to examine the various techniques that create this kind of compelling reading experience. It will also be addressed in how far the passages which caused moral outrage and the narrative devices that generate a titillating and enthralling read complement each other.

5.1 "[S]o many horrible adventures"[19] – the story

5.1.1 Plot structure and suspense schema

The Monk is a novel consisting of several plotlines which are interwoven with each other. The main plot is about Ambrosio, a celebrated and honoured monk at Madrid's cathedral, who gradually gives in to his vices and morally degenerates in the course of the story. One of his novices turns out to be Matilda, a woman claiming to be deeply in love with him and seducing him to explore his sexuality. When Ambrosio becomes tired of her, she helps him with the use of dark magic to obtain a possibility of satisfying his cravings for Antonia, a young innocent girl deeply admiring him. Through a pact with a demon Ambrosio can secretly enter Antonia's bedroom and murders her mother who tries to protect her daughter. Disgusted at his deed he flees to his convent, but after a few days he turns to Matilda for advice how to get Antonia into his possession. Matilda creates a plan in which Antonia is pronounced dead, but secretly is kept in the crypts as a sex slave. The plan succeeds, but after raping Antonia Ambrosio is filled with disgust. In a desperate attempt to escape Antonia is stabbed by him. Lorenzo, Antonia's admirer, arrives too late to save her – she dies in his arms. Ambrosio is arrested and charged for murder. Shortly before his execution Matilda appears and reveals herself as Lucifer's tool. She offers him freedom in exchange for his soul and he accepts. However, Ambrosio can only escape from the

[19] *The Monk* 364.

punishment of the people of Madrid – exposed to the mercy of the devil, he has to pay for his sins and finds a cruel death.

Closely intertwined with Ambrosio's plotline is the story of Antonia's life that gradually becomes more miserable: due to her own bad experiences with socially unequal marriage, Antonia's mother impedes a union between her daughter and Lorenzo. After her death Antonia is left alone without a protégé or financial security. Her messages that should have moved the addressees to aid her do not arrive their destined targets. These circumstances facilitate Ambrosio's malicious plans to abduct her.

Another major plotline tells of the secret love between Agnes and Don Raymond, their vain attempts to elope and Agnes' monstrous punishment by the Prioress. In the course of this story numerous other subplots emerge, such as the story of the Bleeding Nun, a ghost that haunts Raymond, or Marguerite's story, which is presented in the course of an encounter with robbers in the wood.

Generally speaking, the structure of the novel is characterised by different plotlines and numerous subplots that often reveal the biographies of various characters. For instance, we learn that the main characters are related to each other – Antonia's mother Elvira is Raymond's sister-in-law, Agnes is Lorenzo's sister and Ambrosio is Elvira's abandoned son. This again strongly confirms Williams' view about the importance of family relations in Gothic novels and the development of plot (see Williams 45).

The simultaneous treatment of various plotlines automatically produces a crucial factor of suspense – the cliffhanger. In many cases one plotline is interrupted and immediately followed by the resumption of another one. However, this does not exclusively happen in moments of highest suspense – nevertheless, it appears at points in the discourse when the readers' interest is heightened, such as at the prospect of hearing a story from a character that promises to explain his or her actions. Thus, the use of retardation is not just limited to the phase that follows the "Wechselspiel von Aussichtslosigkeit und Hoffnung" (Wenzel 31), but occurs at various discourse points.

The rest of the typical suspense schema, however, remains relatively stable. It can be discovered on different narrative levels, ranging from whole plotlines to single scenes – as Caroll states, suspense can be found both in specific sequences and in whole narratives (74).

A striking example of the first phase of suspense, the "Vordisponierungsphase" (Wenzel 31), is undoubtedly Lorenzo's dream in the cathedral of Madrid. The atmosphere of the building slightly depresses him and he reflects about his first meeting with Antonia a few moments before; his thoughts quickly carry him off to sleep. He dreams about Antonia, who stretches out her arms towards him and even addresses him as her "destined Bridegroom" (*The Monk* 178), but is attacked by a monster that ravages her on an altar. The floor opens into an infernal abyss that swallows everything except Antonia, who ascends into heaven.

In this dream Lorenzo already foresees Antonia's destiny and the development of the whole plotline. However, even if the dream already reveals future developments, it still conceals the identity of the villain; besides, at this point both the reader and Lorenzo do not perceive it as a true account of the future, as its validity and credibility is strongly doubted through the fact that it is "just" a dream. Nevertheless it evokes a sombre mood and points towards upcoming danger and complications.

The second phase, the involvement of the reader, is often realised by depicting the main figures. The reader receives more information about the characters, their lives and background stories, which facilitates a better understanding of their wishes and motives. Thus, an empathetic relation towards them can be established and the reader can anticipate their actions and speculate about plot developments, which contributes to a suspenseful act of reading (see Junkerjürgen 150). A detailed analysis of how reader involvement is realised in *The Monk* will follow in the corresponding chapter.

There are numerous examples of moments in which hope and fear oscillate. Let us have a closer look at the dinner scene in which only Raymond knows that the hosts will drug their guests to turn them over to bandits. This passage illustrates the necessity to provide the reader with enough information. Before Raymond leaves his

room to have dinner, he discovers a blood-stained linen and overhears a conversation between his host and the bandits. If those facts were not mentioned at all, the dinner scene would appear quite usual and fully lack suspense. Instead, we know about the impending danger that lurks upon the dinner party and share Raymond's hope that the host's son will not find the bandits, which would allow the guests to leave unharmed in the following morning.

Another source of suspense in this passage is the question if Raymond can maintain his "poker face" or if he accidentally reveals his knowledge of the scheming – he can hardly conceal his agitation, which is instantly noticed by the others. If the host or his sons realise that their plans are revealed, they will murder the guests. This circumstance provides an additional factor of reader involvement and suspense. The following passage captures the essence of the whole situation:

> I shuddered involuntarily, as Baptiste [i.e. the host] entered the room. He made many apologies for his long absence, but 'He had been detained by affairs impossible to be delayed.' He then entreated permission for his family to sup at the same table with us, without which, respect would not authorize his taking such a liberty. Oh! how in my heart I cursed the Hypocrite! How I loathed his presence, who was on the point of depriving me of an existence, at that time infinitely dear! I had every reason to be satisfied with life; I had youth, wealth, rank, and education; and the fairest prospects presented themselves before me. I saw those prospects on the point of closing in with the most horrible manner: Yet I was obliged to dissimulate, and to receive with a semblance of gratitude the false civilities of him, who held the dagger to my bosom. (*The Monk* 233)

The other guests enjoy themselves and are in a cheerful manner; to Raymond and the reader, however, the conversations have a macabre ambiguity:

> Our Host thought it necessary to apologize for the poorness of the supper: 'He had not been apprized of our coming; He could only offer us such fare as had been intended for his own family:'
> 'But,' added He, 'should any accident detain my noble Guests longer than they at present intend, I hope to give them a better treatment.'
> The Villain! I well knew the accident to which He alluded; I shuddered at the treatment which he taught us to expect! (ibid. 233)

All of the mechanisms that heighten suspense are present in this scene. For instance, the depiction of the vulnerability of the character and the slim chances of his succeeding have been communicated to the reader at an early point – due to an accident in the wood the group of travellers is forced to seek shelter at the cottage of

a lumberjack and his family. Thus, they are removed from a civilised area and help from others. The people of high social status are soon separated from their attendants, who should reside in the barn. Raymond remains the only man, the only person in the group trained in fighting and combat. However, he is outnumbered by the host and his two sons and he is unarmed, thus leaving him nearly defenceless.

The situation becomes even more critical as he is offered a glass of champagne containing a strong opiate. Moreover, one of the sons suggests to shoot Raymond and the bandits arrive. Junkerjürgen (96) claims that the chances of success of the protagonist, which present a crucial factor for the rise of suspense, are subjected to the dynamic character of storytelling – thus, they are not static throughout the whole story. This can be verified in the dinner scene – the chances of Raymond's survival even decrease as the story advances. They have plummeted to the lowest point in the moment of the bandits' arrival and the determination of Baptiste and his sons to murder their guests. The two factors that define the chances of success – the degree of danger and of the protagonist's vulnerability (ibid. 96) – are pushed to the extremes: Raymond is unarmed and has to flee from a group of bandits. He does not only have to rescue him but also the drugged Baroness Lindenberg. If he fails, he has to share the terrible fate of his servants.

All in all the third phase of the suspense schema in this episode is constructed in great detail and encompasses a wide range of fictional events. It begins in the moment Raymond discovers the blood stains and lasts until Raymond and Marguerite meet a group of soldiers on their escape.

The next phase of the suspense schema shall be just briefly mentioned here for the sake of completion. As already mentioned, retardation is often realised in *The Monk* by the use of a cliffhanger. A more detailed account will be provided in the respective chapter.

The final phase resolves the suspense. In many cases this happens by the use of a happy ending. Junkerjürgen defines this type of final suspense phase as "Abschluss einer Konflikthandlung und Anfang einer (vermeintlichen) Harmoniehandlung" (100). He distinguishes between two kinds of happy endings – in the first type the

characters merely manage to overcome a crisis and the second type even provides them with a bonus reward (ibid. 101). In *The Monk*, the latter one clearly predominates: at the end of the dinner scene Marguerite,[20] Raymond and the unconscious Baroness manage to flee from the robbers and find a troop of soldiers who show them the way to Strasbourg. However, the episode does not just end with their safe arrival in the city. Raymond gains a new and promising social connection to the house of Lindenberg, the bandits are arrested by the soldiers and Marguerite is reunited with her father and gets the opportunity to start a new life. The major plotline ends similarly – Agnes is not only rescued from her prison, but finds her old lover and marries, Lorenzo manages to cope with Antonia's death and quickly finds another partner and the evil characters meet their punishment.

However, although the final phase may always seem to be a wholly positive ending, it actually often features a touch of negativity – in the dinner scene Raymond's servant is killed by the bandits and in the end Ambrosio murders Antonia. In many instances, the partly negative ending of a scene in *The Monk* serves the purpose of maintaining the audience's interest - the suspense has been resolved, as the important suspense question has been answered through the course of the narration, but the reader is curious to find out more about the fate of the characters.

Another example of a passage following the classical suspense schema provides the scene of the planned elope of Agnes and Raymond: Agnes has decided they should choose the night the Bleeding Nun is said to appear every year. Taking advantage of the people's superstition, Agnes plans to dress as the ghost to escape from the house. In the arranged night, Raymond waits for Agnes, enjoying the gloomy and foreboding atmosphere (phase 1 – "Vordisponierungsphase" and phase 2 – reader involvement). Raymond perceives a female figure at the window – when it exits the house, he embraces her and carries her into the carriage. In the course of the flight, the horses bolt and a heavy thunderstorm begins, while the female figure seems to have fainted (phase 3 – oscillation between fear and hope). The carriage has a severe accident – Raymond is injured and lies senseless on the ground (phase 4 – retardation). He is found by some farmers who take him to the next village where he

[20] Marguerite is the host's wife, who has secretly warned Raymond about her husband's intentions.

is taken care of. He survives, but his companions have died in the accident and Agnes is nowhere to be found (phase 5 – resolving of suspense).

The final phase in this sequence cannot be classified as a typical happy ending. The protagonist has survived, but the servants have died and a union with Agnes is still not possible, as she seems to have disappeared. Thus, the suspense caused by the eloping sequence has resided, but the suspense in the major plotline of Agnes and Raymond is still present – the question if their love will prevail remains unanswered. The chances even seem less favourable, as the reader witnesses another failed attempt to elope.

As we see, *The Monk* features a large number of highly suspenseful episodes that fully entice the audience to continue the reading process. Many directly operate with the depiction of the human drives, which probably contributed to the public scandal the book caused for its obscenity (see Botting 82-83), as we will see in the following chapter.

5.1.2 "[T]he cravings of brutal appetite"[21] - motifs and thrill

Of all literary works discussed in this paper, *The Monk* is certainly the one that most heavily makes use of thrill. A characteristic feature of both thrill and Gothic is the violation and transgression of boundaries (see Botting 7, Wenzel 25) – Lewis's work has also been described as indulging in the "fascination of how far conventional limits can be transgressed" (Loidolt 58).

Concerning the three main drives, sexus and crimen are most prominent in the text. In contrast to other literary works in which the drives merely serve as "a pretext for text-formation rather than the object of suspense" (Koch, *Biology* 46), the novel indulges in the depiction of the consuming of the drives.

Sexuality is certainly one of the most prominent themes in *The Monk*. It ranges from explicit descriptions of sexual actions to vague suggestions of erotic encounters. The

[21] *The Monk* 312.

characters either fully give in to their drives, try to protect their virginity or are not yet even aware of the powerful urge that lies within them. However, in all cases "sexuality, whether experienced as love or lust or as a desire to escape its shameful consequences, is the prime motive for all action" (Williams 116). Similarly to contemporary works of Gothic fiction, such as Radcliffe's novels, it often has a negative and destructive connotation (see Loidolt 27) and hardly is presented in the context of a romantic relationship.

Of course, one could argue that the conceiving of Agnes' child is an act of love between two people who are deeply enamoured; however, even this erotic encounter is regarded as a great sin, as Agnes has violated her vows of chastity and has to bear the dreadful consequences when the other nuns find out about it. Moreover, Raymond's account suggests that he is the initiator of the lovemaking, as Agnes heavily heaps reproaches on him afterwards and even breaks off contact with him (see *The Monk* 280). Even Raymond's choice of words bear connotations of violence: "[I]n an unguarded moment the honour of Agnes was sacrificed to my passion" (ibid. 280).

As bashful and vague Raymond's account of this night may be, *The Monk* also contains episodes with sexual overtones that are described livelier and in greater detail – also Loidolt points towards the strong visual element in the depiction of sexually arousing passages, which she even classifies as a characteristic feature of this novel (57). Most of these scenes are immediately connected to Ambrosio and his sensations and reactions. One of the first moments is Matilda's confession of her cross-dressing and her threat of suicide when Ambrosio threatens to reveal her true identity. As she positions her dagger on her breast, her garment is loosened:

> She had torn open her habit, and her bosom was half exposed. The weapon's point rested upon her left breast: And Oh! 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 thousand wild wishes bewildered his imagination. 'Hold!' He cried in an hurried faultering voice; 'I can resist no longer! Stay, then, Enchantress; Stay for my destruction!'(*The Monk* 203)

Here, as in most of the erotic passages, sexuality manifests in the presentation of the object of desire and the reactions it produces in the spectator. In this moment Matilda's revealed breast awakens Ambrosio's lust, a drive that has been unknown to him. In this context, this body part has a double meaning:

> In *The Monk*, the bosom is not only the repository of the heart and its secrets (invoking the historically enduring language of piety and romantic love), but also a more erotic quantity (derived from the new materialist libertine discourse which used physiological phenomena to trace erotic excitement). (Ellis 91)

The female breast is sexually highly appealing to Ambrosio (ibid. 91); there are numerous scenes in which its mere sight arouses his carnal desires and nearly drives him insane. It appears in his erotic dreams about Matilda (see *The Monk* 215), it seduces him to his first sexual intercourse and thus to the breaking of his vow (ibid. 219) and subsequently to neglect his guilty conscience and continue his affair (ibid. 305). When he secretly observes Antonia through a magic mirror before her bath, it is again her bosom that plays a central role and is the ultimate motivation for Ambrosio to get involved in Matilda's rituals of dark magic:

> At this moment a tame Linnet flew towards her, nestled its head between her breasts, and nibbled them in wanton play. The smiling Antonia strove in vain to shake off the Bird, and at length raised her hands to drive it from its delightful harbour. Ambrosio could bear no more: His desires were worked up to phrenzy.
> 'I yield!' He cried, dashing the mirror upon the ground: 'Matilda, I follow you! Do with me what you will!' (ibid. 335)

A remarkable feature of this passage as well as the scene in which Rosario reveals his real sex is not just the highly arousing effect on Ambrosio, but, more specifically, his exclamations of surrender. Thus, Ambrosio seems to be fully aware of his present situation and the negative consequences he has to bear, but nevertheless indulges in his sensual appetites. In a nearly clairvoyant manner he even speaks of his destiny and destruction. By claiming to be a victim of his surroundings, he automatically positions himself as subordinate to the situation – he no longer is in power of himself or his deeds. This creates an interesting constellation of power – the culprit claiming to be a victim of his environment that leaves him no other choice than to commit the terrible deed.

Similar to sexus, the depiction of crimen can be found in numerous passages in the text. Interestingly, most of the scenes in which a character is harmed are assaults – there are always notable differences in the distribution of power, as one of the characters usually is in a less advantageous position. Probably one of the most prominent brutal moments in the novel is the killing of the prioress: during the procession, her sadistic character and excessive brutality is dramatically revealed to the public. Deeply moved by Agnes's story and her terrible punishment, the people become enraged and want to bring the Prioress to justice. They abuse her in a brutal way and, after she has died, still continue to use violence on her lifeless body: "They beat it, trod upon it, and ill-used it, till it became no more than a mass of flesh, unsightly, shapeless, and disgusting" (ibid. 390). The Prioress, once feared and enormously empowered in the convent, is then completely helpless and fully exposed to the raging mob. The fury of the people does not only affect her, but the whole convent – they blindly wound other nuns and vandalise the building:

> The incensed Populace, confounding the innocent with the guilty, had resolved to sacrifice all the Nuns of that order to their rage, and not to leave one stone of the building upon another. […] They battered the walls, threw lightened torches in at the windows, and swore that by break of day not a Nun of St Clare's order should be left alive. (ibid. 390)

The people, who first came to worship and to see the procession, now "forgot all respect to the Saint" (ibid. 391) – the extent of their destructive behaviour is described in great detail and adds a strong visual element to the scene. Suspense is mostly created by the detailed depiction of crimen and its effects on the characters – the angry mob's blind rage and destructive frenzy present a difficult obstacle for Lorenzo to save himself and the nuns of the convent. Moreover, he has to operate under a serious time pressure, as the fire quickly spreads to all buildings and the infuriated people approach fast, which highly intensifies the experience of suspense. Leonard (32) has mentioned that suspense is conveyed by the feeling of being too late – this can be verified by the passage in which Lorenzo and his men try to escape out of the shattered building (see *The Monk* 391).

Another example of crimen is the passage of Elvira's murder. Similar to the riot scene, the situation can be characterised as a spontaneous assault – Elvira discovers Ambrosio nearly raping her daughter Antonia and threatens to reveal his crime in

public. As there is no possibility for him to escape, he decides to silence her by suffocation:

> The Monk continued to kneel upon her breast, witnessed without mercy the convulsive trembling of her limbs beneath him, and sustained with inhuman firmness the spectacle of her agonies, when soul and body were in the point of separating. Those agonies at length were over. She ceased to struggle for life. The Monk took off the pillow, and gazed upon her. Her face was covered with a frightful blackness: Her limbs moved no more; The blood was chilled in her veins; Her heart had forgotten to beat, and her hands were stiff and frozen. Ambrosio beheld before him the once noble and majestic form, now become a Corse, cold, senseless, and disgusting. (ibid. 356)

This scene is clearly marked by its detailed and moving account of the murder. The choice of words and phrases indicates an authorial influence on the reader: it laments Elvira's death and thus clearly draws the reader's sympathies towards the victim. Ambrosio, on the other hand, is depicted as a cruel and merciless killer – expressions such as "worked up to madness", "violent[…]" and "without mercy" (ibid. 356) perfectly characterise his present condition and behaviour.

This scene does not only feature crimen, but also sexus. As already described, Ambrosio has secretly broken into Antonia's chamber to daze Antonia and to satisfy his lust. In contrast to *Otranto*, in which sexual advances are covered under the duty of preserving the family lineage, Ambrosio's true intentions are clearly described: "He resolved not to delay for one instant longer the accomplishments of his wishes, and hastily proceeded to tear off those garments, which impeded the gratification of his lust" (ibid. 354).

The sight of sleeping Antonia even contributes to his arousal – the visual description of her body focuses on details which stress Antonia's beauty and erotic appeal: due to the hot weather, she lies naked in her bed – some strands of hair have fallen upon her breast, her cheeks blush and "her ripe and coral lips" (ibid. 354) smile and utter sighs. Her innocent appeal even makes her more attractive to him and increases his wish to rape her.

This scene is emblematic of the depiction of sexuality in this novel in general. It is, in fact, always concerned with power relations. They are often expressed in a rather aggressive and violent manner (see Loidolt 20), which creates a combination of the

two dominant human drives depicted in the text: crimen and sexus. In three encounters between Antonia and Ambrosio there are explicit references to rape – the first two have been interrupted by the appearance of Antonia's mother Elvira, but the third, which is undoubtedly the most cruel and terrible scene, even features forced intercourse: Ambrosio abducts Antonia and locks her into a tomb, where she should serve as his sex slave. When she awakes, she is horrified by her surroundings. In the course of Ambrosio's speech she detects his plans and desperately fights his advances, but in vain: "He stifled her cries with kisses, treated her with the rudeness of an unprincipled Barbarian, proceeded from freedom to freedom, and in the violence of his lustful delirium, wounded and bruised her tender limbs" (ibid. 407).

The power relations in this passage are accentuated to the extreme – Ambrosio can be compared to a beast as "his lust was become madness" (ibid. 405), whereas Antonia's weakness and fragility has even increased by the desperateness of her situation. This difference is mirrored and becomes most prominent in the fact that the powerful aggressor terrorises the weak character – Loidolt mentions the eroticisation of the innocent and, as a consequence, the male fantasy of victimising "an artless and helpless woman" (43) as a central feature in the depiction of sexuality. This inequality, the resulting menace and the fact that this scene features both the crimen and the sexus drive evoke a high level of thrill.

I have defined thrill in terms of a voyeuristic experience of the audience – this becomes most apparent in this novel. Loidolt even mentions voyeurism as a central element in *The Monk* which "most possibly" (57) played a crucial factor in its success. – I have already pointed towards the fact that Gothic is concerned with excess and the transgression of "social proprieties and moral laws" (Botting 3) and that it "fed uncultivated appetites for marvellous and strange events" (ibid. 4):

> With *The Monk* Lewis wilfully transgresses the moral codes and taboos [...], insofar as he not only depicts indecent sexual scenes, but also gives shape to all kinds of terrible and abysmal fantasies, which shock the reader and provoke an immediate emotional response […]. (Loidolt 58)

It is exactly this fascination of "taboo literature" (Koch, *Biology* 45), of narratives which are concerned with transgressive behaviour and extraordinarily outrageous

events which can be clearly described as voyeuristic – in *The Monk*, the emphasis of the visual factor in the depiction of such scenes even supports the choice of this term.

