ANTAGONIST CHARACTERS IN THE EARL Y GOTHIC NOVEL: A MATTER OF POLITICAL ANXIETY?

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ABSTRACT : During the eighteenth-century, the antagonist, previously the second most important character in a story, becomes, first in Richardson's Clarissa, and then under Gothic influence, the main character in the novel. This recalls the "heavy" villain of Elizabethan drama. The use to which the character is put by the author is both consciously and unconsciously political or ideological, at least in part. Under political influence, the antagonist can be classified as either "repentant" or "unrepentant," with very different effects, as a New Historicist or Cultural Materialist analysis can reveal. The Gothic antagonist is set within the Gothic novel, and together with other conventions of the Gothic novel became the basis of later interpretations of the Gothic impulse in novels of various sub-genres, from oriental fiction and science fiction to the modern romance novel.

Keywords: *Antagonist, Gothic novel, villain, New Historicist, Cultural Materialism, ideology, genre, fiction, romance.*

ÖZET : Bir öykünün karşıt karakteri (antagonist), yani, ikinci önemli karakteri, önce Richardson'un ellerinde birinci önemli karakter konumuna yükselir; daha sonra da Gotik etki altında ana karakter konumuna çıkar. Bu durum Elizabet Çağı Tiyatrosunun "kötü adamının" ulaştığı o yüksek konumu çağrıştırır. Karakterin yazar tarafından bu şekilde kullanımı bilinçli veya bilinçsizce politik etki altındadır veya en azından ideolojiktir. Yeni Tarihçi veya Kültürel Maddeci yorumsal irdelemelerin de gösterdiği gibi, karşıt karakter (antagonist) politik etki altında ise "pişmankar" veya "meydan okuyucudur". Gotik karşıt karakter doğu yazınından, bilim-kurguya ve modern romanslara kadar çok çeşitli alt türlerdeki gotik dürtünün temelini oluşturarak diğer Gotik roman gelenekleri ışığında yorumlanır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: *Gotik, Gotik roman, gotik karşıt karakter (antagonist)*

With the coming of Samuel Richardson, the epistolary novelist, the writing of characters in the early novel became more concerned with motivation and psychological processes on the part of certain main characters within the larger context of a story. Indeed, in this regard, Richardson's Pamela (1741) is considered by many to be the first true novel in English. Richardson's Pamela pits a heroine, a main character, against an antagonist, a morally dangerous man, while his Clarissa (1748) pits the heroine, Clarissa Harlowe, against a villain, Lovelace, who is more fully developed psychologically, so much so that with Lovelace the antagonist might be said in this case to have merged with the protagonist and become, if not the hero or heroine, at least, and this is significant, the most important character in the novel. Sympathy, however, and a clear sense of moral justification is still reserved for the hero/heroine (the "good guy"). The main characteristics of Lovelace in Clarissa are also those of Manfred in The Castle of Otranto (1765), considered the first Gothic novel. Indeed, it appears that Walpole combined the obsessive personality of Lovelace with the "graveyard" scene and mood of Tobias Smollett (Roderick Random, 1748) to create his tale of horror. Of course the graveyard mood and a "heavy" villain both predate the novel. But as novelists, it may be said that both Smollett and Richardson anticipated in their turn key aspects of the Gothic novel.

Lovelace's literary descendent is the Gothic villain. Gothic villains, as especially strong antagonists in eighteenth-century novels, owe their development both to contemporary social pressures and to the influence of earlier evil characters, and can be characterized as either *repentant or unrepentant*. These villain characters, as drawn by their eighteenth-century authors, were a product of their time, and were used to encourage morality and ideologically "correct" behavior. In fact, the typical eighteen-century villain character, as seen in Clarissa, in the Castle of Otranto and in Ann Radcliffe's Gothic novels, The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794) and The Italian (1797), functions sociologically as an index of Puritan heritage and continued social influence.[1]

As a wicked or evil antagonist to the hero or heroine, the villain in the early English novel is typically a strong but ambiguous character, and developed in his specific attributes as a result, in part, of the failure of Tudor-Stewart society. His ambiguity reflects the changing state of popular ideology during the shift from royal to constitutional government and from a local to an international economy. An analysis of the villain as a function of Puritanism is a Cultural Materialist undertaking which also facilitates an analysis of Puritan society in broadly economic and ideological terms. This undertaking allows one to bring a range of post-structuralist techniques to bear on the novel to demystify and deconstruct the ideological assumptions of the authors and their contemporary readers as well. At the same time, the continued appearance of such characters in English literature illustrates the continued influence of Puritan attitudes in society. Ideology plays a key role in the creation and perception of the villain character, while villain characters also play a key role in the creation and perception of ideology.

