

'THE HAUNTED BEACH': THE COAST AND THE GOTHIC TRADITION, 1764-1820

by

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ABSTRACT

The coast has an underappreciated importance in the Gothic tradition. It is well established that the environment plays a key role in Gothic literature, but the coast's specific impact has not been investigated so thoroughly. This dissertation aims to explicate the importance of coastal motifs to traditional Gothic texts. Specifically, it investigates the role of the coast as an ecotonal boundary space in fairy-tale, in Gothic discussions of religion and to emphasise disembodied voices. An ecotonal boundary is one which divides and combines two different ecological spaces – for example, the ecotonal coast is the space where the land meets the sea.

The coast is a space which provokes emotional responses and builds a unique sense of atmosphere. By looking at traditional Gothic texts from between 1764 to 1820, it is possible to discern that the coast is a place chosen by writers to establish a sense of in-betweenness, where characters occupy the space between disparate realities. Ann Radcliffe, Charles Maturin, Matthew Lewis and Horace Walpole are all featured in this dissertation as examples of authors who depict the coast as possessing Gothic qualities and macabre significance. An uncomfortable note comes from the tension between the known and the unknown in these novels, creating mystery and ambiguity.

This investigation of the relevance of the coast to traditional Gothic writing reveals how the genre has taken and elaborated upon the space's pre-existing reputation for liminality, as well as how it uses this boundary to engage in conversations about fantasy, spirituality and death.

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'The Haunted Beach': The Coast and the Gothic Tradition, 1764–1820

INTRODUCTION

The night passed away, and the sun rose from the ocean; my feelings became calmer, if it may be called calmness when the violence of rage sinks into the depths of despair. I left the house, the horrid scene of the last night's contention, and walked on the beach of the sea, which I almost regarded as an insuperable barrier between me and my fellow creatures; nay, a wish that such should prove the fact stole across me. I desired that I might pass my life on that barren rock, wearily, it is true, but uninterrupted by any sudden shock of misery. If I returned, it was to be sacrificed or to see those whom I most loved die under the grasp of a dæmon whom I had myself created.¹

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818)

The coast has a fundamental presence in the Gothic literary tradition. As Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* articulates, the shore can represent many unsettling and shocking elements. It is a space receptive to the peaks of emotion, 'the violence of rage' and 'the depths of despair'.² It can be a borderline space, 'an insuperable barrier', between the human world of land and the nonhuman mysteries of the sea.³ It can also provide a shadow of protection and relief – Frankenstein wishes to remain, desolate but 'uninterrupted' by further miseries, on a rock on the shoreline, protecting himself from 'me and my fellow creatures'.⁴ The shore is a space which haunts traditional Gothic literature, featuring in novels from Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) to Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820). By examining representations of the coast in this period, it is possible to see the full significance of the space for Gothic writing, and how the shore propels the genre's narratives. Establishing the importance of the shore to the Gothic makes it possible to understand the multiple meanings the area can hold for different texts and reveal the variety of unsettling connotations it can hold.

Whilst the modern Gothic has been analysed from a coastal perspective, the traditional Gothic period has not been given as much attention. Both Jimmy Packham and Gemma Goodman have explored the Gothic shoreline beyond the traditional Gothic period. Packham focusses on twenty-

¹ Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, ed. by Marilyn Butler, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) p. 141.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

first century texts, whilst Goodman places Daphne du Maurier's writings in a coastal context.⁵ Nicholas Allen, Nick Groom and Jos Smith also consider the history of the literary coastline in their introduction to *Coastal Works*. They describe the space as both 'marginal' and a 'contact point between evolving, and sometimes contrasting, experiences of time, space, and motion'.⁶ The language they use here highlights the Gothic nature of the shore. They identify the strange relationship with time and space at the coast. Although I investigate the littoral exclusively in traditional Gothic texts in this dissertation, the language used by Allen, Groom and Smith demonstrates how the beach can be represented across literature as a place which confronts the notion of hard and fast boundaries.

Traditional Gothic texts, I will argue, are responsible for the coast's reputation for in-betweenness – these works depict important instances of the shore's being an area of 'transgressions of borders and boundaries'.⁷ 1760–1830 is an important period for expanding the range of ways in which the shoreline can be considered 'in-between'. This introduction focuses on three examples from the eighteenth and nineteenth century to illustrate this in-between aspect. Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798) and Mary Robinson's poem 'The Haunted Beach' (1800) all use the littoral to express cultural anxieties about humanity's venturing too far into the realm of nature, transgressing the boundary between coast and sea. Importantly, they are canonical works which feature a sustained use of Gothic imagery. Although they all offer Gothic interpretations of the shoreline, they do so in different ways. Coleridge's coastal 'kirk' offers protection from the horrors of the ocean, whilst Robinson's beach is the site at which the sea's horrors, and the transgressions of the fisherman, are relived. *Frankenstein*, as we have seen, posits the shore as an area of dark and emotional revelation. Each narrative introduces the idea that Gothic characters often exist on the social periphery, isolating themselves from cultural normality. The littoral, being the edge of land and the edge of civilisation, parallels characters' alienation. As Matthew Kerr articulates, the space attracted people interested in 'the progressive possibilities the coast offered', people searching for 'change and innovation – utopianism, even'.⁸ Its depiction articulates the experience of being different both from culture and from nature, occupying an

⁵ Jimmy Packham, 'The Gothic Coast: Boundaries, Belonging and Coastal Community in Contemporary British Fiction' in *Contemporary British Fiction, Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 60 (2019) pp.205-221. Gemma Goodman, 'Women at Sea: Locating and Escaping Gender on the Cornish Coast in Daphne du Maurier's *The Loving Spirit* and *Frenchman's Creek*', in *Sea Narratives: Cultural Responses to the Sea, 1600-Present*, ed. Charlotte Mathieson, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) pp.171-194.

⁶ Nicholas Allen, Nick Groom and Jos Smith, *Coastal Works: Cultures of the Atlantic Edge*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) p.4

⁷ Jimmy Packham, p. 206.

⁸ Matthew P. M. Kerr, *Coastal Cultures of the Long Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), pp. 17-19.

intervening space between two phenomena. As the coast is in-between, so are many characters who occupy the space. They are in-between society's rules and a natural paradigm (or model) which functions independently, with its own set of guidelines.

Phillip E. Steinberg suggests that 'the ever-changing uses, regulations, and representations of ocean-space have been as much a part of each period's spatiality as have the spatial constructions of land-space.'⁹ Steinberg should also consider coastal-space. Despite the shore's frequent omission from conversations about nature, it has an important significance to cultural conceptions of spatiality. Gothic texts regard the coast as equally as important as, and different from, both the terrestrial and the aquatic. It is a place for contemplation, confrontation and, occasionally, relief. For example, as Frankenstein walks along the shore, he 'wearily' contemplates how he has trespassed the boundary of what is ethically acceptable, culminating in the 'dæmon' he has created. Shelley's depiction of the shore as a dark and pensive space calls upon classical influences to demonstrate the area's capacity for provoking introversion and deep thought. The eighteenth century, however, saw popular attitudes towards the shoreline changing from reservation to enjoyment and acceptance. People increasingly went to the beach to enjoy holidays and family time.¹⁰ As Alain Corbin describes it, Gothic literature repelled itself from the emerging attitudes of pleasure and enjoyment at the seaside and became aligned with the 'fear and repulsion' which, Corbin argues, was the primary emotional response to this space up until the 1750s.¹¹ The beach, in the 1750s, was growing in popularity as a place of recreation and relaxation.¹² The Gothic, then, spoke to the anxieties that came with this sudden change in attitude. The traditional Gothic coastline invites a discussion about transgression into the realm of the natural, or beyond the ethical norms of conventional society.¹³ Eighteenth and nineteenth-century novels outline the importance of respecting nature and the potential dangers of increasing industrialisation. In this way, the littoral-space, or ecotone, can be seen to have a role in shaping cultural spatiality. Ecotone refers to an area of transition and overlap between two spaces. The combination of an overlap of two separate cultures, sea and land, as well as a unique and separate coastal identity, provide an area of ambiguity, uncertainty, and instability. The shore forms the focal point of the great and terrible power of nature over humanity's precarious expansion.

⁹ Phillip E. Steinberg, *The Social Construction of the Ocean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) p. 6.

¹⁰ This change is marked by novels such as Jane Austen's *Sanditon*, which depicts the construction of a modern, recreation centred seaside town, popular with young people and business owners.

¹¹ Alain Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea* (California: University of California Press, 1994) p. 1.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ For contemporary examples, see Jimmy Packham's article on 'the Gothic coast' referenced above.

The Gothic genre is frequently defined as a literature of protest and of warning. H.L. Malchow outlines this, defining it not as a genre but as a discourse: ‘a *language* of panic, of unreasoning anxiety’.¹⁴ The genre spreads awareness of that which is cause for societal concern, seeking to stimulate in its readership new understanding and relationships with fear and the unknown. Arguably, the genre is also responsible for stoking panic itself: it both reflects the readers’ fears and creates them. It produces anxieties in the popular imagination and elevates them to a new level of horror. For example, *Frankenstein* represents the fear surrounding the growth of technology and science and the impact that could have on the environment and the people around us. Andrew Smith reads the science represented in *Frankenstein* as ‘individualistic, egotistical and opposed to the feminine’, representing dangerous idealism which ‘leads to murder, terror, and death’, suggesting that when it comes to natural science ‘what works in theory might not work in practice.’¹⁵ Indeed, Smith’s reading of *Frankenstein*’s science identifies the extent to which male-dominated fields such as science and industry hold sway over nature and the feminine in general. The novel’s representation of the destruction that scientific idealism brings to Frankenstein’s life, however, places nature as the victor. Rather than a pliant force vulnerable to being ‘penetrat[e]d’ and exploited by the male scientist, the creature’s connection with the natural world allows him to wreak havoc in Frankenstein’s life.¹⁶ His friends’ bodies are strewn along coastlines, his opportunity to escape is thwarted, all as a direct result of the coastal setting, over which the creature manages to take control. Jimmy Packham describes the creature as having ‘a more benignant ethical engagement with the natural world ‘due to his vegetarian diet, which serves to vindicate or explain his bestial ‘death-dealing voraciousness’.¹⁷ Despite being a product of science, the creature easily understands a nonhuman ethical code which allows him to use natural forces, such as sea, shoreline, and ice, against Frankenstein. Part of what makes the creature so unsettling is that he is both organic and inorganic – his ability to connect seamlessly with flora and fauna gives him an advantage over Frankenstein. *Frankenstein*, then, depicts science and nature as conflicting with one another.

As Heidi C. M. Scott observes, the origin of this fear of society’s impacting nature is from the Romantics. ‘Ecology’s most pressing questions come from the exigencies of human impacts on the

¹⁴ H. L. Malchow quoted by Thomas Ærvold Bjerre, ‘Southern Gothic Literature’, *Oxford Research Encyclopaedias Online*, (2017) <<https://oxfordre.com/literature/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.001.0001/acrefore-9780190201098-e-304>> [accessed 3 September 2019]

¹⁵ Andrew Smith, ‘Scientific Contexts’ in *The Cambridge Companion to ‘Frankenstein’* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016) pp.69-83, p.77.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

¹⁷ Jimmy Packham, ‘Children of the Quorn: *The Vegetarian, Raw*, and the Horrors of Vegetarianism’ in *Gothic Nature*, 1 (2019) pp.78-102, p. 79.

biosphere' Scott posits.¹⁸ She describes this as 'chaos ecology', which both 'revolutionises the classic view of a balanced world that has dictated [...] perceptions since at least the Enlightenment' and has roots which 'reach down into Romantic-era soil.'¹⁹ Chaos ecology, or the idea that the world is not 'balanced' by its own rules but instead is reacting to human impositions, is an idea which Scott ties to Romantic poets. Romanticism and the Gothic existed alongside in the early nineteenth-century, and they influenced one another in this regard. Each genre is respectful of nature and enamoured of its beauty, whilst also being suspicious of the beginning of industrial change and its capacity to change the way that nature can behave. Jonathan Bate also identifies this shift, describing 'a respect for the earth and a scepticism as to the be-all and end-all of human society'.²⁰ Moving away from the classical view of ecology being self-governing, then, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries fostered a suspicion of human development and its capacity to impact the environment. This shift is explored by ecoGothic scholarship. The Gothic potential of ecological spaces become clear in this period in particular, where the natural world is a place of uncertainty and shifting attitudes. Specifically, the ecotonal coast, displays Gothic significance emerging organically from its ecology.

Gothic texts follow no set generic or thematic conventions to create their effect, making the genre itself notoriously difficult to define. Instead, it uses a set of tropes, or themes, which produce a tone of fear. Its lack of defining features moves the focus to *how* the writer expresses herself, rather than *what* she expresses. The attention in the Gothic is primarily on its language of shock and terror. When certain tropes do recur – such as the labyrinthine castle, the tyrannical abbey, and the haunted littoral zone – they are worthy of further explanation. Thomas Ærvold Bjerre expands on this, stating that 'Gothic literature generally challenged Enlightenment principles by giving voice to irrational, horrific and transgressive thoughts, desires and impulses, thereby conjuring an angst-ridden world of violence, sex, terror and death.'²¹ Bjerre's focus here is on 'voice', an oral focus which, I argue, is essential to the Gothic's effect. He also accurately describes that effect as a magical 'conjuring'.²² Portraying problems as fantastical or magical detaches them from the reality which they are protesting. The coast facilitates this detachment. It is characterised by its in-betweenness, being a dividing point between two disparate spaces. As Rebecca Solnit articulates in *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, the beach is a space where one can feel disconnected from conventional rules of time,

¹⁸ Heidi C. M. Scott, *Chaos and Cosmos: Literary Roots of Modern Ecology in the British Nineteenth-Century* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University, 2014) p. 3.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Jonathan Bate, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1991) p. 9.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

space and reality: 'With a long line of footprints behind me, I couldn't get literally lost but I lost track of time, becoming lost in that other way that isn't about dislocation but about the total immersion where everything else falls away.'²³ All Solnit is really aware of in these lines is being 'located' at the shore, whilst feeling 'lost' in every other way. The space facilitates a sense of wandering and of separation from the known. The detachment allows for the reflection that both of these areas provoke in characters. The sea can trigger philosophical contemplation, and, when viewed from afar, characters are able to imagine it without really having to experience its perils. The same applies to society. The shore facilitates a buffer from each space, making it an ideal point from which to contemplate the faults of the land and the mystery of the sea.

Since the coast can be a space from which either the land or the sea is viewed and contemplated, it also forms a borderline between them both. It is a physical boundary as well as a metaphorical one. Traditional Gothic writers frequently use the space to represent the junction between the known and unknown, for example, as this is essentially the reality the shoreline exhibits - humans cannot know or comprehend the true depths of the sea, whilst they are familiar with day-to-day life on land. The coast provides an opportunity to consider the depths of the ocean, without experiencing the risks of exploring it first-hand. In the same way, the littoral can be used to represent other concepts which are similarly mysterious or unknown. Chapter One in this dissertation discusses traditional Gothic representations of coastal folk lore, where the ecotonal mirrors fantasy and reality. Chapter Two expands on the way the beach can be represented as a space between the spiritual and the physical, and in the final chapter is conceived as a boundary between sound and meaning, and a liminal (or transitional) state between life and death. The shoreline's geographical, ecotonal, dividing role makes it a rich repository of metaphor to demonstrate these mysterious rifts.

As John Mack observes in his cultural history of the sea, the interpretation of the coast as a neutral borderline between two equally weighted spaces has its flaws. He notes that 'what happens around or even on the sea is often strongly coloured by what happens on land. People cannot have the sea without some access to the land and its products.'²⁴ As Mack posits, perceptions and depictions of the sea are inevitably influenced by the terrestrial. However, Mack's conflation of shore and land ignores the unique significance of the littoral. The beach is a space which has its own independent influence on spatial perceptions of the marine. The coast is the most frequent site from which people experience the sea in Gothic texts: it is the setting for many shipwrecks, and the place where the ghosts of mariners emerge. The shoreline informs how the sea is written about and conceived.

²³ Rebecca Solnit, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost* (New York: Penguin Group, 2005) p. 36.

²⁴ John Mack, *The Sea: A Cultural History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011) p. 13.

The ecotonal nature of the coast, however, means that it is a combination of both sea and land. To draw a distinct borderline between sea and land ignores the extent to which one influences the other. The sea and the land are never entirely separate entities, because of their union at the littoral. The shore is at once a borderline between them and a symbol of their union - it is where both settings unite to form an area which is neither totally land nor totally sea, and which is not independent from either.

Mary Robinson's poem 'The Haunted Beach' represents this juncture. Robinson contemplates in this short lyric the otherworldly and deadly nature of the sea from a fisherman's perspective on the coast. The fisherman is on the beach during the poem and as a result all the action occurs there. The commentary comes from a coastal viewpoint, but it is nonetheless about the mysteries the ocean holds. The poem opens 'upon a lonely desert beach/Where the white foam was scatter'd'.²⁵ The shore is also described as 'chalky'.²⁶ The whiteness invokes death and bones, as well as depicting virginal purity. It is idyllic and natural, utterly different from the mysterious depths of the sea and from the civilisation on land. 'Weeds forever waving' show the products of the sea spilling on to the shore and foreshadow the emergence of the ghost sailors in the following stanzas. Like trapped souls, they are forever stuck, waving and clinging to the shore, desperate for escape. The littoral represents spiritual and literal abjection, being littered by the detritus of the ocean.

And often, while the moaning wind
Stole o'er the summer ocean,
The moonlight scene was all serene,
The waters scarce in motion;
Then, while the smoothly slanting sand
The tall cliff wrapp'd in shade,
The fisherman beheld a band
Of spectres gliding hand in hand—
Where the green billows play'd.

And pale their faces were as snow,
And sullenly they wander'd;
And to the skies with hollow eyes
They look'd as though they ponder'd.

²⁵ Mary Robinson, 'The Haunted Beach' in *Eighteenth Century Women Poets*, ed. Roger Lonsdale (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) p. 83.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

And sometimes, from their hammock shroud,
 They dismal howlings made,
And while the blast blew strong and loud,
The clear moon mark'd the ghastly crowd,
 Where the green billows play'd.

And then above the haunted hut
 The curlews screaming hover'd;
And the low door, with furious roar,
 The frothy breakers cover'd.
For in the fisherman's lone shed
 A murder'd man was laid,
With ten wide gashes in his head,
And deep was made his sandy bed
 Where the green billows play'd.²⁷

In his reading of the poem, Manuel Aguirre also draws attention to Robinson's beach as a borderline space. 'As a result of his transgression [the fisherman] has entered a threshold space, there to be "chained" to a beach – the border area between land and sea – where his sterile labours contrast with the ludic activity of the waves; iteration of the refrain "where the green billows play'd" highlights the liminal quality of the setting'.²⁸ As Aguirre observes, the shore is a liminal threshold space in the poem – however, it is not like this because of the fisherman's transgression. The shore is like this independently of what the fisherman has done. It merely records actions, remembering that the fisherman has violently murdered a man, leaving him with 'ten wide gashes in his head'. His condemnation is marked by the voices at the coast, a concept which is explored further in Chapter Three. 'Moaning' sounds and 'dismal howlings' echo around the coast, making his punishment of eternal entrapment in the space seem as if it is a judgement made by the coast itself. The coast is a threshold because of its ecotonicity, which exists independently of the fisherman's crime – he could have done something else and the shoreline would have reflected the action back at him in the same way.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Manuel Aguirre, 'Mary Robinson's 'The Haunted Beach' and the Grammar of the Gothic', *Neophilologus*, 98 (2014), pp. 690-704, p. 696.

Aguirre also observes that, '[i]n myth and fairytale a hero's companions are surrogates, their role to help him carry out his task or to perish in his stead'.²⁹ The messmates of the Mariner, doomed to glide 'hand-in-hand' with him, occupy a purgatorial space between life and death. The messmates can only move on into the afterlife (or whatever comes next) when the Mariner's death, and the fisherman's transgressions, have been dealt with. Aguirre argues that 'the mariner's murder has arrested their passage so that they, too, are caught in an unfinished transit. [...] [T]hey enforce the fisherman's isolation and must walk the figurative line he is not allowed to cross back into the human world'.³⁰ The littoral here represents a juncture between life and death that is comparable to purgatory. Without resolution, the characters are doomed to walk the line between life and death until they have finished their duties. The shore represents this line. Aguirre omits to mention however that the fisherman, too, has an equal role to the messmates in this suspended state. He is also condemned to relive the Mariner's murder again and again, as long as he continues being a fisherman and living on the coast. He is in purgatory too – unable to totally atone for his mistakes, as well as unable to leave them behind without giving up his livelihood. His dependence on the shoreline sustains him economically, whilst also perpetually draining him emotionally, as he must repeatedly confront the horrors of his past that the shoreline insists he does not forget. The fisherman is not just in isolation, then, but in purgatory like the mariner and the messmates.