In many instances the reader gets the possibility to experience certain scenes from the viewpoint of another character – the audience literally sees the fictional world through the eyes of a figure. I have already mentioned the strong visual element as a central narrative device of the novel – however, even these depictions are in most cases not neutral points of view. If we consider the passage in which Ambrosio secretly enters Antonia's bedroom at night, the description of the sleeping young girl is clearly marked by Ambrosio's gaze, as the narrator mainly focuses on sensual parts of the body – "all the charms of the lovely Object" (*The Monk* 354): red lips, blushing cheeks, strains of hair, heaving breasts and the general fact that she is naked (ibid. 354).

Loidolt claims that "Lewis uses his protagonist's sexual obsession as a pretext to indulge in elaborate descriptions of ripe lips, swelling breasts and delicate limbs" (57). If the author's only intention in using a subjective point of view was to offer erotic stimuli to the readership is, of course, highly debatable. However, we can safely state that the reader does not only witness immoral and criminal behaviour (in this context the attempted rape of Antonia and Elvira's murder), but even gets the possibility of receiving a glimpse on the villain's distorted mind, as his reflections and emotions are revealed by the narrator. Thus, the readers experience thrill on two levels, as they are confronted with moral deviation expressed both in actual events and in a psychological portrait of the antagonist – Loidolt refers to the "sensationalistic" depiction of a "horror scenario where everything is carried to the extremes, especially the gradual 'transformation' of the saintly innocent monk into a lecherous, brutal monster" (186).

5.2 "Lustful Man and crafty Devil"[22] – characters

One of the main differences in characterisation in *Otranto* and *The Monk* is the altering depiction of a character in the course of the narrative. One of the most

[22] *The Monk* 185.

apparent examples for that can be found in the presentation of the villain. Whereas Manfred in *Otranto* was characterised in a negative way from the immediate beginning of the novel (this is realised by his absence of grief as a reaction to the sudden death of his son), Ambrosio's first appearance is in Madrid's cathedral. The reader is confronted with his public image of an excellent and highly charismatic orator and Ambrosio is defined by the enthusiastic reactions of his audience. In the course of the novel a more psychological view is presented, which reveals his thoughts and feelings and gradually deviates from the original image of the perfect angelic monk. Soon the readers do not only detect his numerous faults, but also his vices and finally they face his complete transformation into the role of a classic villain – thus, they have to revise their former conceptions about the character in the course of the story.

In terms of the reader's empathy, Ambrosio is a highly interesting figure. As he starts as an innocent character and ends as a Gothic villain, he does not easily fit into a clear-cut categorisation as the characters of *Otranto*. The initial depiction of Ambrosio's nearly ethereal appearance and his stunning presence render him an awe-inspiring aura:

> He was a Man of noble port and commanding presence. His stature was lofty, and his features uncommonly handsome. His Nose was aquiline, his eyes large black and sparkling, and his dark brows almost joined together. His complexion was of a deep but clear Brown; Study and watching had entirely deprived his cheek of colour. Tranquillity reigned upon his smooth unwrinkled forehead; and Content, expressed upon every feature, seemed to announce the Man equally unacquainted with cares and crimes. He bowed himself with humility to the audience: Still there was a certain severity in his look and manner that inspired universal awe, and few could sustain the glance of his eye at once fiery and penetrating. Such was Ambrosio, Abbot of the Capuchins, and surnamed, 'The Man of Holiness'. (*The Monk* 172)

This is Ambrosio's first appearance in the novel. The depiction of his looks already entails a first characterisation: he is described as being handsome, but, in contrast to the description of many female characters, his attractiveness does not entail amiability – quite the contrary, it renders him a distinguished loftiness and aloofness. His smooth forehead suggests that he is above worldly everyday worries. Ambrosio's eyes cast stern and frightening looks and altogether lack emotional warmth or care. His mind is bent towards laborious study and therefore his cheeks have become pale, as no physical exercise has rendered them a healthy colour. Moreover, his pale

cheeks even deny corporeality – if we compare passages that feature the description of red or rosy cheeks, it becomes obvious that a large number of them appear in an erotic context.[23]

This description is accompanied by the ecstatic reactions caused by him on the people in the church. The effect he has on them could be described as enchanting – they hang on Ambrosio's every word during the sermon and when he drops his rosary, the crowd greedily seizes it: "Whoever became possessor of a Bead, preserved it as a sacred relique " (ibid. 173). The "[e]nthusiasm" (ibid. 186)[24] he has incited in the people can in fact be compared to a modern pop concert – the dazed spectators cheer at him, try to touch him and fight over an object formerly owned by him and carelessly thrown into the crowd, which is now preserved as some kind of fetish.

In short, Ambrosio's whole appearance in this scene may be fascinating, but it certainly does not contribute to empathy on the reader's side. He appears as a higher being and lacks features that distinguish him as human, which complicates a relation of the reader towards him based on sympathy (see Junkerjürgen 135).

However, as already mentioned, the depiction of Ambrosio changes in the course of the novel. The perfect façade soon starts to dissolve as the reader is granted a closer, more private look. His most intimate thoughts and views are revealed, which moves his figure away from the perfect, transcendental being towards a real human with all his weaknesses. Does this render him more amiable in the eyes of the audience?

From a theoretical point of view, this question could be affirmed. Junkerjürgen states that the presentation of a character has to include personal motives, thoughts and wishes and also some negative qualities in order to evoke empathy in the reader (150,

[23] Antonia's cheeks in the flirt scene in the cathedral (*The Monk* 168), the cheek of the painted Madonna adored by Ambrosio (ibid. 187), Ambrosio's blushing at the thought of Matilda's exposed breast (ibid. 204), Matilda's cheek as her cowl accidentally reveals her face (ibid. 213), again Matilda's cheek as she successfully convinces Ambrosio to continue their affair (ibid. 304), Leonella's use of red ink in a love letter to Don Christoval "to express the blushes of her cheek" (ibid. 291), Antonia's cheeks "suffused with crimson" (ibid. 291) at the sight of Lorenzo and Antonia's blushing caused by warm temperatures in the night Ambrosio enters her house (ibid. 354).

[24] Ellis states that the term enthusiasm was a prime notion of the eighteenth century, denoting "the uncontrolled encouragement of feelings and sentiments" (85).

144). Based on the information given in the characterisation, the reader has to be able to understand and anticipate the decisions and reactions of a figure. Moreover, quirks and imperfections of the character stress the human nature of the figure and thus contribute to a closer relationship to the reader (ibid. 144). Both factors are given in the characterisation of the abbot. However, the case of Ambrosio is far more complicated.

Referring to the fact that he was seduced by Matilda's "femininity", Ellis attributes a "misogynist ideology of women's rapacious sexuality and propensity for pleasure" (87) to the novel. There are some debates about the novel's indirect accusation of women in the fall of Ambrosio (see Loidolt 34-35): Matilda, the typical femme fatale, always incites him to commit even more atrocious crimes (see Ellis 88) – thus, it appears as if she is the main cause for the moral degeneration of the seemingly innocent abbot (see Loidolt 40). Ambrosio, too, constantly accuses female figures for his deeds.[25] However, this can just as well be regarded as an evidence of Ambrosio's ignorance towards the negative development of his character – his accusative behaviour can easily be regarded as a symptom of to his immature unwillingness to accept his sins as his own, to face the consequences and to repent. Instead, "he projects his own failure on women" (Loidolt 41).

Besides, we must bear in mind that Ambrosio has, in fact, never been completely immaculate. Already the scene after the service in which the reader gets a first private glimpse on him reveals one of his tragic flaws – pride:

> He was no sooner alone, than He gave free loose to the indulgence of his vanity. […] He looked round him with exultation, and Pride told him loudly, that He was superior to the rest of his fellow-Creatures.
> 'Who,' thought He; 'Who but myself has passed the ordeal of Youth, yet sees no single stain upon his conscience? […] I seek for such a Man in vain. I see no one but myself possessed of such resolution. Religion cannot boast Ambrosio's equal!" (*The Monk*, 186-187)

As his thoughts linger on his alleged moral superiority, a Madonna painting catches his eye. He closely examines and praises her physical features more from an erotic than a religious point of view, lamenting on the strict rules of celibacy (ibid.187).

[25] He blames Matilda for seducing him (see *The Monk* 304), he easily accepts the thought that Elvira's stubbornness and her resolution to damage his reputation has forced him to murder her (ibid. 357) and he makes Antonia and her charms responsible for his crimes (ibid. 408).

Thus, in one single scene the reader is familiarised with Ambrosio's major weaknesses. If we consider Junkerjürgen's theory (144), it could be argued that the exposing of a character's defaults heightens the reader's empathy towards him or her. However, the negative qualities exposed in this scene are by no means just quirks or harmless weaknesses, but cardinal sins. Lust and pride are Ambrosio's vices – not the temptations of women, but his own tragic flaws are the real cause of his fall.

It is his own hubris which motivates him to wish for a proof of his virtuousness:

> Ambrosio[…] is proof against temptation. Temptation, did I say? To me it would be none. What charms me, when ideal and considered as a superior being, would disgust me, become Woman and tainted with all the failings of Mortality. […] Are not the passions dead in my bosom? Have I not freed myself from the frailty of Mankind? Fear not, Ambrosio! Take confidence in the strength of your virtue. Enter boldly into a world, to whose frailings you are superior; Reflect that you are now exempted from Humanity's defects, and defy all the arts of the Spirits of Darkness. (*The Monk* 187)

In this moment Rosario, the monk who shortly afterwards turns out to be Matilda, enters Ambrosio's room. It is obvious that this is no mere coincidence, but an answer and an immediate reaction to Ambrosio's bold speech. Therefore it could be argued that Matilda is in fact not the reason for Ambrosio's corruption, but rather a test of his moral fortitude.

In the course of the following passages it soon becomes apparent that Ambrosio has highly overrated his virtues, as he subsequently gives in to every temptation which presents itself before him. In fact, until this moment Ambrosio has never had a real opportunity to test his character: "His monastic seclusion had till now been in his favour, since it gave him no room for discovering his bad qualities" (ibid. 314). Once Ambrosio makes one mistake, however, all of his other vices break free: "As yet his other passions lay dormant; But they only needed to be once awakened, to display themselves with violence as great and irresistible" (ibid. 314).

The enormity of his transgressions rises dramatically – at first he breaks his vow of celibacy and spends a night with Matilda. This was not the last time, though – after his first experience with carnal desires, he freely indulges in his appetites and starts a passionate affair with Matilda, who initiates him into "the art of pleasure" (ibid. 305). However, this does not satisfy him – after some time he becomes weary of

Matilda and yearns for diversion. He signs a pact with a demon to get the opportunity to rape Antonia. This includes even two more crimes – not only does he employ dark magic, but he also wants to satisfy his sexual cravings by violent means. His next atrocity is the murder of Elvira, which is immediately followed by the kidnapping of Antonia, her rape and murder. His last fatal sin is a pact with the devil – he trades his soul for his freedom.

After each crime Ambrosio feels remorse and pity, but he strives to suppress these feelings by seemingly rational argumentation. That plunges him even deeper into moral decay and distances him from repent and purification. Committing a crime, however, does not satisfy his restlessness, but ultimately leads to another transgression:

> Desire leads Ambrosio to commit crime, but the desire is always in excess of the crime, so the crime does not satisfy him. This dissatisfaction, this sublime lust, spurs him to still greater sin [...]. (Ellis 88)

This becomes most apparent when Ambrosio falls guilty of murder. The terrible death by Elvira only encourages him to pursue Antonia's destruction:

> As if the crimes into which his passion had seduced him, had only increased its violence, He longed more eagerly than ever to enjoy Antonia. The same success in concealing his present guilt, He trusted, would attend his future. He was deaf to the murmurs of conscience, and resolved to satisfy his desires at any price. (*The Monk* 358)

This passage reveals his manic obsession and his corrupted nature. There is no doubt that he is a villain – the readers have already became aware of that in the course of his sadistic pursuit to ruin Antonia's innocence. It is, in fact, her childlike ignorance, her chastity and her resistance which inflame his passion (ibid. 325-326, 407). Those features which highlight her innocence and helplessness heighten the reader's empathy towards her, but to Ambrosio they trigger his aggressive and destructive behaviour. This is one major factor which alienates Ambrosio to the readers – they no longer feel empathy for him (if they ever have at all), but clearly identify him as an antagonist.

Ambrosio's guilt is based on "incontinence, hypocrisy, perjury, and pride" (Loidolt 188). Moreover, he ignores feelings of pity or empathy. These vices also prohibit any sympathy from the reader's side. Thus, Ambrosio is not a figure which evokes

empathy, although at a first glance some features on the discourse level may appear to point towards a different direction (e.g. the fairly large amount of discourse time devoted to Ambrosio, the detailed depiction of his thoughts and, as a result, the transparency of his motives). As Peck states, "[t]hough Lewis devoted pages of analysis to Ambrosio's character […] he evokes no more sympathy" (38). The transformation of his character does not entail a dramatic change in the reader's attitude towards him. At one point the narrator tries to explain the origin of Ambrosio's nature by blaming his Catholic education (see *The Monk* 313).[26] However, this may be an explanation for his behaviour, but certainly not a justification. Even if the reader temporarily takes pity on Ambrosio, this feeling quickly fades in the moment of his next crime.

A figure which does cause a dramatic change in the reader's sympathies is certainly Matilda. Similar to Ambrosio, her character does not remain static – however, there is said to be a crucial difference in the characterisation. Whereas Ambrosio's change is based on a gradual transformation, Matilda's is described as "a revelation rather than a transformation" (Ellis 86).

Matilda first appears in the form of Rosario, a young novice whose background is unknown and who seems rather introverted in the company of the other monks. His defining features are "[h]is hatred of society, his profound melancholy, his rigid observation of the duties of his order, and his voluntary seclusion from the world" (*The Monk* 188) – they contribute to the air of mystery which surrounds him (ibid. 188). The novel soon reveals the special relationship between Rosario and Ambrosio – each one seems more calm and less fierce and farouche in the company of the other.

There are various theories about Rosario's change into Matilda. Most of them agree that Matilda's true nature is a demon, but there are different points of view concerning the significance of her femaleness.[27]

[26] In fact, there are numerous anti-Catholic references in the novel, as we will see later.
[27] For the theory of "diabolical female sexuality" see Loidolt (41). For the theory of Matilda revealing the "constructedness of gender identity" see Ellis (87). For Matilda's split personality and an analysis of her "good" side, see Peck (39).

Some passages are a crucial indicator for directing the reader's sympathies towards Matilda – she is portrayed as devoted, loving and subservient and there is no doubt about her good-heartedness. She appears to be the typical "femme fragile", the same type of female role as, for instance, Matilda and Isabella of *Otranto*. The reader is strongly inclined to pity her, as Ambrosio blames her for their first sexual contact. Ambrosio laments on the "abyss of misery" (ibid. 304) she has plunged him and she reacts with bitter tears, reminding Ambrosio of him being of the true motive for her entering the convent:

> To me these reproaches, Ambrosio? To me, who have sacrificed for you the world's pleasures, the luxury of wealth, the delicacy of sex, my Friends, my fortune, and my fame? What have you lost, which I preserved? Have I not shared in *your* guilt? Have *you* not shared in *my* pleasures? (ibid. 305)

As Ambrosio falls in love with Antonia, the reader's sympathies are again directed towards Matilda: "Unfortunate Matilda! Her Paramour forgot, that for his sake alone She had forfeited her claim to virtue; and his only reason for despising her was, that She had loved him much too well" (ibid. 317).

In the moment of Matilda's illness the reader is again more inclined to sympathise with her than Ambrosio, who mainly fears that her death might put an end to his newly discovered carnal pleasures (ibid. 305).

However, a slow change in her manner and behaviour becomes apparent soon. She no longer seems as fragile as in the former passages, but gradually gains a more confident and determined appearance. Ambrosio notices the change in her manner and her intellectual capabilities and laments her former behaviour – she has seemed to him "the mildest and softest of her sex, devoted to his will, and looking up to him as to a superior Being" (ibid. 309). As he witnesses her change, she gains his respect, but altogether loses him as a lover (ibid. 310).

Also the reader's sympathies are not certain anymore at this point – Matilda appears alienated, her eyes flash "with a fire and wildness" and a "determined desperate courage reigned upon her brow" (ibid. 307). In her discussions with Ambrosio she resumes a more resolute and even commanding tone and, as even Ambrosio himself

observes, she lacks pity (ibid. 310), which becomes obvious as she advises him against a mitigation of Agnes' punishment (ibid. 309).

Her counsels for Ambrosio become more and more evil, but she manages to rationalise them in a way which appears sensible to him. In fact, "[h]e found himself unable to cope with her in argument, and was unwillingly obliged to confess the superiority of her judgement" (ibid. 309-310). It is not quite clear for the reader to understand the reason for her change. Matilda denies jealousy (ibid. 332), but it would serve as an adequate motive for persuading Ambrosio to employ black magic to rape Antonia. In this way, she could plot the ruin of her former lover and his new object of desire.

Another possible explanation could be that her character has changed in the course of trying to save her own life by means of magic. Naturally she must have been somewhat familiar with these techniques, otherwise she would not have been able to perform a ritual; however, it is clear that the step she was going to take appeared new and dangerous to her:

> 'Since you have made me feel that Life is valuable, I will rescue mine at any rate. No dangers shall appal me: I will look upon the consequences of my action boldly, nor shudder at the horrors which they present. I will sacrifice scarcely worthy to purchase your possession, and remember, that a moment past in your arms in this world, o'er-pays an age of punishment in the next. (ibid. 305)

Matilda's change has often been referred to as the *revelation* of Matilda's true, infernal nature (e.g. see Ellis 86-87) in the sense that she has always been a demonic figure straight from the first appearance in the novel onwards. However, there is some textual evidence that does not fully support this claim. First, there are hardly any cataphoric references whatsoever - in the course of the story, she may develop into an antagonist, but there are no clues that point towards a supernatural character. Moreover, the text clearly establishes her as a passionate woman who has fallen in love with Ambrosio. Even if she lied in her speeches to Ambrosio und simulated her reactions, the text even provides passages which could be regarded as a glimpse on her thoughts.[28] Naturally, Matilda's change aims to surprise and it motivates the

[28] The text leaves no doubts concerning Matilda's affection towards Ambrosio. When poisoned Ambrosio lays sleeping in his bed, Matilda visits him and utters her sorrows, care and love for him -

reader to reconsider former descriptions as a devoted and loving woman. However, it is highly unlikely that the previous information which the text has provided about her character could be classified as inaccurate – there are not any other passages which suggest an unreliable narrator.

As her beliefs become more radical and cruel and her mischievous counsels motivate Ambrosio to commit worse crimes, the reader's sympathies quickly fade and are replaced by the realisation that Matilda has taken over the role of an antagonist. She does not only encourage Ambrosio's negative character traits, but her vicious plans also pose a serious threat to Antonia.

Regarding the presentation of conventional Gothic figures, Matilda is certainly a fascinating and exceptional case, as she takes over two different and seemingly binary roles – the femme fragile and femme fatale. Whereas Matilda at first causes the readers to worry about her well-being in the moment of her illness, she afterwards causes them to tremble for Antonia's safety.

Most of the other female figures are more easily to categorise, as they are mostly flat characters. Agnes and Marguerite, for instance, clearly fall into the category of "fallen women" (see Loidolt 45), who have transgressed social boundaries, but, in contrast to the femme fatale, have never consciously used their sexuality in a way to gain power (ibid. 34) and can therefore be described as evoking sympathy in the reader. They have to bear the terrible consequences of their deeds and suffer enormously – Marguerite, who eloped with her lover, has to accept a new husband when her former has died and to share the ostracised and vicious way of life of bandits. Her attempts to break out are quickly and cruelly discouraged by the threat on her children's lives (see *The Monk* 240). Agnes does not only indulge in extramarital sex, but also breaks her vow of celibacy and thus has "disobeyed both moral and religious codes" (Loidolt 46). As a result, her punishment by the prioress is most severe and inhuman.

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the text clearly establishes that she "believe[s] that He [is] sleeping" (*The Monk* 212). While Ambrosio becomes weary of her, Matilda becomes "more attached" (ibid. 312) to him and he "become[s] dearer to her than ever" (ibid. 312).

A parallel between both characters is their passive role in the moment of transgression – Marguerite's lover urges her to flee with him from Strasbourg, as he was pursued by the police, and she often refers to him as her seducer (see *The Monk* 239, 240). Similarly, the moment of lovemaking between Agnes and Raymond seemed to have been initiated by the male part (ibid. 280). Moreover, there is no indication that Agnes enjoyed the night or ever had a positive attitude towards it – immediately afterwards she regrets the deed and blames Raymond for betraying her trust.

Marguerite's and Agnes' punishment functions as penance, which ultimately leads to a happy ending for them. Their suffering atones for their transgressions and makes "an ultimate restoration of their reputation" (Loidolt 47) possible, which facilitates a successful reintegration into society. Although the text clearly establishes their involvement into an act of transgression, the reader's sympathies are not impeded by this – on the contrary, their good nature, their harsh punishment, their suffering and the narration of their background stories easily evoke pity in the reader.

As already mentioned, Gothic is marked by both the fascination of transgressing moral and social norms and the reasserting and affirming of them (see Botting 6-8), which often implies the punishment of characters who are considered to have sinned. This kind of "bad karma" cannot even be prevented by an early death, which is depicted in Beatrice's case. In contrast to Agnes and Marguerite, who have been described as "victims of seduction" (Loidolt 45), Beatrice appears without scruples and consciously and wilfully transgresses social norms and taboos: after eloping with her lover, Baron Lindenberg, from the convent, she officially becomes his mistress and wallows in luxury and vice:

> She lived at his Castle as his avowed Concubine: All Bavaria was scandalized by her impudent and abandoned conduct. Her feasts vied in luxury with Cleopatra's, and Lindenberg became the Theatre of the most unbridled debauchery. Not satisfied with displaying the incontinence of a Prostitute, She professed herself an Atheist: She took every opportunity to scoff at her monastic vows, and loaded with ridicule the most sacred ceremonies of Religion. (*The Monk* 272)

Beatrice soon finds another lover in the Baron's brother, who is characterised as "her equal in depravity" (ibid. 272). He persuades her to murder his brother, but soon

realises that Beatrice could pose a threat to him in his aspirations to power. As a result, he stabs her in the same night she has murdered the Baron.