Broadly speaking, by beginning with an anthropological and structuralist methodological framework based upon both the work of the Prague Circle of structural linguistics and also on the structural anthropology inspired by Claude Levi-Straus, an analysis of the villain character can effectively respond to the specific application of Cultural Materialist theory based upon the work of Raymond Williams and Terry Eagleton, and to a specific historical analysis of British class structure and religion. Such an approach constitutes an "archeology of the text" along post-structural lines following the work of Louis Althusser. Ian Watt and Michael McKeon have laid the groundwork for demystifying the ideological role of the novel and indeed literacy itself in Puritan society.

Analytical Presuppositions

The word is the sign, and so, in order to establish the epistemological assumptions which allow deconstruction to proceed, we begin with the word "villain" itself as a term which reveals, *through a series of conspicuous absences*, the very ideology the authors of the early novel may have wished to hide. What is signified by "villain" has shifted quite a lot over the past three hundred years, and these shifts in meaning and signification parallel changes or shifts in the ideological culture of Britain. As the term is used by eighteenth-century authors in works of fiction and in popular commentary about such works of fiction, the term "villain" carries with it the residual effects of outmoded aesthetic ideologies, such as feudalism and "the divine right of kings." But it would be too simple to suggest that Richardson was unaware of such a shift. In fact it is quite clear, upon examination of the political ideologies of Richardson's creative time (the years either side of the 1745 Stuart rebellion—the last gasp of "divine right of kings"), and upon closer inspection of the aesthetic ideologies ranging from the time of Daniel Defoe's writing (c. 1720) to the time of Lord Byron's work (c. 1820), that the term "villain" and the villain characters are both deployed by authors to have a very specific effect upon the English readers during a politically turbulent time.

To understand the historical and cultural context of the early novel we must step back to the previous ideological paradigm, locate the sign, "villain," and then step back again into the eighteenth century, taking with us a sense of what was signified by the seventeenth-century term, which itself is still laden with outmoded but sensible significations from the sixteenth-century sign, "villain" or "villein." Identifying the various ideological strands involved in the use of the term in any age ultimately requires us to trace the term to its original use, "villein": signified here is a type of proto-bourgeois and rural small landowner. This class was, from an aristocratic perspective, relatively "low" and plebian, and yet carried a certain respectability of being tied by a free status to the land, but this sense of the term is lost in the contemporary eighteenth-century usage and understanding of the term "villain." The memory of these agricultural freemen as a class of Englishmen was demonized by the new bourgeois aristocratic classes after 1540 and especially after the Restoration in 1660. Hence the use of the term "villain" to denote wickedness. This was the result of country vs. city economic competition. This shift in the

treatment of the villain class from sponsorship under Tudor-Stuart Paternalism to villification by the victors of the Civil War marks a nodal shift from the paternalism towards capitalism. The subsequent rise of the Whig squire oligarchy as now *owners* of land and as rental agents and *evictors* demanded the destruction and the concomitant demonization of the whole villain class, which stood in the way of capitalist agricultural development, which was the goal of the new bourgeois farmer-squire. Politically this change was marked by the end of the Stuart kingdom and the importation by the English bourgeois class of, first, the Dutch Oranges and then of the German Hanovers. Progressive solidification of the economic and political foundations of bourgeois ideology allowed a transition also from a more purely religious understanding of Puritanism to one more overtly political, beginning with the English Civil War.

History is important: we can assert that it is important to the creation of villain characters by authors when we assert that villain characters are produced by and also influence political and economic factors in society, especially in terms of political and economic competition. There are several types of villains found in English novels, and there are social, historical and ideological factors contributing towards the literary construction of villains. In Cultural Materialist and indeed in New Historicist terms, the type of villain created, seen in differentiated economic terms and relative to contemporaneous economic subgroups in society. There are villain characters in different periods: They are always indicators of certain social phenomena first appearing in early modern England.[2] The foundation of sovereignty in England went through a change from the "old" aristocracy associated with the Stuarts, through the period of gentry oligarchy between 1688 and 1760, to the "new" aristocracy and the "new" Tory party associated with the House of Hanover. This change produced social contradictions which have an effective literary index in the villain character: here we link the ideological unease and political unrest associated with this longer period with the aesthetical response made by authors producing villain characters in literary works for a specific contemporary readership. Within this historical contest such villain characters, villainous, evil, can be viewed as images or reflections of that which might otherwise be hidden by the "smooth" construction of a purely narrative legitimacy on the part of a contemporary party or oligarchy. With authors as agents of the Institutional State Apparatuses (ISA's), such groups in all periods will attempt to *establish themselves aesthetically as a means of also establishing themselves politically*. However, cognizance of this literary-ideological process allows us to effectively reverse it by analyzing the changing aesthetical construction of the villain as an image of the changes in the social formation itself, both generally and in terms of specific villain characters.