Similarly, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of The Ancient Mariner* (1798) depicts a mariner whose sins have influenced the fate of the rest of his crew. The ocean plays an active part in his condemnation, acting as an eternal judge and preserver of Christian morality. Gesa Mackenthun's observations on the cultural history of the sea are relevant here: 'The sea is imagined both as the guardian of a history that has gone unrecorded by traditional Western forms of preserving the past – narrative, museum, monument – and as a release from the oppressive regime of "tribal memories" and embittered by ancestral ghosts.'³¹ Mackenthun identifies the capacity of the sea to preserve and remember history. Expanding on this idea, it is possible to see the ocean as an agent of repressed horrors and memories, capable of re-emergence. This theme is central to both Coleridge and Robinson's writing. The sea, remembering all things, is both omniscient and eternal. The shore, in its proximity to the sea, is the most frequent site for memories to wash up, or to be recalled. Coleridge represents the coast as a space where transgressions from the past re-emerge, and the Mariner is forced to confront repressed memories. In the following scene, the Mariner is speaking to a fellow wedding guest about his experiences at sea. The guest is so disturbed by his recollections that he

²⁹ Ibid. p. 697.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Bernhard Klein and Gesa Mackenthun, 'Introduction: The Sea is History' in *Sea Changes: Historicising the Ocean*, ed. Bernhard Klein and Gesa Mackenthun (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 1-13, p. 1.

says, 'I fear thee, ancient Mariner!' before comparing him to sand: 'And thou art long, and lank, and brown,/As is the ribbed sea-sand.'³² The Mariners' disturbing recollections are tied to the littoral through this comparison, which suggests that the Mariner himself looks coastal, resembling the space's colour and shape. As his story surfaces, then, it is as if he embodies the shoreline's perspective. His marine stories have now metaphorically washed up from the sea, where they occurred, and have taken a new significance on the shore.

I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.³³

Coleridge's description of the sea as 'rotting' suggests it holds the decaying bodies of sailors that have died in the ocean. In part two of the poem, the ocean is described as 'the slimy sea', containing 'slimy things that did crawl with legs'.³⁴ The sea is established as a place which is full of contamination from the shore, bodies which should not be there, rotting and infecting the water. Denied a proper resting place, they haunt the Mariner. The sea retains the memory of those deaths and the mysterious 'wicked whisper' indicates knowledge of historical evils which have passed. The fact that the sound comes as a response to the Mariner's prayer suggests that God is in league with the ocean, or one with it. Retaining bodies and eternal memories, the sea's judgement is Godlike, its authority unquestioned.

'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man?
By him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

³² Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' in *Lyrical Ballads: 1798 and 1802*, ed. Fiona Stafford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) pp. 5-25, p. 12.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid. p.447.

[...]

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.'³⁵

The disembodied voices which find the Mariner near death represent enforcers of the ocean's punishment for killing the 'Christian soul' represented in the Albatross.³⁶ The Christian allusion is reinforced through mention of 'him who died on the cross', clarifying the broader implications of the Mariner's sin. The ocean, acting by God's will, punishes as it sees fit. In this instance, it seems as if the Mariner's mere presence sailing on the sea is an example of mankind overstepping the boundary of what is acceptable. Frequent reference to the punishment of God and to the Mariner's arrogance in overstepping the mark suggest that he, like Adam and Eve, has transgressed a boundary which God has set in place to protect humanity from itself. The boundary here, of course, is the coastline.

The sea's role as punisher contrasts the coast's role as protector. After the Mariner has experienced the horrors of the sea, the littoral begins to represent salvation for him. In part six of the poem, he comes to shore.

Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The light-house top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?³⁷

The joy and relief he feels come from the familiarity of the space: it abounds with features and buildings that he recognises. Importantly, it provides a sense of identity: 'mine own'. This sentiment is repeated when the Mariner finally steps onto the shore: 'And now, all in my own countree,/I stood on the firm land!'³⁸ The elation he feels at being enveloped in the safe, secure and 'self' of the shore is palpable. The beach has the effect of tying itself to a character's sense of identity, especially in comparison to the vast anonymity of the ocean. When compared to the coast, the ocean is

³⁵ Ibid. p.17.

³⁶ Ibid. p.7.

³⁷ Ibid. p. 19.

³⁸ Ibid. p. 23.

unknowable and horrific. Familiarity provides safe reflection. The shoreline and the sea are spaces which represent very different things to the Mariner, but which both have a strong influence over him. They each attract the Mariner. The littoral, however, is attractive in its sense of safety and protection, whereas the sea is attractive in its dangerous wildness. The unsettling power of both the sea and the coast over the Mariner renders them Gothic spaces.

Female imagery abounds at the coast. The shore is traditionally considered to be a feminine place, due to its proximity to the wild, unknown and uncontrollable sea. It is part of the natural world that Anne K. Mellor describes as at risk: 'the aggressive, virile male scientist legitimately captures and enslaves a fertile but passive female nature'.³⁹ Traditionally, reason and logic can be sequestered to the realm of the known and understandable, or the masculine. The unpredictable, unintelligible aquatic or feminine represent an antithesis to this idea. As Mackenthun comments, the sea has been described as feminine to underline its unfathomable complexity and depth. 'Such a mythical view of the sea – as a symbol of madness, irrational femininity, unruly or romantic anti-civilisation – arguably serves only to consolidate the dualistic structure of Western modernity whose definition of knowledge and reason has a remarkably *landed* quality'.⁴⁰ She omits to mention the way the coast also easily fits into this description, owing to its ecotonal overlap with the sea. Goodman, however, does extend these characteristics to the littoral, conflating the 'land' and 'conformity' as concepts removed from the shore⁴¹. She argues that the coast is a place where the constraints of gender can be shrugged off. 'The possibility of escape from social constructions of femininity is nowhere more present in the coastal site of the beach and the sea'.⁴² Here Goodman seems to suggest that the socially restrictive aspects of femininity can be forgotten, and a liberated, unrestricted form of femininity embraced. Her descriptions of du Maurier's liberated heroines suggest that the 'female' is not lost altogether at the shoreline, but rather redefined to be freeing rather than restricting. Her analysis also applies to the traditional Gothic period. Traditional Gothic literature repeatedly places women at the coast. Ann Radcliffe's novels, for example, which focus mainly on heroines seeking freedom from persecution, frequently culminate in scenes at the shore. Coastlines, then, are often portrayed as a feminine or non-conformist space, removed from patriarchal or cultural norms.

Setting is a large part of establishing mood in the genre. As Fred Botting writes, the settings of Gothic narratives 'manifest disturbance and ambivalence in spatial terms as movements between

³⁹ Anne K. Mellor, *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters* (Abingdon: Methuen, 1989) p. 89.

⁴⁰ Klein and Mackenthun, p. 2.

⁴¹ Gemma Goodman, p. 186.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 180.

inside and out.⁴³ Botting's discussion of Gothic spatiality lends itself to the ecotonal, a space which facilitates fluctuation and ambiguity. As this dissertation suggests, the area encourages characters to reflect on their circumstances, and often provides a setting for confrontation of fears and the release of repressed emotion. Botting adds, 'Landscapes stress isolation and wilderness, evoking vulnerability, exposure and insecurity. [...] Nature appears hostile, untamed and threatening; again, darkness, obscurity and contained malevolent energy reinforce atmospheres of disorientation and fear.'⁴⁴ Although Botting does not pinpoint the coast exactly as a space which can achieve this, the phenomenon of nature evoking a Gothic mood can be attributed to the littoral. This wildness and its concomitant femininity are represented in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Part Two of the poem describes the Mariner's meeting with a womanly illusion, symbolic of the untamed sea's influencing his escalating madness.

As the female spectre approaches the Mariner, her appearance becomes increasingly ghastly until the water itself changes to reflect her witchy alchemy, 'green, and blue and white'.⁴⁵ Her horrifying appearance, and her relationship with death, ties her to the Mariner's spiralling mental state. She is both beautiful and awful, having 'red lips' and hair as 'yellow as gold', but 'skin as white as leprosy' and a visible skeleton, 'through which the Sun' shines.⁴⁶ She is alluring yet terrifying, maddening yet appealing, like the ocean itself. The woman seems to be a macabre manifestation of the derangement he is experiencing, as well as a personification of the sea. His relief to reach the coast again is magnified by his experience of this ghastly figure, and establishes the beach as a place of safety. The shoreline colours every part of the narrative in the poem. Despite the fact that the action is at sea, it is told by the Mariner at a wedding on land. The setting is away from the memory of sea, within walking distance of a littoral 'kirk', imbuing his narrative with his sense of comfort. This relief is most poignantly relived when he describes his return to the coast. The Mariner's feeling of safety allows him to take on the role of a wise, yet tormented storyteller, seeking lost individuals to teach his lessons. He is still haunted, and perpetually dwells on his experience, preferring to 'walk together to the kirk' instead of indulge in a 'marriage-feast' with the other guests.⁴⁷ The story, and the woman, are spun into the view of a person watching from the shore, at a safe distance from danger. In this sense, the narrative he tells is an extension of the gratification the littoral held. He is free to tell his tale and to frighten others with it, knowing that it doesn't hold the same terrible significance for them on the shore as it did for him at sea. The coast in the poem is portrayed as both a place of

⁴³ Fred Botting, *Gothic*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014) p. 4.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Coleridge, p. 9.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 24.

great relief and as a place of remembrance – the Mariner recollects on the shore, incapable of moving on, although unwilling to fully relive his experience again.

The shoreline lends itself to being conceived in terms of Gothic metaphors. Its topography can provoke conversations about death and life, fantasy and reality and spirituality and the nominal. Shelley's depiction of Frankenstein's moment of contemplation at the coast illustrates the way the space can transcend the boundaries of the real and venture into supernatural conversations. This dissertation approaches the shoreline as a space which is Gothic in its own right, but which also inspires uncanny metaphors and motifs.

Chapter one attempts to understand how the Gothic uses folkloric imagery to reinterpret the dream world as a critique of reality. Through looking at fairy tales and myths, it is easy to see how the two modes overlap. Focusing particularly on Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* (1796) and Ann Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), I discuss how mythical and folklore components enhance the supernatural and Gothic qualities of coastal narratives. Warnings for women, children and society abound in both folklore and Gothic. Each genre uses and interprets the littoral as a vehicle for portraying this caution. Chapter two offers an interpretation of Gothic theology at the shore. Although the Gothic is most frequently associated with Christianity, the chapter also considers depictions of Judaism and Islam. Religious institutions and organisations are critiqued by many Gothic writers, whilst God Himself can be treated as a presence most easily found and connected with in nature, often, at the shore. Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797) portrays issues relating to Catholicism and natural theology, manifesting itself as a debate between terrestrial abbeys and the spiritual implications of the coastline. Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) features Judaism's relationship to the littoral, especially in relation to 'the Wandering Jew', frequently depicted on shorelines of the Red Sea. William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786) illustrates traditional Gothic conceptions of Islam at the coastline of the metaphorical 'Sea of Blood'.

The final chapter considers utterances on the beach, including murmurings, howls, cries and moans. Each of these sounds has a different effect, although they are often associated with disembodied and tormented souls and the repressed or unfinished business that they represent. The sea is a container of these souls, and the shore is the place where they come to visit the living. This imagery occurs in a large variety of texts, and therefore many different novels are used in this chapter. I discuss Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian, A Sicilian Romance* (1790) and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), as well as revisiting Maturin and Lewis. I also approach Shelley's *Frankenstein* in greater depth. Each

of these chapters focuses on 'traditional' Gothic literature, using texts from 1764–1820. Ann Radcliffe, Charles Maturin, Matthew Lewis and Horace Walpole are all central writers for my analysis of the period, as they are typically associated with the time and genre, providing the best reflection of what the Gothic offers. Overall, this dissertation argues that Gothic coastlines are used to protest against society. As the littoral is the literal fringe of the land, Gothic authors depict the space as an area which represents those on the fringe of society. Characters who are alienated, isolated from or persecuted by society are championed in Gothic texts, whilst powerful figures and institutions are condemned. In this way, the Gothic is a genre of protest, and this dissertation demonstrates how authors use coastal spaces to express a sense of isolation from society generally, and various problems that they see within the society from which they feel alienated. Each chapter examines several examples of Gothic texts which use shorelines both to protest against injustice and to champion the isolated characters in their narratives.

Through looking at the Gothic in this way, from childhood to death, it is possible to discuss the relevance of its setting. The coast is not just a natural space – for the writers of the gothic, it holds something more mysterious and less intelligible than other places. It depicts the image of the boundary, the borderline, the end of life as we understand it in the terrestrial world and the beginning of life in a world we don't understand, the aquatic world. It is intensely Gothic in its enigmatic ecotoneality. It is so mysterious as to merit usage in nearly every traditional Gothic text. This dissertation explores the importance of this pervasive motif in Gothic literature by analysing these three areas, looking at how the coast is used in many different circumstances and its relevance to society in context.

CHAPTER ONE

Folkloric coastlines

The shore is a space which lends itself to depictions of the magical and mysterious world of folklore. Mythical beings, like nymphs, fairies and spirits appear in the Gothic coastlines of Radcliffe, Lewis and Walpole. As it stands as an ecotonal boundary between disparate spaces, the coast abounds with fantastical suggestion, prompting the appearance of beings who reside between fantasy and reality. In this chapter, I will focus on three different examples of how folklore and the coast intermingle in Gothic literature. The first section will focus on the Bluebeard archetype present in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), and how the juxtaposition between coast and castle serves to emphasise the evils of patriarchal society. The coast in Walpole's narrative, representing nature and equality, is a utopian space. Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* (1796), however, offers a different perspective. Section two of the chapter will show the coast as a space which encounters folkloric and mythic anthropomorphism, creating a metaphor for cannibalistic consumption and unbalanced marriages. For Lewis, the coast is a space capable of representing the danger that women face in ill-advised marriages. The final section discusses Ann Radcliffe's poems in *The Romance of the Forest* (1791). For Radcliffe, the coast is portrayed as an area abounding with fantastical spirits, nymphs and creatures, all of whom contribute to a portrayal of the space as an area of escapism and wish-fulfilment. Each of these sections demonstrates the way the coast is used to critique society, particularly patriarchy, marriage and the church. The coast provides either a preferable alternative to the man-made structure, as with sections one and three, or a damning metaphor for its flaws, as with section two.

Folklore tales are frequently violent and frightening. They feature fantastical 'monsters and dragons, evil stepparents' and 'false brides' with 'severed limbs'.⁴⁸ Joseph Abbruscato reasons that these elements are 'important tools to teach children about themselves and the world around them'.⁴⁹ These Gothic horror elements serve more of a role than just entertainment, bolstering readers against the dangers of reality, preparing them to become 'productive members of their societies,

⁴⁸ Joseph Abbruscato, 'Introduction: The State of Modern Fairy Tales', in *The Gothic Fairy Tale in Young Adult Literature*, ed. by Joseph Abbruscato and Tanya Jones (Jefferson: MacFarland and Company, 2014), pp. 1-10, p. 1.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

cultures, and families, and able to maturely handle the crises and situations which arise in the course of their lives.⁵⁰ Abbruscato inadvertently describes an important function of Gothic novels here - representation and critique of reality. Both folkloric and Gothic texts are similarly motivated. Kate Bernheimer, too, shows how folklore tales use Gothic motifs to depict the real world: 'it is violent; and yes, there is loss. There is murder, incest, famine and rape – all of these haunt the stories, as they haunt us. The [folklore] world is the real world.'⁵¹ Without frightening elements, then, the message of myth would be unheard, and the true intention of folklore, to protect rather than to mollify, would not be achieved. Folklore relies on Gothic motifs to deliver its effect. Gothic texts, in their turn, have come to adopt mythological motifs in a similar fashion. The coast in Gothic literature is an example of where folkloric imagery has been adopted. It is a space where, often, the fantastical and real worlds mix, becoming a supernatural hybrid of the two paradigms. As well as being an ecotonal boundary between land and sea, it can also be interpreted as a boundary between the real and the imagined. This dual-ness is unsettling and often dark, emphasising a character's sense of isolation from the civilised world.

Folklore's role in ending childhood innocence, by using childish tropes and images to introduce adult concepts like poverty (*Cinderella*) or murder (*Little Red Riding Hood*), makes it a good way to investigate the relevance of the coast to the Gothic genre. Through looking at the way that folkloric stories have been used by Gothic writers to access the pain and suffering of reality, researchers can better understand why the coast is an important place for Gothic protest. The Gothic is a genre which often critiques society. To achieve this critique, the Gothic depicts the coast as a space which is separated from society, where traditional rules and norms do not apply. The interstitial coast has an ethereal, sublime quality, resembling supernatural folklore. 'Interstitial' refers to the coast's existence between two different spaces. The monsters and fairies depicted at the shore are good and bad conjurations of features of the terrestrial world. Society's villains are represented by supernatural aquatic monsters. Fairies are magical and beautiful conceptual figures, depicting ideas like freedom and the natural. Folkloric motifs are depicted at the Gothic coast to shock, to imagine a better world.

Both folklore and the Gothic occupy a borderline between the real and the unreal. In this regard, the genres behave in a coastal, interspatial fashion. Manuel Aguirre describes this borderline: 'The nature of the other in Gothic hinges on its lack of definition: we cannot further its boundaries, as it is

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Kate Bernheimer, 'Introduction' in *My Mother She Killed Me, My Father He Ate Me: Forty New Fairy Tales* (London: Penguin Group, 2010), pp. 8-12, p. 12.

often to be identified less with a distinct locus than with unfamiliar traits developed by familiar space.⁵² Although Aguirre does not describe the coast as this 'familiar space', the shore is often the site at which the 'unfamiliar' or mysterious is encountered in the Gothic. The coast's natural ambiguity incites a sense of terror and uncertainty. This effect is amplified when mythic or folkloric figures appear – the binary between the real and the unreal is challenged. Aguirre suggests that in the Gothic 'we cannot quite tell the other from our own world: it is part of and yet profoundly alien to the human realm.'⁵³ This ambiguity between known and unknown links folklore, Gothic and the coast. As Aguirre comments, the boundary is disturbed, and reader's perceptions of reality are challenged. Gothic texts achieve this through their inclusion of the familiar (coastal) and the non-familiar (mythical elements). As the two features coincide, the distinction between real and imagined becomes blurred, and the two intermingle, just as the coast is a mixture of land and sea, but also a unique territory. Through investigating the representation of this setting, we are further able to understand the nuances of this hybrid, and how it functions to exacerbate the effects of Gothic texts.

HORACE WALPOLE AND BLUEBEARD

Both folklore and the Gothic use the theme of entrapment to depict protagonists and villains in their respective roles. Protagonists are the trapped party, and villains are the trappers. Protagonists are trapped by the villains, such as Bluebeard, who often hold the key to forbidden bedrooms and dungeons within arcane and grandiose edifices. The Bluebeard archetype, then, is important to the coast because it serves as a point of total contrast. Bluebeard is associated with castles, palaces and dungeons hidden in large cavernous mansions. Anne Williams astutely describes the castle as an element of patriarchal seduction, essential to Bluebeard's power and influence.⁵⁴ For the Bluebeard archetype, the castle is not merely setting, but a source of details from which to portray reality: 'it "realizes", makes concrete, the structure of power that engenders the action within this social world.'⁵⁵ Bluebeard's power is physically manifested by the grandiose edifice that he uses to trap his victims, which is therefore an extension of his character. The fact that this is a distinctly man-made setting, too, is vital to establishing effect. 'As "monsters" often do, the "unnatural" Bluebeard [exists within] [...] the "unnatural" state we call culture.'⁵⁶ Williams compares Bluebeard's castle to the

⁵² Manuel Aguirre, 'Mary Robinson's 'The Haunted Beach' and the Grammar of the Gothic', *Neophilologus*, 98 (2014), pp. 690-704, p. 496.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Anne Williams, *The Art of Darkness* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1995) p. 42.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 41.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

underground caves of Hades in order to emphasise that the man-made quality of the castle is what ties Bluebeard to notions of warped patriarchy, featuring ‘haunting’ families and their legacies.⁵⁷ The house wraps characters in the claustrophobic notion of inescapable cultural values which de-humanise individuals. Bluebeard, then, provides a motif for the unnatural control and scope of patriarchy and the horrifying ways in which it can isolate the powerless. Where Bluebeard and the coast coincide in the Gothic, a juxtaposition emerges between two disparate spaces. The coast offers caves and rock features which, although providing protection from the outside world as the castle does, do not come with any implication of suffocating loss of agency. Rather, at the coast, characters are empowered, freed from the overbearing Bluebeard characters which can only dominate narratives within their respective castles. Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) provides an example of this contrast between Bluebeard’s castle and the ownerless coast.