This passage clearly marks the viciousness of Beatrice, thereby establishing moral standards by the depiction of their violation. The text explicitly morally judges her behaviour and condemns it by attributing negative qualities: expressions such as "her warm and voluptuous character" (ibid. 272), "a character so depraved" (ibid. 272) or "a Woman, whose violent and atrocious character made him tremble with reason for his own safety" (ibid. 273) clearly comment on her behaviour. The remark which initiates Beatrice's story – "the enormity of her crimes must excite your abhorrence" (ibid. 271) – can therefore be also interpreted as a direct influence on the readers, who are supposed to be appalled by such a figure.

Beatrice has been described as a "corrupted 'femme fatale'" (Loidolt 46) who is depicted as the embodiment of polluted femininity" (ibid. 47). As punishment for her sinful life and due to the fact that she has never had a proper burial, she is condemned to spend her afterlife haunting as a ghost. Only when Raymond chooses to get in contact with her and frees her from eternal damnation and a restless afterlife, she finally finds peace. In this respect Beatrice resembles Matilda and Marguerite, as the same structure of narrative events can be discovered in their story: betrayal by a male character (see Loidolt 48) – punishment – penitence – salvation by another character. However, whereas Matilda's and Marguerite's sufferings aim to evoke pity in the reader, Beatrice's unrest is depicted as a nuisance to Raymond – he frees her from her punishment only to rid himself from her haunting. The burial of her bones in the crypt of her family is merely another task he has to fulfil in his long quest for Agnes and is depicted rather matter-of-factly (see *The Monk* 275).

Beatrice's character is certainly not designed to evoke pity in the reader. The only reason why Raymond is told to respect her wishes and listen to her story is due to the fact that they were distantly related to each other (ibid. 271). Nevertheless she plays a crucial role in the creation of suspense, as she is presented as a constantly lurking threat to Raymond. Her uncanny appearances and the inconveniences that usually accompany them clearly mark her as an antagonistic force which threatens Raymond. Although she probably means no harm to him, she clearly assumes an opposing role.

The role of the typical Gothic heroine is occupied by Antonia. Similar to Matilda in *Otranto*, she falls prey to the ravings of the Gothic villain and finally dies innocently. To some degree Antonia, too, lives in a motherless space: Elvira does exist, but can clearly be categorised as benevolent but ineffective – at the beginning, she is restricted to her bed due to a severe illness and therefore is unable to protect actively her daughter. She confides Antonia to the care of Leonella, who shows no real interest in her niece but rather seeks personal amusement, as it is illustrated in the scene in the cathedral – flattered by the coquettish discourse of Lorenzo and Raymond, she tries to appear equally sophisticated and introduces Antonia and her mother in a negative and inferior tone:

> 'Tis a young Creature, […] who is totally ignorant of the world. She has been brought up in an old Castle in Murcia; with no other Society than her Mother's, who, God help her! Has no more sense, good Soul, than is necessary to carry her Soup to the mouth. (ibid.168)

Moreover, she forces Antonia to unveil and expose herself to the gaze of others. Instead of protecting her from the bold advances of the two men, she encourages their behaviour and abandons her duties of her niece's protection. She does not interfere as Lorenzo, "armed with the Aunt's sanction" (ibid. 168), hastily removes Antonia's veil in order to gaze at Antonia's physical appearance.

Loidolt mentions that "the veil stands for sexual prohibition" (55) and the "denial of satisfaction" (54) in the novel. I agree that the scene described above does contain some sensual implications, as Antonia's deranged veil offers "erotic glimpses of body parts" (ibid. 55). However, in this context the veil can also be regarded as a symbol of privacy (see Kilgour 149). In the moment Antonia takes it off, she enters the social world of Madrid – she reveals her face to the public, which means it will be remembered and recognised by others and thus she becomes part of Madrid's society. As Leonella scolds her because she refuses to unveil, Antonia argues that taking her veil off would be against the custom in Murcia, the place of her childhood (see *The Monk* 168). Leonella, however, reminds her of their moving to Madrid and, as a consequence, the necessity to adapt to new manners. This presents a challenge to Antonia, as she is presented in sharp contrast to Madrid society. Whereas others attend church due to social reasons – "[t]he Women came to show themselves, the

Men to see the Women […] and one half of Madrid was brought thither by expecting to meet the other half" (ibid. 165), Antonia anxiously veils herself and makes no effort to actively participate in the conversation with Lorenzo. In forcing her to unveil, Leonella does not only push Antonia to adopt a new social behaviour, but she also plunges her into society, a sphere which is new to her and which she has not yet been properly prepared to enter.

Thus, Leonella falls into the category of "schlechte Ersatzmütter, die […] die schutzlose und isolierte Position der Heldin im mutterlosen Raum [verstärken]" (Thomas 63) due to incompetence and a lack of effort (ibid. 63). Instead of helping Antonia in a difficult situation, she abandons her because of selfish reasons. Leonella is certainly not an antagonist – she is described as having "entertained a sincere regard for Elvira and her daughter" and being "truly affectionate" (*The Monk* 381); however, she is unable to help and care for Antonia in the moment of greatest distress – in the time after Elvira's death.

Apart from Elvira and Leonella, Lorenzo, her admirer, and Raymond, a distant relative, also fail to protect Antonia. A well-timed proposal of Lorenzo could have saved her from Ambrosio's evil plan, as it is verbalised in Matilda's urging speech to the abbot:

> [Y]ou have no time to lose. The Nephew of the Duke of Medina Celi prepares to demand Antonia for his Bride: In a few days She will be removed to the Palace of her Relation, the Marquis de las Cisternas, and there She will be secure from your attempts. (ibid. 373)

Lorenzo, however, is detained by various preparations at his uncle's house. When he finally returns to Madrid, he is determined to bring justice to the prioress and "had no opportunity to enquire about his Mistress, and was perfectly ignorant both of her death and her Mother's" (ibid. 382). On the same day Antonia is already buried.

Also Raymond fails at helping Antonia – her letter does not receive him. In fact, he even sends it back, as both his physical and psychological condition prevent him from dealing with correspondence. If she had written it one day earlier, he would have accepted the letter, but again an instance of bad timing prevents Antonia's safety and happiness.

Regarding to their relation towards the female protagonists, Raymond and Lorenzo clearly occupy the role of the romantic hero. Their flat character, their absence and inability to protect their love interests are decisive features of this Gothic character type (see Loidolt 171, Thomas 81) Both are deeply devoted to their loved ones, but are characterised by their incapability to save them from misfortune – Raymond cannot save Agnes from the Prioress' punishment and Lorenzo cannot protect Antonia from Ambrosio's evil plans. Although Raymond is presented as cunning and adventurous, he fails at decisive moments.

Thomas states that "der junge Held [ist] nicht in der Lage, Übel von seiner Angebeteten abzuwenden oder auch nur die angekündigte Hochzeit stattfinden zu lassen" (81). Not just in the case of Antonia, marriage is presented as an exit out of the dangers of the Gothic world. For the female Gothic protagonists, the official, sanctified and socially accepted union with the romantic hero is a safe means of escaping the motherless space without losing their identity (see Thomas 84-85).

However, it is not just Lorenzo who fails to arrange a timely marriage – also Raymond is incapable of saving Agnes at various times: he can neither save her from a forced entering into a convent nor help her to exit the monastic life. In fact, his inability to act manifests itself in his physical condition – he develops a severe illness which confines him to bed. His psychological condition rapidly deteriorates, which is mirrored in "the most terrible access of passion" (*The Monk* 342) and the high "distress and agitation of his mind" (ibid. 360).

Also at the moment of eloping Raymond is not able to return to Castle Lindenberg and rescue Agnes, as he is abducted by the ghost of the Bleeding Nun and, as a consequence, severely injured. While Raymond has to recover from his accident, Agnes' situation has become even more unfortunate, as her plans of eloping have been revealed and she has to suffer the consequences. Thus, the fragility of the romantic hero in *The Monk* is not expressed in the classic way of "einer ausgeprägten Neigung zu Ohnmachtsanfällen und Weinkrämpfen" (Thomas 85) – his weakness and emotional instability are revealed in temporal physical deficiencies and illness.

Although his passivity hinders the heroine's escape from the numerous dangers of the Gothic world, the text does not impede sympathetic feelings towards the romantic hero. He is presented as an amiable character whose weaknesses are often excused, as for instance Raymond's failing of accommodating Elvira, his sister-in-law, and Antonia:

> [H]is hopes of making the proposal [of moving into Raymond's house] to Elvira through the lips of Agnes, and afterwards, his disappointment at losing his intended Bride, as well as the severe illness which for some time had confined him to his Bed, made him defer from day to day the giving an Asylum in his House to his Brother's Widow. […] [T]he Marquis did not imagine, that a trifling delay on his part could create any embarrassment; and the distress and agitation of his mind might well excuse his negligence. (*The Monk* 360)

The text frequently refers to his noble intentions and virtuous character and clearly assigns him a supportive role. However, his frequent misfortunes in securing his mistress' safety and his tendency to endanger himself makes him merely another object of the reader's pity.

One of the characters evoking the greatest empathy is certainly Antonia. Her helpless situation is directly addressed in the text: "In truth, Antonia's situation was sufficiently embarrassing and unpleasant. She was alone in the midst of a dissipated and expensive City; she was ill provided with money, and worse with Friends" (ibid. 359-360). Her desperate situation and her helplessness easily create a high level of emotional involvement in the reader.

Antonia's character has been referred to as an "innocent angel" (Schramm 57). Indeed, her defining features are innocence, beauty and fragility. Apart from that, there are hardly any other characteristics that flesh out the figure. Her appearance is compared to a Seraph and the ample description of her body features some references to jewels and heaven (see *The Monk* 168). Her innocence is frequently addressed in the form of inexperience and negligence, such as her bashful looks in the cathedral as a reaction towards the flirting advances of Lorenzo (ibid. 168) or her naïve behaviour towards Ambrosio which ultimately leads to her destruction. In the scene in which Ambrosio asks her about past experiences with being in love, she compares the symptoms he describes with her feelings of admiration of their first meeting, obviously unaware of the implications she thereby draws:

> "Me, Antonia?" He cried, his eyes sparkling with delight and impatience, while He seized her hand, and pressed it rapturously to his lips. "Me, Antonia? You felt this sentiments for me?"
> "Even with more strength than you have described. The very moment that I beheld you, I felt so pleased, so interested! I waited so eagerly to catch the sound of your voice, and when I heard it, it seemed so sweet! It spoke to me a language till then so unknown! Methought, it told me a thousand things which I wished to hear! It seemed as if I had long known you; as if I had a right to your friendship, your advice, and your protection. […]"
> "Antonia! my charming Antonia!" exclaimed the Monk, and caught her to his bosom; "Can I believe my senses? Repeat it to me, my sweet Girl! Tell me again that you love me, that you love me truly and tenderly!"
> "Indeed I do: Let my Mother be excepted, and the world holds no one more dear to me!" (ibid. 329)

Antonia's words have a tremendous impact on Ambrosio, they arouse him to a point where he is no longer able to control his passions. He is determined to indulge in them – even if he has to employ violence. Dazzled Antonia desperately and unsuccessfully tries to free herself from his embrace – only Elvira's sudden entering can stop Ambrosio from pursuing his intentions.

This passage also illustrates Antonia's third major characteristic feature, fragility. Her naïveté and inexperience directly lead her into danger. By depicting her in perilous situations the contrast between the impending menace and her helplessness emphasises her weak condition. As in *Otranto*, this is realised through the detailed descriptions of her fearful reactions which evoke pity in the audience. The most touching and gruesome example is certainly the moment of her rape:

> With every moment the Friar's passion became more ardent, and Antonia's terror more intense. She struggled to disengage herself from his arms: Her exertions were unsuccessful; and finding that Ambrosio's conduct became still freer, She shrieked for assistance with all her strength. […] Even his caresses terrified her from their fury, and created no other sentiment than fear. […] Antonia's shrieks were unheard: Yet she continued them, nor abandoned her endeavours to escape, till exhausted and out of breath She sank from his arms upon her knees, and once more had recourse to prayers and supplications. (ibid. 407)

The features beauty, innocence and fragility could be regarded as direct means of directing the reader's sympathies towards Antonia. Physical attractiveness is, according to Tan (23), one of various characteristics which can ensure a positive attitude towards a figure. Her innocent behaviour point towards a virtuous character and her fragility heightens her vulnerability.

Interestingly, these character traits are not only crucial for evoking the audience's sympathies – the same features also seem immensely attractive to Ambrosio. Her purity and innocence are the reasons why he falls in love with her (as, in this way, she represents Matilda's exact opposite for him) and why he is obsessed with her destruction and corruption afterwards. Her fragility even incites his passions – her immense fear and dread in the rape scene as well as the certainty that she is completely subjected to his will in this moment "seemed only to inflame the Monk's desires, and supply his brutality with additional strength" (*The Monk* 407). Afterwards he blames her beauty for the crimes he has committed (ibid. 408).

However, although these character traits greatly heighten the reader's emotional involvement and pity towards her, Antonia could be regarded as one of the flattest characters of the three novels discussed in this paper. The features of beauty, virtue and fragility do not give depth to the character, but in fact even contribute to the stock-character depiction of Antonia. Even her virtuousness, a trait which could eventually indicate certain convictions and opinions, is merely founded on Antonia's complete "ignorance of human sexuality" (Ellis 85) and thus only a sign of her restrictive and highly idealistic upbringing.

Moreover, she makes no autonomous decisions and is reduced to absolute passivity. She seems to be stricken by fate and makes no efforts whatsoever to oppose it. She gladly obeys her mother and her aunt without further attempts to join her lover as, for instance, Matilda of *Otranto* has done. Neither does she actively seek help after her mother's death.

Thus, Antonia could be regarded as the embodiment of "d[er] Hilflosigkeit der Frau in einer brutalen Welt" (Schramm 44) and her victimisation. Loidolt claims that Antonia's character is an expression of the fantasy of dominating and victimising "an artless and helpless woman" (43) – if we follow this argument, Antonia does not only evoke "Rührungsthrill" and "Angst-Thrill", but theoretically could also trigger the experience of "Macht-Thrill" in the audience (see Späth 156).

In general, it is safe to say that most of the characters in *The Monk* can be clearly categorised according to the reactions they are supposed to evoke in the audience. The reader's empathy and sympathy is directed by the text both explicitly and implicitly. The portraying of likeable characters corresponds largely to the characteristics Junkerjürgen has also mentioned. Their defining features are attractiveness and virtue, their aims and motives are transparent and explicitly communicated to the reader and even main figures of high social rank are referred to by their first names (see Junkerjürgen 136-150).[29] Probably the most significant aspect in the creation of reader reactions is, however, the depiction of vulnerability. Similar to *Otranto*, the audience's awareness of upcoming danger as well as their perception of the characters' sufferings heavily direct the reader's sympathies towards them.

An interesting aspect of building the relationship between the readers and the characters in *The Monk* is certainly the character's moral integrity. Some of the figures clearly have disobeyed the moral codes defined by the text but nevertheless can trigger sympathy, such as Agnes, Raymond and Marguerite. They have violated social norms out of love and must face the terrible consequences in the course of the novel. However, this does not impede a positive relation towards them – on the contrary, it rather stresses the imperfection of the characters and thereby adds a more human and likeable side to them (ibid 134-135).

The character of Matilda certainly presents a special and unique case in the character list of the novel. At the beginning she is portrayed as an amiable figure which also triggers the reader's sympathies – in the course of the story, however, she changes into an antagonist. Thus, Matilda clearly stands out from the stereotypical and clear-cut character portrayals. According to Zillmann, the "[r]eversal of affective disposition toward characters may, in fact, greatly contribute to emotional involvement" (*Mechanisms* 49). Although the change in Matilda's depiction is not per se suspenseful as it lacks any form of cataphoric reference, it is nevertheless an interesting and unconventional method of reader involvement.

[29] Junkerjürgen mentions that last names and titles are more likely to create a distance between a character and the audience (138). The change to first names, as it is realised in the case of Raymond, can be regarded as "ein Mittel […], über das der Erzähler versucht, die Figurenwahrnehmung des Lesers zu manipulieren" (ibid. 139).

5.3 Settings

If we compare the settings of the various scenes in which suspense is created, two major categories can be distinguished: nightly outside locations and religious sites. We have already briefly encountered the first category in *Otranto* – landscapes and gardens in moonlight are also a characteristic feature of Walpole's novel.

Similar to *Otranto*, the shining moon often takes a crucial role in revealing plot items, such as Matilda's breast (*The Monk* 203) or Batiste's meeting with the bandits (ibid 230). In most cases, nocturnal nature is a vital part of establishing the general mood of a scene. When Ambrosio visits the garden of the abbey, an ample description of the luxurious place communicates the tranquillity and harmony he was looking for. The sketching of the setting follows the principle of crescendo – the reader is first confronted with the special botanical arrangements, then with the grotto and finally with the novice Rosario, who is about to reveal his true identity, as the climax of all the depicted loveliness (ibid. 193).

The moments when Raymond is waiting outside Castle Lindenberg to elope with Agnes is another example of a setting which generates the atmosphere of the scene. Compared to the garden scene, it lacks the harmonic gentleness of the surroundings – instead, the scenery is depicted as "equally awful and picturesque" (ibid. 260):

> [The] ponderous Walls [of the castle] tinged by the moon with solemn brightness, its old and partly-ruined Towers lifting themselves into the clouds and seeming to frown on the plains around them, its lofty battlements oër-grown with ivy, and folding Gates expanding in honour of the Visionary Inhabitant, made me sensible of a sad and reverential horror. (ibid. 260)

The appearance of the castle is communicated simultaneously with its effects on Raymond – he confesses that the scenery "inspires […] melancholy ideas not altogether unpleasing" (ibid. 260). Regarding this alleged paradox, it cannot be denied that Burke's notion of the sublime had a major influence on this passage.[30]

In most cases, however, outside settings at night in *The Monk* do not provide such a positive atmosphere – on the contrary, they almost always precede or initiate

[30] In 2.2, I have already mentioned how Burke's notion of the sublime manages to reunite the dichotomy of pleasure and pain.

situations of imminent risk or danger. References towards adverse weather conditions appear frequently and seem to be a characteristic feature of these scenes. When his coach has an accident, it is the "excessive cold" (ibid. 224) of winter which prevents Raymond to ride alone to Strasbourg or to spend the night in the forest. Instead, it forces him to seek shelter in a house of murderous bandits.

Thunder and lightning are another signifiers of imminent danger – during his flight from castle Lindenberg, Raymond experiences an uncommonly severe thunderstorm: "The winds howled around us, the lightning flashed, and the Thunder roared tremendously. Never did I behold so frightful a Tempest!" (ibid. 261). In the next moment, the horses bolt, the whole carriage is shattered and Raymond is struck unconscious. Raymond attributes the uncontrolled behaviour of the horses to the thunderstorm, but it could also derive from the fear of the ghost, the Bleeding Nun, that is seated in the carriage with Raymond. Trautwein (41) has referred to the capability of animals in ghost stories to sense supernatural entities and the danger that emanates from them.

The violence of nature finds its most dramatic expression in the final scene in which Ambrosio escapes with the help of Lucifer to Sierra Morena. The whole scenery is depicted in a vivid manner and prominently contributes to the mischievous mood:

> [T]he gloomy Caverns and steep rocks, rising above each other, and dividing the passing clouds; solitary clusters of Trees scattered here and there, among whose thick-twined branches the wind of night sighed hoarsely and mournfully; the shrill cry of the mountain Eagles, who had built their nests among these lonely Desarts [sic]; the stunning roar of torrents, as swelled by late rains they rushed violently down tremendous precipes; and the dark waters of a silent sluggish stream which faintly reflected the moon-beams, and bathed the Rock's base on which Ambrosio stood. (*The Monk* 442)

During the scene, it soon becomes obvious that nature is not a mere indicator of a looming threat any more, but becomes the peril itself – the sharpness of the rocks inflicts serious wounds on Ambrosio, insects pester him, eagles eat his flesh and finally the river drowns him. Nature turns into a highly dangerous and active force – it is both the instrument of torture and a cruel punisher.

The other category of settings is probably the most outstanding and predominant. A large quantity of scenes take place in sacred surroundings – however, their original function is frequently subverted by the exceptional profaneness of the incidents that happen there. This can already be observed in the very first scene of the novel in which a rather flirtatious and sensational society is presented in the cathedral. The church is no longer a place of worship, but of "lecherous flirtation" (Ellis 84) and people do not join masses due to religious celebration, but out of admiration for Ambrosio and his oratorical skills. Moreover, Don Christoval and Lorenzo hide and wait for the nuns to unveil, as they are considered to be "some of the prettiest faces of Madrid" (*The Monk* 180). As Kilgour states, "[r]eligious worship is reduced to a sexual encounter, here a striptease" (148). Thus, the church even has become a place of voyeuristic activities.

Additionally, the reader soon learns that the architecture of the church also serves lovers as a means of communication (see *The Monk*, 179-181) – the shadow of a column grants the male lover a certain amount of concealment and the statue of a saint is converted into a secret pigeon hole for their amorous correspondence (ibid. 179). All those passages hint towards the fact that the text relatively soon establishes a rather critical attitude towards the church as a place of worship and piety.

Once again, the term of the building can be regarded as ambiguous, as *church* refers on the one hand to the religious institution and the people devoted to it and on the other to the edifice in which sacred ceremonies are performed and prayers are held. The two meanings of this polysemy are closely intertwined, as there are parallels between the building with its peculiar structure and architectural design and the members of a certain religious belief. As already mentioned earlier, the Gothic and the neo-classical were widely regarded as some kind of binary pair – Gothic seemed to form a direct opposition to the Humanist principles of simplicity, reason, regularity and clarity (see Haslag 88). Moreover, Gothic designs were said to cause distraction (ibid. 85) – especially the very beginning of the novel seems to affirm this claim, as I have just pointed out.