The early novels in English literature include the works of Daniel Defoe (Robinson Crusoe, 1719; Moll Flanders, 1722), Samuel Richardson (Pamela, 1741; Clarissa, 1748), Henry Fielding (Joseph Andrews, 1742; Tom Jones, 1749); Tobias Smollett (Roderick Random, 1748; Peregrine Pickle, 1751; Ferdinand Count Fathom, 1753), and also the first Gothic novels, the beginnings of a new sub-genre, starting in 1765

with the publication of Horace Walpole's Castle of Otranto. Of these, a number contain characters we tend to distinguish as "villains": strong characters who have importance that reaches beyond the impact of their actions alone, their very personalities making them figure centrally as determinants of the course of the narrative. All of these villains are, as they were constructed or created at the time, male figures, but the "bad" actions of the villain are typically resisted by a "good" heroine, an oppressed but heroic female protagonist persecuted by the villain.

On a surface level, the villain character is easy to identify: descriptive words come to mind: "base," "treacherous," "vicious," "scoundrel" and "criminal." Villains appear as devilish men cast as "the other" in dualistic literary constructions created for us by authors. A villain is, quite simply, "a bad man." Yet, as we have seen, this usage of the term is difficult to understand when we consider that before the days of Milton and the English Civil War in the seventeenth century, the word "villain" (villein) referred to a feudal tenant who possessed a free status: not a serf in the normal sense, but a "freeman." Today our "villain" stereotype is not at all that of a rural farm worker. Clearly, this term has undergone an abrupt change of meaning at some point in the cultural and linguistic past, specifically in the years prior to the Restoration (1660).

In New Historicist terms, the villain character is dynamic: we are interested in what the character tells us about society, and we are interested in his direct impact on society itself. We are concerned, in other words, with the effects of literature, because literature can often strongly influence the way people participate in their society. For example, though literature is art, as often as not, the art that affects the readers most—and even most subtly—is simply the art of persuasion. As art, literature's purpose is understood to be more than to educate and more than to entertain: It is to do both by involving us profoundly in an awareness of "good taste." However, the heightened personal awareness that accompanies a sense of good taste also reassures us of our continued participation in an identity as individuals who stand for something either for or against what other people themselves stand for. In other words, while the aesthetic appreciation of literature is pleasing, it is also self-justifying in the sense that it involves one in a personal identity that depends upon a sense of group membership, however small it might be. This group membership conveys an implicit "us vs. them" mentality which is always present within an individual appreciation or aesthetic awareness of literature. Such group identity rewards us by giving the changing conditions of our lives the illusion of continuity through the construction of a relatively static category for knowing others that we control. Such aesthetic construction as occurs in works specifically about literary aesthetics is similar to that found in other texts, such as historical narratives, all of which together contribute to what John Bender, in Imagining the Penitentiary, described as an "ongoing process of cultural construction" (Bender, 1987:3). This way of knowing others is also perhaps our chief way of knowing ourselves.

Any shift from a consideration of literature within a personal context, one pertaining to aesthetical recognition and to solitary acts of individual choice, to a consideration

of literature within a societal context, one involving a literature within its own full linguistic community, requires us to consider the total nexus of individual users of a language, including both those who actually read the literature in question and those influenced by those who read. Within such a context, literature has the potential to influence the life of the whole community by influencing individuals in their perception of group identities within that community. Such group identity or membership may obscure the fact that there is a larger community at all.