The Castle of Otranto contains one main Bluebeard archetype– the patriarch and king Manfred. Walpole also provides comparative father and patriarchal figures, offering both exaggeration of Manfred’s dislikeable character and an example of what a successful male authority figure can be like. Manfred himself, however, is violent, wealthy and powerful, and attempts to trap and manipulate women into fulfilling his own lusts. Manfred tries to trap Isabella in the castle, despite sharing the space with Hippolita, his wife. Hippolita is forgotten by Manfred, who behaves as if she does not exist. She is comparable to the bodies of Bluebeard’s dismembered and used wives, which he keeps trapped in the castle like trophies for his new wives to find. Hippolita’s presence is haunting for Isabella. She is a constant reminder of Manfred’s lack of respect for women, and his motivation to consume and discard all that they have to offer. Matilda and Theodore’s relationship contrasts Manfred and Hippolita’s in its ease and naturalness. The coastal setting, in comparison to Manfred’s castle, depicts their relationship as a good one. Chapter three shows the two relationships, and the two spaces, as in juxtaposition with one another.

Not against *thy* father; indeed I dare not, said Theodore: excuse me, lady; I had forgotten– but could I gaze on thee, and remember thou art sprung from the tyrant Manfred? –But he is thy father, and from this moment my injuries are buried in oblivion. A deep and hollow groan, which seem to come from above, startled the Princess and Theodore. Good heaven! We are overheard! said the Princess. They listened; but perceiving no farther noise, they both concluded it the effect of pent-up vapours: on the Princess, proceeding Theodore softly, carried him to her father’s armoury; where equipping him with a complete suit, he

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 44.

was conducted by Matilda to the posterngate. Avoid the town, said the Princess, and all the western side of the castle: 'tis there the search must be making by Manfred and the strangers: but hie thee to the opposite quarter. Yonder, behind that forest to the east is a chain of rocks, hollowed into a labyrinth of caverns that reach the seacoast. There thou mayst lie concealed, till thou canst make signs to some vessel to put on shore and take thee off. Go! Heaven be thy guide!⁵⁸

In this scene, Matilda, Manfred's daughter, is helping Theodore escape from Manfred's prison, where he is trapped until he will be killed. Manfred has sentenced Theodore to death for helping Isabella escape. In the quoted passage, the romance between Matilda and Theodore is just beginning, but its origin is contextualised in Bluebeard. Manfred and his tyrannical evil make it impossible for Theodore to comprehend fully that Matilda could be his offspring. The pair are discernibly anxious, blaming their paranoia on 'pent-up vapours'. The level of anxiety that the prison generates is a comment on the urgency of their situation. There is also a vaguely comical anti-climax to this, as the noise is just vapours. Walpole possibly pastiches here elements of Romantic literature to bathetic, comic effect. Theodore and Matilda also seem to believe that Manfred is omnipresent within the castle walls. The 'deep and hollow groan' above them in the prison emphasises their underground location, as well as their entrapment. The groans from above, mysterious in origin, emphasise Manfred's evilness. They also render Theodore's entrapment in the prison akin to being in hell. Theodore and Matilda are paranoid that they are being listened to, the possibility that they may be 'overheard' extends Manfred's power to even influence what they can say and do when they are alone. This mirrors the folkloric Bluebeard's control over his wives. If the wives get blood on the keys he gives them, they are fated to die, extending the power of Bluebeard beyond that which he can extend in person. The Bluebeard archetype, then, is supernatural, even demonic, since he seems to have nonhuman powers to make others miserable, even when he is not present. The horror of Theodore's entrapment in the castle emphasises the freedom that the seacoast on the other side of the caverns represents – it is a place of total and perfect liberation, contrasting Manfred's hellish and Bluebeard-esque castle.

The underground space contrasts the coast. The former is a prison while the latter offers salvation. The rocks and caverns which lead to the coast are purgatorial. It is the route which Theodore must take in order to reach freedom (or the 'end' of his journey). The coast is essential for this salvation. The coastal caverns offer both concealment and the possibility of escape over the sea, indicating

⁵⁸ Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, ed. by Michael Gamer (London: Penguin, 2001) pp. 65-66.

that the coast is a space of true liberation away from the hellishness of Manfred's prison. The groans, the underground setting and the tense anxiety link to depict a hellish scene, controlled by a demonic patriarchal despot. The coast, in contrast, is explicitly linked to heaven. Whilst escaping, Matilda says, 'Heaven be thy guide.' This line suggests that the coastline is a safe and Godly space, infused with salvation and Christian values. The comparison of these two settings depicts the natural world as superior to the stifling entrapment of Manfred's castle, as well as criticising Manfred himself. Maria Tatar comments that 'both myth and fairy tale take up powerful questions about innocence and predatory behaviour through the optic of the nature/culture divide.'⁵⁹ As Tatar observes, the nature/culture divide is present here – it is through nature that the protagonists and villains are framed. The coast has an important role in dividing nature from culture, and therefore good from bad. As the prison is betrayed as a hellish space, then Manfred, who condemned Theodore to die there, is a sort of Satan. Here, there are clear comparisons to be made between Manfred and Bluebeard. Manfred is a binary evil character, forming a familiar and a common enemy who unites almost every other character against him. He unites others to the extent that Matilda and Theodore fall in love with each other because of their joint plight against him. He is so bad and so dislikeable as to make his own daughter want to betray him and to even love someone who has grossly insulted Manfred's authority. The fact that the coast is a significant setting for Theodore's escape from Manfred highlights its importance as a representation of freedom and goodness, especially in its juxtaposition with Manfred's prison. The connection of the coast with goodness is also made in Radcliffe's *A Sicilian Romance*, where a coastal lighthouse represents respected Christian and family values, in contrast with other non-coastal spaces.

Theodore's father, the once wealthy monk Jerome, provides a comparative father figure to Manfred, emphasising Manfred's Bluebeard-like tendencies and offering a softer version of patriarchy as an alternative. Chapter four presents the pair as contrasting patriarchs, whilst holding court in Manfred's castle.

Rise, said he; thy life is not my present purpose. -But tell me thy history, and how thou camest connected with this old traitor here. My lord! Said Jerome eagerly. - Peace, impostor! Said Manfred; I will not have him prompted. My lord, said Theodore, I want no assistance; my story is very brief. I was carried at five years of age to Algiers with my mother, who had been taken by corsairs from the coast of Sicily. She died of grief in less than a

⁵⁹ Maria Tatar, 'Introduction', in *The Cambridge Companion to Fairy Tales*, ed. Maria Tatar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 1-10, p. 5.

twelvemonth. - The tears gushed from Jerome's eyes, on whose countenance a thousand anxious passions stood expressed. [...] -It is most true, said Jerome; I am that wretched father. [...] I remained in slavery, said Theodore, until within these two years, when attending on my master in his cruises, I was delivered by a Christian vessel, which overpowered the pirate; and restoring myself to the captain, he generously put me on the shore in Sicily. But alas! Finding a father, I learned that his estate, which was situated on the coast, and during his absence laid in waste by the rover who had carried my mother and me into captivity: that his castle had been burnt to the ground: and that my father on his return had sold what remained, and was retired into religion in the kingdom of Naples, where, no man could inform me.⁶⁰

Coastal imagery is used to separate Manfred's character from Jerome's. While Manfred is situated in imposing edifices, Jerome is depicted living in modest coastal properties, which Theodore was due to inherit. The inclusion of the coastal setting makes both Jerome's and Theodore's characters seem more noble and sympathetic. Jerome's sensitivity and empathy contrasts with Manfred's arrogant forcefulness. While Jerome cries and implores Manfred to be more sympathetic, calling himself 'wretched', Manfred openly says he does not care about Theodore's life, arrogantly orders everyone to listen to him, and holds power over everyone in the room. Jerome is proffered as a preferable father figure to Manfred. He clearly loves and cares for his son, he regrets what has happened even though it was not his fault, and he is portrayed as a deeply religious and moral character, which would have been regarded sympathetically by readers at the time of publishing. For Theodore, the coast represents both fond childhood memories and his escape from pirates at sea. The shore underpins major events in Theodore's life, making it a formative influence on his personality. Jerome's and Theodore's good characters are linked with, and perhaps come from, the coast.

The coast is established in this scene as a pure, life giving space. Theodore's mother dies after being taken away from the coast in Sicily, the memory of which hurts Jerome so deeply that it provokes tears. When Theodore is liberated from slavery and pirates, he is brought to the coast. Jerome's estate, which has been destroyed by bandits, is depicted as being once 'situated on the coast'. Naples, importantly, is a coastal city: Jerome's entire life has been lived on coastlines. For Theodore, coastlines have meant freedom; Matilda frees him from prison and takes him to the coast; before he and his mother are kidnapped his whole childhood is at the coast; when he is liberated from slavery he is taken to the coast. For both men, coastal spaces offer salvation and liberation. The space

⁶⁰ Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (London: Penguin Books, 2001), pp. 74-75.

establishes Jerome as a good father and man, in direct contrast with Manfred who lives exclusively in the confines of his castle and away from the coast and nature in general. The patriarch, then, is criticised without being absolutely rejected. Manfred, as a depiction of the Bluebeard archetype, shows the extent to which patriarchy and male power can be malevolent, whilst Jerome shows an alternative, positive father figure. Manfred's character, when compared to Jerome's, redeems the general principle of patriarchy whilst criticising the power within it. The coast is the main agent through which Walpole delivers his criticism of uncontrolled patriarchal power, since it both contrasts with Manfred and provides the setting to depict an alternative.

MATTHEW LEWIS AND THE WATER-KING

Matthew Lewis also takes inspiration from folklore to write his novel *The Monk* (1796). 'The Water-King', originally a Danish folktale which Lewis features in his novel, discusses the dangers for a woman intending to get married in the eighteenth century.⁶¹ It also deals with issues of cannibalism, deceit, and xenophobia. Theodore, Raymond's servant, tells the tale of the Water-King to a group of nuns in the monastery. Theodore is in the monastery disguised as a beggar in order to avenge the murder of Agnes on Raymond's behalf, whilst also trying to warn the nuns against the dangers of men. Whilst building excitement among the nuns, Theodore establishes the tale as enmeshed in mythical magic.

'But before I begin,' said he 'it is necessary to inform you, ladies, this same Denmark is terribly infested by sorcerers, witches, and evil spirits. Every element possesses its appropriate daemons. The woods are haunted by malignant power, call the Erl-or Oak-King: he it is who blights the trees, spoils the harvest, and commands the imps and goblins: he appears in the form of an old man of majestic figure, with a golden crown and long white beard: his principal amusement is to entice young children from their parents, and as soon as he gets them into his cave, he tears them into a thousand pieces - the rivers are governed by another fiend, called the Water-King: his province is to agitate the deep, occasion shipwrecks, and drag the drowning sailors beneath the waves: he wears the appearance of a warrior, and employs himself in luring young virgins into his snare: what he does to them, when he catches them in the water, reverend ladies, I leave for you to imagine –'⁶²

⁶¹ Lis Møller, 'Travelling Ballads: The Disseminations of Danish Medieval Ballads in Germany and Britain, 1760s to 1830s' in *Danish Literature as World Literature*, ed. by Dan Ringgaard and Mads Rosendahl Thomsen (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017) pp. 32-52, p. 43.

⁶² Matthew Lewis, *The Monk*, ed. David Stuart Davies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980) p. 222.

These dark and magical themes are examples of what makes folklore so attractive. As Abbruscato points out, 'The dark landscape, inappropriate lusts, and ravenous villains correspond to the dangerous impulses and aggressions [that readers] actually experience as part of their own mental topographies, and fairy tales offer narratives that put those scary appetites in their proper places.'⁶³ As Abbruscato indicates, fantastical creatures with even more unbelievable desires act as an outlet for readers. The unreality of the character allows readers to enjoy disgusted interest in their crimes without having to feel any kind of legitimate outrage as their fantastical context facilitates a level of detachment. The animalistic, hedonistic amorality of the fairy-tale characters Theodore lists before singing the ballad introduce a folklore Gothic hybrid in the scene. Immoral impulses in readers, who are both drawn in and repelled by Theodore's narrative, help to tie folklore to Gothic: 'Gothic plots build on a deed (whether physical, intellectual or moral) that opens up the human to the other.'⁶⁴ Through this anthropomorphism, Lewis is able to connect the human to the supernatural in a way that is both uncanny and archetypally Gothic. Landscape, however, is an important part of this transformation. Lewis' Theodore identifies the 'province' of the Water-King being to enact coastal and aquatic misdeeds – this sense of purpose is essential for his existence. The mythic figure cannot exist simply for the benefit of the reader's self-realisation, but also must exist in a fully realised world of its own. There must be a connection between reality and fantasy within the text for a convincing anthropomorphism to be made. One way in which the human is linked to the other in the Water-King ballad is through mythic transformation.

the witch she gave him armour white;
he formed him like a gallant knight;
of water clear next made her hand
a steed, whose housings were of sand.⁶⁵

After seeing the maid on the shore, the Water-King asks his mother to transform him into a human so he can trick the maid into coming back into the ocean with him. Through her magic, she is able to turn him into a traditional mediaeval knight with white armour, a symbol of purity and innocence which, as the rest of the ballad shows, is deceitful. His mother uses the water and sand as transformative matter, making a horse and stable respectively for the Water-King or knight. Here, the coast becomes a scene of magic and possibility. The witch's magic is so powerful that she is able to persuade everyone around the maid that the Water-King is a good, attractive and trustworthy husband. The metamorphosis the Water-King undergoes makes him seem to be an archetypal

⁶³ Abbruscato, p. 9.

⁶⁴ Aguirre, p. 696.

⁶⁵ *The Monk*, p. 223.

folkloric knight eager to whisk a young, innocent virgin off her feet and into a traditional happy ending. Holly Hirst explains that transformation is an important technique to folklore, and usually takes place in three different ways. 'The first is that of a shape-changer, a trait illustrated by the mythic figure of Zeus who takes on many different animal and non-animate forms in order to seduce [...] half of the female population of ancient Greece. The second variant is that of the definitive change to a form that "more fully expresses them and perfects them than their first form."'66 The third variant 'is that of the temporary change prompted by outside force as punishment or impediment.'67 The type of transformation that occurs here mirrors the seduction transformation of Zeus. The Water-King is transformed into an attractive and appealing character in order to manipulate women into trusting him.

This transformation motif occurs frequently in both folklore and Gothic literature. Water is a particularly apt place for these transformations to occur. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, various aquatic transformations are mentioned during the tale of Arachne.

Arachne shows Europa cheated by
the bull's disguise, a real bull you'd think
And real sea. The girl was gazing at
the shore she'd left and calling to her friends,
Seeming to dread the leaping billows touch,
Shrinking and drawing up her feet in fear
[...]
She wove, and pictured Leda as she lay
Under the white swan's wings.'68

Arachne weaves the 'Europa and the Bull' myth, which depicts Zeus, disguised as a bull, kidnapping Europa and swimming across the sea with her from Lebanon to Crete in order to rape her. Ovid depicts her as a lonely victim of the God's abuse, 'gazing' longingly at the coast which comes to represent the distance between her and her old life, and the full extent of what Zeus has taken away from her. Duplicity on Zeus' part is also implied, 'a real bull you'd think', referring to Europa's innocent mistaking of the bull for another one of her father's cattle. She comes to fear the coastal waters 'leaping' towards her, as if the waters themselves represent her rapist. The coast, being the

⁶⁶ Holly Hirst, 'Gothic Fairy-tales and Deleuzian Desire', *Palgrave Communications*, 4 (2018), pp.51-59, p. 55.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. by A. D. Melville (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) p. 75.

place at which she is attacked, is anthropomorphised as a conspirator, complicit in her misery. Arachne also weaves the myth of 'Leda and the Swan', which also references aquatic transformation. As with 'Europa and the Bull', Zeus transforms into an animal in order to trick women into letting their guard down. Although Leda's rape is not directly coastal, the myth does take place in shallow waters. The swan is also a shallow water animal. Classical literature sets a precedent for the Gothic development of this myth. Shallow and coastal waters can be depicted as Gothic, predatory forces, looking out for vulnerable young women to trick and then consume. The unpredictability of coastal waters mirrors the behaviour of transformed mythological characters – at one moment, they appear to be calm, benign and gentle. Their terrifying and rapid change from innocent to dangerous, however, puts those unsuspecting women on the shore at risk.

The transformation in the Water-King is both a mythological and a Gothic metamorphosis because the lines between the human and the other are blurred. As Hirst observes, 'In the tales of Gothic transformation, the key focus is not completed transformation but a process, a confusion of forms and identities or a mutation – a "becoming". [...] the differentiation between human and animal is increasingly blurred, not only in terms of physical appearance, but in terms of internal psychology too.'⁶⁹ The Water-King is never human or animal, but an uncanny hybrid. He is animalistic in his desire to obtain and consume the maid, but he is also distinctly human in the way he goes about it, with clever and manipulative flair. He is a hybrid between sea creature and man, making him an ecotonal figure. He looks human for most of the ballad, despite the fact that he is not. There is never really a distinction between the Water-King and the knight he becomes. This ambiguity suggests that external appearances are misleading and can hide the character's flaws. Appearances have the power to mislead, which makes them dangerous. The women in this tale decide to trust the Water-King based on his appearance and forfeit the maid's life as a result. Unlike the Bluebeard tale, then, the Water-King warns readers that an appearance can never show the depth of reality behind a character. Just like the coast, a seemingly calm shore can mask a strong storm coming. White foam at the shore can mask a strong and deadly current. Attractive and convincing appearances can deceive, and potentially be deadly in their deception.

Although the Water-King behaves somewhat like a generic human man in attempt to obtain the maid, Lewis also describes his demonic characteristics.

the water-fiend's malignant eye

⁶⁹ Hirst, p. 55.

along the banks beheld her hie;
Straight to his mother-witch he sped
and thus in suppliant accents said:
'oh! Mother! Mother! Now advise,
how I may yonder maid surprise:
oh! Mother! Mother! Now explain,
how I may yonder maid obtain.'⁷⁰

He watches her walk along the shore in a way that is relatively normal and human-like, but with the additional detail of a 'malignant eye'. This description identifies him as untrustworthy and dangerous. Thus, the 'suppliant accent' he uses to talk to his mother becomes sinister since his predatory intentions have been revealed by the description of his 'eye'. The shoreline is portrayed ambiguously in the tale, featuring description of both a river ('banks', 'streamlet') and a coastline ('sand', 'billows'). The ambiguity between the spaces is perhaps used to add a level of confusion, where neither the reader nor the maid is fully aware of what is happening. Equally, however, it might also be because Lewis himself was not a geographer. The mixed register emphasises the extent to which both a riverbank and a shoreline might be seen as an ecotonal space capable of provoking similar effects. As stated earlier, metamorphoses in classic literature often occur in spaces of shallow water, whether coastal or on a river. Rivers, in their function of feeding into oceans, share ecotonal similarities and feed into one another. The Gothic potential of the coast, then, overlaps that of the river.

The Water-King also talks about obtaining a woman in a way that is partisan and objectifying, focusing on individual body parts, rather than her character or appearance as a whole. She is discussed as both an animal and an object to be acquired, thereby developing the general theme of cannibalistic consumption which folklore brings to the Gothic. When she is consumed by the Water-King, the consumption is ecstatic for the Water-King and deathly for the maid.

she shrieks, but shrieks in vain; for high
the wild winds rising dull the cry;
the fiend exults; the billows dash,
and o'er their hapless victim wash.'⁷¹

⁷⁰ *The Monk*, p. 223.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

The Water-King 'exults': in the context of newly-weds, this creates a double entendre. The language insinuates sexuality, whilst also describing the horrible reality. The shrieks and cries the maid makes are clearly in pain, referencing what might be traditionally acceptable on a wedding night. She is both sexually and physically consumed by water: her death is both by cannibalism and by rape. It is cannibalistic in that she is swallowed up by the water, as a mouth would swallow food, and that her corpse then stays within it to rot and decay, providing food for the inhabitants of the coastal sea, perhaps even the Water-King and his mother. Carolyn Daniel suggests that the importance of cannibalism and sexual consumption to folklore cannot be understated. 'Stories about monsters who threatened to consume [...] continue to be the mainstay of much grotesque horror fiction aimed at both children and adults. Monsters such as these act outside cultural and social prohibitions and represent the antithesis of civilised humanity.'⁷² Although Daniel correctly emphasises the importance of the trope, the idea that it is antithetical to society perhaps overgeneralises. The idea of a husband who treats a wife's body as a consumable object, for example, is well within the realm of cultural norms. So too is a mother-in-law who would like to slaughter or dispose of her son's new spouse. The relationship that endures in this tale is that of the Water-King and his mother – the one who suffers to strengthen it is the wife. This is an idea which is ingrained in society, and is especially relevant in folklore.⁷³ The coast fulfils the witches' desires, obeying her commands, and forming to suit her wishes. Just as the new bride enters the unfamiliar family home of her new spouse, the maid enters the coastal seas and finds herself out of her depth.

It is important to note that the coastal location of this tale, in some ways, plays a part in the breaking of the cultural and social prohibitions Daniel identifies. Because it is an interstitial space, it facilitates a tone of uncertainty and ambiguity. It does not adhere to moral or social norms. The coast assists the Water-King in the narrative, being moulded into any shape necessary, and providing the proximity to reach the maid easily. The coast is the border between the realm of the maid and the realm of the Water-King. In this instance, the shore aids and abets the Water-King, showing the natural and feral, bestial and amoral. The space does not impart ethical or spiritual messages in *The Monk*, as it does for Radcliffe. Furthermore, it is important to also note that the water continually erodes and consumes the land. The water encroaches upon the space humanity has. In that way, it also consumes and overcomes human agency, as the Water-King does.