However, the parallels between Catholic hypocrisy and architectonic structure take even more grotesque forms in the course of the novel. In chapter three of the second

volume, the reader is confronted with the subterranean vaults. This part of St Clare is no longer considered as public – it is only accessible for certain members of the convict and Matilda even has to ask Ambrosio to get the keys, as she would probably not have been granted access under normal circumstances. Thus, we learn that there is more to the convict than the official places already introduced before, that there is limited access to specific locations which are set under the surface of the buildings visible to the outside world.

In the course of the novel it soon turns out that these places must be even huge and complex - certain parts of them are neglected, abandoned and even kept secret from other nuns by means of superstitious narrations (see *The Monk* 395-396). It seems that the deeper one ventures into this clandestine complex, the more atrocious crimes are discovered, ranging from Matilda's summoning of demons to physical and sexual abuse.

Trautwein (92) observes that these kind of constructions in Gothic literature often feature a specific centre of horror. Here, it is in fact the whole secret complex in which the protagonists are in great danger and which is presented as a location of evil. The readers consequently find themselves led back to this place to witness dark rituals, the plotting of Antonia's rape, Antonia's captivity and abuse, Lorenzo's exploration of the vaults and his attempt to save Antonia. Even at the end we are torn back to that location by an analeptic episode in Agnes's narration of her captivity.

Regarding the actual source of danger, it can be said that the threats vary from scene to scene, ranging from single oppressors such as the summoned demon, Matilda, Ambrosio or the prioress to adverse conditions weakening and endangering the protagonists. Considering all these examples, it again becomes obvious that the vaults play a crucial role in the novel - numerous decisive plot points are set there and many protagonists enter this place at least at one point in the novel. As Ring states, this location "develops a gravitation" (92) insofar as the various narrative strands are combined and resolved there.

Thus, there are various scenes in the novel that depict vicious deeds committed in the subterranean complex. If we have a closer look at them, we realise that all of them

feature distinct architectural and spatial descriptions. The first actual presentation of the vaults is the scene in which Ambrosio resorts to dark magic in order to find a way to satisfy his lust for Antonia. After descending a marble staircase that is only partially illuminated, Ambrosio and Matilda follow the dim light emanating from a lamp beneath a statue of St Clare - it is quite interesting how a distinctly Catholic emblem, a saint's statue, appears in this moment that precedes altogether unchristian practices.

They move on through a labyrinth of various halls and passageways, some of them featuring rather macabre decorations of "most revolting objects; Skulls, Bones, [and] Graves" (*The Monk* 337). For a brief moment, uncertainty and regret take over Ambrosio's feelings, but it has already become impossible for him to return to the convent without Matilda's help:

> Gladly would He have returned to the Abbey; but as He had past through innumerable Caverns and winding passages, the attempt of regaining the Stairs was hopeless.
> His fate was determined: No possibility of escape presented itself [...]. (ibid. 336)

The spatial distance from the "upper social world" both reflects and results in a detachment from its conventions and regulations. It is in these vaults where Ambrosio gives in to his drives and "begins his transformation into a Gothic villain" (ibid 81). Botting also speaks of Ambrosio's "descent into infamy" (ibid. 81), which refers both to the spatial movement into the subterranean passages and to his moral decline.

Apart from isolation, Trautwein (30) has mentioned another characteristic feature of Gothic rooms which can of course also be distinguished in *The Monk* - the significance of darkness. He claims that obscurity is marked by privation - the (partial) loss of the visual sense in situations in which a clear perception would be essential. Thus, major optical difficulties render the character more vulnerable and exposed to possible threats (see Ring 64-65). In the novel, there are some scenes which support this claim, most of them set in the vaults. For instance, in the scene in which Lorenzo has just discovered the hidden passage behind the statue of St Clare and descends the stairs to follow the faint groans he perceives - the "thick darkness and impenetrable mists" (*The Monk* 397) complicate the descent down the narrow

staircase and greatly heighten the risk of missing a step and of sustaining severe injuries:

> The obscurity by which He was surrounded, rendered his footing insecure. He was obliged to proceed with great caution, lest He should miss the steps, and fall into the Gulph below him. This He was several time at the point of doing. (ibid. 397)

A fascinating aspect concerning the textual use of obscurity is the sudden and brief illumination of dark places. Instead of providing a valuable opportunity for the character to regain control over the situation, it even enforces the sense of seclusion, as the following scene illustrates: having been told to wait at the staircase, Ambrosio's impatience and curiosity grows and he tentatively ventures further into the vaults to find out more about Matilda's secret enterprise. He is greatly shocked as a strange vibration emanates from nearby, which is accompanied by a loud thunder and a flash of lightning:

> He saw a bright column of light flash along the Caverns beneath. It was seen but for an instant. No sooner did it disappear, then all was once more quiet and obscure. Profound Darkness again surrounded him, and the silence of the night was only broken by the whirring Bat, as She flitted slowly by him. (ibid. 310)

Here it is not only the sudden visual impulse which causes the moment of shock, but there is also an auditory and even a tactile dimension. All of them contribute to a sense of privation, as they emphasise the contrast to the situation preceding and succeeding this moment.

Which role does darkness as a feature of Gothic buildings play in the creation of suspense? In how far does this element influence the readers' emotional involvement? An obvious answer is to categorise obscurity as a kind of averse condition which is not only an obstacle in the protagonists' plan, but also a serious threat to their well-being. As already mentioned, it leaves them helpless to surrounding danger. Moreover, the fear of darkness is easy to relate, as it has been described as a "vorliterarisch geprägtes Verhaltensmuster" (Trautwein 30), an innate uncanny feeling in the human mind which is not confined to any kind of social or historical parameters.

However, darkness is not the only stimulus to create a suspenseful atmosphere - another crucial factor is a hint towards a possible menace. This could, for instance, be the presence of an aggressor or the mere fact that the character is entering an unexplored place.[31] In the scene in which Lorenzo ventures into the dark vaults, we see that even a noise, a groaning is enough to enforce suspense.

If we have a close look at the use of darkness in this scene, it could be argued that it features some sort of personal perspective. There are no explicit authorial remarks that make the reader aware of possible dangers awaiting Lorenzo in the darkness. The reader perceives as much as the character deprived of his visual sense and thus is restricted to his poor assessment of the situation. At first glance, it seems as if this situation merely excites curiosity, as the reader is not provided with sufficient information to perceive any definite danger and to experience suspense. However, as I have already mentioned, there are more elements which define the scene - the noise he frequently perceives, the nuns' fearful behaviour, a spark of light in the distance as well as the perilous steps he has to descend - they all contribute to a foreboding atmosphere of gloom. Besides, the vaults in general have already been established as a venue of viciousness and horror, so the reader's expectations are likely to dwell in those directions. Trautwein refers to a "inhaltlich unbestimmte Antizipation" (30) caused by various features of darkness.

The vaults play a crucial part in the novel, both regarding important plot points and in the creation of suspense and reader involvement. They are the centre of horror and maliciousness and are located underneath the convent - the whole complex is built above them. Thus, they serve as the basis, the foundation of the convent - also in a figurative way. This construction is another symbol of the depicted "moral hypocrisy of the religious orders" (Ellis 105). When the raging mob's destructive forces attack the building, shatter glass, set fires, tear down walls and destroy furniture, the people's aggression is directed towards the clergy - again, the building serves as a metonymy. In this context, the shattered façade has a double meaning - not only the building, but also the reputation of the convent is destroyed. It was built up on

[31] This also corresponds to Trautwein's theory of possible threats in Gothic rooms - he roughly distinguishes between an aggressor such as the Gothic villain and perilous circumstances and external influences (93).

hypocrisy and tyranny - the moment its real face is revealed to the public, it can no longer exist.

Although not directly verbalised by the text, it is likely that the whole complex was shattered to pieces and the conflagration left nothing but ruins: "Nothing was heard but shrieks and groans; The Convent was wrapped in flames, and the whole presented a scene of devastation and horror" (*The Monk* 391). This image is highly evocative, it bears strong resemblances to typical depictions of hell - the flames have a purgatory effect, nothing vicious remains, so the formerly glorious edifice will probably be fully destroyed and thus receiving just punishment.

It has already been established that the text shows a rather critical, if not altogether negative attitude towards the Catholic church, which has been identified as a symptom of the "patriotic English mode of anti-Catholic gothicism" (Ellis 84). I have already mentioned sacred buildings and some of their architectural features which provide the setting of emotionally involving and horrifying scenes. However, there are also instances in which merely Catholic emblems are part of the setting and thus contribute to an atmosphere of gloom. There is the statue of St Clare and the legend which serves to frighten the nuns and to prevent them from discovering the secret part of the vaults (see *The Monk* 395-396). The statue of St Rosolia and its light makes sleeping Antonia's features more visible and attractive to Ambrosio (ibid. 354) and the crucifix and rosary are among the first objects Agnes perceives when she awakes in her prison (ibid. 419).

The sacred objects are an essential part of setting the mood of a scene. The role of sacrosanct locations such as the church, the buildings of the convent, the churchyard and the vaults even have a greater significance - by posing obstacles to the protagonists, they have an influence on the development of the plot and, similarly to *Otranto*, often serve as an antagonistic force.

If we now roughly compare the structural condition of the various settings of *The Monk* with those in *Otranto*, there is a vast number of similarities - nocturnal nature, hidden passages, complex subterranean constructions and ancient edifices. However, the most obvious and defining feature of these locations in Lewis's novel is that they

are largely part of Catholic places of worship. Whereas the exoticness of the general setting in *Otranto* consisted of a spatial and temporal remoteness - the ruins of the castle of Otranto are a signifier of a barbarous past - *The Monk* establishes a new feature, the Catholic monastic locus. Thus, Lewis followed the zeitgeist of his time and captures the "Protestant constructions of a tyrannical and superstitious Catholicism" (Botting 83).

As we have seen, the dialectic between open or public places and secluded or hidden settings plays a crucial role - this dichotomy is perhaps even stronger as in *Otranto*, as the public is represented to a greater extent. The scenes which feature a large number of people, such as the scene of Ambrosio's sermon or the revealing of the Prioress's crimes are always relevant to the major plot. To maintain the high reputation of the convent, it is of utmost importance to establish a strict distinction between public and private places. In fact, there are even different levels of private. The smaller the number of nuns is who know about a place, the higher is the possibility that it harbours great horrors and atrocities. Naturally, in most cases the secluded places evoke higher degrees of reader involvement, as they do not only feature secrets, but also potential dangers of various kinds.

In general, *The Monk* is another example of the crucial role of settings in the development of suspense. In most cases, they pose threats to the character's well-being and foretell or accompany dangers. In contrast to *Otranto*, natural settings have a higher appearance and feature some crucial scenes - however, suspenseful scenes set in artificially constructed sites such as edifices, tombs, vaults and secret passages are more heavily represented in general and therefore have again received greater attention in analysis. As we have seen, their function often exceeds the mere evocation of a certain mood - they also amplify and complement the plot developments and the portrayal of characters.

5.4 Suspense on the discourse level

I have already mentioned that Lewis's novel was heavily criticised a few years after its first publication, one of its main supposed "dangers" being the author's compelling

way of storytelling. Botting provides an explanation for this rather unconventional point of criticism by referring to the claim of eighteenth century critics that "[s]tyle seduces readers, leads them astray and leaves them unable to distinguish between virtue and vice and thereby expel the latter" (83). Which characteristics of the discourse level of *The Monk* influence the readers' emotional involvement and the experience of suspense will be analysed in this chapter.

5.4.1 Cataphora

Already the first chapter features two distinct uses of cataphora. The very first instance of foreshadowing is Lorenzo's dream in the cathedral - he sees Antonia, dressed as a bride and awaiting her groom. Before they can embrace, a terrifying creature clasps Antonia: "His form was gigantic; His complexion was swarthy, His eyes fierce and terrible; his Mouth breathed out volumes of fire; and on his forehead was written in legible characters - 'Pride! Lust! Inhumanity!'" (*The Monk* 178).

This description clearly hints towards Ambrosio. His whole appearance, particularly his breath of flames already points towards a fiendish origin and thus anticipate his pact with infernal powers. The three words written of his forehead are the sins he is going to commit in the course of the story. However, as already mentioned in the analysis of the first stage of the suspense schema, the reader is not yet aware that the monster alludes to Ambrosio. It is an embodiment of his vicious character, which is hitherto unknown to both the reader and Lorenzo.

The monster falling into the abyss clearly symbolises Ambrosio's downfall and his dramatic descent into hell. It is not capable of dragging Antonia with it, but manages to take away her white wedding gown, a symbol of her purity and virginity. Antonia, however, manages to free herself - her glorious ascension to heaven clearly mark her as a character of moral integrity.

This dream already predicts Ambrosio's true character, his intentions with Antonia, her horrible sufferings, Antonia's vain hopes of marriage and a happy and peaceful matrimonial life, and finally Ambrosio's and Antonia's destiny. Thus, it is definitely the most extensive cataphora regarding the amount of plot points and developments

which are foretold. As Ring states pointedly, "the author basically reveals the whole plot in the first chapter" (84).

However, not only Lorenzo's dream, but also the fortune teller predicts Antonia's bleak future. First, the "Gypsy" (*The Monk* 183), as the woman is referred to in the text, reads Leonella's hand and thereby identifies her as a mature woman who ridicules herself by trying to catch other men's attention. As this passage is preceded by the scene in the church in which Leonella has attempted to flirt with Lorenzo and Raymond, the fortune teller's words are verified and the reader realises that she knows her art. Thus, her predictions concerning Antonia's destiny can be taken into serious account.

In general, this foretelling is, to a great extent, almost identical to Lorenzo's dream - it is mentioned that Antonia's grief and pain will be caused by a man, a "Lustful Man and crafty Devil" (ibid. 185), and that her death will soon follow and release her from her sufferings. However, she is also warned about false appearances, hypocrisy and "Fair Exteriors" that "hide Hearts, that swell with lust and pride" (ibid. 185). Again, Ambrosio's great sins are mentioned. Finally, the fortune teller advises Antonia to await her destiny with "submission bending" (ibid. 186) and promises her a better life after death - seemingly there is not even the slightest chance for Antonia to escape her fate. The text describes that Antonia has been greatly affected by these prophecies, but soon she forgets them.

Another prediction which turns into reality at a later point in the story is uttered by Agnes. It is a curse upon Ambrosio, because he has handed over her secret letter to the prioress. By revealing Agnes's broken vow of celibacy, she is completely and utterly at the prioress's mercy and is aware that the life of herself and her unborn child is at stake. Thus, she addresses Ambrosio in a passionate speech, first pleading him and appealing to his mercy. After having realised that his real hypocrite and heartless character has never been confronted with temptation, she predicts his gloom future and finally utters the curse:

> What temptations have you vanquished? Coward! you have fled from it, not opposed seduction. But the day of Trial will arrive! [...] When you feel that Man is weak, and born to err; When shuddering you look back upon your crimes, and solicit with terror the mercy of your God, Oh! in that fearful

> moment think upon me! Think upon your Cruelty! Think upon Agnes, and despair of pardon! (ibid. 192)

From the fortune telling scene the reader already knows that predictions which fall under the category of superstition need to be taken seriously in the diegetic context. Soon after this moment his desires for Matilda present an unknown mighty force to him and, in an introspective moment, he cries: "Agnes! Agnes! [...] I already feel thy curse!" (ibid. 205). Thus, the text reminds the readers of Agnes's curse and proves its power.

I have already mentioned that the text lacks any instances of foreshadowing which would prove Matilda's wickedness from the very beginning. However, there are some cataphoric passages which hint towards Rosario's secret, such as the first scene when (s)he is introduced to the reader. We learn that the background of this young novice is unknown, even to the monastery:

> A sort of mystery enveloped this Youth which rendered him at once an object of interest and curiosity. [...] He seemed fearful at being recognised, and no one had ever seen his face. His head was continually muffled up in his Cowl; Yet such of his features as accident discovered, appeared the most beautiful and noble. [...] No one knew from whence He came, and when questioned in the subject He preserved a profound silence. (ibid. 188)

Some hints towards his previously wealthy disposition, his youthful beauty and his peculiar character, combined with continual references towards the lack of more information spur the reader's imagination. What is the story behind this strange character? What are his secrets and why has he entered a convent?

The speculations about Rosario are even increased by the scene in which he confesses Ambrosio that he suffers from terrible sorrows:

> Sufferings, which if known to you, would equally raise your anger and compassion! Sufferings, which form at once the torment and pleasure of my existence! Yet in this retreat my bosom would feel tranquil, were it not for the tortures of apprehension. Oh God! Oh God! how cruel is a life of fear! - Father! I have given up all, I have abandoned the world and its delights for ever: Nothing now remains, Nothing now has charms for me, but your friendship, but your affection. If I lose that, Father! Oh! if I lose that, tremble of the effects of my despair! (ibid. 189)

This long and highly dramatic monologue shows Lewis's extraordinary skills at involving the audience. It stresses the graveness of the situation and displays the high emotional involvement of the character by emphatically using repetitions and exclamations. Thus, there is a lot of narrative time devoted to describing the nature of the problem without actually revealing it. At the end, both the readers and Ambrosio are eager to know it - they are fully aware that the stakes must be high, as Rosario is extremely agitated. However, the resolution is denied to them, as the dialogue is interrupted by the ringing bells. Rosario rushes away to the vespers, leaving Ambrosio's and the audience's curiosity unsatisfied. Thus, this passage does not only present an example of cataphora, but also retardation.

There is one cataphoric passage which stands out in its exceptional storytelling and which also features a high amount of suspense. It is the moment in which Elvira's ghost appears her daughter and predicts her death in the consecutive three days.

The location is set in Elvira's bedroom. To divert her mind, Antonia takes a look at her mother's book collection and stumbles across a Spanish ballad, which is a piece of Gothic literature in itself: on her wedding day, a bride is abducted by the revengeful ghost of her former lover whom she has sworn eternal love and faithfulness. Ironically, it is in her mother's room where Antonia encounters her first piece of romantic literature. Elvira, striving towards a highly idealistic and naïve educational aim, provided her daughter merely with a censored version of the Bible, which was "copied out with her own hand, and all improper passages [were] either altered or omitted" (ibid. 327).

After the exciting read of the Spanish ballad of Alonzo the Brave, the atmosphere transforms from gloomy and desperate into frightening and horrific. Whereas it is characterised by absence (of a beloved person, warmth, light, life) at first, the following atmosphere is created by the addition of details in the setting (e.g. weather condition, intervallic lighting of the room). The depiction of the ghostly surroundings and the description of Antonia's reaction towards them – her physical tension and passivity such as her incapability to utter a cry of help, to leave the room or even to rise from the chair (ibid. 365) paint a vivid picture of the situation in the reader's mind and contribute to a higher degree of emotional involvement. Finally, a "tall thin

Figure, wrapped in white shroud" (ibid. 365) approaches Antonia and predicts her impending death.

This passage symbolises the fact that without her mother's guidance, Antonia is likely to encounter the very things her mother has always strived to keep out of her reach. As she never has been properly prepared to deal with them, Antonia has enormous difficulties, which is, in this case, her heightened fear after reading. Additionally, the ballad's gloomy depiction of the subject of love is similar to the experiences Antonia is going to encounter herself – her destiny is as gruesome and fatal as Imogine's.

Most of those cataphoric references with which the characters are confronted share two similarities. First, they are presented in some sort of numinous, irrational way, such as via a dream, a fortune telling, a curse, or even a haunting; second, they always become reality, probably even "nastier and more explosive" (Kilgour 151) than expected. Thus, at many points in the story the reader wishes for a happy ending and the prevention of the predictions - however, the inevitable can be merely delayed (ibid. 151).

5.4.2 Retardation

Let us have another look at the riot scene. It is surely one of the most iconic and involving episodes of the text and a perfect example of what has often been referred to as "Lewis's compelling writing" (Ellis 110). From the beginning - the extravagant procession in honour of St Clare - until its end which is marked by the complete destruction of the building and the escape of Lorenzo and his attendants, it is portrayed in a highly vivid and captivating manner. Eager to reveal the crimes committed in the convent, Lorenzo nervously waits for St Ursula. The reader is also compelled to await anxiously that moment - the text ponders on various complications which could eventually occur and thus grants an impression of the difficulty and perils of the situation. Curious to see how Lorenzo's plan would develop, the reader's anticipation is still not satisfied - by meticulously describing the formation of the procession, the author clearly makes use of retardation.

In order to prevent the reader's mind being carried away by the passages that delay the appearance of the prioress and St Ursula, sentences like "Lorenzo's heart beat high, when He found the execution of his plan to be at hand" (*The Monk* 383) or "Still He expected the moment eagerly, when the presence of his Ally should deprive him of the power of doubting" (ibid. 383) always call back the ultimate goal of Lorenzo's plan. At the same time they describe his nervous condition, thereby emphasising the importance of the plan and heightening the stakes.

Thus, in this passage retardation highlights the perils of Lorenzo's risky enterprise and describes the procession, thereby introducing a new character - Lorenzo's future wife and substitute for Antonia.

The revelation of Rosario's true nature is another instance of delay. I have already mentioned Rosario's hints towards his sorrows and alleged sin as an example of a scene that employs both foreshadowing and retardation. When Rosario and Ambrosio have another meeting, the reader is already aware that Rosario has a secret and yearns for its revelation. However, both characters first ramble on the issue of hermitage and total seclusion before Rosario vaguely hints towards his problem by describing its effects but denying sufficient revealing information. He even becomes highly emotional and walks away before he finally tells his story (ibid. 197).

It is obvious that the primary purpose of these methods is to create suspense. Under different circumstances, the reader's involvement in this passage could only be classified as curiosity. However, the constant referring to Rosario's extremely agitated state and to the possible consequences he has to face if the secret is discovered clearly raise the stakes and even hint towards some sort of menace.

There are some instances in the novel, though, in which the reader has to show even more patience towards the outcome of a plotline. The second volume, for example, ends with a cliffhanger - Ambrosio has received the magic myrtle from the demon which permits him to enter any house or room. Being teased by images of naked Antonia, he eagerly awaits the "approach of midnight" (ibid. 340) to break into her house and satisfy his lust. Chapter one of volume three does not immediately

continue this part of the narration, but starts with Don Raymond's illness and Theodore's attempt to infiltrate the convent in order to find out more about Agnes (ibid. 341).