Because it directly influences group identity, a literary text's aesthetic agenda, the sense of "taste" the text espouses, is inherently political or ideological. The influence of aesthetic sensibility can thus extend beyond the personal to the societal to such an extent that literature and politics within a linguistic community mutually affect one-another. As Michael Shapiro points out in Language and Political understanding, a number of contemporary literary critics have recognized this link between the social and the literary realms in calling for a political analysis of language "that uncovers the political presuppositions inherent in language" (Shapiro, 1981: 24). Most critical studies in this area are interdisciplinary, drawing on diverse philosophical positions and social theories. In his essay "Critical Developments," Jonathan Dollimore attributes these inter-disciplinary approaches in literary criticism to the influence of "a range of intellectual perspectives in post-war Europe, including anthropology, post-structuralism, Marxism, deconstruction, psychoanalysis, feminism, and cultural studies" (Dollimore, 1990: 406-407).

A Transhistorical Constant?

The antagonist is a literary constant as a metaphor, but unique to his time in his particulars. The refers to an analysis of villain characters from literary works of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and builds upon the political and cultural analysis of early-modern English literature by such writers as Raymond Williams and Terry Eagleton. One can add to this a specific analysis of the villain from an especially anthropological point of view in an effort to historicize a character usually treated as an a-historical literary figure. For instance, a socio-historical perspective associated with Marxist literary criticism can be used in a consideration of the villain character and his eighteenth-century reader, but also one can apply to the "repentant" villain a methodology derived directly from the structural anthropology of Mary Douglas (Purity and Danger), while to the "unrepentant" villain a methodology might be used that is derived in part from cultural materialism and in part from Marxist structuralism. The villain has been treated as a transhistorical figure, while "villainy" as a cultural concept has been usually treated as if it were a kind of a-historical constant. The point is that specific insights from cultural anthropology, Cultural Materialism and New Historicism offer a profitable alternative analysis which "unlocks" quite a lot of information that suggests certain links between literary character development and political tensions.[3] While it is often attractive to treat the villain a-historically, this typical treatment of the villain tends to mask specific political content which might lie behind such transhistorical constructions, which are actually based upon analogies drawn

between periods and zeitgeists. Such transhistorical conceptualizations of the villain fail to recognize the importance of ideology as, first, an influence on the creation of specific villains, and, second, as a real influence, via the villain, in the institutionalized socio-political indoctrination of contemporary readers.

The transhistorical conceptualization of the villain is only true as a kind of cultural metaphor, and only works when the authors and readers willingly make or accept broad analogies between periods and villains. Such analogy is of course a dynamic cultural practice associated generally with enculturation, and should be recognized as such by the critic interested in understanding the process and impact of ideological factors in literature. The approach to the problem of interpreting the villain character as a social or cultural artifact reflects a desire to benefit from the range of approaches mentioned above, while also regaining some of the distance and perspective which favors a more characteristically anthropological conceptualization of culture or cultural ideology over a more superficial conceptualization of culture as describing political trends or as describing simply that which is conceived as being socially contemporaneous.

The political analysis of literary aesthetics can be applied to texts specifically about literary aesthetics or to narrative texts in which some overall aesthetic assumption (the high brought low, the villain punished) plays a major role in the movement of the action (disorder to order, innocence to experience), as is the case in novels, drama or in narrative poetry. Political analysis of a text's aesthetics has significance beyond the personal and momentary: such analysis can unlock the text's ideology, helping us the "place" the text vis-à-vis other dynamic factors in the social structure.

When engaged in the political analysis of literary aesthetics, one examines a text against its context as a response, as an expression of ideology and as an agenda or attempt at influence within its linguistic community. The assumption here is that the aesthetic content of a text has a political or sociological dimension which goes hand-in-hand with its ability to please or entertain a reader, a subconscious underside which, when demystified and understood, can point the way to and understanding of the powerful persuasive agendas which underlie all literature.

Discussing the relationship between aesthetics and ideology, Terry Eagleton in his book Criticism and Ideologypoints out that "it is essential to examine in conjuncture two mutually constitutive formations: The nature of the ideology worked by the text and the aesthetic modes of that working" (Eagleton, 1976:79). Even in overtly aesthetic modes—as in the case of texts about literary aesthetics—the ideological content is only a little closer to the surface. Even the author may not be fully cognizant of the impact or implication of what he is doing as he writes: A literary text's ideological content inheres unselfconsciously in every literary expression as it is produced or articulated. Not only is ideology a key factor in the literary process, but given its apparent omnipresence, it may even be viewed a s the active agent in literary production. In other words, ideology inheres in the aesthetic structure, while it is the aesthetic that gets the first attention of the reader. These "aesthetic modes"

thus simultaneously both produce and partially hide the ideology of the text. The relation the literary text bears both to the ideology that produces it and to the ideology it produces is that, as Eagleton again points out:

> Ideology pre-exists the text; but the ideology of the text defines, operates and constitutes that ideology in ways unpremeditated, so to speak, by the ideology itself (Eagleton, 1976: 80).