⁷² Abbruscato, p. 7.

⁷³ Please see Margery Hourihan, *Deconstructing the Hero: Literary Theory and Children's Literature* (London: Routledge, 1997), especially: 'The women in the hero's story are rarely shown as involved in any kind of relationship with each other, and where a relationship between women, especially between mother and daughter [in-law], is featured it is almost invariably hostile and destructive.' P. 200.

Abbruscato also rightly suggests that the threat of being consumed is linked with the terror of personal nonexistence. 'With the ever-present potential of cannibalisation and the subsequent lack of being, these hero and protagonist identities become merged with the consumer, completely altering him and his own story. [...] This fear of victimisation by cannibalism is the fate of losing human identity, shape or existence.'⁷⁴ For the maid, both her body and her personality are totally and utterly consumed by the Water-King. Her body is an allegory for the consumption involved between husband-and-wife. The husband consumes the woman in that she is owned by him. He has control over her financially, legally and sexually; she becomes an object within marriage. Consumption, then, has many different meanings in the Gothic. One can be consumed sexually, through rape, consumed gustatorily, through cannibalism, or be consumed spiritually, through stolen personal identity. Powerlessness, vulnerability and loss of agency are all tied to the concept of the body consumed, as with the maid who sinks beneath the waves. The coast, from this perspective, is a barrier to the literal consumption the maid endures in the sea – the further she walks away from it, the more agency she loses, and the more she is engulfed by the water. The sea, perhaps, is a metaphor for the worst of what can happen for women in patriarchy, while the coast represents the golden safety of childhood before marriage. Crossing the boundary from childhood to marriage entails sexual consummation. Here, the maid's sinking into the waves of pain and loss signifies her lost virginity. Her childhood, though always in her sight in the form of the shore, is now unreachable. Lewis emphasises this warning and threat of consumption within marriage in the final verse of the Water-King ballad:

Warned by this tale, ye damsels fair,
to whom you give your love beware!
Believe not every handsome knight,
and dance not with the water-sprite!⁷⁵

Here, the coast represents the point at which fantasy and reality mix. In myth and folklore, characters can transform into a shape that is completely different from the original. In reality, although the change is not as conspicuous, people can use their attractive appearance to win social aplomb or to manipulate people in to doing what they want them to do. People can appear to be trustworthy when they are not, just as coastal waters can seem calm before a storm. As long as society attaches notions of goodness and virtue to physical attractiveness, people misjudge others.

⁷⁴ Abbruscato, p. 8.

⁷⁵ Matthew Lewis, *The Monk*, ed. David Stuart Davies (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2009) p. 223.

In the context of a society where men can hold complete control over women in marriage and relationships, this warning holds a dark significance. It is not so simple as misjudging someone: if one chooses one's partner for looks alone, they risk their safety in the long term. Lewis warns women not to believe every handsome young man they come across. Since the coast is an interspatial boundary between the mysterious and the familiar, the setting illustrates how fantastical transformations overlap with the reality of eighteenth-century courtship and its dangers for women. Like coastal waters, people are treacherous and unpredictable.

The Water-King is a Gothic and a mythic character. Aguirre proposes that a flawed hero is an essential part of a Gothic narrative. The ballad describes the Water-King as a hero: 'At present I have no business with any of them except the fiend of the waters. He is the hero of my ballad'.⁷⁶ The Water-King is both a villain and the hero. Aguirre observes that 'flawed hero-villains are not simply legion in Gothic: they are the rule.'⁷⁷ The Water-King is a hero in certain respects: he is eponymous and his looks prior to his transformation are not described, so we are only presented with his stereotypically heroic horse and white coat of armour. Aguirre adds, 'It is the fashion of Gothic narrative to centre upon the flawed type rather than upon the paradigmatic hero of traditional narrative. This creates equivocal, liminal figures – peripheral yet central, evil yet appealing, ineffectual yet burdened with the responsibility of heroes. [...] Gothic tells the 'other' story of fairytale, the narrative of the failed hero.'⁷⁸ This analysis can be easily applied to Lewis's Gothic representation of folklore. The Water-King is the alter ego of the traditional mediaeval knight from myth and legend. He looks for a maiden in the same way, he relies on magic in the same way, and, he exists within a romantic setting – the coast. *The Monk* demonstrates an example of a coast which is complicit in destruction, rather than protection. The Water-King provides an anti-folkloric hero. He is the Gothic other within a mythic paradigm.

RADCLIFFE'S POEMS AND THE FANTASTICAL

Ann Radcliffe's use of folkloric imagery in her Gothic novels differs from both Walpole and Lewis. Instead of establishing frightening moral characters inspired by myth, Radcliffe uses the fantastical elements from folklore to create a mood of ethereality. Folkloric images emerge within poems in the narrative rather than in her novels' prose. By creating a mystical atmosphere in these poems, she is able to illustrate her character's escapism, both psychological and literal. This section focuses on

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 211.

⁷⁷ Aguirre, p. 618.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 698.

how the poems within Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* use the coast and folklore to achieve this sense of release. The coast, for Radcliffe, is a place far removed from the society of land, allowing it to be both mystical and distant. The section will deal with two forms of escapism: escape from society (castles, patriarchy and cultural attitudes), and psychological escape from the wonted world into the fantastical.

First, *The Romance of the Forest* uses mythic imagery as protest against society. As Gerry Turcotte indicates, 'For the Gothicism, the castle is the symbol, *par excellence*, of society's attendant dangers, a paradigmatic representation of sexual, personal and cultural entrapment. Although the castle is a particularly convenient metonym for such territory, it is always an equally alienated/alienating landscape.'⁷⁹ The coast is the exact opposite of the castle that Turcotte describes, providing liberation in contrast with the castle's alienation. Characters trapped in the edifices he describes are forced into positions of isolation from both society and their true psychological nature, something that the coast helps them to realise. Adeline struggles within the setting of the arcane and intimidating abbey, where the Marquis traps her, coerces her ally (Monsieur La Motte) and repeatedly threatens her with forced marriage. Within this context, Radcliffe places 'The Song of A Spirit'. Despite the song's being played in the presence of the Marquis at a banquet intended to coerce her into 'compliance with his proposal', Adeline is able to 'withdraw her mind from the present scene and enchant it in sweet delirium'.⁸⁰ In other words, she is able to escape from the physical confines of the abbey into the folkloric world of the coastal spirit whose narrative informs the lyrics. The experience of the spirit is much like her own, connecting the spirit's mythic world with Adeline's reality. The spirit is trapped and dreams of escape.

In the sightless air I dwell,
On the sloping sun-beams play;
Delve the cavern's inmost cell,
Where never yet did day-light stray.

Dive beneath the green-sea waves,
And gambol in the briny deeps;
Skim every shore that Neptune laves,

⁷⁹ Gerry Turcotte, *Peripheral Fear: Transformations of the Gothic in Canadian and Australian Fiction* (Brussels: P. I. E. Peter Lang, 2009), p. 58.

⁸⁰ Ann Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest*, ed. Chloe Chard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) p. 129.

From Lapland's plains to India's steeps.⁸¹

In these lines, the spirit fantasises about her freedom: something which is represented by shorelines. The shores here are a link to the rest of the world in its entirety, the route to fantastical possibilities, whilst the internal 'cavern' of the first stanza is a prison 'cell', without light or colour. The dramatic 'green' waves invoke optimism and fantasy, as well as mythical excitement in the references to 'Neptune'. The sea is a space of the fairy sprite and a place of myth, both representing liberation. Turcotte suggests that the use of fantastical natural scenes in Radcliffian Gothic are aspects of her social and political critiques. 'In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Ann Radcliffe uses the wilds of the Apennines as a metonym for society in decay. Wildness, anarchy and violence are endemic in barbaric walls, and are symptoms of a civilisation in decline. Radcliffe uses this "external" landscape to measure the limits and weakness of her own "civilised" world.'⁸² *The Romance of the Forest* offers similar social critique to *The Mysteries of Udolpho* in that it utilises nature to criticise society. By focusing on the coast, Radcliffe offers a better, more natural alternative to society's edifices. The spirit also plays a role in exposing the 'weakness' of the terrestrial world by highlighting the man-made quality of the cell in which she is trapped away from 'sun-beams'.

The song continues, repeatedly harking back to the coast and the ocean:

Then, when the breeze has sunk away,
And ocean scarce is heard to lave,
For me the sea-nymphs softly play
Their dulcet shells beneath the wave.

Their dulcet shells! I hear them now;
Slow swells the strain upon mine ear;
Now faintly falls---now warbles low,
'Till rapture melts into a tear.⁸³

The inclusion of mythological creatures – sea-nymphs – reiterates the importance of the fantastical to this song. Through use of both Greek mythology and folklore, it moves beyond the realistic, leaving the mundane restrictions of the cell behind completely. The music the nymphs create has an

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 130.

⁸² Turcotte, p. 58.

⁸³ *The Romance of the Forest*, p. 130.

almost spiritual significance, reverent and hymn-like. Sibilance continuing from 'shells' to 'slow swells' is both coastal and soothing, mirroring the sound of waves brushing the shore. The fantastical melancholy which the scene evokes reaches its peak in the spirit's melting tears. The scenario, a fantasy-within-fantasy (as the imagined spirit is imagining fantasies herself), holds a mirror up to Adeline's predicament. She, listening to music and believing it is being played for her by a fantastical spirit, is also moved to tears at the end of the song. The spirit is a comment on and a reflection of her own situation, the repeated references to the coast deeply evocative of the craved natural life.

Having nature as an agent of 'retribution' or complaint rather than the character themselves is key to maintaining a sense of morality that is removed from the character's own experience. Rather than Adeline herself, it is nature and fairy-tale creatures at the coast which expose the unfairness of her situation. She is not the mouthpiece through which dissatisfaction is voiced. She is able to remain relatively impartial and to enjoy a typical folkloric ending. The fact that Radcliffe's characters never fully dissent from patriarchal systems makes it less awkward when they do go back to them at the end of the novel – Adeline does return to the abbey as a married woman, this time under her own terms (with Theodore as her husband and the Marquis dead). Allen W. Grove adds, 'It is the Gothic castle where the hero and/or heroine is imprisoned and endangered, and it is from the oppressive castle the hero and heroine must escape before they can marry. It is also the castle that becomes the site of heterosexual union, reproduction and family.'⁸⁴ As Grove observes, the castle is a site of heterosexual and patriarchal limitation, yet these are both concepts Radcliffe is reluctant to completely reject. Regardless, however, it is always the castle which is blamed. The castle is repeatedly the site at which these values are at their most vicious and alienating. The ruined tower is associated with ancient lineage and medieval times, and as a result is embodied with the gory scenes of violence, war and suppression that the period encompassed. The castle and entrapment are inextricably linked. The shore, on the other hand, signifies both mysticism and freedom. The song of the spirit illustrates this.

Or hie me to some ruin'd tow'r,
Faintly shewn by moon-light gleam,
Where the lone wand'rer owns my pow'r
In shadows dire that substance seem

[...]

⁸⁴ Allen W. Grove, 'Coming Out of the Castle: Sexuality and the Limits of Language', *Historical Reflections*, 26 (2000), 429-446, p. 446.

Unseen I move---unknown am fear'd!
Fancy's wildest dreams I weave;
And oft by bards my voice is heard
To die along the gales of eve.⁸⁵

The spirit's song of entrapment emerges from 'some ruin'd tow'r' but continues through the music of 'bards'. The spirit's unnerving freedom is as a ghost who has died whilst trapped, and only knows freedom through the supernatural. The spirit's ambiguity pertains to what Tatar calls 'raw' stories.⁸⁶ They describe the acting out of primal desires, childhood dreams and fantasies, but do not often venture into exact motivations for their actions. The spirit's motivations, the nature of its entrapment and its powers to escape it are all left deliberately unclear and fantastical. What is emphasised instead, however, is Radcliffe's attention towards greater questions of philosophy – where is it more natural for a person to be? How should a person live? The spirit clearly indicates that a life away from the freedom and exploration that the coast exhibits is one of unfortunate misery. The coast is timeless in contrast to the castle which is rooted firmly in the past. In this way, the primality of a natural, coastal life, is championed above the life of civilisation.

This is made all the more unsettling knowing that the heroine always makes an uncanny return to this setting. Turcotte observes, 'Radcliffe's heroines [...] journey out of the comfortable "country" [or coastline] of home into the "uncomfortable" nightmare of elsewhere.'⁸⁷ The movement from a castle to the freedom of nature, however, is nearly always followed by a swift return. The heroine always 'returns to the former order where those values are spuriously and unconvincingly reaffirmed. The familiar, which is offered up to the reader through the character, is no longer untainted by doubt; it has been rendered cripplingly problematic.'⁸⁸ This criticism, followed by return, cements the macabre Gothic notions of the spirit in the song. I would argue, however, that the use of the coast and other natural spaces renders the return of her characters less 'problematic', making them seem as if they are merely returning to a more natural, virtuous life. The contrast of coastal spaces and the castles and monasteries which trap women in the novels is always made explicit, highlighting the serenity that the shoreline offers. After the heroine has been able to explore herself fully within nature, her return to civilisation is made in her own terms. She has been able to experience the psychological fulfilment that the coast offers. The spirit song emphasises that

⁸⁵ *The Romance of The Forest*, p. 130.

⁸⁶ Tatar, p. 4.

⁸⁷ Turcotte, p. 66

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

the edifice she is trapped in is inferior to the liberation of the coast, but it never suggests that she will live there permanently, or that the effect of the space is limited only to when a character is there. The freedom to experience nature and the coast is the desired object, rather than permanent communion with it. The spirit is aware that her story will 'die among the gales of eve' – the natural, mythical message will be unheeded, and the cycle of repression will continue. The 'gales' she refers to are distinctly coastal, suggesting that her voice will be heard at the shore and carried over the seas.

Radcliffe also uses her poems to depict the significance of folklore to psychological escapism, or 'desire fulfilment'.⁸⁹ The poem 'Titania to Her Love' takes place whilst Adeline waits for Theodore to be released from prison and for her fortune to be restored. She is safely away from the abbey, staying with La Luc and his daughter Clara. As she waits, the folklore allows her to explore her unarticulated desires. The coast, again, is central to her fantasies. In this scene, she has 'retired to the terrace of the garden, which overlooked the sea', the 'tranquil splendour of the setting sun' 'reflected on the polished surface of the waves'.⁹⁰ She also cites 'Shakespeare's genius' and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as chief inspirations for her song, introducing the presence of the fantastical before the poem even begins.⁹¹

O! fly with me through distant air
To isles that gem the western deep!
For laughing Summer revels there,
And hangs her wreath on every steep.

As through the green transparent sea
Light floating on the waves we go,
The nymphs shall gaily welcome me,
Far in their coral caves below.⁹²

The emphasis on the waves of the coast references freedom. 'Fly with me', asks the speaker, invoking suggestions of free and frivolous travel. The characters are not limited to human restrictions. They are also able to delve, welcomed, into the world of fairy-tale 'nymphs'. The tone of

⁸⁹ Hirst, p. 57.

⁹⁰ *The Romance of the Forest*, p. 150.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

this song is less melancholic than 'The Song of a Spirit', but the fact that both repeatedly refer to coastal spaces suggest that their significance to Radcliffe's conception of freedom is important. For the spirit, the coast is a space to be literally and physically free from bondage. In this instance, it represents a lighter, psychological freedom, where wishes are fulfilled and desires merely frivolous, as human inadequacies and restrictions do not apply.

For oft upon their margin sands,
When twilight leads the fresh'ning hours,
I come with all my jocund bands
To charm them from their sea-green bow'rs.

And well they love our sports to view,
And on the Ocean's breast to lave;
And oft as we the dance renew,
They call up music from the wave.

[...]

There myrtle bow'rs, and citron grove,
O'er canopy our airy dance;
And there the sea-breeze loves to rove,
When trembles day's departing glance.⁹³

In these lines, the coast is a space of dancing, music, reverie and colour. A sensory assault of beautiful 'citron' smells, sea-breezes and 'fresh[ness]' depicts the scene as one of complete bliss. The speaker is transported to a place without worry or human limitation. She becomes a folkloric creature herself. It is a space of renewal and re-invention. The setting seems to reference a more blissful version of *The Tempest*, perhaps insinuated by her reference to Shakespeare before the poem begins.

Bridgwater identifies this technique of psychological fulfilment as a Gothic one. He uses Kafka's work as an example. Like Gothic novelists, Kafka sees literature as an expression of his inner reality as a means to explore his own psychical life. Kafka's 'novels are about his feelings of guilt, inadequacy and non-entity as he sought, first, to explore and express his own inner life in the form of his dreams' and to communicate "'truth" or "spiritual reality"'. [...] He eventually found both in

⁹³ Ibid., p. 151.

perspective, style, and symbolical language of dreams, myth and fairy tale, the archetypal symbolism which is present in the Gothic.⁹⁴ Although this is a critique of Kafka, it also applies to Gothic texts. Adeline also ventures into dreams to express her desires. This poem is indeed dreamlike, calling on many folkloric conventions to create an atmosphere of ethereality. Here, it seems Adeline is expressing her 'dreamlike inner life' and desire for perfection. It is somewhat childish in its lack of grasp on reality, as well as fascinating and magnetic. Radcliffe, perhaps, represents Adeline's folkloric fantasies in *The Romance of the Forest* to suggest that fantasy and dreams are an easier way to express deep psychological issues and truths. The coast is key to unlocking mental freedom, allowing characters to express and explore their true selves. Reiteration of the space in Radcliffe ties it to this sense of freedom and rejuvenation, opposed to the stifling edifices which trap characters, both literally and spiritually.

Folklore can be represented as an escape into a dreamlike world away from conscious responsibility. It can also help us to critique the world around us and the problems we see within it. Regardless, folklore provides a safety net to hide behind. The coast is a common site where the mythic and reality mix, because it is an ecotonal borderline between mystery and familiarity, water and land, fantasy and reality. It is a space which encourages easy movement between concepts. Beaches allow disparate concepts to intermingle, creating an unsettling and Gothic tone. Reality as characters know it is questioned at the shore, and fantasy takes on a new relevance. This ecotonal mixture of fantasy and reality creates a tone of horror and of security. There is comfort in delving into the fantastical and unreal, a shelter from the wild storm of reality. As the Gothic is a genre which capitalises on protest, it makes sense that folklore should appear here. Without it, the authors are faced with the grim realities of their novels as a reflection of life. Issues of isolation and alienation would be seen as having no escape, no possibility of an ending. The mingling of fantasy and reality adds a level of detachment for the reader, making the issues discussed seem more abstract and less relevant. It also effectively dramatizes them, using extreme characters and mythical beings to breed excitement. The horror of Gothic, then, takes on a new, enchanting relevance at the coast. In the castles and monasteries which also abound in the genre, the shore comes as a welcome relief, and a promise of a reality altered.

⁹⁴ Bridgewater, p. 29.

CHAPTER TWO

The Coast as a Religious Motif

There is a great deal of criticism on the theological aspects of Gothic fiction. Gothic coastlines as theological spaces, however, have been overlooked. Some recent examples of criticism of religion in the Gothic include Alison Milbank's *God and the Gothic* (2018), Simon Marsden's *The Theological Turn in Contemporary Gothic Fiction* (2018), and Carol Davidson's *Anti-Semitism in British Gothic Literature* (2004). These texts demonstrate the importance of religion to the Gothic mode, as well as highlighting how varied theology in Gothic texts can be. Gothic theological imagery may be Jewish, Hindu or Muslim, as this chapter also investigates. Gothic novels often use religion as both a way to voice outrage against society and as something to protest about in itself. For example, Gothic literature often targets Catholic abbeys and their grandiosity, as in the decadent facades of the Marquis' abbey in Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) or the corrupt cloisters in Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* (1796). Gothic coastlines proffer a humble, stripped back alternative to these imposing edifices, yet are depicted as equally capable of inspiring devotion or demonstrating the power of God. These beaches bring the necessity of grand churches into question.

This chapter will discuss three different aspects of theological imagery and Gothic coastlines. The first section will discuss Ann Radcliffe's use of natural theology in both *The Italian* (1797) and *A Sicilian Romance* (1790). In these texts, she depicts the coast as having an omnipotent Godlike power to influence the emotions and actions of characters in the narrative. This effect is primarily a positive one. It pictures a more natural and alternative form of worship. In the second section, I focus on Matthew Lewis's and Charles Maturin's portrayals of the Red Sea in *The Monk* and *Melmoth the Wanderer*. They also depict the coast as a space of God's omnipotence, but to a darker end. Lewis depicts a coastline where a fearsome, Old Testament God enacts his wrath against sinners. Maturin portrays God's omniscience through the coastline, representing it as a space of eternal remembrance through God. The dark, fearsome power of the Red Sea's coastline condemns the actions of those who disobey religious principles, insinuating that no sin goes unremembered or unpunished. The final section also focuses on the coast's role as God-like punisher. William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798) depict a sea of blood – an image which encapsulates the collective sin of Mankind and condemns humanity. The fearsome power of the coast is represented through its inspiration of awe and fear. Each of these sections proves the coast's role as an enforcer of divine power in Gothic literature. It

condemns and punishes society on God's behalf. The righteous, by way of contrast, are rewarded and protected on the coast.