Another cliffhanger can be found at the end of chapter three of the third volume. Having just rescued Agnes, Lorenzo decides to explore the rest of the dungeon in order to find out if she was the only captive of the prioress when suddenly he and his men hear cries of help. They immediately hurry towards the alarmed voice - at this point, the chapter ends. The reader can infer that the voice crying for help in this place can only be Antonia. However, the next chapter does not start with their encounter, but narrates the story of Antonia and Ambrosio in the vaults (ibid. 403).

Both examples share a distinct common feature - one narrative string is interrupted by another one. Probably the most extreme case of such a form of retardation is Raymond's story about his adventures and his liaison with Agnes. It presents a break in the main plot and starts when Ambrosio and Matilda start their affair and active consumption of their lust - "a moment [from which it] is most annoying for the reader" (Ring 121) to be distracted. The storyline featuring Ambrosio and Matilda is not continued until the next volume of the novel. Interestingly, even this huge retardation has first been delayed. Raymond is willing to tell Lorenzo everything about himself and his love to Lorenzo's sister, Agnes, and invites him to his lodgings. Raymond promises Lorenzo a story "that will astonish you" (*The Monk* 182), thereby also heightening the reader's interest. However, at this point the narrative focus is shifted to Antonia and Leonella.

Ring regards delay as the "main method of creating suspense" (85) in *The Monk* and also Kilgour mentions the importance of retardation (151-154). As we have noticed, there are several examples to be found in the text. They vary according to the length of narrating time spent to delay certain plot information and development. In many instances this is done by "interpolated narratives" (Ring 121) - the various plotlines are narrated in an alternating way, often interrupting each other at points in which the reader's involvement is heightened. In this way, the "[e]vents take a long time to unfold" (Kilgour 151).

If we follow the theory that the whole plot and the ultimate destiny of Ambrosio and Antonia are already given away in the first chapter, it can be argued that everything happening between the beginning until the ending of the novel can be categorised as retardation, a "delay of the inevitable" (ibid. 151). This delay, however, builds up suspense - the "relation between a known conclusion" (ibid. 151) and the deferring of it causes the audience to hope for a "possibility of a definitive interruption of the sequence of events" (ibid. 153). This is even fostered by dividing a plotline and narrating it bit by bit (ibid. 153). Its revelation, however, turns out to be extremely disastrous - Antonia dies after being raped, Ambrosio is deceived by the devil and his body is gradually consumed by the forces of nature of the Sierra Morena. Even Agnes, who should meet a cruel punishment by the prioress but whose fate is left unclear until the end of the novel, ends up as some sort of "grotesque Madonna" with a "rotting child" (ibid. 143) on her breast. Thus,

> [d]elay itself, the building of suspense, becomes a narrative mode of repression which produces a destructive explosion of pent-up energy. (ibid. 154)

5.5 Conclusion

It has been argued that suspense in *The Monk* is to a great extent realised by features on the discourse level of the text. Ring mentions a combination of two as the main method of creating suspense - the accelerating presentation of dramatic and horrible scenes at the end of the novel and retardation:

> This intense struggle between two rivalling discursive tendencies and the double technique of realisation and delay is Lewis' main strategy of building up suspense in a novel where the horrible ending is clear from the very beginning. (Ring 93)

It is true that the discourse level of this text has a major influence on the reader's involvement. However, also some aspects on the content level play a crucial role. In *The Monk*, several features are carried to the extremes - the impending dangers, the atrocities committed as well as the passion and ecstasy experienced and uttered by the characters. The stakes are raised and the scenes depicted often feature a slow, but severe escalation of a situation. The reader is enthralled, there are hardly scenes that fail to evoke some sort of emotional response and involvement.

Concerning the use of settings as a means of creating suspense, some of the depicted places bear similarities to those employed in *Otranto* - subterraneous passages are, for instance, still present. However, the various settings are presented in greater detail and the most iconic and crucial of the whole text, the vaults of St Clare's, are immediately connected with horror, cruelty and the transgression of social norms. Some places even have the sole purpose of torture, incarceration and pain - such as Agnes's prison. A new feature is the presentation of Catholicism, which seems to be a prop of horror itself.

The depiction of characters in the novel ranges from traditional Gothic stock characters such as the childlike, innocent heroine (Antonia) or the young but unsuccessful hero (Lorenzo) to more dynamic characters such as Ambrosio or Matilda. Antonia clearly aims to evoke pity and empathy in the reader - in how far she inspires actual sympathy is debatable. The plainness of her character and her extreme form of naïveté and childishness somehow make it harder for a modern audience to really like or even identify with her. However, the drastically averse conditions she has to face in the course of the novel and the fact that she is distinctly depicted as harmless and of moral integrity is more than sufficient to let the reader care for her well-being.

One of the most emblematic features of the novel is the close connection between suspense and horror - in fact, they are often hard to distinguish. In many instances, appalling passages are tightly interwoven in suspense-inducing features - they either set the mood and/or function as direct menace to the protagonists. In some passages, a highly shocking and horrific event or revelation resolves a sequence of suspense. The same explicitness that is employed in erotic contexts can also be found in the depiction of horrifying, grotesque, brutal and repulsive passages. Thus, the depiction of crimen and sexus as well as the transgressions of their socially accepted limits is exceedingly more prevalent than in *Otranto*. As a consequence, *The Monk* is a great example of thrill put to the extremes.

6. Suspense in *Dracula*

When Bram Stoker published his novel *Dracula* in 1897, it was merely a "modest success" (Eighteen-Bisang, Miller 301). He had been writing on it for almost seven years, devoting much of that time on intense research on vampires (ibid. 284). Unlike Lewis's or Walpole's works, *Dracula*'s publishing was not accompanied by any kind of innovation or scandal which would heighten sales figures.

However, out of the three novels, *Dracula* has definitely become the most famous and popular. It has been adapted and quoted numerous times, which has undoubtedly contributed to its "undying popularity" (ibid. 291). This chapter aims to explore which kinds of mechanisms in this novel lead to a heightened involvement and suspenseful reading experience - aspects which have undoubtedly also have had an impact on the novel's status of a "modern myth" (ibid. 294).

6.1 The story

6.1.1 Plot structure and suspense schema

To aid in the purchase of London estates, Jonathan Harker sets out to Castle Dracula in Transylvania. His feelings of alienation and uneasiness slowly increase as Dracula, his host and client, forces him to stay longer than planned. During his time in the castle, Jonathan meets increasingly mysterious and horrible incidences. Finally Jonathan manages to flee and catch a train to Budapest, where he is taken to a hospital to recover his mind from a "violent brain fever" (*Dracula* 110). When Mina, his fiancée, finally receives a message of her husband in hospital, she immediately travels to Budapest and they marry.

In the meanwhile Lucy, Mina's friend in England, falls gravely ill and dies. Neither Arthur, her fiancé, nor Dr Seward or his former professor Van Helsing have been

able to save her. Van Helsing, however, is convinced that Lucy's death has not been caused by a medical illness.

When Mina and Jonathan return to London they see Dracula. Jonathan is highly agitated and "very greatly terrified" (ibid. 184). Upset and concerned due to her husband's behaviour, Mina decides to read his journal from his time in Transylvania. Soon she is contacted by Van Helsing, who wishes to find out more about Lucy. In the course of their discussion Mina provides Van Helsing with a copy of Jonathan's diary and receives confirmation that his account is true and not merely the result of his brain fever. Invigorated by these news, Jonathan is determined to seek out Dracula with Van Helsing's help.

Mina, Jonathan, Dr Seward, Van Helsing and Quincey Morris (Lucy's suitor) team up to hunt down Dracula and revenge Lucy. In the course of this enterprise they have to defeat undead Lucy, find out about Dracula's true vampiric nature, locate his London whereabouts and consecrate his coffins.

While the men are engaged in investigating, Mina's energy fades and she falls ill, showing very similar symptoms as Lucy did. They have not been able to prevent Dracula from inflicting Mina with the vampire curse. The whole group chases him across Europe back to his native country, Transylvania. Before Dracula can reach his castle before sunset the group manages to drive a stake through his heart and cut off his head. Thus, Mina is liberated from the curse and her soul is clean again. Quincey, however, has been mortally wounded in the fight against a band of gypsies - he dies a few moments after Dracula's defeat.

In terms of plot structure, *Dracula* is certainly an extraordinary text. The epistolary form provides the reader with different personal points of view and thus also with different plotlines, such as Mina and Lucy on their vacation in Whitby, Dr Seward and his patient Renfield and Jonathan in Transylvania. However, the separate narrative strands are soon joined when the characters meet one by one. The various accounts are collected, shared and assembled to be finally revealed as different jigsaw pieces of one major plotline. Each of them bears the same triple narrative structure which Craft (259-260) has mentioned - first, the threat is established, then it

displays its destructive potency and thereby "produce[s] a pleasurable, indeed a thrilling anxiety" (ibid. 260), only to be eliminated in the last stage. In some instances, this "tripartite cycle of admission-entertainment-expulsion" (ibid. 260) overlaps with the typical suspense structure of "Vordisponierungsphase" (Wenzel 31), reader involvement, oscillation between hope and fear, retardation and resolution. Craft mentions this triple structure as a common feature of late Gothic novels which feature a monster as a villain. On a macrostructural level of the text it can also be discovered in *Dracula* - the vampire is presented as a dangerous and antagonistic figure, he displays his powers by turning Lucy, one of the protagonists, into a creature of his own kind, and even infects Mina, another protagonist. Finally, the heroes manage to destroy him and thereby save Mina.

However, if we take a closer look on the various suspense episodes, it soon becomes obvious that neither Craft's triple structure nor the typical suspense pattern can be fully applied in all cases. This can be observed when we analyse the first part of the novel, Jonathan's business trip to castle Dracula, step by step according to the suspense pattern. The first phase is fully fleshed out in various aspects - Jonathan has a restless sleep and complains of "bad dreams" (*Dracula* 8), he describes the strange fearful reactions of the townsfolk when mentioning Dracula (ibid. 10-11, 12), his own uneasiness while travelling further (ibid. 11) and the sudden haste at sunset shared by the driver of his coach and his fellow passengers (ibid. 15). All these instances already predict a looming threat.

They are soon followed by an accumulation in the depiction of Dracula's alienating habits and Jonathan's reactions towards them. Already at the day of his arrival Jonathan is highly agitated in the presence of Dracula. His host joins him at dinner, but refuses to have some food himself. After a long silence, the count sentimentally points out the howling of nearby wolves - a noise which has different connotations to each of the two men: whereas Jonathan has learned to fear wolves after the perilous trip to the castle, Dracula refers to them as "the children of the night" that make "music" (ibid. 25). Jonathan seems rather alienated by his host and concludes his diary entry with the following words: "I am all in a sea of wonders. I doubt; I fear; I think strange things which I dare not confess to my own soul. God keep me, if only for the sake of those dear to me!" (ibid. 25).

The situation becomes direr when Jonathan accidentally cuts himself while shaving. He learns that Dracula does not bear any reflections in mirrors and shows extremely frantic reactions at the sight of blood. Moreover, he feels a strong sense of entrapment and solitude and suspects that he may be "the only living soul within this place" (ibid. 32) and Dracula openly warns him against entering certain areas of the castle.

As we see, the phase of establishing a gloomy and fearful atmosphere, or, as Jonathan puts it, "the unnatural, horrible net of gloom and mystery" (ibid. 40), is skilfully realised in these passages. The gradually rising intensity of the threat engages the reader's involvement. It starts with warnings based on the alleged superstitiousness of the locals. Then it slowly increases with the experience of otherness caused by different surroundings and a seemingly eccentric and proud aristocrat. At some point it is intensified by actual warnings and the implied censorship of Jonathan's correspondence. Of course, the atmosphere is established to a large extent by the depiction of Jonathan's reactions towards these aspects.

In fact, we are constantly provided with information concerning Jonathan, also about his private life and the purpose of his business trip. This part of the novel is narrated by him, which entails that we perceive other characters and settings through his eyes and thus are confronted with his thoughts and feelings towards them. This establishes a bond between him and the reader.

The third phase heavily merges with the first two phases, as Jonathan already shows signs of distress and fear at the day of his arrival and his comfort is gradually diminished, especially when he has to prolong his stay at the castle. The first actual instance of hope are Jonathan's secret letters to Mr Hawkins and Mina. He wants the Szagany to deliver them to the next post office without Dracula's knowledge - this plan does not only fail, but puts him in an even greater danger, as Dracula finds out and knows that Jonathan has tried to deceive him.

Another moment of hope is presented when Jonathan writes about the prospects of leaving the castle with Dracula's consent - first at night, when Dracula even escorts

him to the front door, then in the morning, when Jonathan believes the passage to the outside still to be open and unbolted. Both instances are merely short passages in the text - their discourse time does not exceed more than a few sentences. However, the subsequent denial of their fulfilment and the description of Jonathan's crushed despair clearly mark them as significant sequences in terms of reader involvement.[32] The moment of shattering hope and its concomitant change of the reader's emotional response give those passages a crucial relevance in influencing the audience's empathy.

Besides these few moments of hope, there are a vast number of passages in which Jonathan clearly expresses his fear and the hazardousness of his situation, such as in planning to climb the façade of the castle. The text leaves the audience in a state of mixed hope and fear, first pointing towards the prospects of flight, then mentioning death, even uttering a final goodbye and an invocation of his fiancée:

> And then away for home! away to the quickest and nearest train! away from this cursed spot, from this cursed land, where the devil and his children still walk with earthly feet!
> At least God's mercy is better than that of these monsters, and the precipice is steep and high. At its foot a man may sleep - as a man. Goodbye, all! Mina! (61)

Mentioning the possibility of his failure and death heightens the stakes and limits the prospects of his success, which increases suspense. However, at this point Jonathan Harker's itinerary stops - the ultimate moment of retardation and a powerful cliffhanger.

According to Wenzel, the resolution would be the next (and last) phase of a typical suspense structure. However, this phase is denied to the reader, as Jonathan's narration simply terminates at the formulation of his escape plan. Thus, this first part of the novel ends in a cliffhanger - the plotline is resolved later, but only indirectly via Mina's account of the letter from a Hungarian hospital. Strictly speaking, this part of the novel lacks the final phase of suspense - the ultimate outcome (Jonathan has successfully been able to escape from castle Dracula) is mediated through a different

[32] In the scene in which all doors stand open and Jonathan is permitted to go, he suddenly notices the monstrous wolves outside waiting for him. Realising that physical obstacles and the count's dissent have merely been replaced by the threat of meeting a cruel death by the ferocity of the beasts, Jonathan himself tells Dracula to shut the doors again. He "covered [his] face with [his] hand to hide [his] tears of bitter disappointment." (*Dracula* 58)

point of view at a later point in the novel and the exact details are withheld from the reader.

Let us take a look at the pattern of another storyline - Lucy and her deteriorating health. The initiating event is Lucy's somnambulistic visit of the churchyard. In this nightly tour she is bitten by Dracula for the first time, which marks the beginning of the bond between her and the vampire and, as a consequence, her physical change. Up to this point, the reader is already familiar with her character, she has been introduced as the sister-like companion of Mina and a positive, lively character.

After this incident her condition changes and soon it becomes apparent that her health deteriorates and she gradually becomes weaker, even if on some days she seems better and vivified. Her situation becomes direr and even her physician, Dr Seward, seems to be ignorant of the cause of her malaise or an appropriate treatment. Van Helsing's appearance brings hope to the characters and the reader, as he seems to have found a cure for Lucy. However, his arrangements are constantly crossed by misfortune and the ignorance of other people in the household, which has fatal consequences. This phase is characterised by the fear for Lucy's health and the spark of hope which is embodied by Van Helsing and his determination to save her.

Some retarding moments are caused by the insertion of other accounts, such as Mina's letters, Dr Seward's report on his patient Renfield or a newspaper clipping about an escaped wolf. Lucy's death marks the final phase, the resolution. However, instead of terminating this plotline, the very end of Lucy's death scene features a prolepsis:

> I [i.e. Dr Seward] stood beside Van Helsing, and said: -
> "Ah well, poor girl, there is peace for her at last. It is the end!"
> He turned to me, and said with grave solemnity: -
> "Not so; alas! not so. It is only the beginning!" (*Dracula* 173)

Indeed it is, as from this moment on, Lucy starts her undead existence. A new task is at hand - liberating Lucy from her curse and setting her soul free. Thus, this scene functions only as a temporary resolution, as the reference to future troubles already loom over the present.

A similar example can be found in the passage of Lucy's impalement. It is preceded by a highly compelling scene - Van Helsing, Dr Seward, Quincey Morris and Arthur meet the vampire Lucy. She tries to lure her former fiancé Arthur into his demise, but the men have baited her, intending to put an end to her vampiric activities before they can lead to murder. After trapping her in her tomb they have to leave the churchyard and wait for the next night to finish their task - a moment of retardation. Finally, the impalement seems to mark the horrific ending. There is a short moment which conveys the feeling of relief and release: "One and all we felt that the holy calm that lay like sunshine over the wasted face and form was only an earthly token and symbol of the calm that was to reign for ever" (ibid. 231).

Not only Lucy's appearance, but also matutinal nature seems to echo this mood:

> Outside the air was sweet, the sun shone, and the birds sang, and it seemed as if all nature were tuned to a different pitch. There was gladness and mirth and peace everywhere, for we were at rest ourselves on one account, and we were glad, though it was with tempered joy. (ibid. 232)

However, the companions are soon made aware that their job is not yet finished - on the contrary, as Van Helsing puts it,

> one step of our work is done [...]. But there remains a greater task: to find out the author of all this our sorrow and to stamp him out. [...] [I]t is a long task, and a difficult, and there is danger in it, and pain. (ibid. 232)

In this passage Van Helsing does not only make a proleptic comment again, but he also clearly defines the stakes and the riskiness of their endeavour, which additionally heightens the reader's involvement.

The next task, to which Van Helsing refers, requires the protagonists to increase their knowledge of Dracula. They collect and juxtapose various pieces of information and set out into the city to make enquiries about him. In order to stop his turning women into vampires, they need to find out more about him - his strengths, weaknesses, lairs and plans. Assiduously they keep records and copy and study old ones, ask workers about their tasks and inquire confidential information about Dracula's estates in London. In numerous meetings they brainstorm, report and compare their findings and deliberate on further steps.

This part of the text bears strong resemblances to a detective novel: a crime has been committed (Lucy's turning), which raises various questions. At this stage the knowledge of the reader and the protagonists is on the same level, as they all have studied the same records and now strive to fill the information gaps[33] - it is evident that this passage also features mystery. However, the reader does not merely experience a cognitive stimulation - emotional involvement is still present and even strongly fostered, as there are a number of emotional scenes (for instance Mina comforting Arthur, Van Helsing's motivational speeches or doubtful and apprehensive utterances). Thus, this passage is an example of what Junkerjürgen has called "*mystery/suspense*" (70) - a temporary combination between both forms of reader involvement.

As we have noticed, the classic suspense pattern is exceptionally blurry in this novel. In some instances some phases are not fully realised, such as the resolution in Jonathan's itinerary. In other passages the reader is made aware that the resolution is only temporary. Foreshadowings placed at the end of resolution phases already hint towards other dangers which loom over the protagonists and are soon to be encountered. Thus, the readers are hardly granted any rest - similarly to the main characters, they rush from peril to peril. In this manner the novel is able to maintain constantly a certain amount of suspense throughout the whole text.

Another outstanding feature of the suspense pattern in the novel is the temporary blend with mystery. According to Junkerjürgen, the core of *mystery/suspense* can be formed by a "Geheimnis [...], von dem eine Gefahr ausgeht" (70-71). In the figure of Dracula, both features are united - he is undoubtedly an enormous threat and his background, abilities, strengths, weaknesses and motivations present a riddle to the other protagonists.

Concerning traditional plot devices, *Dracula* certainly employs some interesting alterations to those already established in *Otranto* and *The Monk*. It starts in the rather conventional manner - the protagonist has to set out to an exotic, unknown place and finally arrives at the villain's gloomy castle. However, already in this part we can observe the first deviation from classic conventions - this role, typically a

[33] These parameters are identified by Jünkerjürgen as characteristics of mystery (66-67).

female character, is here occupied by a male, Jonathan Harker. He experiences the same sort of dangers and hardships a Gothic heroine has to face, though: forced seclusion, the utter subjection to a potentially dangerous villain and the threat of sexual assault. Jonathan soon realises his helplessness and vulnerability.

After this part, however, there is another significant change to the novels I have previously discussed - the change of locations. Whereas the setting of both *Otranto* and *The Monk* were marked by remoteness, *Dracula* takes its villain directly to the core of contemporary civilisation. The significant impact of this issue will be addressed at a later point, though.

The plot moves on to the persecution of the female protagonist(s) and the depiction of the fear and danger caused by it. The hunting of the villain, taking up only a relatively short span of discourse time in *The Monk* (publicly revealing the crimes of the prioress and arresting Ambrosio), is prolonged in *Dracula* - the gathering of information, the baiting and the persecution of the vampire through Europe is narrated in greater detail.

The ending is realised in the traditional manner - the villain is punished - even annihilated - and the virtuous characters are rewarded: Mina is freed from her vampiric curse, both Arthur and Dr Seward find a wife and the remembrance of Quincey Morris's heroic death is kept alive through the name of Mina's and Jonathan's young son.

Thus, *Dracula* features numerous discrepancies to the typical suspense and plot pattern which has already been established by the previous novels of my analysis. In how far the creation of thrill and the presented motifs that trigger it differs from the other texts shall be discussed in the next chapter.

6.1.2 "Both thrilling and repulsive"[34] – motifs and thrill

As I have already mentioned, Gothic can always be regarded as an "embodiment[...] and evocation[...] of cultural anxieties" (Botting 2). Of the novels analysed in this

[34] *Dracula* 45.

thesis, *Dracula* is maybe the one that most directly addresses the social fears and insecurities of its time of origin.