Perhaps we can begin to understand why demystification of a text's relationship to ideology is both necessary and often progressively difficult, there being several manifestations of ideology implicit under the aesthetic modes of the text: The former ideology pre-existing the test, the ideology promoted in the aesthetic structure of the text itself, and the ideology presumably to develop in society as a result of publication, partially as a reaction to the influence of the text on the ideational construction of individual and group identity on the part of the readership.

The social and the ideological are of course closely linked, the more so because ideological concerns play such an important role in our minds as we construct ourselves as social beings. As a body of ideas held by an individual, an ideology reflects one's needs and aspirations within the context of a culture. Having an ideology is a precondition to social participation, and when enough people snare such needs and aspirations, the corpus of ideas used to justify these needs constitutes their "cultural ideology." As Jean E. Howard points out in "The New Historicism in Renaissance Studies," literature can contribute to the formation or modification of a cultural ideology. This is especially true in a society with a high rate of literacy:

> Rather than passively reflecting an external reality, literature is an agent in constructing a culture's sense of reality. It is part of a much larger symbolic order through which the world at a particular historical moment is conceptualized and through which a culture imagines its relationship to the actual conditions of its existence. In short, instead of a hierarchical relationship in which literature figures as the parasitic reflector of historical fact, one imagines a complex textualized universe in which literature participates in historical processes and in political management of reality (Howard, 1987: 15).

In its social effects, the importance of literature might be said to be the way it produces ideology for a linguistic community of readers, that is, for a society which may comprise several ideological sub-cultures. We can use a literary text to explore the fundamental assumptions through which a society is or was structured in the minds of its constituents, as something on which to ground our re-construction of social meanings, and as a foundation for understanding the influence of cultural ideology. We can accomplish this by first "contextualizing" a work—not generally against its historical background, but more specifically in terms of sub-groups and then by situating a hypothetical reader from a given time, as an individual, in an effort to establish his particular relationship to his (or her) society in terms of the fundamental social assumptions we find evident in a given text (the influence of the character). Keeping the specific autonomy of character and author foregrounded in our minds, we begin in advance with the assumption that though they may use facts, texts are not themselves factual so much as they are persuasive in their use of such

facts. Understanding this, we can chose to consider a literary product such as the antagonist or villain character, as an artifact, not so much of an historical event or literary period, but more specifically of an ideological attitude. As Howard puts it:

> ...the ideological is omnipresent; it inheres in every representation of reality and every social practice, as all of these inevitably confirm or naturalize a particular construction(s) of reality. Consequently, there is no way in which ideology can ever be absent from literature, any more than it can be absent from any discursive practice (Howard, 1987: 18).

A Political Villain orAntagonist

Literary villains exist at the simultaneous juncture of the religious, the moral, and the social. Their evil is not necessarily a simple or absolute thing: it is relative to their behavior in either the moral or the religious arenas, and through these, in the social arena. The political should not be separated from the social because, as Mary Douglas has shown, political influences are not restricted to formal political institutions, but are "diffused through the whole system" (Douglas, 1966: vii). Villains are defined by the "evil" they do, but there is a difference between the deed itself and the attitude we take toward it. In other words, villains are defined by how evil others consider them to be: they are evil by consensus. Their evil in not ultimately based on their own assessment of themselves, though as characters they may indulge in self-judgement and even self-castigation.

True villain can be identified because they are "big" as well as "bad." In other words, they get attention for their own sake as much as they do for the part they play in a story. For instance, as a kind of villain, the identity of Shakespeare's Iago is tied to the plot in Othello (1604), whereas Macbeth is well-known as a "heavy" character fully significant in his own right in the famous Shakespeare tragedy of that name (1606).[4] In the former case our main interest in the villain is in what he did, in the latter our interest is in who he is. In this connection, the villain as a "heavy" character resembles such tragical figures as Christopher Marlowe's Dr. Faustus (1594), who in his brooding interior monologues anticipates Milton's Satan in Paradise Lost (1667)as well as certain similarly ambitious and willful characters from the Elizabethan stage.[5] After Macbeth, villains as heavy characters develop through epic poetry (Milton's Satan), the early novel (Richardson's Lovelace) and on into the Gothic realm, where the "heavy" villain becomes at last the normative example of the type for future generations of writers, for instance for writers of the Gothic.[6]