Before the Gothic period, coastlines were not treated as places for contemplation or relaxation. Alain Corbin identifies a change in approach that started just before the peak of the traditional Gothic period. 'The changing attitude that made a new outlook possible began as early as the seventeenth century. Between 1660 and 1675, the oceans became less mysterious with the progress made by oceanography. In the same period, Satan began to disappear from the Western intellect.'⁹⁵ Corbin's observations predict the conditions of many Gothic texts – vanishing conceptions of Satan and further understanding of the sea and coast helped to change attitudes towards what the coast was capable of signifying. Before developments in oceanography had been made, the mysteries of the space were tied to Satanism and the occult. After the shift Corbin describes, the shore's enigma remained intact, while its most frightening mysteries began to fade. Growing in reputation away from being a 'demonic', 'Satanic' and 'angry' place, the beach took on a less sinister role.⁹⁶ Corbin adds, 'The exploration of the seashore became a part of a way of experiencing nature that conformed with the lifestyle of a social elite seeking renewal and refreshment.'⁹⁷ The coast, and nature more generally, then, came to have a role similar to that of the church. Believers used natural spaces to help them understand more thoroughly the 'mysterious correspondences between the physical world and the spiritual one, between the human and the divine, between man, the microcosm, and the universe, the macrocosm.'⁹⁸ The coast offered spiritual and contemplative opportunities that the church could not provide. The coast provided an insight into God's creation, and its workings, which did not involve a denial of Christian worship, but rather, a reimagining of what worship could entail. As Corbin observes, 'the beauty of nature bore witness to the power and bounty of the Creator. God regulated the spectacle, through both the laws that He had established in his infinite wisdom and his immediate, providential interventions.'⁹⁹ Nature's beauty established an obvious and appealing connection with God, as well as an immediacy which manmade churches could not necessarily replicate.

The central focus of this chapter is Christianity, as that is the most prevalent religion described within English Gothic texts in this period; there are extensive connections between the spiritual and the coastal in these works. As George Adam Smith wrote in 1901, 'In the Psalms the straight coast

⁹⁵ Alain Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea* (California: University of California Press, 1994), p. 18.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

serves to illustrate the irremovable limits which the Almighty has set between sea and land.¹⁰⁰ The coastal space has served as a Christian allegory or God's power and his authority for hundreds of years. The coast was vital for the spread of the early church, being the main landscape for the evangelisation of the gospel as it spread through Europe. Acts details the different places Peter and Paul travelled to proselytise, the majority of which were coastal or port towns. The Bible depicts the shore as a place of both growth and easy withdrawal. Peter was shipwrecked on the island of Malta, highlighting the significance of an island-landscape for the progression of early Christianity. The island offered the seclusion and protection of geographical isolation, which emphasised the potential function of the coast for deep spiritual thought and grand theological purpose.

Gothic novels often depict the shores of lakes and rivers in a similar way to the coast and sea. They are all ecotonal spaces, highlighting the significance of boundaries and their transgression. The intermingling of these spaces may be a deliberate attempt by the authors to demonstrate the similarities between these areas and their effects – their connection emphasises the way that all cultures, countries, communities and religions are tied by their waterways. It may equally be accidental, the product of the authors themselves not being familiar with a specific set of definitions or geographical terms which apply to a coastal analysis. In this chapter I will focus on the significance of what seems to be an ecotonal and coast-like space on the narrative, although the exact nuances of what the shore itself may border can often be ambiguous. Intermingling ambiguity and uncertainty, however, are all concepts which the coast is used to provoke in the Gothic. In the context of theology, this interspatial uncertainty highlights broader ontological ambiguities which religion attempts to address.

RADCLIFFE'S NATURAL THEOLOGY

Ann Radcliffe's personal religious beliefs are difficult to pinpoint, and the uncertainty around her religious affiliations contributes to the mystery of the Christian imagery in her novels. The depictions of faith may well have little or nothing in common with her own beliefs, although her descriptions of coastlines as a space in which God can be found seems to indicate that she herself might have advocated an association between coast and Christ. Radcliffe left few traces of her personal life. She did not keep a diary (apart from some travel journals) or records of her opinions.¹⁰¹ Her work and the little we do know about Radcliffe, however, seem to indicate that she was a Protestant writer, albeit with a few Catholic sympathies. Rictor Norton establishes this in the introduction of his

¹⁰⁰ George Adam Smith, *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1901), p. 132.

¹⁰¹ Rictor Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho*, (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1999) p. I.X.

biography of Radcliffe, *The Mistress of Udolpho*, 'My own aim will be to clearly establish the Dissenting – especially Unitarian – background to Radcliffe's life and work'.¹⁰² In general, as the Gothic is often defined as an anti-Catholic genre written by Protestants, readers should expect a general dislike for Catholicism and an overall bias toward Protestantism.¹⁰³ As Radcliffe was also an English woman, it might be expected that her views reflected the majority religious view at the time of writing.¹⁰⁴ Her sympathies towards Catholicism, its aesthetic grandeur (within churches, iconography and masses themselves) and its tradition, especially in Europe, add a level of complexity to her use of religious imagery. It also contrasts with her use of coastlines.

Radcliffe's writing is influenced by natural theology, as demonstrated by her depiction of nature and God as intertwined entities. As Alison Milbank suggests, for Radcliffe, 'the natural world itself is the source of devotion to God, without any recourse to revelation'.¹⁰⁵ Milbank rightly observes that nature can be a place of worship in Radcliffe's novels – the coast is an important setting for this devotion. Radcliffe's connections to natural theology differ greatly from her Catholic and Protestant ones. Natural theology, unlike other branches of Christianity, attempts to prove the existence of God and divinity through observation of nature, science and human reason, without reliance on scripture or doctrine. William Paley's *Natural Theology* (1802) sets out the argument that creation informs belief, suggesting that the intricacies of mechanical structures in animals and humans, such as joints, are undeniably the work of an intelligent creator. Anne Chandler suggests that this approach appealed to Radcliffe because of its rationalism and reliance on independent and scientific thought: 'natural theology offered at once a justification for, and a spur to, scientific enquiry'.¹⁰⁶ Chandler believes Radcliffe 'is especially drawn to the plenitude-and-variety emphasis of natural theology, and broadly applied, almost existential optimism it fostered'.¹⁰⁷ In this regard, Chandler identifies Radcliffe's nonconformist theological attitudes as a justification for the rest of her worldview. Believing strongly in the value of scientific pursuits and the benevolence of God, natural theology offers Radcliffe an alternative to inflexible Catholic doctrine and to heavily scriptural Protestant teachings. Despite this, however, Chandler aligns Radcliffe with John Ray, who believed that nature did not supplant scripture: 'Radcliffe's concept of spiritual sublime is always lexically mediated – arising, that is, not only from a "book" of nature, but the psalmic naming of its "great Author". By

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Jarlath Killeen, *Emergence of Irish Gothic Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014) p. 51. See specifically 'the Gothic is essentially a Protestant genre.'

¹⁰⁴ Angela Wright, *Gothic Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) p. 83. See specifically 'Protestant British nation' with a 'Protestant monarch'.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Anne Chandler, 'Ann Radcliffe and Natural Theology', *Studies in the Novel*, 38 (2006), pp. 133-153, p. 135.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 141.

this I mean the organic, ecstatic experience of Burkean sublimity is usually tempered by a sense of [...] commonly held meaning (veritably, “common prayer”).¹⁰⁸ Although Chandler correctly identifies Radcliffe’s reference to the written word, and to an Author God, she mistakes these details for foundational theological aspects. Radcliffe never ventures into scripture in great depth or detail, focusing instead on landscape descriptions and devotional comments inspired by these scenes. Radcliffe’s focus on natural theology is a movement away from scripture and toward nature, a perspective which significantly departs from conventional Protestantism. For Radcliffe, the coast contains the essence of divinity more acutely than scripture, as this is where her characters most frequently encounter God.

Radcliffe capitalises on this movement toward the natural and the spiritual by focusing on the shoreline as an area capable of provoking spiritual reflection. This is particularly prevalent in *The Italian*. Romanticism colours her Gothic style without overwhelming its outlook – the shore is still a macabre and mysterious place, with powers beyond the understanding of human onlookers. The beach, looking towards the depth of the sea, becomes a place of humbling spiritual reflection. It often creates a space to escape from the secular influences of the land beyond the coast, forcing characters to confront their insignificance when faced with the grandeur of nature, and providing a chance to converse with God. The ocean, demonstrating the potential wrath of God in its destruction and terrifying size, is tempered in its proximity to the shore. The coast’s rugged geographical features eroded by violent waves (caves, cliffs, rock formations) emphasise both the sea’s power and the coast’s endurance against it. The coast is a space for characters to look outward, to touch the surface of the majesty of God and nature, but from the safety of the shoreline. Much like church, the space provides a chance for characters to listen and to ask for help. The awful and extreme power of nature is present in Radcliffe’s writing.

The shore takes on a magical and sublime role in *The Italian*. Representing much more than just an organic space to the characters, it becomes otherworldly. The coast forms a brink between the ethereal, magical ocean, and the civilised society on land. Radcliffe represents the sea in a highly dynamic way in order to illustrate the enchanting effect of the ocean. She features the sublimity of nature to emphasise the developing romance between Ellena and Vivaldi, whom she describes meeting one another in nature.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

These excursions sometimes led them to Pozzuoli, Baiae, or the woody cliffs of Pausilippo; and as, on their return, they glided along the moon-light bay, the melody of the Italian strains seemed to give enchantment to the sea shore. [...] Frequently as they glided round a promontory, whose shaggy masses impended far over the sea, such magic scenes of beauty unfolded, adorned by these dancing groups on the bay beyond, as no pencil could do justice to.¹⁰⁹

The shore here provides 'enchantment' for onlookers, bestowing it with a certain power and influence above an earthly realm or expectation. Its description, also, as a 'magical scene' reinforces this sense of unearthly beauty. Radcliffe's descriptions of the coast here fit in with what Edmund Burke described as the 'sublime'. Burke, writing in 1757, describes the sublime as a scene which 'paralyzed [...] thought' and inspired the 'strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling.'¹¹⁰ He also includes magnitude and obscurity as prerequisites for a sublime scene. According to Burke, 'natural objects affect us' because of psychological 'laws of connection' which we cannot control.¹¹¹ Words are capable of affecting us in the same way, having 'as considerable a share in exciting ideas of beauty and of the sublime' as natural scenes themselves.¹¹² For Radcliffe, this definition encompasses Gothic significance. In her essay 'On The Supernatural in Poetry' (1826), Radcliffe distinguishes between terror and horror by suggesting that 'the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them'.¹¹³ For Radcliffe, terror and awe are psychological. The seashore she describes is so awe-inspiring that it cannot be replicated, and transcends the abilities that humans have to communicate and codify that experience. In this way, she shows how the coast possesses power beyond human understanding. The fact that the sublime cannot be replicated in words is something which Radcliffe knowingly capitalises on to heighten the tension of her depictions of the coast.

Gazing on the ocean from the coastline, then, is to experience the full terror of the inadequacy of human understanding. The prospect of the shore belittles and humbles the viewer. The coastlines which Radcliffe describes frequently exhibit this kind of sublimity, being a scene above which the mind can represent accurately through 'pencil' - either referring self-consciously to her own writing

¹⁰⁹ Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian*, ed. Robert Miles (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2000), p. 46.

¹¹⁰ Edmund Burke, quoted by *ibid.*, p. 89.

¹¹¹ Manuel Aguirre, 'Mary Robinson's 'The Haunted Beach' and the Grammar of the Gothic', *Neophilologus*, 98 (2014), pp. 690-704, p. 690.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Ann Radcliffe, 'On the Supernatural in Poetry', in *New Monthly Magazine*, 16 (1826), pp.145-152, p. 150.

or to the work of pictorial artists who might want to try and capture the vast emotional response coastline scenes can evoke.

Despite describing her attempts as unable to bring 'justice' to the coast, Radcliffe tries to represent the sublime and magical quality of the scene through use of auditory, visual, tactile and kinetic imagery. By doing so, she gives an immersive feel to her descriptions. This technique establishes the scene as both a sentimental and a Gothic episode in its extended focus on small details. The 'moonlight' creates a sense of romantic mysticism from the reduced vision in darkness, drawing attention to the 'bay' which is the focal centre of the sublime. Auditory imagery follows, using the 'melody of the Italian strains' to reinforce the romantic mood. This, combined with the tactile imagery of the 'woody' and 'shaggy' trees dipping into the water, including the repetition of the word 'gliding' to describe their movement across the bay, creates a total sensual immersion. Radcliffe uses these sensuous images to include the audience in the sublime environment and to attempt to replicate the otherworldly influence the bay has on the characters.

There is also an erotic implication provided by the rocking boat, bobbing on the 'waves' of a 'trembling' sea.¹¹⁴ Allen W. Grove convincingly argues that Radcliffe's use of insinuation allows her to fully capitalise on the Gothic legacy. 'The trained reader comes to expect sexual transgression and violation whether they actually happen or not. The conventions of the genre created by Walpole and his successors allow Ann Radcliffe to emerge in the 1790s as the Queen of Romance because she could write about sex without talking about sex.'¹¹⁵ Although Radcliffe is not explicit here, she heightens the sublime natural with the erotic allusions she knows her readership expects. She shows without telling, creating a disconnection between realism and fantasy. Radcliffe uses ambiguous sexuality to blur the line between the subjective and objective. Readers are unable to determine exactly which sensation is 'real' and which is subjective to Vivaldi's impressions in Radcliffe's narration, adding to a sense of the magical. Without the clearly factual, the boundary between reality and fantasy is blurred. The shore, then, becomes an unsteady borderline between the realism and logic associated with the land, and the depth of mystery and magic associated with the sea.

Notably, Radcliffe provides little information in *The Italian* about how divinity manifests itself at the coast. Radcliffe's descriptions of the beach focus mainly on the experiences of her heroines, with little contextualisation. We are not told exactly why Radcliffe's heroines have spiritual experiences at

¹¹⁴ *The Italian*, p. 46.

¹¹⁵ Allen W. Grove, 'Coming Out of the Castle: Sexuality and the Limits of Language', *Historical Reflections*, 26 (2000), 429-446, p. 438.

the coast, only that they do take place. Stephen Greenblatt comments: 'Shakespeare found he could immeasurably deepen the effect of his plays, that he could provoke in the audience and in himself a peculiarly passionate intensity of response, if he took out a key explanatory element, thereby occluding the rationale, motivation, or ethical principle that accounted for the action that was to unfold.'¹¹⁶ Radcliffe is influenced by Shakespeare in her use of this technique. Just as the elements in *The Tempest* are under Prospero's control, the coast in Radcliffe is controlled by God. Not totally understanding the motivations of Prospero or God heightens the drama of the narratives: essential information is withheld from the reader, intensifying the mystery the coast represents.

Radcliffe establishes the shore's constant observation by opening a chapter with a quote from John Milton's 'The Hymn': 'The lonely mountains o'er, And the resounding shore, / A voice of weeping heard, and loud lament!'¹¹⁷ Radcliffe's use of Milton here serves two purposes; first, as Milbank observes, for the eighteenth century, Milton 'was the national and above all Protestant poet', and his use in this context affirms Radcliffe's point of view as a Protestant writer.¹¹⁸ Secondly, the quotation introduces a melancholic note to the sublime in Radcliffe's writing. Milbank expands on the importance of Miltonic melancholy for Radcliffe's Gothic. 'It is Milton who thus offers the Gothic authors of the eighteenth century a way of appropriating the hermit's contemplation and the aesthetic appeal of the Catholic liturgy and architecture as an instructive mode of spiritual education. [...] Milton shows how to link Catholic 'ecstasies' to Protestant contemplation through his ordering and directing through melancholy.'¹¹⁹ 'The Hymn' is an example of how melancholy facilitates a Catholic aesthetic in Protestant narrative. The lonely, isolated speaker mirrors a Catholic hermit, whilst the natural surroundings, away from the traditional cloister, takes influence from Paley's natural theology. The overall sense of melancholy is 'loud' and exclamatory, imbuing the shore with an uncanny, spiritual power. The shore, melancholic and God-like, seems to be capable of providing warnings - amounting to either striking beauty or ferocious waves.

The scene appeared to sympathise with the spirits of Ellena. It was a gloomy evening, and the lake, which broke in dark waves upon the shore, mingled its hollow sounds with those of the wind, that bowed the lofty pines, and swept gusts among the rocks. She observed with alarm the heavy thunder clouds, that rolled along the sides of the mountains, and the birds

¹¹⁶ Stephen Greenblatt, 'Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare', (London: Pimlico, 2004) p. 323.

¹¹⁷ *The Italian*, p. 209.

¹¹⁸ Alison Milbank, *God and the Gothic: Religion and Reality in the English Literary Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 52.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

circling swiftly over the waters, and scudding away to their nests among the cliffs; and she noticed to Vivaldi, that, as a storm seemed approaching, she wished to avoid crossing the lake.¹²⁰

The water appears to mirror Ellena's sense of perturbation after her tumultuous escape. The 'dark waves' and gloom create a sense of dwelling evil and unrest. The 'hollow sounds' of the wind, 'heavy thunder clouds' and frantically 'circling' 'birds' are similarly mysterious. The coast, holding many of these unsettling warnings, communicates with Ellena, persuading her to avoid taking a boat and facing the ocean's wrath. The sea, which seemed to be assisting Ellena and Vivaldi earlier in the text, now seems to be hindering their safe passage. Despite appearing to favour Ellena, this passage makes clear that the ocean is beyond human comprehension, with properties that are controlled purely by a higher power. The fickle nature of the water establishes the coastline as an essential boundary between safety and unpredictability, and the only reliable communicator between the two spaces.

Whilst the sea's role in *The Italian* is deliberately ambiguous, *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) uses the coast as a means of reuniting Ferdinand with his friends and his mother. The coast, in this instance, seems to be acting to fulfil the will of God.

The flame continued to direct his course; and on a nearer approach, he perceived, by the red reflection of its fires, streaming a long radiance upon the waters beneath—a lighthouse situated upon a point of rock which overhung the sea. He knocked for admittance, and the door was opened by an old man, who bade him welcome. Within appeared a cheerful blazing fire, round which were seated several persons, who seemed like himself to have sought shelter from the tempest of the night. The sight of the fire cheered him, and he advanced towards it, when a sudden scream seized his attention; the company rose up in confusion, and in the same instant he discovered Julia and Hippolitus. The joy of that moment is not to be described, but his attention was quickly called off from his own situation to that of a lady, who during the general transport had fainted. [...] 'My son!' said she, in a languid voice, as she pressed him to her heart. 'Great God, I am recompensed! Surely this moment may repay a life of misery!'

Here, the light falls upon the water in an arrow towards Ferdinand's family. Ferdinand is greeted by all those he had believed he had lost, including his mother, who attributes the event to God's

¹²⁰ *The Italian*, p. 214.

repaying 'a life of misery'. The lighthouse appears to be the literal beacon of salvation. It casts a long stream of light through the darkness and confusion of the scene, both literally and metaphorically illuminating Ferdinand's journey. The light from the lighthouse is both external and internal: within the building his family are seated around a 'cheerful' fire, adding both illumination and warmth. The lighthouse seems to be portrayed as a place from which edifying Christian values may be emitted. This perfect resolution at the end of the texts seems to suggest that the difficulties which preceded this idyllic scene are merely part of a larger spiritual plan over which we have no control. Nature, of course, has a large part in this scheme, but only in its relationship with God. Without the reflection of the waves pointing Ferdinand in this direction, he would not have found his friends or happy ending. The shore, in this scene, is an important agent to both resolve the narrative and explain the suffering of the characters: they were merely being led to this exultant, spiritual happiness. The oppressed and alienated characters are able to achieve happiness only through the work of God in nature. Nature, however, has no agency of its own – it only acts as directed by divine powers. The coast exemplifies this pure and good version of nature.

The lighthouse is a common coastal motif. Samuel Taylor Coleridge also portrays the lighthouse as a beacon for goodness, hope and Christianity. *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798) begins, optimistically and cheerfully, on a shore with a lighthouse.