Dracula was written in the last decade of the nineteenth century, a time which was characterised by various social changes and the fears that accompanied them: "The turn of the century was rife with changes that challenged the fiber of Victorian England and middle-class values" (Eighteen-Bisang, Miller 300). One of them is the notion of gender, more specifically, of woman. The "New Woman" movement questioned traditional female roles and demanded women's admission to "higher education, striving to enter the learned professions, and [...] working outside the home for money" (Spencer 312). Moreover, it strove to grant women the right to own property and even to have the same amount of sexual liberties as men (ibid. 312). However, sexuality was still widely perceived as a negative force in women (see Loidolt 40) and, as a consequence, sexually active behaviour was both feared and condemned (ibid. 36).

In what ways does this relate to the novel, which neither features explicit sexual scenes nor directly addresses the issue of sexuality in general (see Pick 291)? - It is widely believed that vampirism represents a perverted, forbidden and thoroughly negative kind of sexuality (see Eighteen-Bisang, Miller 280; Craft 259; Labes 16). This is partly due to the fact that after having been bitten by Dracula, female sexual behaviour alters completely - instead of conformist passive submission, women begin to take action. They show initiative and thereby violate gender norms and regulations by "usurping" the traditionally male role, thus violating the allegedly "natural" order.

Probably the most prominent example are the vampire women at castle Dracula. They appear at a point in time in which Jonathan has fallen asleep and, lying on the bed and being outnumbered, is undoubtedly in a weak position. They move towards him as he seems to be paralysed by shock and fear. Those very movements indicate the distribution of roles in this situation - while the vampire women literally make the first move and thus clearly play the active part, Jonathan stays immobile and wholly passive. This behaviour differs considerably from traditional gender roles of the nineteenth century - in fact, it marks the direct opposite (see Craft 261).

"He is young and strong; there are kisses for us all" (*Dracula* 45) - this statement expresses not only enormous self-confidence, but also alludes to orgiastic practices. Jonathan is both fascinated as well as horrified:

> There was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive, and as she arched her neck she actually licked her lips like an animal, till I could see in the moonlight the moisture shining on the scarlet lips and on the red tongue as it lapped the white sharp teeth. (ibid 45)

The paradox of the vampiric mouth with its deep red and wet lips and its sharp teeth has often been addressed by various critics as a kind of "*vagina dentata*" (Levy 156) or alternatively as an organ which combines male and female features - the lips alluding to the vulva and the teeth to the penis: "[T]he vampire mouth fuses and confuses [...] the gender-based categories of the penetrating and the receptive" (Craft 261). It combines the passive and receiving female with the active, piercing male part. Thereby one creature of any sex can fulfil both sexual roles, which have been so far neatly separated and securely attributed to either male or female individuals. This concept subverts the traditional social distinction male-female with its corresponding binary pair active-passive. Although it is clearly marked as monstrous and unnatural, it nevertheless expresses the "Victorian anxiety over the potential fluidity of gender roles" (ibid. 264) by carrying it to the extremes: in fact, it does not only question social behaviour, but also anatomic features. Thus, the body is no longer a reliable signifier (ibid. 267). One organ has subverted allegedly natural and adamantine gender rules and thereby violated a taboo.

Which effects does the vampiric mouth produce when it takes action? If we return to the passage quoted above, we see that one word captures the whole range of the vampiric bite: it is considered as voluptuous, a term frequently used throughout the novel referring to female vampires and the ambiguous reaction they provoke in male characters. Not only the vampire women in Castle Dracula are described as voluptuous, but also Lucy after her transformation (see *Dracula* 225-226).[35] They all produce a paradoxical effect on males - they both enthral and repel them. Thusly displayed vampiric sexuality is "both thrilling and repulsive" (ibid. 45), not only to the characters in the novel but also to the readership:

[35] Labes directly links the adjective voluptuous to vampire women and their physical powers (50).

> Das beherrschende Element in der Auseinandersetzung der Kunst mit dem Vampirismus ist die Sexualität der Nachtgeschöpfe, welche die Rezipienten dieser Werke gleichermaßen abstößt wie anzieht. [...] Die sexuelle Komponente macht den Vampir erst richtig attraktiv und auch gefährlich [...]. (Labes 15)

Thus, we see that once again the protagonists as well as the readership basically share the same kind of seemingly contradictory reactions, which are also a distinctive feature of thrill. The very depiction of this kind of sexus - a perverted, negative kind of sexuality (ibid. 16) - seems to have a "Magnetwirkung" (ibid. 15), an enormous attraction on the reader, which is based on the universal fascination of the other and the evil as well as the "Umsetzung der Überlegenheit in physischer und psychischer Hinsicht" (ibid. 15). Again, two crucial features of thrill are addressed: angstlust and the open display of power differences. The latter is most vividly realised in the scene of Dracula's nightly visit to Mina's and Jonathan's bedroom:

> With his left hand he held both Mrs Harker's hands, keeping them away with her arms at full tension; his right hand gripped her by the back of the neck, forcing her face down on his bosom. Her white dress was smeared with blood, and a thin stream trickled down the man's bare breast which was shown by his torn-open dress. (*Dracula* 300)

Craft refers to this passage as Dracula's "final demonstration of dangerous potency" (279) - indeed Dracula appears as vicious oppressor. Even though the text itself compares the situation with a ridiculously infantile and trivialising simile - "a child forcing a kitten's nose into a saucer of milk" (*Dracula* 300) - the passage strongly resembles a situation of rape: Dracula violently grips Mina in a way she cannot defend herself, her bloodstained white dress alluding to typical imagery of lost virginity. Additionally, Mina's account of the situation emphasises the parallels to enforced oral sex (see Craft 278): "When the blood began to spurt out, he took my hands in one of his, holding them tight, and with the other seized my neck and pressed my mouth to the wound, so that I must either suffocate or swallow [...]!" (*Dracula* 307).

Generally, this depiction of Dracula's assault does not only involve sexus, but is also part of crimen. However, according to some theories, this is not the only passage in the novel where those types of human drives are intertwined. It has been argued that the blood transfusions and the impaling are similar acts of violent sexuality, although

they have been carried out by characters depicted as morally superior - Craft associates the blood transfusions given to Lucy with gang rape (281) and identifies the impaling as acts of "violence against the sexual woman" (ibid. 275):

> [Van Helsing's] logic of corrective penetration demands an escalation, as the failure of the hypodermic needle necessitates the stake. A woman is better still than mobile, better dead than sexual[.] (ibid. 274)

Both Lucy and Mina are the impetus for a power struggle between Dracula and Van Helsing. When Lucy is suffering from anaemic symptoms caused by Dracula, Van Helsing tries to replace the missing blood by "defensive transfusions" (ibid. 269) that are, however, soon consumed by the vampire, which demands even more transfusions. It is apparent that Lucy's body becomes the battlefield for Dracula's and Van Helsing's struggle against each other. Their fight presents a source of crimen in the novel, producing scenes as the confrontation with Van Helsing, Jonathan, Dr Seward, Quincey and Dracula in Piccadilly (see *Dracula* 325-326) and, most importantly, the final showdown in front of castle Dracula in Transylvania.

Another distinct passage of crimen is the first part of the novel - Jonathan's journey to Transylvania and his stay and incarceration at the castle. This is, as already mentioned, highly reminiscent of traditional Gothic novels, as the protagonist (in this case, the male hero) is set into alien and disturbing surroundings to be fully exposed to the villain's maliciousness and evil plotting. The danger of the situation is continually emphasised and references towards it increase in frequency and urgency as the story advances. Jonathan's first sensations are vague feelings of upset - "I cannot but feel uneasy" (ibid. 32) and advance to lethargic conclusions about his security: "[s]afety and the assurance of safety are things of the past" (ibid. 43). Jonathan also directly addresses the inequality of power relations: "I am so absolutely in his power" (ibid. 49).

We have already addressed the forms of sexus and crimen in *Dracula* - in how far is fructus present? So far, it has only played a minor role compared to the other two drives. In *Otranto*, the whole issue of succession draws on this drive and the incestuous relation between Ambrosio and Antonia in *The Monk* also addresses it. In this novel, however, it becomes more prominent. - The count threatens to turn London's inhabitants into creatures of his own kind, obeying only his wishes: "Your

girls that you all love are mine already; and through them you and others shall yet be mine - my creatures, to do my bidding and to be my jackals when I want to feed" (*Dracula* 326).

However, this does not only imply his wish to enslave others, but also hints towards the possibility of dominating and turning a vast and ever-growing number of human beings. In fact, it expresses his determination to become "the father or furtherer of a new order of beings" (ibid. 322). Van Helsing perceives his duty to prohibit "the world" to be "given over to monsters" (ibid. 341) - this entails the threat that vampirism could not only spread in London, but the whole planet. Thus, Dracula's urge to procreate both represents a twisted form of fructus[36] as well as serves to raise the stakes - the success or failure of the group does not merely affect a few individuals, but the whole human race.

Apart from the creation of other vampires, there are more instances of fructus in the novel. Similar to the example I have just given, they present deviations and corruptions of that drive. Closely connected to the raising of children is the concept of motherhood. There are passages in the novel which show a highly distorted image of maternity - the apparent preference of vampire women for young children. During Jonathan's confinement in castle Dracula the text strongly hints towards two instances of child abduction and murder to satisfy the vampires' hunger for human blood (ibid. 47, 53-54).

However, the most iconic example is certainly the passage of the "Bloofer Lady" (ibid. 189) - a series of temporarily missing and harmed children in London attracts the attention of the press and Van Helsing. The professor soon concludes that this can only be part of Lucy's recent vampiric activities. When they secretly enter the graveyard to prevent any more children from being harmed or even murdered, they finally spot Lucy:

> [W]e saw a white figure advance [...] which held something dark at its breast. The figure stopped, and at the moment a ray of moonlight fell between the masses of driving clouds and showed in startling prominence a dark-haired woman, dressed in the cerements of the grave. [...] Van Helsing

[36] In this context, fructus does not mean to give life to somebody but the exact opposite - to drain life and to pass on the state of being undead. As Van Helsing puts it, Dracula is the father of creatures "whose road must lead through Death, not Life." (ibid. 322)

> raised his lantern and drew the slide; by the concentrated light that fell on Lucy's face we could see that the lips were crimson with fresh blood, and that the stream had trickled over her chin and stained the purity of her lawn death-robe. [...] With a careless motion, she flung to the ground, callous as a devil, the child that up to now she had clutched strenuously to her breast, growling over it as a dog growls over a bone. The child gave a sharp cry, and lay there moaning. (ibid. 225-226)

The remarkable feature of this passage is the slow revealing of the identity of the approaching figure and her hideous crime. Again, lightning plays an essential role (similarly to *The Monk*, moonbeams literally shed light upon a dark secret). The closer the figure approaches the protagonists, the clearer the mystery of the missing children is resolved in its full horror. The image of Lucy and the abducted child on her breast mirrors the image of the mater lactans in a highly distorted way - instead of feeding a child, the female figure feeds on the child to satisfy her own appetite. Afterwards she carelessly throws it away (see Loidolt 37).

The sucking of blood itself is another instance of fructus. It is, according to Renfield, a precious and potent way of nourishment: "the blood is the life!" (*Dracula* 152). This remark is probably based on Deuteronomy 12:23 - this biblical passage strictly interdicts the consummation of blood: "Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh." Thus, the basis of the vampiric diet breaks a religious taboo as well.

However, the bloodsucking of a vampire does not only refer to fructus - it is, in fact, a combination of all three drives. I have already pointed out the sexual allusions in the passages in which Jonathan encounters the vampire women and in which Mina is turned by Dracula. Labes even argues that the concept of the vampire was deliberately used due to its imminent latent sexuality in order to depict transgressive sexual behaviour:

> Verschlüsselte Darstellungen verbotener sexueller Handlungen bilden den Kern eines Gehäuses, das die phantastische Geschichte des Grafen Dracula mit den größtmöglichen Mitteln an Authentizität erzählt. [...] Die codierte Darstellung der viktorianischen Prüderie war notwendig, um die Zensur zu umgehen. Dafür erwies sich die Metapher des Vampirs als geradezu perfekt. (Labes 143)

In how far the story of the novel is merely a shell to cover the narration of sexual acts is open to dispute.

It is, however, obvious that a bite of a vampire is always connected with aggression and assault. Even Lucy, who has often been referred to as easy prey for Dracula (see Loidolt 39) regularly falls into a "half-dreamy state" (*Dracula* 105) - clearly Dracula possesses some kind of mind-affecting abilities that bolster his hunting success. It directly affects his victims - both Renfield and Mina are unable to speak freely (ibid. 262, 343), Jonathan was in stupor while Mina was attacked (ibid. 301) and Dracula seems to have nearly unlimited access to Mina's thoughts and perceptions at certain times of the day (ibid. 344). Loidolt claims that the Gothic villain can only unite with women in a brutal way (177) - Dracula, however, does not limit violence to the physical level, but in his assaults he also directly influences the free will of his victims, which also adds a new perspective to the realisation of crimen.

As we see, the vampiric act of biting and bloodsucking unites all three human drives - sexus, crimen and fructus. It is not only their mere depiction which causes thrill - each of them transgresses taboos as well, thereby intensifying the involvement of the audience.

6.2 "On fire with anxiety and eagerness"[37] – characters

Dracula features one particularity which immediately stands out in the characterisation in all three novels - it is the successful teamwork of the protagonists. Originally, they are all in some way connected - Quincey Morris and Seward are Lucy's suitors, Arthur is her fiancé, Mina is Lucy's best friend, Jonathan is Mina's fiancé and Van Helsing is Seward's former teacher. They start to team up and devise a plan when they have already lost a dear friend, Lucy. The high stakes and the potency of the villain make them realise the necessity of a unified and systematic course of action.

[37] *Dracula* 369.

The Monk already features an attempt of a similar teaming up when Lorenzo asks his uncle, the Duke, for bureaucratic help to marry Antonia. He also borrows some of his armed men to convict the prioress. However, he merely achieves a Pyrrhic victory as the conviction of the prioress rapidly escalates into a violent public slaughter and vandalism, and he is unable to save his love from the claws of her kidnapper. - In *Dracula*, the team is more successful - it seems as if the characters are no longer passively shaken by their fate, but they actively engage in the battle against the villain. Their resolution does not falter despite the horrors they have to face. They do not merely utter lengthy lamentations about their misfortune, but try to intervene actively in their own destiny.

According to Junkerjürgen, the teaming up of the characters has two major effects on the involvement of the audience. First, it prohibits an overly powerful representation of individual characters, which could impede a close relationship to the audience (ibid. 135). Each figure fulfils a specific role and they all complement each other. Thus, "[d]as Team entlastet den Leistungsdruck, der auf einer Figur liegen würde und schützt sie somit davor, als übermenschlich zu erscheinen" (ibid. 135).

Second, the positive comments of individual characters about other team members have a significant influence on the reader's sympathies:

> Indem positiv exponierte Figuren sich beispielsweise positiv über eine andere Figur äußern, beeinflusst dies bereits wieder die Haltung des Rezipienten. Nicht nur der Erzähler, sondern auch die anderen Figuren können daher über ihre Kommentare direkt für die Sympathie einer Figuren werben. (ibid. 154)

There are numerous examples in the text - most of them concern Mina. She undoubtedly receives most of the praise from various other characters. The atmosphere in the group between its individual members is generally highly positive and there are various moments which clearly stress that they are not just bound together by a common cause, but by a deep "sense of companionship" (*Dracula* 328). Indeed, their friendship is even strengthened in moments of sadness (ibid. 316). This great emotional bond provides the characters with the necessary mental and moral stability to face the various challenges and dangers of their quest.

Dracula is undoubtedly the main source of aggression and menace for the protagonists. If we compare him to the other Gothic villains, one feature is definitely most striking: his supernatural nature. Whereas Manfred and Ambrosio were still distinctly depicted as human, the antagonist in *Dracula* has developed into something beyond that - "Ordog" and "vrolok" (*Dracula* 12), as the Carpathian people call him, "great Un-Dead" (ibid. 217), as Van Helsing names him, or - quite simply - a monster.

I have already briefly mentioned that the depiction of Manfred may evoke pity - partly because the motives for his actions are to some extent explained to the reader. In *Dracula*, however, we have no insights into the villain at all - we are merely provided with speculations of the protagonists. It can be argued, of course, that the ulterior motives of Manfred and the vampire lord are quite similar - they both want to procreate. However, in Manfred's case it *could* be said that he feels the need to preserve his ancestral lineage, his heritage - as he supposes himself to be the only heir, he perceives it as his duty. In *Dracula*, there is none of such evidence to be found throughout the novel - in fact, the three vampire women in his castle only prove that Dracula is not the only one of his kind. There are, however, frequent comparisons to a predator throughout the novel,[38] which implicitly hint towards his natural disposition as the main source for his maliciousness.

His distinctly marked non-human nature is undoubtedly the greatest and most powerful indication of alienness - however, there are also other factors which create and enforce the distance between the figure of Dracula and the readers. Junkerjürgen (151) mentions three factors which are decisive for the kind of relationship between a fictional character and the reader - age, gender and nationality.

If we have a look at the first point, the otherness of the figure of Dracula is evident: being undead, Dracula's existence far exceeds that of a human being. Van Helsing identifies him as "that Voivode Dracula who won his name against the Turk"

[38] e.g. "There was something so *panther-like* in his movement - something so unhuman, that it seemed to sober us all from the shock of his coming" (*Dracula* 325, emphasis added). "Your man-eater, as they of India call the tiger, who has once tasted the blood of the human, care no more for other prey, but prowl unceasing till he get him. *This that we hunt from our village is a tiger, too*, a man-eater, and he never cease to prowl" (ibid. 341, emphasis added).

(*Dracula* 256), thereby dating him back centuries ago. Thus, Dracula originates from another time period than the one in which the actual story is set.

Concerning the second aspect, I have mentioned before that the vampire combines both male and female physical attributes and thereby makes traditional gender boundaries obsolete - Craft denotes it as "the vampiric abrogation of gender codes" (268). Even if Dracula is explicitly referred to as a man, his mouth, in its vampiric character, also possesses certain features commonly attributed to femaleness (see Craft 261-262).

The third aspect, however, is definitely the one that has been more frequently addressed in theories. Dracula's provenance, clearly marked as foreign and exotic, is described in all its peculiarities already at the very beginning of the novel. Labes (20, 29,143) identifies the figure of Dracula as the personified fear of an invasion of the uncouth furthered by British colonialism. Botting and Townshend arrive at a similar conclusion:

> [C]oming from distant and almost oriental lands to cross the thresholds of English homes by invitation only, Dracula, foreigner and aristocrat, evokes the strangeness at the heart of the bourgeois family, setting loose the barely suppressed impulses within them and thereby corrupting fragile mores and norms. (Botting, Townshend 7)

This passage aptly summarises why the concept of foreign exoticness in *Dracula* is not only a means of distancing a character from the reader, but also evokes menace and creates antagonism.

However, there are even more features which create distance between Dracula and the audience. One of them is his physical appearance. The first closer description of the vampire's face is remarkably detailed - Jonathan notices his aquiline face, an adjective which has been similarly used in the description of Ambrosio (see *The Monk*, 172). Furthermore, he mentions his thick eyebrows that were "almost meeting over the nose" (*Dracula* 24), as well as his "fixed and rather cruel-looking" (ibid. 24) mouth and his protruding sharp teeth. Additionally, "his ears were pale and at the top extremely pointed; the chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks firm though thin. The general effect was one of extraordinary pallor" (ibid. 24-25).

As for his hands, Jonathan notices their sharp and thin fingernails and a growth of hair at the palms. Their touch causes "a horrible feeling of nausea" (ibid. 25) in Jonathan. All in all, many of these features and the reaction they cause in Jonathan present a means of alienating the character and thus influencing the reader's attitude.

Mina provides a similarly uncanny description of Dracula. After their encounter in London she writes about a man with a "fierce and nasty" (ibid. 184) appearance. These two adjectives also summarise the effects which are evoked in the reader by Dracula's looks. Similar to Jonathan's depiction of Dracula, all the distinguishing features used to describe the count, his whole marked appearance clearly identify him as "other" and thus present another means of creating a distance between this character and the audience (see Junkerjürgen 147). In fact, Labes (31) claims that the figure of Dracula was modelled according to Lombroso's theory of atavism and degeneration. It is true that the passage in Jonathan's diary features an almost whimsically detailed presentation of all forms, shapes and measures of Dracula's face. Moreover, the notion of physiognomy is even mentioned in the novel - Van Helsing identifies Jonathan as physiognomist (see *Dracula* 201) and Mina provides a highly detailed description of Van Helsing's appearance after their first meeting (ibid. 194).

Moreover, a large number of the references towards and descriptions of Dracula in the text feature similes based on animals (see Eighteen-Bisang, Miller 293) and demons (see *Dracula* 12, 252, 326). Also Botting (146) claims that Dracula is no longer a Gothic villain, but a diabolic agent. Loidolt classifies him as the typical demon-lover, who "aim[s] at a slow and sadistic destruction of the female victim" (ibid. 180) as well as "Satan incarnate" (ibid. 183), who strives towards world dominion.

Dracula is, however, an interesting example of a Gothic antagonist. He is no longer human, he has voluntarily chosen his own damnation (ibid. 181). Trying to achieve a god-like status by creating a new race of beings, he is undoubtedly the most powerful and dangerous of the discussed villains. Dracula's past remains mythical - the novel provides only frustratingly scarce information about his turning, such as Van Helsing's attempt to explain Dracula's supernatural nature in a scientific way by

referring to the strange geological peculiarities of his homeland (*Dracula* 340). Whereas *The Monk* provides its readers with deep psychological insights into its villain, Dracula's inner life remains largely a mystery to us. By denying him a narrative voice and by constant explicit comparisons to the infernal, the text clearly identifies him as alien and full of menace. He does not only pose a threat to the Gothic heroine, but in fact to all of the characters in the novel.