Corresponding with the development of this type of individually-significant villain are two momentous occurrences in terms of British political ideology and de facto state power: the death of the paternalist state of the Tudors and their relations the Stuarts (the last British monarchs continuous in both blood and outlook with the feudal past), and the rise of the Whig squire oligarchy (and later aristocracy) built first around the "elected" bourgeois monarchy of William of Orange (Netherlands) and later around the imported monarchy of the House of Hanover (Germany). These

political developments in eighteenth-century England correspond with literary treatments of religion and morality such as those also concerning the villain in the early novel. Illumination of these correlations reveals strategies of class dominance and political ascendancy exercised in the writing of the novel. Ideological changes influencing the literary construction of the villain including the progressive secularization of political and also the change in the conceptualization of what it meant to be "Puritan." "Puritan" was less and less a noun describing a group, and was more and more an adjective describing supposed cultural traits: it somehow still described an influence. This Puritan disembodiment was a cultural strategy, a way of self-description that avoided calling attention to the change that had taken the Puritan from an overtly political and religious faction in the seventeenth century to one in the eighteenth century which would like to assume that its political hegemony is beyond debate, and would rather therefore be preoccupied with morality and respectability as vaguer but more powerful tools for its ruling oligarchy.

Given the overtly political nature of the former Puritan radicalism of the English Civil War period (mid-seventeenth century), we may account for the moralistic Puritanism of the aristocracy of the Whig era (mid-eighteenth century) reflected in Richardson's novels as a second manifestation of Puritanism more involved in up-scaling the bourgeois side and emphasizing a judgmental Calvinism (such as in the case of Richardson) that easily translated into the politics of exclusion and aristocratic privilege. This privilege was analogous but not equivalent to the privilege of the former aristocratic system of the Tudor-Stuart period, and its textual dissemination as morality served to keep a secular Puritan economic domination in place. These "new" Puritans differed from previous revolutionary puritan in that morality as bourgeois respectability was central to their sense of political justification.

The earlier "repentant" villains of Richardson and Walpole are fundamentally different from the villainous or heavy characters socially anathematized seen in the works of Radcliffe and later Byron. The latter are distinctive in relation to society in that they remain socially unrepentant through the end of the story. The repentant villain of Richardson and Walpole is on the other hand at some point unequivocally sorry for his villainy. Take, for instance, the final moments of Schedoni in Radcliffe's The Italian (1797). The "evil" priest, the son of an impoverished nobleman, pursues schemes and intrigues with the powerful for purposes of his own advancement. He is also guilty of Murder. In his attempts to ruin the young son of a duke, he finds that his own daughter's fate is ironically tied to that of the youth he opposes. Though he quickly adjusts his schemes to match the welfare of his newly discovered "daughter," he nevertheless finds himself in the dungeons of the Italian inquisition. There he suffers horribly for his crimes against society and finally dies, but not before he successfully poisons a rival priest, whom he confronts in his final moments with a terrible stare. Schedoni's own demise is marked with none of the familiar attempts at didactic moralizing that had formerly distinguished the repentant villain.

Just as Ambrosio, as a repentant priest in Monk Lewis' The Monk (1796) reflects anti-Catholic feelings on the part of a late-eighteenth-century audience, Schedoni, as an "evil" confessor (priest), is an easy target for English prejudice against something they don't understand and are as well traditionally taught to fear: the international network and "sovereign" power represented by the Roman Catholic Church. For instance, Victor Sage in his study Horror Fiction in the Protestant Tradition relates the creation of Radcliffe's villainous priest to anti-Catholicism and anti-clericalism in late-eighteenth-century England. Specifically, in his view, Radcliffe's priests are a form of "Protestant" propaganda against the ideological threat posed by Catholics on the Continent and the time of the French Revolution (Sage, 1988: 20). However, such propaganda must also be understood as predicated by the need on the part of the general English reading public for a literary mode of political justification vis a vis England's own final rejection, by the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, and under questionable circumstances, of the House of Stuart (political side) and England's own Catholic past (religious side).

Shedoni is a hard man dying a hard death, and in this he serves on some level as a parable for the death of the defunct but still not completely forgotten sovereignty which distinguished the past politically and socially in relation to the present: a hard, unrepentant priest or king is worthy of respect, but it is respect as a distance of time or geography by a now firmly established constitutional government in England. Though the domestic rivals of the English constitutional settlement of 1688 (whether, they be radical Puritans or Old Tory Aristocrats) are long dead, there are nevertheless very real political rivals still to be found across the channel in France and the Continent. Here the Napoleonic Wars also suggest or remind the English that it is to France that the Stuarts fled at the end of the former political system. The successful ideological rejection of such rivals still required a form of political justification provided, through a process o aesthetical transference, by the unrepentant villain.