'The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.¹²¹

The lighthouse establishes the hopeful tone of the first part of the poem. At the lighthouse, the sailors are filled with hope for a successful and peaceful voyage. When they are faced with storms, the albatross that visits them is viewed as a sign from God that they are blessed and that they will be

¹²¹ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' in *Lyrical Ballads: 1798 and 1802*, ed. Fiona Stafford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) pp. 5-25, p. 6.

protected. As a result, they say vespers with the albatross, and the scene itself is focused on looking for signs of God in nature. For example, the albatross is described as a 'Christian soul', and the terrifying prospect of an iceberg is as beautiful as an 'emerald' because of the bird's soothing influence.¹²² The light emitted from the lighthouse seems to inform their voyage. In these early stages, they are hopeful, and the light of the 'Sun' seems to protect them. As with *A Sicilian Romance*, the light and hope cast by the lighthouse seem to extend beyond the building itself and venture for a small distance into the sea. Without this light, the influence of Christianity seems to fade, culminating in the Mariner's shooting of the albatross. The lighthouse and the coast are a motif for the Christian values that abound in Gothic coastal spaces. Beyond the coastal lighthouse and the extent of its literal and metaphorical illumination, characters lose sight of these moral dictates.

Radcliffe's view of the coast as a space where God can be present is a point of view inspired by natural theology. Its modernity and unorthodoxy associate it with progress and distaste for tradition. As Robert Mighall argues, 'Such troubling reminders of the 'dark ages' as the worship of relics, belief in miracles, the persistence of the inquisition [...] occur in the historical and topographical accounts, contemporary with the emergence of Gothic fiction. Such accounts help to reinforce Protestant identity, but also evoke the [...] confrontation that structures the narrative and dramatic effects of Gothic fiction.'¹²³ This confrontation between new and old understandings of God and worship divide approaches to the coastline. Ann Radcliffe's approach is influenced by natural theology. She prioritises the coast over the man-made church. The uncanny presence of the inflexible Catholic church in *The Italian* isolates the spiritual and theological appeal of the coast, whilst *A Sicilian Romance* depicts God's use of the coast as an agent of His will. The alluring tides are an entity which provoke the curiosity and praise of Gothic onlookers. As Pluce and Dulard suggest, 'The movement of the tides [...] is part of this great design: the waves obligingly withdraw, inviting man to collect the creatures that the sea has left behind for him on the shore.'¹²⁴ Radcliffe's writing embodies this philosophy. The coast's physical properties invite the onlooker in, eliciting interest. As we shall see, however, the coast as an inviting symbol of natural theology is a motif which separates Radcliffe from her contemporaries, who view the spiritual implications of the sea as much more threatening.

THE RED SEA

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Robert Mighall, *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) p. 6.

¹²⁴ Alain Corbin quoting Pluce and Dulard, p. 29.

The Red Sea's presence in traditional British Gothic texts is common, owing to the range of connotations the area holds for writers in its theological tradition. Calling on centuries of both historical and theological relevance, the Red Sea's coast has implications for Christians, Jews and older Greek and Egyptian faiths. The space may have different relevance to each faith, but they are united in seeing its coastline as a preserver of the history. The sea itself separates Africa from Asia, encompassing a mixture of these coastal cultures. The sea space in this instance often occupies a similar ecotonal significance to the coast, in that it is a combination of both its surrounding countries and an entity in its own right. The coastlines around it, then, are markers of this interstitial quality, revealing the competing influence of other shores. During the era of the traditional Gothic, the Red Sea coast's influence spread over both Occident and Orient, uniting a diverse group of people in its geography.

The reason for the sea's dramatic name, and its consequent Gothic associations, is disputed. Originally called 'the Great Green' by the Ancient Egyptians, it was also referred to as '*yam suph*' by Hebrew Scholars, '*suph*' referring to the woolly seaweed it produced.¹²⁵ Maurice Copisarow writes about the bizarre nature of the mixing cultures around the sea. 'It is perhaps a paradox that the *Great Green* of Ancient Egypt should have become the *Red Sea* of the Greeks, but it is stranger still that the *yam suph*, the border sea of the desert, should have been entangled in the swamps of the Nile.'¹²⁶ The space has an air of the fantastical in its mix of Hebrew, Egyptian and Greek mythologies. The first recorded instance of the name 'Red Sea' came from the Greek translation of Hebrew texts. Contested theories as to the origin of the name include that it might have been named after the Erythraens, or the 'red people', that it might have been from the red coral in the sea, or from the red appearance the water can have owing to certain zoophytes present in the water. It has also been suggested that there may be a link between 'Red Sea' and *yam suph*, taking into consideration the plant life that the name suggests. Copisarow believes that this linguistic link is unlikely. '[T]he attempt to derive the name Red Sea from Reed Sea (reedy sea – Schilfmeer) seems to be erroneous.'¹²⁷ The other macabre reason for its name is suggested by Carl Jung: 'The Red Sea is the water of death.'¹²⁸ Milton describes the Red Sea as 'A gulf profound, as that Serbonian bog [...] where whole armies have sunk'.¹²⁹ These 'armies' could be an allusion to Artaxerxes, King of Persia, whose army was believed to have drowned in the Red Sea in 350 BCE, or the Egyptian

¹²⁵ Maurice Copisarow, 'The Ancient Egyptian, Greek and Hebrew Concept of the Red Sea, *Vestus Testamentum*, 12, (1962), pp. 1-13, p. 1.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 10-11.

¹²⁸ Carl Jung, *Mysterium Conjunctionis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963) p. 141.

¹²⁹ John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) p. 8.

army which was swallowed by the ocean when in pursuit of the Israelites.¹³⁰ It seems reasonable, then, to imagine that the 'Red' name of the sea could refer to the blood in and around it. The idea of the Red Sea as an aquatic communal grave, lapping onto the shores that surround it and infecting the rivers which feed into it, inspires many Gothic motifs.

The Red Sea's coastline is frequently associated with bloodshed. The use of the Red Sea image in the Gothic recalls the many tragedies of these faiths. Thomas Bjerre comments on the Gothic's ability to revive stories untold: 'region's historical realities take concrete forms in the shape of ghosts that highlight all that has been unsaid in the official version of history.'¹³¹ While the area's official history has been written, and much of its bloodshed is publicly visible, what makes an uncanny return is not the events themselves, but the legacies of individuals who lost their lives in bloodshed and war as Bjerre observes. Ghosts haunt the coastline and reveal the power of the hidden and unsaid histories which people have forgotten. The Red Sea motif revives the mysteries and ghosts attached to each of these faiths, allowing them to reveal their significance. As a multicultural space of blood and death, the coast is infused with an uncanny appeal, both familiar and unfamiliar to audiences.

Traditional Gothic literature has been associated with protesting the love 'English men seem' to have of 'Popery', viewing Catholicism as the extreme enemy of progress.¹³² As Mighall says, 'Such troubling reminders of the 'dark ages' as the worship of relics, belief in miracles, the persistence of the Inquisition or the power of the Pope, occur in both historical and topographical accounts, contemporary with the emergence of Gothic fiction. Such accounts help to reinforce Protestant identity, but also evoke the fission of confrontation that structures the narrative and dramatic effects of Gothic fiction.'¹³³ The Red Sea image perfectly exemplifies the anachronistic presence of the Old Testament God which is frequently tied to Catholicism. The Red Sea's role as a space of Christian protest occurs in Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* (1796). *The Monk*, set in a dark and mysterious monastery, focuses on this sense of Catholic horror. The Red Sea is frequently mentioned as something in which a spirit or apparition may be laid or drowned. Lewis uses this allusion when referring to the emergence of Elvira's ghost in her old chamber.

¹³⁰ For more information on the Red Sea and military history, see Joust Crowel, 'Studying the Six Chariots from the Tom of Tutankhamun – An Update', *Chasing Chariots: Proceedings of the First International Chariot Conference*, ed. André J. Vedlmeijer & Salima Ikram, (Cairo: Sidestone Press, 2013) p. 74.

¹³¹ Thomas Ærvold Bjerre, 'Southern Gothic Literature', *Oxford Research Encyclopaedias Online*, (2017) <<https://oxfordre.com/literature/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.001.0001/acrefore-9780190201098-e-304>> [accessed 3 September 2019]

¹³² Mighall, p. 5.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

And so, your Reverence, upon hearing the shriek, I put away my work, and away posted I to Donna Antonia's chamber. [...] However, in I went, and sure enough, there lay the young Lady at full length upon the floor, as cold as a stone, and as white as a sheet. I was surprized at this, as your Holiness may well suppose; but Oh me! how I shook when I saw a great tall figure at my elbow whose head touched the ceiling! The face was Donna Elvira's, I must confess; but out of its mouth came clouds of fire, its arms were loaded with heavy chains which it rattled piteously, and every hair on its head was a Serpent as big as my arm! At this I was frightened enough, and began to say my Ave-Maria: but the Ghost interrupting me uttered three loud groans, and roared out in a terrible voice, "Oh! That Chicken's wing! My poor soul suffers for it!" As soon as She had said this, the Ground opened, the Spectre sank down, I heard a clap of thunder, and the room was filled with a smell of brimstone. When I recovered from my fright [...] it directly came into my head, that if anyone had power to quiet this Spectre, it must be your Reverence. So hither I came in all diligence, to beg that you will sprinkle my House with holy water, and lay the Apparition in the Red Sea.¹³⁴

Lewis' choice to make Jacintha, the old landlady, relate the awful haunting and apparition of Elvira adds a level of humour to the narrative. Jacintha is the only character in the text who mentions the Red Sea directly. Her 'rambling' and 'prosing' draws attention away from the horror of the context and lightly mocks her old-fashioned and Catholic sensibilities.¹³⁵ Her insistence on sycophantically (and ironically, considering his indiscretions throughout the text) calling Ambrosio 'your Reverence', for example, shows her ignorance of his character. 'She had conceived a great opinion of his piety and virtue; and supposing him to have much influence over the Devil, thought it must be an easy matter for him to lay Elvira's ghost in the Red Sea.'¹³⁶ She fawns over his greatness and abilities to work through God despite his interruptions, lack of 'patience' and his 'threat' that if 'she did not immediately tell her story and have done with it, He should quit the parlour, and leave her to get out of her difficulties herself.'¹³⁷ This creates a sense of ironic humour as well as commenting on a perceived weakness within the Catholic Church; its followers are not encouraged to ask many questions. It also paints Jacintha as a character willing to believe any religious doctrine she is told. Her preoccupation with the Red Sea, illustrates her militant belief that the space is an area from which punishment is sent, and that all who inhabit its coastlines are vulnerable to God's wrath. The coastline of the Red Sea expands beyond its literal shore and out to the Madrid abbey Jacintha

¹³⁴ Matthew Lewis, *The Monk*, ed. David Stuart Davies (London: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2009) p. 238.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 237

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 235

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 237

inhabits. The power of the space is so pervasive to Jacintha that its influence extends far beyond the coastal communities affected by it in the Old Testament: everywhere is the shore of the Red Sea, and everywhere is vulnerable to its wrath.

The description of Elvira's ghost is decidedly hellish. Her apparition is associated with both ghosts and Satan himself. She goes from at once appearing as a meek, innocent, albeit ghostly figure 'white as a sheet' and 'cold as stone' to a 'great tall figure' of vengeance and fear. Her terrifying return represents the repression of her story, the lack of openness about her death. Her innocence becomes her revenge as she re-emerges, powerful and terrifying. Despite her ostensible innocence in the narrative, her appearance suggests she has come from hell to enact her revenge. She spits 'clouds of fire' from her mouth, has a head loaded with serpents 'as big as my arm', similar to the occult figure of the Ancient Greek Medusa, and fills the room with 'a smell of brimstone' whilst descending, presumably to hell. Jacintha, however, believes the apparition has not left, and equates its return to damnation with the Red Sea – 'you will sprinkle my House with holy water, and lay the Apparition in the Red Sea.' The Red Sea here functions as a form of eternal punishment and exile, perhaps a place even worse than hell, from which the being has apparently come. Alain Corbin describes the ocean as once being seen as a 'primordial substance' from which all things were created.¹³⁸ Being the matter which makes life, the material for creation, to be returned to that would be to be returned to nothingness, and one's spiritual life removed to give way to a purely physical collection of matter. Jacintha's allusion to 'lay[ing]' into the Red Sea references God's bringing the locusts from the Red Sea in Exodus to plague the Egyptians and then 'laying' them there once they had finished His demands. The allusion to the Red Sea as a place to create and unmake matter reflects on Jacintha's view of the Red Sea as a hub of God's creational power. The coast, as I will explore in the next chapter, is the place where repressed ghosts and histories re-emerge to haunt the living, as Elvira does here. All things, good and bad, either emerge on the coast or are brought back there.

The role of the Red Sea's coast is equally as prevalent in Judaism as in Christianity. Charles Maturin examines the Red Sea's coast in *Melmoth the Wanderer* from a Jewish perspective through Andonijah; he is a Jewish man avoiding the persecution of the Spanish Inquisition. Alonzo narrates his experience with Andonijah:

¹³⁸ Corbin, p. 2.

As I turned over the leaves with a trembling hand, the towering form of Adonijah seemed dilated with preternatural emotion. “And what dost thou tremble at, child of the dust?” he exclaimed, “if thou hast been tempted, so have they—if thou hast resisted, so have they—if they are at rest, so shalt thou be. There is not a pang of soul or body thou hast undergone, or canst undergo, that they have not suffered before thy birth was dreamt of. Boy, thy hand trembles over pages it is unworthy to touch, yet still I must employ thee, for I need thee. Miserable link of necessity, that binds together minds so uncongenial! I would that the ocean were my ink, and the rock my page, and mine arm, even mine, the pen that should write thereon letters that should last like those on the written mountains for ever and ever—even the mount of Sinai, and those that still bear the record, “Israel hath passed the flood.”¹³⁹

Adonijah’s focus on preserving history frames the tale-within-a-tale structure of the text. His insistence that Alonzo must write out his manuscripts, despite that they will most likely be destroyed by the inquisition, demonstrates a distinctly Jewish sense of perseverance and attachment. As Carol Davidson observes, ‘the Wandering Jew could function as a dreaded reminder of a benighted, superstitious past or a harbinger of technological advancement, mass literacy, hyper-rationalism, and dreaded, unstoppable change.’¹⁴⁰ Jewish people represent both preservation of the past and intellectualisation of the future – this is coloured by ‘the Gothic’ that ‘is thrust upon Jews’.¹⁴¹ *The Tale of the Indians*, *The Tale of the Guzman Family* and *The Lovers Tale* are all told because of Adonijah and remembered by him. This desire to keep records and witness is reflected in his reference to the Red Sea coast. A rock on the shore of the Red Sea is said to have once borne the inscription, ‘Israel hath passed the flood’, or the Israelites have crossed the Red Sea. The story of the Red Sea coast is indicative of the Jews’ great struggle over adversity. Despite escaping the persecution of Pharaoh and the Egyptian people, they still had to endure a long and difficult journey to freedom. Edward Edinger comments that ‘It is quite interesting that in the Biblical account, the first stop after the Red Sea was a place called Marah. Marah means bitterness. Not only was the water bitter there, but it was also a place where bitter grumblings took place.’¹⁴² The coast witnessed their trial and reflected their emotions, being ‘bitter’ with them both in name and in nature.

¹³⁹ Charles Maturin, *Melmoth the Wanderer*, ed. Douglas Grant (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) p. 271.

¹⁴⁰ Carol Margret Davison, *Anti-Semitism and British Gothic Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) p. 23.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23

¹⁴² Jung, p. 141.

A part of Andonijah's Jewishness is to remember this sense of bitterness experienced by his ancestors through the Red Sea, documented on the mountains eternally. The Israelites' - and Andonijah's - journey has been a perpetual struggle with little respite. Their only comfort is the assurance that people to come will remember what they have been through. Despite his dislike for Alonzo, he views his employment writing out the manuscripts as a 'miserable link of necessity' – his role in preserving the written document of history is more important than his own personal discomfort. Andonijah's animosity towards Alonzo may also be because of Alonzo's Spanish heritage. Spain famously expelled the Jews from their country in 1492, leading to the folklore myth of the 'Wandering Jew': 'The infamous, transgressive antichrist, associated with what Edgar Rosenberg has called 'the Ur-crime of the Crucifixion', was cursed to immortality until the millennium for mocking Christ as he carried his cross to Calvary.'¹⁴³ The Jews, in their rejection of Christ, have often been falsely depicted as evil by anti-Semites. Holding many similarities to Melmoth, the Wandering Jew in the novel is often turned into a figure of areligious depravity rather than of Jewishness. Andonijah's representation shows his isolation from society, depicting the Jewish people as persecuted rather than persecutors. The Catholic church is responsible for alienating him from society, meaning he is condemned to 'wander' on the outskirts of society. Rather than being evil or demonic, he is burdened by his bitterness. The Wandering Jew, then, is associated closely with the coast. He is a figure on the outside of society, without a country and perpetually escaping discrimination. The coast echoes this sense of alienation, being without one specific country and perpetually on the edge of society.

The coast also unifies the Jewish people as one continued race, gathering their collective knowledge, and awaiting salvation. They remember each other's struggles through the written record and adopt the strife of their forefathers as their own. While the Jewish people in Exodus reached the Promised Land eventually, they still await the arrival of their saviour. The journey to their Promised Land is a long, isolating struggle, as the pilgrimage after the Red Sea had been. After the initial excitement of the miracle of their escape from Egypt, and their crossing, they had to endure the long and painful struggle to reach Israel, in which time they became disillusioned with God. Those rescued originally died, and it was only their children who reached the Promised Land. This struggle is passed on within the race, and their frustration in waiting for their saviour, isolates the Jewish people. Hence, Adonijah calls Alonzo 'unworthy' to touch the pages he has collected. Alonzo's Christianity has freed him from the Jewish pain of waiting and wandering. The

¹⁴³ Davidson, p. 2.

Red Sea's coast, the site of such wanderings and bitter moaning, holds both witness and literal proof of their hardship, despite the attempts of society, or the Spanish Inquisition, to erase it.

The coast as witness is an important trope within *Melmoth the Wanderer*. Melmoth, while investigating the mysterious Melmoth Senior, finds a manuscript left by a distant relative called Stanton. Stanton himself tries to investigate Melmoth Senior, however, his search is deemed to be madness and he is sent to a lunatic asylum. In the asylum, Stanton's fellow inmate reiterates how the coast never forgets.

'The Lord is a man of war,' he shouted. – 'Look to Marston Moor! – Look to the city, the proud city, full of pride and sin! – Look to the waves of the Severn, as red with blood as the waves of the Red Sea!'¹⁴⁴

The blood red waters described here, and their relationship to the Red Sea, links the Severn to the river Nile. The Nile is associated with innocent deaths, as it was where the first-born children of the Israelites were drowned by the Pharaoh. The Nile, also, literally turned red in the Bible. Exodus documents the Nile's dramatic colour change. 'Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants he lifted up the staff and struck the water in the Nile, and all the water in the Nile turned into blood.'¹⁴⁵ The Nile as blood is an important image, both for the Red Sea's coast and for exegetical interpretations of the Old Testament God. The image fuels the association of the Red Sea coast with blood, death and literal redness, while emphasising the Old Testament God's role as a violent enforcer of punishment.

The bloody coastal waters are not just a punishment for the ostensible wrongdoer, Pharaoh, but for all of the people of Egypt. 'And the LORD said to Moses, 'Say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, their canals, and their ponds, and all their pools of water, so that they may become blood, and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.'¹⁴⁶ A deliberate double allusion occurs here with the mixing of blood and water. All of the water in Egypt turns to blood, making it impossible for people to drink and wash. Every person reliant on water is reliant on its source, the Nile, and its creator, God. The total change of the water to blood emphasises that the water is of God just as the blood is of God, and demands that the Egyptian people stop taking the river for granted. The water

¹⁴⁴ *Melmoth the Wanderer*, p. 51.

¹⁴⁵ Exodus 7. 20

¹⁴⁶ Exodus 14. 21

is the life blood of the city, just as blood is of the body. God provides life as easily as he takes it away. After turning the Nile to blood, God says to Moses, 'The fish in the Nile shall die, and the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians will grow weary of drinking water from the Nile.'¹⁴⁷ The passage goes on to record that 'The fish in the Nile died, and the river smelled so bad that the Egyptians could not drink its water. Blood was everywhere in Egypt.'¹⁴⁸ In the Bible, then, the Red Sea and its coasts are flooded with the blood of punishment and death from the Nile. Not only are wrongdoers punished, but all people who do not worship Him. These lines also distinguish the Egyptians from the Israelites, highlighting them as "chosen" by God for protection. In Exodus, all Egyptians are punished, regardless of their potential to recognise the Abrahamic God. Egypt's coast is drenched in blood. This is a punishment which seeps out of the Red Sea and infects coastlines, travelling through rivers like the Severn and the Nile. Stanton's fellow inmate suggests that flowing water brings contagion, and that sin can spread from coastline to coastline and throughout countries via bodies of water.