There is, however, one of the protagonists that is equal to Dracula in intelligence and plotting schemes - Van Helsing (see Loidolt 179). When Seward is at his wits' end, he writes his "old friend and master" (*Dracula* 122) who is

> a philosopher and metaphysician, and one of the most advanced scientists of his day; and he has [...] an absolute open mind. This, with an iron nerve, a temper of the ice-brook, an indomitable resolution, self-command and toleration from virtues to blessings, and the kindliest and truest heart that beats [...] work both in theory and practice, for his views are as wide as his all-embracing sympathy. (ibid. 122)

Not only Seward, but also the others have a high opinion of Van Helsing. In the first crisis meeting he takes a seat on the head of the table (ibid. 251), which is emblematic of his leader role. He takes up the most speaking time and gives plans and orders for the next steps the group is going to take.[39]

Van Helsing takes up multiple roles - "scientist/priest/shaman" (Eighteen-Bisang, Miller 293) - and is often regarded as the "hero of the novel or the vampire's chief antagonist" (ibid. 293). His opposition against the count has been described as a "competition between alternative potencies" (ibid. 268) in a rather simple black-and-white dichotomy - Van Helsing represents social norms and values which are subverted and crashed by Dracula (ibid. 269) and in turn need to be restored by the professor. Labes even extends the symbolistic dualism of the two figures:

> Van Helsing versus Dracula, das ist auch das Kräftemessen zwischen Aufklärung und Geheimnis, Traditionsverteidigung und Bedrohlichkeit, Christentum und Teufel, Gut und Böse. (40)

Van Helsing is clearly portrayed as morally superior. He does not only lead the battle against evil, but also treats injuries and maladies, enforces the sense of community among the others and provides hope and moral support in his speeches. He represents

[39] For further information on Van Helsing's leading position see Labes 29.

what Junkerjürgen has called the superhero - he is the leader of the group and distinguishes himself from the others in terms of superior skills (177).

Although Van Helsing and Dracula clearly form a binary pair, they also share some similarities. Labes has identified other common features between Dracula and Van Helsing: "Beide sind Ausländer und Vaterfiguren, können hypnotisieren und zeichnen für [sic] den blutfixierten und sadistischen Touch der Geschichte verantwortlich" (ibid. 40).

Indeed, "Van Helsing actually equals the Count in his fanaticism - in the name of God and under the pretext of morality he justifies the barbarous slaughter of vampire (=sexual) women" (Loidolt 36). He calls it his "duty" (*Dracula* 220), but also admits it is "butcher work" (ibid. 394).

As Van Helsing is the embodiment of paternal norms and values, he strictly rejects any kind of active sexuality in women - he nearly regards Lucy's voluptuous behaviour as "Affront gegen ihn und die Gesellschaft" (Labes 39). His battle against Dracula entails a confiscation of sexuality from women - the very same sexuality Dracula has awakened in them before. Van Helsing's methods to maintain "paternal supremacy" (Loidolt 35) are cruel - he uses "corrective penetration" (Craft 270) in order to "liberate" vampire women.

His ideal of womanhood is personalised by Mina - he calls her a "pearl among women" (*Dracula* 233). She suppresses her sexual side (see Loidolt 39) and also actively opposes Dracula's effort to awake her sexuality - she even prefers death to a vampiric state of being. In contrast to many other figures in the novel, the text lacks a detailed description of Mina's physical appearance - Vander Ploeg interprets this as a denial of corporeality and, as a consequence, a renunciation of "sensuousness" (50).

Mina's obedience and passivity are a constitutional part of the fundament of male admiration and respect towards her (see Loidolt 132). As Craft (270) observes, the male characters' view on her is even heightened in a way that Mina is idealised to a symbol, which becomes obvious in the following passage:

> She is one of God's women, fashioned by His own hand to show us men and other women that there is a heaven where we can enter, and that its light can be here on earth. So true, so sweet, so noble, so little an egoist - and that, let me tell you, is much this age, so sceptical and selfish. (*Dracula* 201)

Mina has been called "a martyr for patriarchy and an advocate for Victorian morality" (Loidolt 39). In case she dies and turns into a vampire, the party would not merely lose a close friend and valuable ally, but also the battle against the corruption of the moral establishment (see Labes 64). For them, Mina has become the chief source of motivation and a propulsive force, in short - she is the figure head of their cause.

Despite her own feelings and better judgement, Mina obeys the commands given to her by the men of the group.[40] She consents to remaining passive although it renders her "weak and depressive, since she is denied to support the group as an active member" (Loidolt 131). Labes, not recoiling from a more expressive and emotionally involved language, highly condemns this behaviour: "Denn trotz ihres für die Konformität geschaffenen Charakters kann man zwischendurch nicht glauben, dass Minas Intelligenz ihr keinen Tritt in den angepassten Hintern gibt" (66).

However, Loidolt has quite correctly called Mina as "probably the most sensible Gothic heroine" (127). Mina certainly shares some similarities with the typical Gothic heroine, as, for instance, her orphanhood (see *Dracula* 168), but is far more independent than Matilda of *Otranto* or Antonia. Mina is able to support herself financially, as she has worked as a schoolmistress. She trains herself to become a journalist and plans to be Jonathan's secretary after their marriage. Probably referring to her professional education and the various skills that were thereby acquired, Van Helsing speaks of her "great brain which is trained like a man's" (*Dracula* 361).

Her intellectual capabilities became apparent at various points in the novel - she analyses, arranges facts, deduces and draws conclusions. She proposes the idea of hypnosis to establish a link to Dracula (ibid. 331) and thus "beats [him] with his own weapons" (Loidolt 129). Furthermore, she is also able to turn the few bits of information she could gather in this process into a relatively solid theory about

[40] "Last night I went to bed when the men had gone, simply because they told me to" (*Dracula* 274).

Dracula's whereabouts. Based on this, she constructs a plan about the further steps the group should take (see *Dracula* 373-375). Truly, the kind of deductions she draws at this point are worthy of a detective. Thus, her capabilities clearly exceed those of a mere secretary.

Apart from her analytical skills, she is characterised by her composure and endurance. Unlike Lucy, she does not even think of succumbing to Dracula - until the end, she fights the various urges that are triggered by her pre-vampiric state. The mere thought of causing harm to her friends even leads her to contemplate suicide (ibid. 309-310).

Furthermore, Mina is a character who suffers greatly, but determinedly tries to maintain her countenance and to struggle against any weakness, as we see in various instances, such as at the memory of Dracula's visit (ibid. 306) or Van Helsing's exhortation towards her to stay alive (ibid. 306). In both instances, her great emotions are depicted in her reactions and her struggle to suppress them:

> The remembrance seemed for a while to overpower her, and she drooped and would have sunk down but for her husband's sustaining arm. With a great effort she recovered herself and went on. (ibid. 306)

These passages heighten the sympathies for Mina. The vivid depiction of her physical reactions make the reader aware of the enormity of pain and fear Mina has to suffer. However, she does not give herself up, but desperately tries to provide moral support to the group and to battle against her fears. The passage quoted above is followed by Mina's speech to the men, but the last sentence - "[w]ith a great effort she recovered herself and went on" (ibid. 306) - can, in fact, be applied to her whole story line. She has to endure enormous difficulties, but in the end she manages to lead a normal life with her husband.

In addition to struggling with her own problems, she also provides a shoulder to cry on for her male friends. Apart from Jonathan, her own husband, she comforts both Arthur and Quincey Morris in moments of despair (ibid. 245). Mina downplays these scenes by referring to women's nature and the strength provided by maternal instincts that are triggered in those moments (ibid. 245). Nevertheless it is clearly her who is depicted as the strong character in this passage. She provides fortitude and comfort to

her group members who give loose to their emotions in her company. For them, Mina incorporates several positively attributed female roles (see Labes 41) and thus rehabilitates their image of women (ibid. 41), which has been previously shattered by Lucy. To her male friends, Mina's mere presence seems to render a positive atmosphere of constancy and stability - for instance, the simple state of receiving a cup of tea from Mina makes Dr Seward perceive his house as a real home for the first time (see *Dracula* 247).

However, the male figure whose weakness is depicted most frequently and thoroughly and who is in most desperate need for Mina is undoubtedly Jonathan. He is characterised by his highly emotional responses to various situations, such as his rash temper during the formation of possible strategies (ibid. 312), his terror at recognising Dracula in London (ibid. 183-184), his growing self-consciousness after returning home from the hospital in Varna (ibid. 168), his self-proclaimed state of being "wary to death" (ibid. 330) or his breakdown due to a "collapse of misery" (ibid. 378). His sentiments are also clearly expressed in his writing style, as we see in the numerous exclamations and repetitions after the night of Mina's turning[41] and, of course, his diary entries at castle Dracula.

Jonathan's stay in Transylvania is a particularly striking example of his characterisation in the novel, as Jonathan bears all features of a typical Gothic heroine (see Botting 146) - he is exposed to an overly powerful patriarch, which puts him in grave danger. His continually shrinking control over the situation and his despairing and fearful reactions evoke the same kind of empathy in the reader as the Gothic heroine usually does: "I came back to my room and threw myself on my knees. It is then so near the end? Tomorrow! tomorrow! Lord, help me, and those to whom I am dear!" (*Dracula* 58).

Passages like this directly mirror Jonathan's emotional state. His distress is not only conveyed on the semantic, but also on a more formal level. The use of repetition, elliptical syntax and invocations emphasise his confused state of mind. They can mainly be found at the end of diary entries and thus form some kind of cliffhanger, as the reader leaves the character in a highly agitated state. Other examples can be

[41] e.g. "The end! oh my God! what end? ... To work! To work!" (*Dracula* 308)

found in the entry of 24 June when Jonathan relates the story of the woman whose child had been abducted by Dracula[42] or when he decides to follow Dracula and climb through windows into Dracula's room.[43]

Throughout the novel, Jonathan remains the weakest male figure (see Labes 34-35) and corresponds largely to the classical Gothic hero as described by Thomas (85). His weakness, however, is not only restricted to his inability to protect his beloved, but is expressed in various instances. He temporarily loses his sanity (ibid. 34) and also starts with an inferior social and financial position compared to most of the other characters (ibid. 35). In many instances he is consoled by his wife, Mina - when she visits Jonathan in the hospital in Hungary and when they meet Dracula in London, it is her who is decidedly the stronger character. With her support, Jonathan manages to recover and gain enough vitality to assist the others in their battle against Dracula. Additional to her supportive qualities, Mina also seems to have a greater presence among the others than her husband: "[...] Jonathan bleibt im Schatten seiner Frau, durch die er selbst erst richtig wahrgenommen wird" (Labes 41). Apart from the beginning, this can also be applied to the rest of the novel - the text devotes a larger quantity of narrative spotlight to Mina than Jonathan.

If we try to come to conclusions, various points can be observed. First, Mina combines both modern as well as traditional qualities - she has practiced a profession and possesses analytical and practical skills, but she fully subordinates herself to the men's will, thereby suppressing her talents in various cases. Insofar, Mina combines "qualities of both the emancipated and the traditional woman: thus, Mina is not only independent, intelligent and rational, but also faithful, tender and loving" (Loidolt 126).

Although she has been harshly criticised, Mina still remains the most competent of all Gothic heroines discussed so far in this paper. She represents a change of this character type and the female ideal in general shifting from the "simple-minded, naive maiden to [the] intellectual, rational lady" (ibid. 127). In contrast to Antonia

[42] "What shall I do? what can I do? How can I escape from this dreadful thrall of night and gloom and fear?" (*Dracula* 54)
[43] "God help me in my task! Goodbye, Mina, if I fail; goodbye, my faithful friend and second father; goodbye, all, and last of all Mina!" (ibid. 55)

and Matilda of *Otranto* she clearly stands out with her perseverance and eagerness, two character traits which heighten the reader's sympathies (see Junkerjürgen 142).

In contrast to the other novels discussed, power differences are therefore not primarily based on the helplessness and impotence of the heroine - in *Dracula*, they are evoked by the extreme viciousness and menace emanating from the villain. He has been described as "the embodiment of all socioeconomic and psychosexual nightmares at once" (Steward 379). Dracula, the foreign aristocrat from a country portrayed by large uninhabited areas and the superstitiousness of its people, invades England to endanger its society. His figure shows the brutal entering of the forgotten or repressed barbarous past into modernity, thereby creating chaos and confusion.

The battle against Dracula as well as the harm he has inflicted is depicted in the most lively way - by directly providing the reader with the individual thoughts and feelings of a majority of the main characters. In contrast to *Otranto* and most of *The Monk*, they are not mediated by an omniscient narrator, as it is an epistolary novel. Thus, the genre per se provides a higher chance for the readers to establish relations to the characters. Due to the intimacy which is created by this kind of narrative mediation, it can be argued that *Dracula* most prominently facilitates a close relationship between its characters and the audience.

6.3 "[T]hat monster [is] really in London!"[44] – settings

If we consider the settings of the novel, the first that comes to mind is certainly Transylvania, Dracula's native country - it is definitely one of the most iconic Gothic settings. In various instances its geographical and cultural remoteness is both explicitly and implicitly expressed in the text, such as Jonathan's long journey, his encounter with superstitious inhabitants and the fact that certain parts are not cartographically recorded (see *Dracula* 8).

The descriptions are not just restricted to the country, but can also be adopted to Dracula. Both he and his ancestry are deeply rooted within the history of the country

[44] *Dracula* 200.

- in fact, he and Transylvania seem to be identical in many ways. Both are characterised by a certain primal wildness and both define themselves in rather proud and martial terms.[45] Dracula describes his family tree as a "conquering race" (ibid. 36), which could, in fact, be regarded as one of the first cataphoric references regarding Dracula's plan to invade Britain. He refers to Transylvania as a melting pot of various other tribes and thereby draws on mythical images to stress the nobility and potency of his lineage (ibid. 36).

The Transylvanian landscape features various facets which evoke different reactions in the characters and readers. Jonathan perceives the "Mittel Land" (ibid. 13) as beautiful and picturesque, he admires the blooming trees and costumes of the farmers and workers. When he continues his journey and approaches the Carpathians, the landscape changes and evokes sublime impressions, showing "jagged rock and pointed crags" as well as "mighty rifts" (ibid. 13) which inspire awe in his fellow traveller. As they advance and the night sets in, the surroundings first impede the journey (the steepness of the road reduces the speed of the horses) and later become increasingly menacing - thunder appears, the wind increases, the temperature drops, snow begins to fall and finally the carriage is surrounded by fierce wolves.

Later, when the group travels to Transylvania in order to ban Dracula from his castle and destroy him, they have to face similarly adverse weather conditions. Van Helsing describes the landscape in evocative terms: "all is oh! so wild and rocky, as though it were the end of the world" (ibid. 387). The "more and more wild and desert land" believes him into thinking that "Nature seem to have held sometime her carnival" (ibid. 388). Similar to Dracula's victims, the landscape appears to have been drained of its vital energy.

Shortly before the climactic scene in which the group attacks the men which carry Dracula's coffin, the weather conditions become even worse and Mina describes the scenery close to the castle as "wild and uncanny" (ibid. 396). In this passage, the surroundings can be regarded as a reflection of the character's inner lives, their tension and fear - when Dracula is defeated, the sun rises and illuminates the gloomy

[45] Dracula emphasises Transylvania's barbarous and belligerent past: "[T]here is hardly a foot of soil in all this region that has not been enriched by the blood of men, patriots or invaders" (*Dracula* 28).

landscape. Botting classifies this sort of depiction of "wild and untameable" (12) nature, which can be found in both the landscape as well as human psyche (ibid. 12), a common feature of nineteenth-century Gothic. This, however, stands in contrast to various other depictions of settings - in many other instances, it is the setting which evokes a certain uncanny feeling in the characters.

In general, all the illustrations of Transylvania, its peoples and its past aim to create a sense of otherness and weird foreboding - Dracula even explicitly mentions to Jonathan that "Transylvania is not England. Our ways are not your ways, and there shall be to you many strange things. Nay, from what you have told me from your experiences already, you know something of what strange things here may be" (ibid. 28).

If we discuss Transylvania in general, we also have to draw our attention to Castle Dracula in particular. In the tradition of the typical Gothic edifice, the castle is described as ruinous and, right from the beginning, some antagonistic aura seems to emanate from its grim shadows: "through these frowning walls and dark window openings it was not likely that my voice could penetrate. [...] What sort of place had I come to [...]?" (ibid. 21).

It is not just the massive density of the walls that make a cry for help pointless. The location of the castle is marked by its remoteness from any larger settlements. The journey from the Borgo Pass to the castle seems to take some time, and most of the nearby inhabitants seem to be too afraid to venture near the castle. Jonathan's stay is also characterised by feelings of loneliness - he soon realises that apart from him and Dracula, nobody inhabits the old castle.

Similar to *Otranto* and *The Monk,* descriptions of places go hand in hand with accounts of their effects on the characters' feelings. Jonathan's description of the layout of the building, the surrounding area as well as his own bedroom is concluded by his feelings of desolation: "there was a dread loneliness in the place which chilled my heart and made my nerves tremble" (ibid. 43).

Those feelings of unease are soon intensified by a sense of entrapment. Jonathan realises that escape from the castle is a nearly hopeless endeavour: "The castle is a veritable prison, and I am a prisoner!" (ibid. 33). Similarly to *Otranto* and *The Monk*, this edifice, which is at the same time the villain's home, presents an adverse force to the protagonist: Jonathan's flight is hindered by a number of locked doors, the location of the castle - it is set on a cliff and accessible only on one side - and bands of aggressive wolves that lurk outside. The suspense is even heightened when Jonathan realises that Dracula does not plan to release him. In a moment of sadistic mockery, Dracula allows Jonathan to part from the castle, swinging open all formerly locked doors. However, Jonathan sees himself forced to stay, as the danger of being mangled by the wolves is too high. Thus, it is not surprising that even soon after his arrival his attitude towards the castle is characterised by frightful apprehension: "I feel the dread of this horrible place overpowering me, I am in fear - in awful fear - and there is no escape for me; I am encompassed about with terrors that I dare not think of" (ibid. 41-42).

Similar to other edifices presented in Gothic literature, Castle Dracula also features a center of horror (see Trautwein 92), namely Dracula's crypt. It is rather hard to access it - Jonathan even has to walk on a narrow stone ledge on the facade of the castle to reach another wing of the building. A spiral staircase leads down to lower parts of the castle - following the Gothic tradition, the protagonist enters a sinister and menacing space to confront the villain (ibid. 87).

Finally, Jonathan finds out about the peculiarity of this room (see Trautwein 94) - it is a graveyard which is used by Dracula as a resting place. During his second visit, he even finds out about Dracula's strange habit of drinking blood - upon closer inspection, he notices "gouts of fresh blood, which trickled from the corners of the mouth and ran over the chin and neck" (*Dracula* 59). It is also in this room where Jonathan was struck by his first apprehension of Dracula's plan:

> This was the being I was helping to transfer to London, where, perhaps for centuries to come he might, amongst its teeming millions, satiate his lust for blood, and create a new and ever-widening circle of semi-demons to batten on the helpless. (ibid. 60)

This scene can be described as strongly climatic, as the reader is confronted with the enormity of the threat which emanates from Dracula - it does not only affect Jonathan, but in fact the whole London society.

Dracula's moving to London is certainly a novelty regarding the use of Gothic settings. Locations in *Otranto* and *The Monk* were distinctly characterised by their temporal and geographic remoteness - both were set in mediaeval times and in countries which were perceived as foreign by the British audience, such as Italy (*Otranto*) or Spain and Germany (*The Monk*). *Dracula*, however, breaks that convention.[46] It moves to one of the centres of contemporary civilisation. The idea of the vampire, the monster walking unnoticed among common people, finds its epitome in Dracula's stroll in Piccadilly in broad daylight (ibid. 183-184). Thus, people no longer have to travel and move to foreign places any more in order to risk an attack by a Gothic villain - in fact, they are no longer safe in their own homes. Thus, all the "softening device[s]" (Spencer 307) which were an unmistakable feature of the former texts are eliminated and replaced by "the terror next door" (ibid. 307). The contemporary reader does no longer have the convenience of fictional remoteness but actually experiences a convergence to their own environment, which can ultimately lead to a higher reading involvement. Spencer states that

> [t]he characters react with fear and revulsion at encountering what is not only unexpected, but *unnatural* according to the laws of the world they inhabit, and readers usually respond with the same feelings, not only because we identify with the characters, but because the world the characters initially inhabit is our own world. (ibid. 306)

As Mina puts it, "[W]hat an awful thing if that man, that monster, be really in London!" *(Dracula* 200).

However, also the city has its uncanny places in the novel. Abandoned houses like Carfax still follow the classical presentation of edifices in Gothic literature:

> There are many trees on it, which make it in places gloomy, and there is a deep, dark-looking pond or small lake [...]. The house is very large and of all periods back [...] to mediaeval times, for one part is of stone immensely

[46] Although newspaper articles and diary entries always seem to omit meticulously an indication of the year, the point in time of the narrative can be fairly accurately identified as the second part of the nineteenth century due to the mentioning of trains, the use of the phonograph, cameras and telegrams and a reference to Charcot (see *Dracula* 204).

> thick, with only a few windows high up and heavily barred with iron. It looks like a part of a keep, and is close to an old chapel or church. (ibid. 30)

It even produces the same effects on characters, which becomes apparent in the worker's description of the old house (ibid. 243) and Jonathan's association with Castle Dracula (ibid. 266). Similar to the old chapel in the castle, the description of Carfax emphasises olfactory features of the setting,[47] which culminates in Jonathan's observation that in this house, "corruption had become itself corrupt" (ibid. 267).

Another urban location which draws upon typical Gothic features is the graveyard. The purpose of the men's visit is to identify Lucy as undead and, subsequently, to defang her. This gloomy enterprise is mirrored in the nocturnal surroundings - at his first visit, they evoke a memento mori-mood in Seward (ibid. 210). Later, the graveyard creates a more foreboding impression on him:

> Never did tombs look so ghastly white; never did cypress, or yew, or juniper so seem the embodiment of funeral gloom; never did tree or grass wave or rustle so ominously; never did bough creak so mysteriously; and never did the far-away howling of dogs send such a woeful presage through the night (ibid. 224-225).

Interestingly, the images which create such a mysterious atmosphere are all taken from the field of nature. Despite the fact that the graveyard is located in the city, nature is still granted a high presence. Thus, it manages to evoke such foreboding scenes as, for instance, in the passage of *The Monk* in which the Bleeding Nun appears. Similarly, the description of a gloomy nocturnal outdoor scenery is immediately followed by a ghastly supernatural apparition - in *The Monk*, the Bleeding Nun appears, in *Dracula*, it is vampiric Lucy.