Radcliffe's The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794) takes as its subject Montoni, a character reminiscent of Manfred, the villain in the first Gothic tale, The Castle of Otranto (1764). As Donald Spector points out regarding Radcliffe's work in his introduction to Seven Masterpieces of Gothic Horror:

> To an age that sought release, from the mundane, everyday activities, she brought respectable escape. She united terror and beauty. If the reader felt uncomfortable while enjoying the liberation of sadistic and masochistic impulses, he was comforted by the passages of scenic splendor, the final morality, and the ultimate assurance of realism and reason (Spector, 1963: 6).

In "Gothic Heroes," Howard Anderson sees the difference between Lewis' Ambrosio and Radcliffe's Schedoni as a difference of degree rather than of type (Anderson, 1982: 206). He also discusses the difference between Manfred and Montoni as a difference between Walpole's grater use of the psychological in Manfred (the inside) versus Radcliffe's greater use of the pictorial (the outside) (Anderson, 1982: 212), in terms of the degree to which a character is "developed" (Anderson, 1982: 210) or in terms of what a character "learns" (Anderson, 1982: 206). From a social or political

standpoint, however, the distinctive feature of Montoni, for instance, is how unrelenting he proves to be as a defiant and arrogant leader of banditti: he is unwavering and unrepentant, though he is, in the end, defeated by the forces of law and sensibility.

The political origin and cultural impact of both repentant villains such as Lovelace and unrepentant villains such as Montoni would suggest that the problem of sovereignty and traditionality were fundamental to the formulation of the character. For instance, in his introduction to The English Hero, 1660-1800, Robert Folkenflik points out that Richardson "had to present a critique of some traditional conceptions in the person of Lovelace" (Folkenflik, 1982: 18). The root of the problem was the crisis in determining legitimate political authority between the Parliamentarians (and later the Constitutionalists) and those who supported the Stuarts: since the early Middle Ages, sovereign authority in tribal-regional England had resided in a sacral monarchy by tradition, but within the political context of a regionally-based peerage. But, as Christopher Hill points out in Reformation to Industrial Revolution, "fifty-seven persons had better hereditary claims to the English throne than George I: It was impossible to take divine right monarchy seriously after his succession" (1714). The surprising thing is how long such questions remained viable issues, and how long they continued to be reflected in English literature. As our survey of unrepentant villains suggests, such politically inspired characters stretch from Milton at the time of the English Civil War and the Restoration (1660) throughout the eighteenth century, and even effected the Romantic movement in the early nineteenth century, as reflected in Byron's personal and literary career as late as 1824.

Between the Glorious Revolution in 1688 and the Napoleonic Wars at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the old Regime associated with the ideological remnants of Tudor-Stuart paternalism were replaced with a new economic and political order which stressed money and capital investment by *rentier* capitalists and entrepreneur agents over the former more static landed aristocracy.

The repentant villain character was first defined, in the course of the plot, in large part by means of a socio-structural process of exclusion. This exclusion, or rejection, an important part of the basis of the tale, is in effect until his repentance and rapprochement. Unrepentant villains are defined by a different process. The unrepentant character carries a certain amount of newly discovered distance by exchanging the immediacy and moral/ideological particulars we saw behind the creation of Richardson's Lovelace with philosophical perspective and emotional poignancy. A historical travel narrative such as Radcliffe's The Mysteries of Udolpho or The Italian also became a metaphor for something ideologically far away in space and time: the social formations, including religion, which had upheld an agrarian ideology and political economy based dynamically on Tudor-Stuart paternalism. The "Gothic priest," for instance, was considered as an appropriate topic now for the novel because he was easily associated into the general category of defunct ideologies of the past in the mind of the late eighteenth-century reader

now safely able to engage in political nostalgia: the former battle that had marked the repentant villain was over, it had lost its immediacy, and the reader born into a time of constitutional consensus and institutional government was free to explore and vicariously justify his personal and emotional stake in his society's final break with the political idea of what Carlyle later called government by a "strong, just man."