The cadence in these lines equates the biblical quote 'the Lord is a man of war' (Exodus 15:3) with 'Marston Moor', a Civil War battle ground. Marston Moor seems here to be a version of Sodom and Gomorrah. The rhyme equates the character of God with bloodshed and violence familiar to the English reader, establishing the immediate relevance of the quote. It may also reference a sermon of Maturin's during his career as a preacher. The weaver's outburst emphasises the land's role in remembering the 'blood' and 'sin' contained within the sea. The Red Sea coast, exemplifying a space of violent coastal memory, spills into and infects the other waters and coastlines it touches. The terrible nature of the Red Sea, and the idea of God as 'a man of war', relates back to Pentateuchal depictions of a vengeful deity. There has been no baptism which cleanses the sins that the Red Sea records, and so its awfulness still seeps onto those who choose not to beg for forgiveness. The only agents invulnerable to this infection are the physical elements of the coastlines themselves; the rocks, the sand, the water. Despite what has happened on or around them, they are not guilty or infected. Adonijah emphasises their purity and innocence in wishing that they could hold his stories – 'that the ocean were my ink, and the rock my page'. Robert Mighall ties geography to cultural memory, suggesting a fission between Adonijah's mode of remembrance and Alonzo's. 'Maturin equates character with environment', saying that '*The Italian character*' set 'apart in a psychological and 'historical' realm of its own.'¹⁴⁹ As much as the 'Italian character' is informed by geography, the Jewish character is also structured by its attachment to certain geographical

¹⁴⁷ Exodus 7:17

¹⁴⁸ Exodus 7:21

¹⁴⁹ Mighall, p. 20.

features and landmarks. The coastline of the Red Sea is a witness and a documenter, influencing Adonijah's desire to preserve the memory of the struggles of those who have gone before him.

THE SEA OF BLOOD

William Beckford's *Vathek* also explores the significance of the coast to theology. Instead of focusing directly on one coastline, however, Beckford describes a macabre sea of blood. The sea he describes is geographically ambiguous, and not obviously either a metaphor or a literal ocean of blood. The coastline that surrounds it, then, is soaked with the blood of the sea, as are the people who occupy the space. This ambiguity adds a further uncanny note to the narrative, and emphasises the fragile spirituality of the space, which defies definition. *Vathek*, as Gerry Turcotte observes, is largely inspired by a societal move towards the oriental as a source of mysterious intrigue and fascination. As Turcotte points out, 'D. J. Enright calls the turn towards orientalism and *chinoiserie* a "'romantic phenomenon", with "fairy-tale exoticism and allegoricism, an escape from the 'age of reason'"'.¹⁵⁰ The oriental mysteries that *Vathek* offers can be related loosely to its interpretations of Islam, a religion which was known but mysterious and exotic in England at the time. The sea of blood that Beckford describes, then, is associated with Islam and the East from the perspective of the white British imagination. The East was a victim of what Edward Said calls 'Orientalism', or 'a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.'¹⁵¹ He posits that 'the late eighteenth century' was a starting point for this cultural interpretation, which viewed the East from a Eurocentric perspective.¹⁵² Beckford's writing connects this oriental nature with the coast.

Vathek, depressed with fear, was on the point of prostrating himself at the feet of the shepherd, whom he perceived to be of a nature superior to man, but his pride prevailing, he audaciously lifted his head, and glancing at him one of his terrible looks, said:

"Whoever thou art, withhold thy useless admonitions. Thou wouldst either delude me, or art thyself deceived. If what I have done be so criminal as thou pretendest, there remains not for me a moment of grace. I have traversed a sea of blood, to acquire a power which will make thy equals tremble; deem not that I shall retire when in view of the port; or that I will relinquish her who is dearer to me than either my life or thy mercy. Let the sun appear! Let him illumine my career! It matters not where it may end."¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Gerry Turcotte, *Peripheral Fear: Transformations of the Gothic in Canadian and Australian Fiction* (Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2009) p. 33.

¹⁵¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Group, 1995) p. 3.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ William Beckford, *Vathek*, ed. Thomas Keymer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) p. 133.

The Red Sea's relationship with Islam is a close one. The coast of the sea forms the west coast of Arabia for 1,400 miles. In *Vathek*, this deep relationship is represented. The genie, appearing as a shepherd, warns Vathek and his cohort that he is coming by turning 'the waters of two little lakes, that were naturally clearer than chrystal,' into 'a colour like blood.'¹⁵⁴ This anticipates Vathek's later remark that he has 'traversed a sea of blood', relating the two bodies of water. This relationship shows Vathek's arrogance as well as tying the coast to a transcendent mysticism. Although the Red Sea coast itself is not directly named, the area is directly implicated in this description. The 'sea of blood' is not limited to its geographical constraints but has power and applications far abroad. The shepherd's ability to bring the bloody water to the lakes highlights the sea's holiness, and its application as a deterrent from sin. It also shows, as aforementioned, the sea's lapping on to all shores equally, uniting all countries through their coastlines.

Vathek abandons Islam in order to gain supernatural powers. In this scene, a genie adopts the role of a shepherd to attempt to save Vathek from damnation. His appearance is important, as many of the major Islamic prophets are shepherds. Vathek's urge to prostrate 'himself at the feet of the shepherd' shows his inner division and attachment to Islam. From his appearance, he judges him to be 'of a nature of a superior man'. Despite his attraction to the occult, his initial reaction is to 'fear' the shepherd and to humble himself before him. His respect for Islam emphasises his break away from it, showing the Gothic implications of his self-imposed isolation. However, in his shunning of Islam, he turns directly to Greek mythology for support. Vathek's mother, Carathis, is Greek, versed in science, astrology and occult magic. She pushes him towards mythology and attainment of supernatural powers rather than his Islamic faith. He personifies the sun as 'him'. When he beseeches the sun to 'illumine my career', he alludes to the Greek sun God, Apollo. Apollo's appearance here is important as he is the patron saint of shepherds, and a prolific lover. Vathek invokes him in order to attempt to control the genie, as well as highlighting his obsession with his own sexuality. Vathek's dichotomous personality is contextualised through his view of the 'port' or the coast – 'deem not that I shall retire when in view' shows his intrinsic sense of respect for his country, its coastline and its traditions, signified by his suggestion that he might relax when he saw it. The fact that he doesn't want to, however ('deem not'), shows he is rebelling against his natural sense of respect for the coast and his normal life, trying instead to be supernatural and to transcend the humbling limits of the space.

Vathek's arrogance towards the shepherd, and his continual pursuit of knowledge above his station, is also reminiscent of Greek mythology. Menelaus' attempt to gain excessive knowledge

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 131.

in Homer's *The Odyssey* mirrors *Vathek*'s. Menelaus' ship becomes drawn into a cosmic whirlwind near the Red Sea, where he meets a shapeshifting oceanic figure from Greek mythology, Proteus, a sea god. Proteus guards Poseidon's seal flock on an island by shapeshifting to overcome any attackers. Menelaus wants to capture Proteus, who is also a prophet, in order to learn about his future and to find a route home. He eventually manages to capture Proteus, despite his shapeshifting, who tells Menelaus that he needs to 'give a sacrifice to the gods' in the Nile if he wants to go home again.¹⁵⁵ Menelaus is deeply disturbed by this prophecy. A similar conceptual figure to Proteus, the Goddess 'Great Green', also appears in Ancient Egyptian mythology.¹⁵⁶ Menelaus, like *Vathek*, attempts to gain supernatural knowledge beyond his power. The Red Sea coast occurs in each story as an ecotonal barrier between the supernatural and reality – it is an entity possessing great strength and knowledge, but its depths should not be accessed. Its mysteries are deliberately beyond human conception. Should its barriers be breached, the human who is culpable faces death, as with Menelaus, or damnation, as with *Vathek*. The final lines of *Vathek* warn against this.

Such was, and should be, the punishment of unrestrained passion and atrocious deeds! Such shall be the chastisement of that blind curiosity, which would transgress those bounds the wisdom the Creator has prescribed to human knowledge; and such the dreadful disappointment of that restless ambition, which, aiming at discoveries reserved for beings of a supernatural order, perceives not, through its infatuated pride, that the condition of man upon earth is to be – humble and ignorant.¹⁵⁷

Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, like Beckford, depicts a sea of blood to instil a sense of fear in readers. In Part Three, the Mariner is in the grips of madness. His fellow seamen have all died, and their decaying corpses surround him. Looking out into the bleak and uncompromising ocean, the water appears red and blood like.

Her beams bemoaned the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmèd water burnt away
A still and awful red.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Gesa Mackenthun, 'Chartless Voyages and Protean Geographies' in *Sea Changes: Historicising the Ocean*, ed. Bernhard Klein and Gesa Mackenthun (New York: Routledge, 2004) pp. 131-148, p. 133.

¹⁵⁶ Copisarow, p. 1.

¹⁵⁷ William Beckford, *Vathek*, ed. Thomas Keymer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) p. 91.

¹⁵⁸ 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' p. 450.

The redness cast by the boat seems to reference the bloodshed and death which have come from it and are carried by it. The fact that the water is 'charmed' suggests that a mystical alchemy is taking place – nature has joined with fantastical and magical forces to emphasise its condemnation of the Mariner's original murder, where the innocent albatross was shot. The sea of blood is both a reference to witchcraft and magic, and a reference to the death and murder which have come about because of the Mariner's actions. In this sense, the sea is a magical place in that it has the power to change its own form and colour to condemn and possibly to madden its victim. Especially considering the ending of the poem, where the Mariner's salvation takes place after the death and gore of the sea is swallowed up by a whirlpool and his salvation is restored, the sea and coast are contrasted with one another. The coast is unsullied by this blood and the hermit is able to redeem him. The coast, then, despite being ecotonal, only inherits certain characteristics from the sea – the sea itself, also, is an indefinite place, with the power to change its characteristics to suit its moralistic purpose. The coast doesn't change, however: it is a space of salvation and redemption, pure and unsullied, in contrast to the sea's role as punisher. Coleridge's description of this blood red sea becomes increasingly fantastical.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.¹⁵⁹

The inclusion of water snakes here has a few different effects. The first and most obvious one is that water snakes do not live in the middle of the ocean – no species of water snake (that we know of) can survive in water that deep. These water snakes, then, are imaginative, and we can interpret it as

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. pp. 450-451.

a reference to the hope that the coast provides. The man responds in turn, blessing them, interpreting them as a sign that God has not given up on him. The Christian blessing emphasises the theological tone of these snakes. The fact that 'love' gushes in his heart like a 'spring' is another clear coastal reference. The Mariner is taking hope from the idea of shallow, coastal waters, and picturing the abundance of life and hope that the coast offers. The snakes are 'happy' and 'living', contrasting his experience of the ocean in this part: his shipmates are dead, and he is surrounded by a sea of their blood. These coastal creatures serve to reinforce the idea of the coast as a space of safety, where the atrocities which happen in a sea which is literally and metaphorically full of blood, may not permanently haunt the Mariner.

In this part of the poem, the Mariner wishes for death. He badly wants his penance to be over and believes that he has condemned himself by killing the albatross. Perhaps the 'saint' that takes pity on him, he believes, has killed him. The image Coleridge depicts both shows the awful significance of the blood red sea, which literally reflects the blood which is spilled within it, as well as demonstrating that God may use nature to enact the punishments of hell. The effect of this image is to reinforce the terrifying mysteries of the sea, portraying the coast as a space of relative safety and salvation, and, perhaps, where mankind should stay.

The Gothic coast is a space which encounters spirituality in many different forms. Religion, magic and mystery intertwine in Gothic coastlines, creating a tone of the supernatural. Exodus ties the space to alchemy and supernatural magic in the Bible. Just as Moses and Aaron change the Nile to blood, the Egyptian holy men are able to do the same using alchemy. 'But the Egyptian magicians did the same things by their secret arts, and Pharaoh's heart became hard; he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said.'¹⁶⁰ The inclusion of this line in Exodus draws attention to the power of alchemy and "occult" forces in the space. The Christian narrative encourages believers to be wary of the power of the demonic to distract and dissuade away from God. In this instance, the holy men's ability to use alchemy and 'magic' to change the waters red hardens the Pharaoh's resolve against the Israelites, which leads to his eventual defeat. Although Pharaoh is given opportunities to respect God, he allows himself to be distracted by alchemy and magic and is therefore punished. The presence and the power of the Ancient Egyptian religion in Exodus, however, is not to be undermined. The occult force of the holy men informs a sense of the macabre around the Red Sea's coast.

¹⁶⁰ Exodus 7:22

As each section in this chapter has shown, the coast for Christians, Jews, Muslims and mythological faiths is a space representing the great power of the spiritual. Sections two and three emphasise that the coast can have a terrible power, capable of taking many lives and causing devastation; section one, however, shows that it is also represented as a force capable of cleansing and healing. The difference between Radcliffe's approach and the approach of Lewis, Maturin, Beckford and Coleridge is worth emphasising. Radcliffe's outlook is less gory and violent, not featuring blood, damnation or death. As a result, her depiction of theological coastlines seems to represent severe punishment for sinners. The focus is on upholding the outcast, rather than condemning the sinner. The message, however, is similar in all of the texts discussed – the coast is a space where God's power judges the living and the dead. Society is protested, and the pious individual, who behaves differently from others in the text, is rewarded.

Gothic depictions of the coast use a mixture of Christian imagery and the occult to heighten supernatural effect. The water's likeness to blood draws attention to God's power to begin and end human life, as well as to the ghostly presence of the Gothic undead in the sea. Waves of their memory lap on to the shore, infecting the land with their presence. These undead inhabitants emerge onto the shore, confronting characters with their repressed memories and anxieties. The coast is often portrayed as a place of re-emerging repressions, magic and death. Leading on from the fairy-tale, where the coast is a space of fantastical magic and escape, this chapter has shown how theological references at the coast emphasise supernatural elements, tying them to a grander spiritual realm.

The coast looks onward into the sea, showing the lack of human ability to comprehend fully its limits. The fact that the coast occurs so frequently as a religious and Gothic image, illustrates the extent to which it is a macabre space for the spiritual. It is a place worthy of respect, which it is unwise to disrespect or sully. It records, remembers, and it can condemn. The Red Sea in particular, bordering so many disparate cultures, embodies the infection of sin among humans. Its eerie history is fuelled by its omnipresence in so many religious records as an entity bestowed with an incomprehensible Godlike power, one which should not be tampered with. The next and final chapter in this dissertation also investigate the coast's supernatural power, investigating how voice is used in a coastal setting to exacerbate the space's mystery. The voices, which describe and represent the shore's uncanniness, often condemn society by exposing its hidden secrets and flaws.

CHAPTER THREE

The Voices of the Coast

Beaches form a border between the terrestrial and the marine, symbolically standing between the known and the unknown. Similarly, the divide between the living and the dead its own conceptual domain – purgatory. The coast, acting as a topographical barrier, can also represent the liminal space between life and death. Emily Alder comments that ‘the ocean’s precarious surface interfaces between life and death, chaos and order, self and other.’¹⁶¹ As she observes, underwater mysteries contrast with the familiarities of life on land. I would add that this interstitial quality is most pronounced on the coast. In gothic literature, the coast is often infused with the voices of those trapped between existence and nonexistence – historical memories, repressed truths and uncanny strangers are depicted here. It is a place where those trapped in a purgatory are given the opportunity to speak. The ocean is personified, capable of uttering shrieks, cries, moans or murmurs, or allowing the voices of others to be heard.

In this chapter, I will discuss how utterances at the coast in gothic literature condemn a society which forgets its history. This chapter uses one focal text in each part. Ann Radcliffe’s *The Italian* (1797) occurs frequently because it uses utterance in many ways, delivering different effects. Each voice, however, protests in some way. Part one features voices which depict the coast as a purgatorial space. *The Italian, A Sicilian Romance* (1790) and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) all depict the sea as a space of death, specifically drowning. Land, on the other hand, represents life and survival. Whilst characters in these texts are on the coast, they are persuaded by the power of ghostly utterances that either they (*The Italian*) or their love interest (*A Sicilian Romance, The Mysteries of Udolpho*) are between life and death. The second section examines how voices signal the re-emergence of repressed sins. In *The Italian*, Sapaltro is tortured at the coast by memories of his sins. Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818) also utilises whispering voices, signalling that the coast is capable of washing up the horrors which Frankenstein tries to bury in the sea. The final section focuses on the sins of the father visiting the son. Much like the chapter on coast and theology, it focuses on the unburied bodies of war victims at the bottom of the sea. This section, however, focuses on how their utterances are represented. *The Italian, The Mysteries of Udolpho* and Charles Maturin’s *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) discuss the mournful and pitiful groans of the unfairly killed dead, condemning warring civilisations for not having respect for their lives. Society’s evils are

¹⁶¹ Emily Alder, ‘Through Oceans Darkly: Sea Literature and Nautical Gothic’ in *Gothic Studies*, 19, (2017), pp. 1-15, p. 1.

exposed by the coast's utterances. The space is depicted as seeking justice for the unheard, spreading retribution and enacting punishment.

Gothic writers attribute various symbolic voices to the coastline. The space echoes with utterances, voices described in gothic literature in many ways. The murmured articulations at the shore are frequently used to allude to life after death. At points, voices may shout, cry, or even moan; most frequently, however, they murmur. The effect of this murmuring at the shore is deliberately vague. Combined with a murmur's natural ambiguity, stemming from its low indistinctness, the sound at the coast is without a human referent, faceless. A voice without a human speaker persistently creates an uncanny effect. Mladen Dolar expands on the gothic nature of non-human utterance in *A Voice and Nothing More*. He suggests 'the impersonal voice [...] always has a touch of the uncanny', one can readily apply this idea to the gothic coastline.¹⁶² An acousmatic utterance, without the physiological qualities of a speaker to add identification to the voice (coughing, laughter, sneezes, accent, etc.) has no 'animal nature', which is essential to forming familiarity.¹⁶³ A voice attributed to a non-human speaker is often a gothic one.

The origin of the coastal murmur itself is often unclear, even though the effect is still reliably unsettling. Perhaps the voice comes from several sources, each creating a different impression. A voice could come from ghosts which exist around the coast; it could be formed by the literal geography and sound-scape of the space – the lapping, breaking or crashing of the ocean on the sand forming a sound which intimates meaning. The murmur could come from God himself, using the coast as a place to communicate with those who listen there. Gothic depictions of coastal voices manipulate the presence of these possibilities to heighten the fear of the unknown the shore evokes. Reading the murmured coastal voice, it is unclear who has spoken. It is also often unclear who *hears* these voices. The gothic novel is often deliberately vague about whether the coast's murmurings are comprehensible. Often characters seem to listen pensively and act upon what they think they have heard, as with Radcliffe's novels, although this is not always the case.

The uncanny murmur at the shore is entwined with a realm beyond life on earth, largely due to the influence the ocean has over the space. The sea has long been associated with death. As Alain Corbin observes, we can see a literary connection between the ocean and the rotting dead as far back as Ancient Greece. '[I]ndeed, as early as Pythias, the fantasy existed of a coagulated ocean as a thick, rotting sea.'¹⁶⁴ Corbin even uses the metaphor of voice to outline the extent to which pre-

¹⁶² Mladen Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2006), p. 22.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁶⁴ Alain Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea: The Discovery of the Seaside in the Western World 1750-1840*, (California: University of California Press, 1994), p. 16.

gothic literature depicted the sea as a permanent, unsettled necropolis: 'its roaring, its moaning, its sudden bursts of anger were perceived as so many reminders of the sins of the first humans, doomed to be engulfed by the waves; its sound alone was a permanent appeal to repent.'¹⁶⁵ The ocean, as well as containing the dead, was representative of death itself. Corbin continues: 'The grey winter ocean, dismal and cold, generates various kinds of fear; it fosters the haunting dread of being caught by sudden death and deprived of extreme unction, far from the home fires; of being delivered, body and soul, unburied, to these endless waves that know no rest.'¹⁶⁶ Corbin does not consider the significance of these rotting, deathly waves lapping on the coastlines which surround it. Oceans have delivered plague from shore to shore, drowned innumerable sailors and are a permanent memento of the biblical flood which wiped the earth clean. The coast, then, in proximity with this permanent unsettled graveyard, becomes a space to channel the souls of the dead.

Gothic authors frequently use anthropomorphisms to demonstrate the symbiotic relationship between sea and coast. The connection is similar to that between the listener and the speaker. Anthropomorphic monsters are part of the ruthless cruelty of the aquatic food chain, where all participants are predators, all are hungry for souls to consume. Matthew Lewis's Theodore in *The Monk* describes the mythical Water-King as an ever-hungry beast, incapable of satiation. The anthropomorphic figure of the Water-King assumes the form of a Leviathan, representing the 'demonic nature of the angry sea' and the Satanic energy the ocean had come to be associated with, as mentioned in chapter one.¹⁶⁷ The Water-King lures the young maid into the sea and kills her. Her screams and cries for help eventually become muffled by the sea's own voice, heightened by the wind.

She shrieks, but shrinks in vain; for high
The wild winds, rising dull above the cry;
The fiend exults; the billows dash,
And o'er the hapless victim wash.¹⁶⁸

The water appears to be working on behalf of the Water-King here, complicit in his crime and using its voice to stifle the maid. She is silenced by the water as she is by the Water-King. Ann Radcliffe's *A Sicilian Romance*, however, uses an anthropomorphic device to create a different effect. Although her anthropomorphic character still centres on death, her presentation is much less savage and frightening. Lady 'Evening', who, like the Water-King, is introduced by song, is not a malevolent

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 2-3.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p.8.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p.7.