Thus, nocturnal nature and gloomy houses are Gothic settings which also have been employed in the novels previously discussed. However, a location which can be clearly marked as innovative is Seward's working place - the sanatorium. Seward notices that Mina has failed to "repress a slight shudder" (ibid. 234) when entering his working space - the same place she is going to reside for the time coming. However, its most menacing feature is its proximity to Carfax - apart from the rather uncanny episodes with Renfield and Dracula's entering into Mina's and Jonathan's

[47] "Every breath exhaled by that monster seemed to have clung to the place and intensified its loathsomeness." (ibid. 267)

bedroom, most scenes in Seward's asylum are set in his study and the guest rooms. There are hardly any descriptions of the building that go into greater detail, nor do any architectonic features pose obstacles or dangers to the protagonists. However, the mere occurrence of the sanatorium already marks a change in traditional Gothic settings - Botting classifies it as a typical feature of twentieth-century Gothic (13).

In general, the depiction of the late nineteenth-century metropolis may appear less exotic than mediaeval Spain or Italy at first glance. Nevertheless it also bears its dark and menacing places which inspire feelings of unease in the protagonists. Late-night London with its shadows also provides a distorted image of one of the centres of civilisation - Seward observes that "the scattered lamps made the darkness greater when we were once outside their individual radius" (*Dracula* 209). In fact, it is this phenomenon which marks London as a Gothic setting. In many instances, the protagonists have to step out of the cones of light and experience darker and horrifying loci - both literally, such as abandoned houses and crypts in graveyards, and metaphorically by being confronted with distinct otherness, the compromising of moral standards and the awakening of suppressed sexuality.

However, in contrast to Castle Dracula, which follows the Gothic tradition and poses a direct threat to the protagonist by preventing Jonathan's escape, most locations in London play a crucial part in evoking a sinister atmosphere, but hardly endanger the main characters. Carfax and the house in Piccadilly are abandoned edifices and may evoke disgust, but Van Helsing, Seward, Quincey Morris and Jonathan always seem to be well prepared and in charge of the situation - even when all of a sudden a swarm of rats appears, they can put up resistance with their terriers. They have conceived a plan, are well equipped with sufficient lightning and tools to destroy the boxes they expect to find. In contrast to Lorenzo and his men entering the subterranean passages below the convent, the men in *Dracula* have braced themselves. Their entrances are planned beforehand - Jonathan can even provide the others with a plan of Carfax, so that potential surprises are kept to a minimum. However, this does not exclude the arising of suspense in those locations - on the contrary, the knowledge that they may encounter Dracula, the issues at stake as well as the pressure to succeed in their enterprise grant a high level of reader involvement and numerous suspenseful passages.

6.4 "[O]nly let out enough [...] to whet curiosity"[48] – suspense on the discourse level

The epistolary form of Dracula influences the novel on various levels, particularly in the presentation of characters. The intimate account of the characters' thoughts and feelings provide a more solid basis for the reader to establish an emotional relationship to the main characters.

However, some effects of the narrative presentation can also be found on the discourse level of the novel. Generally I agree with Labes - despite the fact that the story is split into several different parts, the various accounts "[greifen] trotz der äußeren Trennung so gut wie nahtlos ineinander" (24) so that the main chronological order of events is maintained. However, there are certain passages in the novel in which a plotline is briefly interrupted, as one diary entry ends and the narrative focus changes to another character in a different situation. This kind of retardation is supported by the multiple perspectives provided by the epistolary form and can be found in various passages, which will be discussed in the course of the second part of this chapter. However, also establishing suspense via cataphora is possible by that feature.

6.4.1 Cataphora

Similar to *Otranto* and *The Monk*, the uncanny and foreboding mood is directly addressed and verbalised. Numerous examples of this can already be found in the first part of the novel - it starts with Jonathan's "queer dreams" (*Dracula* 8) on his journey and one of his travel companions quoting Büchner's Lenore (ibid. 17). His strange experiences in the last night of his journey to the castle already leads to further questions concerning the consequences of his stay:

> I felt doubts and fears crowding upon me. What sort of place had I come to, and among what kind of people? What sort of grim adventure was it on which I had embarked? Was this a customary incident in the life of a solicitor's clerk sent out to explain the purchase of a London estate to a foreigner? (ibid. 21-22)

[48] *Dracula* 203.

Similar to *Otranto* and *The Monk*, *Dracula* also employs the description of settings to create a foreboding mood. Nocturnal London with its abandoned places like Carfax, the old house in Piccadilly as well as the graveyard have already been addressed as a crucial part in the suspense pattern of the novel. However, also Jonathan's first sight of castle Dracula and his descriptions of its architecture feature a foreshadowing element:

> The words 'tall' and 'black' anticipate the appearance of the imposing master of the castle, Count Dracula, and the jagged line of the battlements provides an eerie foreshadowing of the most striking features of the vampires who lie within. (Bunten)

Apart from direct references from characters who anticipate terrible future events or descriptions of settings to create a foreboding mood, also some developments in the plot hint towards impending doom. Once again, the various narrative points of view in this epistolary novel play a crucial function - different sources relate of strange occurrences and soon leave no doubt about a greater connection between them. An article of a local newspaper tells about the landing of a mischievous ship on a stormy night. An excerpt from the captain's log accounts of all mysterious incidents during the ship's journey. Seward notes a change in the behaviour of one of his most perplexing and violent patients, Renfield. Another newspaper clipping informs us of the disappearance of a wolf from the zoo. Lucy's memorandum provides us with a vivid depiction of the brutal invasion of her house. All those accounts culminate towards the major revealing: Dracula is in London. He is the missing link between and cause of all those events.

The various sources - especially the newspaper articles - compensate for the lack of an omniscient narrator in the novel and evoke the impression of an objective narration. They eliminate any doubts concerning the reliability of the personal narrators and additionally create a more vivid depiction of the fictional world.

In the course of my analysis of the suspense pattern in *Dracula*, I have mentioned that some phases of resolution also feature foreshadowing. As an example I have referred to Lucy's impalement - the men have extinguished undead Lucy, but in the same scene Van Helsing reminds them that this has only been one step of their greater task which is exceedingly more dangerous and complicated. Thus,

foreshadowings placed at the end of resolution phases already hint towards other dangers which loom over the protagonists and are soon to be encountered. The readers are hardly granted any rest - similarly to the main characters, they rush from peril to peril. In this manner the novel is able to maintain constantly a certain amount of suspense throughout the whole text.

6.4.2 Retardation

I have already addressed the influence of the epistolary form in terms of retardation. An example of this can be found in the two instances of business correspondence. The first directly follows Mina's rather sombre outlook of the current situation - she still has no answer from Jonathan and Lucy's condition is continually deteriorating. Mina is determined to contact a physician about it in order to cure Lucy's suffering and determine the actual cause of it. However, before the reader can learn more about a doctor's account of Lucy's situation, the narrative focus changes to a letter from Dracula's solicitor containing instructions on the transportation of the boxes.

A similar case can be encountered at a later point in the novel - Dr Seward takes notes in the behaviour of his patient Renfield, thereby realising that the next logical step in his patient's morbid fascination of the food chain would be to sacrifice a human life. He draws inferences about Dracula's influence on Renfield and concludes that "there is some new scheme of terror afoot" (*Dracula* 290). Thus, he plans to have a closer observation of Renfield that night. All these statements once again address and assert the stakes and thus contribute to a higher degree of involvement. The curiosity about Seward's observations of Renfield is, however, not immediately satisfied, as a letter of an estate agent containing information on the former and current owner of Dracula's house in Piccadilly.

In both instances the text increasingly attempts to involve the reader. Admittedly the narrative strings are not interrupted on the highest possible point of suspense. However, the repeated presentation of the stakes as well as emotive expressions of the characters foster the reader's relation towards the characters and form the basis for heightened suspense.

An exceedingly larger number of retardations in *Dracula* are placed on more dramatic scenes. Typically, they can be found at the end of a chapter. I have already briefly touched the cliffhanger at the end of Jonathan's itinerary - his records break off after he has formed his precarious escape plan. His chances of success are rather low - he mentions the steepness of the precipice he is planning to use as his escape route (see *Dracula* 61). In his last words he bids farewell to the world and Mina, which again enforces the mixture of the two elements contributing to suspense in passages like these: the references to the high stakes and the character's vulnerability. They are mediated in a direct way to the reader - the epistolary form grants the characters a voice of their own, which makes it easier to sympathise.

If we take a closer look at the various cliffhangers in *Dracula*, a significant number of them conclude their passages in a rather emotional way. Another instance of this can be found when Mina travels through Transylvania (ibid. 383). There are several similarities to the end of the third chapter - the gloomy prospects of future events as well as incantations to God and beloved people are the subject of the characters' last thoughts.

A different type of cliffhanger is the moment of shock. Something horrible is revealed and the text breaks off before the situation is resolved or even before any particulars are given, such as when Seward is informed about Renfield's accident. Before, he made some remarks on Renfield's current condition and admitted that he was irritated by his behaviour, as it did not match his usual agitation. Suddenly an attendant breaks into his room and states that Renfield has been found "lying on his face on the floor, all covered with blood" (ibid. 292). The text breaks off with this presentation of gore, leaving the readers to form their own theories and thus stimulating their imagination.

Another prominent example of cliffhanging shockers, as one might call them, is the passage in which Van Helsing reveals to Seward that Lucy is the "Bloofer Lady". In a rather verbose exposé reminiscent of Matilda's speech to Ambrosio (Van Helsing appeals to Seward to leave the mental boundaries of his education and be open to

rather unconventional or unorthodox methods and beliefs), Van Helsing prepares Seward for his conclusion, which is only verbalised at the very end of the chapter:

> "You think then that those small holes in the children's throats were made by the same that made the hole in Miss Lucy?"
> "I suppose so." He stood up and said solemnly: -
> "Then you are wrong. Oh, would it were so! but alas! no. It is worse, far, far worse."
> "In God's name, Professor Van Helsing, what do you mean?" I cried.
> He threw himself with a despairing gesture into a chair, and placed his elbows on the table, covering his face with his hands as he spoke: -
> "They were made by Miss Lucy!" (ibid. 206)

In this passage, suspense is created by the growing uneasiness in the course of the discussion - Van Helsing's claim that the situation is more dramatic that Seward imagines, Seward's increasing impatience and Van Helsing's dramatic nonverbal reactions all express the gravity of the situation and prepare the reader for a terrible revelation. Thus, this scene is an exemplary case of retardation, as it first delays the great revelation and immediately ends when it is uttered.

All those instances of retardation, however, have one aspect in common - they remind the readers of the high stakes involved, the characters' vulnerability and the odds they have to face. In this way, the emotional involvement of the audience is maintained.

6.5 Conclusion

At first glance, *Dracula* undoubtedly contains a significant number of features which can be classified as typically Gothic. However, if we juxtapose Stoker's novel to the other texts discussed so far, we can observe some deviances in the use of Gothic devices.

The Gothic villain is no longer human, but a preternatural, malice force. The threat emanating from him has increased dramatically - he no longer poses a threat to the main characters, but to a whole society. His means of achieving his aims are more potent and effective, as he is in possession of supernatural powers.

However, he has to face a whole group of people determined to stop his plans - they combine their knowledge and skills in order to exterminate him. Among them are specialists (Dr Seward and Van Helsing) and Mina, the Gothic heroine. Compared to the female protagonists of the other novels, Mina stands out due to her analytic skills, her competence and her courage. This group is the only instance of successful teamwork in all three texts - in *Otranto*, Matilda and Isabella act spontaneously and mainly uncoordinated and in *The Monk* Lorenzo's and Raymond's endeavours are primarily marked by distractions and delays. The group in *Dracula*, however, proceeds in a more systematic and reflected manner, which finally leads to the success of their enterprise.

One of the most outstanding novelties in the use of Gothic devices is the choice of London as a setting. Of course, part of the story is set in Transylvania, which follows the tradition of exotic and alien settings in Gothic texts, but the larger part of the story takes place in a modern metropolis and centre of Western civilisation. It is no longer necessary to travel to distant countries to experience the fantastic and horror, but it seems to have invaded familiar and everyday territory and can be encountered at the very doorstep of one's house.

Dracula subverts another space which has been implicitly depicted as secure in the previous novels - marriage. Mina is the first female protagonist of the three novels discussed here that is already married when she is directly assaulted by the villain. Whereas matrimony always implied a happy ending and security for the female protagonists in Lewis's novel, this idealist conception is not only severely crushed, but even ridiculed in *Dracula*: Mina is attacked in her marital bed, with her husband lying directly beside her, utterly unable to defend his wife.

Thus, *Dracula* uses established devices and renders them a modern, unexpected touch. In this way, it bridges the gap to older Gothic texts and modernity. This is reflected in various aspects of the novel, such as the settings (Transylvania and London), the issue of matrimony, and the characters (a male character in the role of a Gothic heroine, Mina as a mixture of traditional and modern character traits).

However, in some instances there is a slight tendency towards a sceptical attitude towards modernity, or at least its efficiency to deal with ancient dangers. For instance, telegrams with vital information are not delivered or arrive too late. Dracula can even gain benefits out of the scientific and cultural progress of his destination: "in this enlightened age, when men believe not even what they see, the doubting of wise men would be his greatest strength" (*Dracula* 341-342). Thus, theoretically he could secretly invade the country and reproduce his kind without being noticed or stopped, as the ancient knowledge of vampires has nearly become forgotten - therefore the chances of meeting resistance are relatively low, which makes him even more potent and lethal.

Whereas *Otranto* attempts to present itself as a work of a superstitious and mythical past, it can be said that *Dracula* strives to establish the text as true, trustworthy and non-fiction. All mechanisms which distinguish a text as remote are eliminated - they constantly reminded the reader of the improbability of such events, thus making the reading experience more comfortable while immersing in the story (see Spencer 307). However, these "softening device[s]" (ibid. 307) for consuming Gothic novels have been removed in *Dracula*. Not only is most of the story set in nineteenth century urban Britain, but the text is also presented as a collection of "real" testimonies of "real" people. These factors take the threats presented in the novel to the very doorsteps of the audience and thereby heighten the emotional involvement. The readers are made aware that modern civilisation cannot keep them safe from horror - monsters are able to adapt and live among them.

Final conclusion

In order to examine the relationship between suspense and Gothic fiction, I have tried to provide a holistic textual representation of the novels by including features of the story (structure, themes, characterisation, settings) as well as discourse level (cataphora, retardation). Throughout the analysis of the three different texts, the assumption that the Gothic novel is a literary genre which is inherently suspenseful has been confirmed. Both the story as well as the discourse level are closely interwoven in and largely responsible for the evocation of suspense. Klein has arrived at a similar conclusion: "So versteht es sich von selbst, dass die Spannungstechnik des Gotischen Romans von der Romanstruktur und von der Inhaltsseite her konditioniert ist" (ibid. 145).

Concerning the structure of the novel and its interaction with suspense, a rising impact of the discourse level of a text can be observed throughout the three novels. *Otranto* does employ retardation and cataphora as a means of evoking suspense (see chapter 4.4), but in comparison to *The Monk* and *Dracula*, they seem rather subordinate and inconspicuous due to the novel's linear narrative style. In contrast, *The Monk* shows a more ample and complex use of discourse features due to the numerous narrative strands (see chapter 5.4) and *Dracula* renders a whole new perspective on the structure of the novel by introducing the epistolary form (see chapter 6.4). Thus, the Gothic novel increasingly becomes more conscious of the presentation of the story in the course of the three texts.

However, there is another discourse feature which has proven to be a huge and powerful impact on the reading - the claim of authenticity in the preface of a novel, as it appears in *Otranto* and *Dracula*. In both novels, the author poses as the editor of some documents that have mysteriously been discovered. To some degree, he even denies the fictitiousness of the text. I have only briefly touched this subject at the beginning of chapter 4, although it definitely has a huge influence on the audience and their reading, especially if that claim of truth is positioned before the actual novel as a paratext. Unfortunately, it would go beyond the scope of this paper to provide a closer examination of this phenomenon.

I have devoted some part of the text analysis to the issue of settings, as they have proven to be both a major source of suspense and a typical Gothic feature. They are prominent in nearly every stage of suspense and their role is not limited to creating the atmosphere. In fact, their role is even more complex. In many instances they seem to have a mind of their own - they hide or reveal major secrets, offer clandestine passageways or deny access to certain areas. *Otranto*, for instance, shows us a castle which undeniably possesses its own peculiar character and will (see chapter 4.3). All three novels feature a similar case of edifice which is closely connected to the Gothic villain. It provides a home for him and a prison for a protagonist - this malevolent depiction shifts the readers' sympathies against it. As those buildings often present not only an obstacle, but also a serious threat to the protagonists, they are likely to be perceived as antagonistic. Nature and outdoor settings play a similar role, which is most prominent in *Dracula*. Transylvania and its harsh countryside is more than just an uncanny background for the scenes that are set there - it presents an opposing force to travellers. It does not merely complicate their journeys, but even assaults them with lethal encounters such as ravenous wolves (see chapter 6.3). Thus, settings and their unique character hold a special rank in the creation of suspense.

Whereas *Otranto* and *The Monk* are set in temporary and spacially remote places, *Dracula* locates a great amount of its story in the metropolis of London. This break with a Gothic tradition sounds the bell for a new era in the emotional involvement of the audience - the readers see themselves confronted with horror at their very doorstep. Thus, they no longer consume a "romance", as Walpole first designated his novel - they now experience a more realistic narrative, which intensifies the emotional engagement of the reading experience.

In the course of my analysis it has become evident that a strong reciprocity between suspense and features of the Gothic novel does exist, which causes a rise of intensity on both sides. We could clearly observe a trend towards a steady escalation from *Otranto* to *Dracula*: stakes have been risen and threats have become more imminent and global. The enterprises which are to be undertaken by the protagonists are riskier and more difficult, the characters' sufferings more atrocious and shocking. This kind of constant intensification largely operates with the depiction and evocation of fear

and thus also blurs the boundaries between suspense and horror. In the Gothic novel, fear is largely created by extreme differences in power. The large gap between heroes and monsters, victims and victimisers is always maintained - if the protagonists become more capable, the antagonists only increase their abilities and the level of potential damage they could cause, as we see in *Dracula* (chapter 6.2).

As a result, the constant allusions to and explicit depictions of imminent danger perpetuate an enthralling experience for the reader. As Klein states, "[d]er Leser soll in immer neue Schreckenssituationen gebracht werden, in denen er sein Verhalten zu der Opfer-Verfolger-Situation testen kann" (145).

The readers' attitude towards the relation between the protagonists and the villain, the subjected and subjecter does not only define the type of empathy involved, but also contributes to the experience of thrill. The concept of thrill as outlined in this paper operates with the portrayal of enormous power differences, social abnormities and taboos - it always strives to push boundaries and explores the fascination of witnessing transgression.

Therefore, it probably is the engine of thrill that serves to maintain a certain level of ferocity in the Gothic machinery, perpetually pushing it to produce new and even more intense outcomes in order to create that voyeuristic pleasure in the readers. Narrative devices which have already been established in the earlier novels reappear in a new, more dramatic form, as if they only try to surpass and mitigate their former appearances. Thus, the Gothic repertoire is constantly altered and extended - maybe because the effect of narrative devices wears off quickly.

Considering this, one question still remains: can Gothic novels nowadays still be considered as sufficiently suspenseful? *The Castle of Otranto*, the book with the oldest publication date of the three novels, was released 250 years ago. If we consider this and the intensification of narrative devices mentioned above, is it even possible for an audience of the twentieth century to experience Gothic reader reactions at all?

Probably the greatest obstacles are created by some of the female protagonists. Throughout the course of this paper, the claim that identification is one of the defining features of a Gothic novel (see Botting 7) has proven untenable. The female characters may be likeable but too abstract, as Matilda and Isabella in *Otranto* (chapter 4.2), or the distance between readers and characters is too large, as the case of Antonia in *The Monk* shows, who seems more angelic than human (chapter 5.2). Moreover, a modern audience may have difficulties with acknowledging and sharing the same values as some of the female figures - such as, for instance, Hippolyta's extreme submission and passivity (see chapter 4.2).

However, other forms of relations, such as empathy, are still possible and even highly probable. The very idea of a morally good character facing imminent danger still captures modern audiences. A helpless figure abused by an overtly corrupt character still evokes pity in us.

Thus, certain situations and constellations in power can also engage the modern audience, irrespective of what type of form they take. The threats constantly lurking the novels are of existential relevance and the modern reader can still relate to them – the fears of losing one's family, facing socially deviant behaviour and being the victim of violence and abuse are, for instance, issues that are still present in modern society. Therefore, *The Castle of Otranto, The Monk* and *Dracula* continue to be a suspenseful read in the twenty-first century.

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Attachment I - Abstract

Über das Thema Suspense wurden bereits zahlreiche theoretische Werke in Bezug auf neue Medienformen wie Film und TV verfasst - nur wenige jedoch wagten den Blick weiter zurück in die Literaturgeschichte zu werfen. Diese Arbeit soll nun die Erzeugung von Suspense in der narrativen Literatur des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts genauer beleuchten - anhand dreier englischer Schauerromane (*The Castle of Otranto*, *The Monk* und *Dracula*) soll die Erzeugung und Entwicklung von Suspense aufgezeigt werden. Es werden dabei Aspekte von *histoire* und *discours* analysiert (Handlung, Motive, Charakterdarstellung, Wahl der Settings, Kataphorik und Retardation) und dabei ein Schwerpunkt auf die Entwicklung und Darstellung jener Eigenheiten gelegt, die als typische Merkmale des Gothic angesehen werden und die mit Suspense eine enge Symbiose verbindet.

A majority of works published about suspense focuses on modern media such as films or TV productions - only a few have ventured to analyse earlier forms. This thesis wants to explore the creation of suspense in Gothic fiction of the 18th and 19th century (*The Castle of Otranto*, *The Monk* and *Dracula*) to see how suspense was realised then, in how far it was influenced by the genre of Gothic and in what ways this affected its further development. It focuses on textual features on the story and discourse level (plot development, themes, characterisation, settings, retardation, cataphora), thereby emphasising features typically considered as Gothic, their evolution throughout the novels and their reciprocal relation to suspense.

Attachment II - CV

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