The unrepentant villain Schodoni thus represents something new, something different from the earlier repentant villain, who as a character could be described as a self-fulfilling bourgeois prophesy, where the villain in the end joins with the bourgeoisie. Yet there is still even here in the unrepentant villain, the expectation of repentance, the understanding that they should repent, and a kind of shock or disbelief on the part of the hero/heroine when such villains fail the "play fair" (in establishment terms) and this too makes the unrepentant villain discussed here a bourgeois phenomenon. An unrepentant villain in literature could not be tolerated by the English middle class reading public until the real danger posed by the political ideologies behind such characters had passed: Yet the Catholic church, once the greatest of political threats (The Spanish Armada of 1588, the seventeenth-century religious wars), can by Radcliffe's time be safely indulged and mined for all its mysterious and titillating strangeness and fro its ability to entertain a now less-reactionary English reader.

The villain as a character in eighteenth-century works becomes "villainous" since he embodies a now outmoded connection to the land and to "duty," while the valorized classes of the new time were those moneyed classes engaged in trade and politics. In Clarissa, Richardson's dynamic relationship between Clarissa Harlowe's family and the family of Lord "M," the relative of Lovelace, is one of implicit social competition, a competition between an empty, feared class on the one hand—Lord M and Lovelace his representative—and on the other hand a valorized, emerging class, the rich, bourgeois Harlowes. Richardson's aim was to use the character of Lovelace as a repentant villain in order to allow readers to "purge" him as a representative of a correspondingly failed aesthetic and political/ideological system which nevertheless has left dangerously subversive traces in Richardson's contemporary culture. Lovelace is the first important and popular villain character in the early English novel, and it is no accident that he is drawn as a "repentant" character in the early English novel. Later in the eighteenth century we see the villain character drawn more shockingly and blatantly as *unrepentant* in Gothic novels and also in Byron's Manfred. Whereas the repentant villain *was made to* exhibit remorse for his actions (and by implication for his social position) vis-à-vis the newer classes, by writers and readers of the newer classes, out of a public need for a symbolic purging, fifty years later an *unrepentant* villain was allowed to be seen as unmitigated evil. England was safe enough in its new politics to allow English readers a chance to give full purge to dark fantasies rooted in the relative medievalism of the former sovereign order of Stuart and Scottish Royalty and paternalism.

Whereas there was enough public uneasiness over the shift of economic and social underpinning after the Restoration to require a villain whose complexity permitted, in fact demanded (it was suggested as inevitable), his ultimate acceptance into the contemporary political and aesthetic ideological order, by the end of the eighteenth century the shift was complete enough that no such complexity was needed. The complexity of the repentant villain allowed Richardson to create the first psychologically complex novel, while the unrepentant villain, being relatively one-dimensional, allowed the latter-eighteenth-century author to play with the residual fears and terrors of the bourgeois class in the writing of the Gothic novel, where, as Marx noted, speaking of all Europe: "the tradition of all the generations of the dead weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living" (Marx, 1963: 1). This would also seem to apply to England.

The fundamental and definitive content of the Gothic, beyond the often discussed "subterranean psychological landscape" of ruined castles, ghosts, dark passages and unseen danger is the ideological underpinning so aptly noted by Marx. The terror of the Gothic is a free kind of terror enjoyed by a class which is socially valorized but which lacks a clear sense of justification for its privileged status at the top of the socio-economic pyramid of the capitalist class system. Being Puritan at its base, it must constantly examine itself to determine if a tenuous "elect" status is or is not confirmed by God at any given moment. This is an ongoing process of anxiety which mirrors the anxiety which mirrors the anxiety of economic activity by the bourgeois class; it must be successful, and yet it is a kind of justification which still sits uneasily against the self-evident sovereignty of the previous royal period—from whence the horrific and Gothic writers continue to draw their characters.

Notes

1. See my The Villain Character in the Puritan World (Diss. U of Missouri, 1995).

2. I have adopted the period designation "early modern England," as well as the inclusive dates from J.A. Sharpe's Early Modern England: A Social History, 1550-1760. (London: Edward Arnold, 1987).

3. See e.g. Robert B. Heilman's Tragedy and Melodrama (Seattle: U of Washington P, 1968) p.83.

4. See Walter J. Ong's discussion of "heavy" characters in Orality andLiteracy (New York: Methuen, 1982) pp. 45 and 69-70.

5. See Clarence Valentine Boyer, The Villain as Hero in Elizabethan Tragedy. (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964) p. 79.

6. See Devendra P. Varma, The Gothic Flame(New York: Russell and Russell, 1966) pp. 191-192.

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