¹⁶⁸ Matthew Lewis, *The Monk*, ed. David Stuart Davies (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 2009), p. 213.

presence, not a warning nor a threat – but merely a reminder, a permanent mourner, for those who have been lost at sea. Despite a similar conceptual basis, the two songs create a completely different tone; Theodore uses a guitar to play the rough and thrilling song about the Water-King, while Julia is depicted playing the much softer sounding lute. The songs also have different settings. The Water-King haunts the shores from the water, whilst the ghostly Lady in ‘Evening’ remains constantly on the beach, looking outward to the ocean. The two perspectives represent death which looks outward, and seeks to kill more, and death which looks inward, and contemplates itself.

Wide o’er the waves her shadowy veil she draws.
As faint they die along the distant shores;
Through the still air I mark with each solemn pause,
Each rising murmur which the wild wave pours.¹⁶⁹

Radcliffe describes the utterance at the shore as both a ‘murmur’ and as the onomatopoeic ‘pour’ – the voice pours forth, just as the water does onto the shore. This homophone suggests the doubling of utterance in the space by tying these two meanings together, as it draws to attention our understanding of the voice itself: is the ‘murmur’ a real, meaningful voice, or is it just the audible consequence of geography to which we have attributed meaning? Must a voice be meaningful in order to be a voice at all? Aristotle suggests that a sound must be meaningful in order to be considered as ‘language’.¹⁷⁰ He describes a hierarchy of sound, voice and language to illustrate this. The sounds at the coast, although not imparting clear sentiments, overlap with meaning and influence the tone of the scene in which they are depicted. The use of ‘murmur’ and ‘pours’ together adds a philosophical tone to the scene, encouraging readers to adopt the pensive, contemplative mood of Lady Evening. Evening is personified as a shrouded, mourning woman. She draws her ‘shadowy veil’ over the coast and sea, in a funereal fashion. The character Radcliffe creates anthropomorphises a coast which mourns the dead who permanently float, unburied, at sea. Lady Evening, like the coast, is constantly watching and listening to the ocean, constantly mourning. The coast and the sea are in a permanent symbiotic relationship of conversation with one another – the sea speaks whilst the coast listens. The role of the listener, as represented by Radcliffe’s Lady Evening, is a sombre one. Unable to intervene, the coast must eternally witness the sea’s capacity for violence and death. The space, whilst also serving as a boundary between a terrestrial and aquatic world, is an echo chamber of permanent reflection. The coast, working with Evening,

¹⁶⁹ Ann Radcliffe, *A Sicilian Romance*, ed. Alison Milbank (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 32.

¹⁷⁰ Aristotle, *Problems*, Book XI, ‘Problems Connected with the Voice’ (Harvard: Loeb Classical Library, 2011), p. 343.

mourns the fallen, respectfully listening to their final moans. Captive as they are in the ocean graveyard, they are still allowed contact with the outside world through their murmurs.

The shore provides a voyeuristic space for watching, imagining, listening to and commiserating with the fallen. It supplies a narrative possibility for characters to immerse themselves in death within life. By watching from the coastline, it is possible to imagine and recreate the lives of those lost at sea through listening to their voices, as well as to understand further the gothic potential of the coast for representing the limits of mortality. The voices of the dead unlock the possibility of a continued life beyond death through the recollection of the shore, casting the beach as an area with spiritual significance. The coast enacts a form of samara, or an endless cycle of life, suffering, death and rebirth, which exists for as long as the material world itself exists. The geography of the coastline commemorates all, and in this way, prevents a full death or ending for the acousmatic voices at the shore. The remainder of this chapter focuses on three central motifs surrounding the voices of the dead at sea – the coast as purgatory, the coast and ‘the return of the repressed’ and the coast as a historical burial ground. Each motif illustrates the gothic genre’s use of isolation to create effect. Isolated utterances and alienated characters imbue the coast with an unsettling tone and significance.

THE COAST AS PURGATORY

In Radcliffe’s *The Italian*, the coast is a border between two macabre possibilities. Allusions to death at sea and sea burial establish it as a boundary between life and death, a space between these states that makes it akin to purgatory. As Schedoni considers his failed attempt to murder Ellena, and his plans to try again, he adopts some features of oceanic duplicity.

After some cool, and more of tumultuous consideration, he resolved that Ellena should be assassinated that night, while she slept, and afterwards conveyed through a passage of the house communicating with the sea, into which the body might be thrown and buried, with her sad story, beneath the waves.¹⁷¹

He is at once ‘cool’ and ‘tumultuous’ in his ‘consideration’, rapidly moving backwards and forwards between plaintive calm and tempestuous rage. Schedoni’s eventual decision to throw Ellena’s body into the waves after death, rather than to drown her, represents the waning confidence he has that she will definitely die in the ocean. Schedoni has no power to influence the sea’s condition, or whether it will kill Ellena or not. The sea begins to have power over Schedoni, rather than he power

¹⁷¹ Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian*, ed. Robert Miles (London: Penguin, 2000), p. 265.

over it. His attempts to drown Ellena are thwarted by his conscience, which is influenced by the calmness of the sea:

He quitted it, and traversed the beach in short turns, and with hasty steps; came back again, and bent over it - his heart seemed sensible to some touch of pity. At one moment, he stepped towards the sea, and taking water in the hollows of his hands, threw it upon her face; at another, seeming to regret he had done so, he would stamp with sudden fury upon the shore, and walk abruptly to a distance.¹⁷²

On the coast, his attitude changes from the angry arrogance he shows on land. He is suddenly 'sensible' to the 'pity' the space stimulates, 'regret[full]' of the attempts he makes to harm Ellena or to further his plan to kill her. Throwing water in her face, he endeavours to use the sea as a weapon, which comes across as humorously futile. His comic, bathetic frustration, is shown in his rapid pacing along the beach and stamping on the sand. The ocean's calming effect appears to prevent him from carrying out his plan to drown Ellena. This powerlessness, Allen Grove comments, is indicative of Schedoni's sexual impotence. 'While the seashore scene is suggestive of Schedoni's sexual deviance, it is important to note that he does not stab Ellena. Both he and Spaltro prove impotent at the moment of penetration.'¹⁷³ The association of stabbing with penetration suggests that the scene has connotations of sexuality and incest, as we find out later that Schedoni and Ellena are related. Radcliffe's portrayal of Schedoni's sexual passion as deathly and destructive draws attention to a critique of the lives of monks in general, detached from the world, unable to take wives and have normal conjugal relations. This description contrasts with Vivaldi and Ellena's seemingly natural, coastal romance. In this scene, Schedoni exists both physically and psychologically in a liminal space. The coast's ecotone establishes a mood of ambiguous boundaries and transgression. Schedoni's sexual deviancy overlaps with his purist life as a monk, highlighting his internal dichotomy. His desire to kill Elena, too, contradicts his strict moral code. His wavering indecision shows his psychological instability, as he traverses the border between different values and desires. The coast facilitates this internal navigation, highlighting his character's ambiguity and complexity.

Schedoni's failed plan to dispose of Ellena in the sea 'with her sad story', shows the futility of trying to either overcome or utilise the destructive power of the shore. The house 'communicates' with rather than connects with the sea, suggesting complicity. The shore interrupts his opportunity to

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 259.

¹⁷³ Allen W. Grove, 'Coming Out of the Castle: Sexuality and the Limits of Language', *Historical Reflections*, 26 (2000), 429-446 (p. 440).

drown Ellena and forces him into reconsidering his plan by being both a physical buffer between terrestrial life and aquatic life and by altering his mood to the extent that he no longer agrees with beliefs he held away from the coast. It is both a physical and psychological borderline. It is also connected with his later realisation of the fact that Ellena is his niece. The gothic coast itself becomes a key protagonist with God-like omniscience about Ellena and Schedoni beyond that of either the reader or the characters themselves.

Jessica Roberson describes sea burial as a symbol of purgatorial unrest. Although Roberson does not discuss Radcliffe's *The Italian* explicitly, her analysis can be readily applied to Schedoni's contemplation of sea burial as an opportunity to 'cover' the 'stain' of Ellena's murder. Roberson points out that 'sea-burial is a potent symbol of the attempt to locate or define burial - a word whose roots carry meanings of enclosure, keeping, and sheltering - in a visibly shifting and ungrounded body of water.'¹⁷⁴ Ellena's body, rather than resting in death, would be in a constant unsettled state. In sea-burial, 'the commitment of the dead to the earth is abruptly denied, making a clear distinction between burial as cyclical and drawing on botanical renewal (spring wreaths and flowers) and the [...] 'wave' that figuratively and formally breaks against and denies comfort.'¹⁷⁵ While earth burial offers the comfort of rest and renewal into nature, the sea promptly denies that kind of closure. Sea burial suggests that the body, and therefore the soul, is never really laid to rest. Here, the distinctly gothic motif of the ghost recurs, where we are encouraged to view the dead as not quite dead, but in a liminal space between life and death. While, it seems, burial on land represents a final stillness, death at sea does not allow bodies to come to rest. The shore, forming a space between these two graveyards, becomes a gap between final mortality and continuous unrest in death. It separates two disparate visions of the afterlife, whilst facilitating both. Radcliffe highlights this by drawing attention to Schedoni's desire to bury Ellena's 'sad story' rather than her body alone. Away from the sea, she is allowed the possibility of escape. Whilst on the shore, or in the property that 'communicates' with it, she is faced with her death. Radcliffe's beach comes to represent a stalling point between the two, a zone between life and death, full of the unknown and perpetual indecision.

Radcliffe's *A Sicilian Romance* also reinforces this sea-as-purgatory motif. Hippolitus' false death whilst defending Julia emphasises this.

¹⁷⁴ Jessica Roberson, 'Sea-Changed: Felicia Hemans and Burial at Sea in Nineteenth-Century Imagery', *Gothic Studies*, 19.2 (2017), pp. 35-36.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

He was instantly surrounded, and seized by the servants of the marquis, while the marquis himself denounced vengeance upon his head, and ordered him to be thrown into the dungeon of the castle. At this instant the servants of the count, who were awaiting his arrival on the seashore, hearing the tumult, hastened to the scene, and there they beheld their beloved master lifeless and weltering in his blood. They conveyed the bleeding body, with loud lamentations, on board the vessel which had been prepared for him, and immediately set sail for Italy.¹⁷⁶

The seashore shields Hippolitus' attendants from immediate knowledge of an attack on him. They are only aware of his trouble when a 'tumult' is heard, which leaves Hippolitus 'lifeless and weltering in his blood', presumably already dead. The rapid movement in these lines, produced by several commas and short clauses, adds to the shocking quality of the scene. As readers, we are unaware of the extent to which Hippolitus is in danger before his servants find him. Until this point, all we are told is that the Marquis wants to keep him detained, but alive, in his castle. The bizarre structure of this scene and the position into which the seashore is slotted in the unveiling of Hippolitus' condition reinforces the beach as a scene of great uncertainty. The shore is an intermediary point between two potentially fatal locations. After he is found, Hippolitus is immediately carried aboard his ship with 'loud lamentations', presumably from the attendants, rather than 'lifeless' Hippolitus. After this point, all of the characters reasonably believe that he is dead – the scene leaves little hope for his condition to improve. The sea journey conveys no hope for him, although he is not declared dead by any of his servants. They express anxiety that he will not survive the trip. Yet, after appearing to be dead in this gory, bloody scene, he does survive. Hippolitus' recovery reminds us in the novel that the function of the coast is as a staging point between life and death. The coast has a significant purpose in this motif, as Hippolitus' journey on the ocean after he boards the boat is not described in detail. As Joseph Campbell indicates, the journey from coast to coast resembles re-birth, 'the passage of the threshold is a form of self-annihilation [...] instead of passing outward, beyond the confines of the visible world, the hero goes inward, to be born again.'¹⁷⁷ Campbell's observation shows that the beginning of a journey, in this case of Hippolitus, represents a sort of suicide – the rebirth is not guaranteed, only hoped for. Campbell neglects to mention the roll of the coast in this paradigm. The coast is both the ending and the beginning point – the place where both birth and life happen. It represents hope and possibility for the heroic voyager.

¹⁷⁶ *A Sicilian Romance*, p. 50.

¹⁷⁷ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 84.

Roberta Gefter Wondrich identifies this sense of instability in coastal narrative and attributes it to the natural inconstancy of the shore itself. She suggests that ‘the liminality of the coastline in its intrinsic mutability, and especially its erosion, underscore the inherent fragility of any construction of idyllic permanence and sameness, in a context of a geographical imagination that is always implicitly imbued with a sense of the communal, the ancestral and the natural, and mostly hinging on the land and primacy of the terrestrial.’¹⁷⁸ Here, Wondrich suggests that coasts unhinge the binary definitions and certainty to which we attribute definitions in the ‘terrestrial’, or land based, world.¹⁷⁹ We define our understanding of our conceptual lives through our ‘geographical imagination’ or understanding.¹⁸⁰ Purgatory, as we imagine it, exists in a purely terrestrial (rather than aquatic) sense. The coast’s rough cliffs and fine sand, formed by the sea, show the power of the water over the earth. The jagged roughness of coastal features demonstrates the violent force of the sea and its ability to mould, shape and hold authority over the appearance of the area. It suggests that land is not as powerful or as solid a mass as we imagine it to be. So, too, our conception of terrestrial life is uncertain. We imagine life and death in terms of land – heaven is a space with gravity, solidity, terrestrial features. Hippolitus’ mystical voyage demonstrates the fragility of such an image. Naturally, Hippolitus’ return reasserts traditional understandings of life and death; but whilst he was bleeding to death on the shore, his condition pointed towards a greater conceptual uncertainty. Occupying that space, Hippolitus was neither dead nor alive, drawing attention to the fragility of conventional, cultural notions of a sharp borderline between death and life.

Radcliffe reemphasises this ‘inherent fragility’ with Ferdinand and Julia’s boat, which crashes on its way to Italy.

The darkness was interrupted only at intervals, by the broad expanse of vivid lightnings, which quivered upon the waters, and disclosing the horrible gaspings of the waves, served to render the succeeding darkness more awful. The thunder, which burst in tremendous crashes above, the loud roar of the waves below, the noise of the sailors, and the sudden cracks and groanings of the vessel conspired to heighten the tremendous sublimity of the scene.

Far on the rocky shores that surges sound,
The lashing whirlwinds cleave the vast profound;

¹⁷⁸ Roberta Gefter Wondrich, ‘Shores of History, Islands of Ireland: Chronotopes of the Sea in the Contemporary Irish Novel’, *Sea Narratives*, ed. Charlotte Mathieson, (Newcastle: Macmillan, 2016), p. 148.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

While high in air, amid the rising storm,
Driving the blast, sits Danger's black'ning form.¹⁸¹

The ocean is suffused with many different sounds here, each awful and each potentially a voice of the undead. The distinction between a sound, without meaning, and a voice, inflected with both meaning and understandable language, is blurred. The water makes 'horrible gaspings' and 'roar[s]', combined with the terrified 'noise of the sailors', all contributing to what Radcliffe describes in the poetic and funereal refrain as 'shores that surges sound'. The sibilance of this line creates a subtle hissing sound, creating the image of violent white water slapping the boat. As noted earlier in the chapter, the ocean is also accompanied by a death-like figure, who sits in 'black'ning form', overlooking the proceedings. There is an uncanny uncertainty to the description. Overlooking the fact that Radcliffe is unlikely to kill her main characters before a romantic denouement, the erratic introduction of light, the 'profound' and 'tremendous sublimity' of the scene and the pitiful 'gaspings' of waves which 'quivered' create a sense of both horror and hope. Despite portraying a deathly situation, Radcliffe nevertheless encourages her readers to be hopeful for the survival of her characters. Unlike Lewis' Water-King, the groans of the sea do not express rage or a wish for the sailors to become part of it. The groans and roars express something closer to misery than anger. The situation is 'awful' – but use of the words 'profound' and 'sublimity' create an optimistic note, along with the proximity of potential 'rocky shores'. The presence of the possibility of survival in Radcliffe's description creates a living beauty from a fatal situation. This serves to emphasise the coast as a space of fragile borderlines between death and life. It also highlights the impact of the undead voices from the sea which still exist in a purgatorial space and draws out sympathy for the plight of Ferdinand and Julia.

As discussions of the coast-as-purgatory motif in both *The Italian* and *A Sicilian Romance* reveal, Radcliffe's representation focuses around inward reflections, often in an overtly *unheimlich* sense. Her writing is contemplative and philosophical in its discussion of death, rather than being centred around gore, like other gothic texts. Her nuanced, contemplative and romance centred style feminises her depiction of the gothic coast. Anne Williams comments, 'Realism's 'other', the romance, and the Romanticist's definition of gothic as imminent and material, coincide in at least one respect. Each aligns itself with the 'female' as traditionally imagined in Western culture.'¹⁸² Williams also calls on Robert Hume's argument that the gothic reflects the 'lesser fancy', as it is a feminine genre.¹⁸³ This focus on impossibly unlikely and fantastical romantic relationships as the

¹⁸¹ *A Sicilian Romance*, p. 112.

¹⁸² Anne Williams, *Art of Darkness – Poetics of the Gothic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 7.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

'lesser' fancy to which Walker refers, adds a distinctly feminine touch to a genre which already examines the divisive power of the feminine: "gothic" is an expression (in the Freudian "dream-work" mode) of the ambivalently attractive, "female", unconscious "other" of eighteenth-century male-centred consciousness.¹⁸⁴ Female gothic is often limited to traditionally 'feminine' modes of the fantastic – romance being a key element. Although they can be romantic in focus, the fanciful elements of these texts are often their most powerful tools to protest against society and to create shock and horror. These effects move the genre away from being 'lesser', weak and fanciful, and actually highlight the strength of romance and fantasy.¹⁸⁵ Stuck within the patriarchal system of familial structures, love provides a mode to escape the pater-king, whilst also exercising the independence and potential subversive power of the feminine over the male psyche. Although Williams suggests that gothic (and Romantic) literature ties itself to traditional notions of femininity, both *The Italian* and *A Sicilian Romance* remove themselves from the prescribed binary limits of a traditional female-written, female-focused novel, and subvert existing and expected tropes in order to produce an entirely new perspective. The shocking power of these two novels is in their use of the familiar settings and scenarios – lovers, picturesque coastlines, damsels in distress – to provoke deep, intellectual questions, about the power of the environment, the role of the church, and the spiritual significance of the ecotonal. The coast, in particular, exemplifies Radcliffe's probing investigation into issues and troubling uncertainty far beyond what is expected from novels by women in this period. The space voices her dissent from normality, probing into existential limits, using nature (the shore) to question culture.

The romance trope, however, presents a purgatorial state within itself. Women are placed between one patriarch and another, with the looming prospect of motherhood and entrapment in the Freudian 'house' of the family to come, whilst trapped beforehand in the family story of their father.¹⁸⁶ This unique state of being both liberated in romance and existing within a patriarchal structure often appears beside the sea, as a setting for deep contemplation. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* offers the most explicit example of a romantic coastline as purgatory using Emily's poem 'The Mariner', which she writes while contemplating the death of her father and the potential to see again her lover, Valancourt.

The breeze of Eve moans low, her smile is o'er,
Dim steals her twilight down the crimson'd west,

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 244.

He climbs the top-most mast, to seek once more
The far-seen coast, where all his wishes rest.

[...]

The storm of midnight swells, the sails are furl'd,
Deep sounds the lead, but finds no friendly shore,
Fast o'er the waves the wretched bark is hurl'd,
'O Ellen, Ellen! we must meet no more!

[...]

Oft, at the calm and silent evening hour,
When summer-breezes linger on the wave,
A melancholy voice is heard to pour
Its lonely sweetness o'er poor Henry's grave!

And oft, at midnight, airy strains are heard
Around the grove, where Ellen's form is laid;
Nor is the dirge by village-maidens fear'd,
For lovers' spirits guard the holy shade!¹⁸⁷

The poem is full of sea voices – the breeze ‘moans’ itself as well as carrying Ellen’s ‘weeping’ and her ‘sigh’ to the sailor. When the sailor realises he is about to die, ‘deep sounds’ from the sea are amplified by ‘loud, loud winds’. These voices share in the misery of the couple, as well as heightening the emphasis. The Mariner’s fate mirrors Emily’s (lexically reiterated in ‘Ellen’) perturbation as she is stuck between the prospect of two protectors – the safety of her father’s house is now passed, without retrieval, in his death, whilst the potential of Valancourt’s protection is unsecured as she is perturbed by his past life in Paris. She, like Ellen, is offered impossible promises for the future and ‘joys to come’ by Valancourt, under the guise of an ironic ‘eternal truth’. Ellen’s dreadful fate after Henry’s death reveals the terrifying prospect for an unkept woman in eighteenth-century society: poverty, loneliness and social exclusion. The sea and coast both provide vocal input, primarily with ‘groan[s]’, perhaps indicative of a timeless landscape sad to see history repeat itself yet again, and admit another two souls to its wandering, aimless numbers. The ‘melancholy voice’ which haunts Henry’s ‘grave’ could be Ellen’s, the ocean’s or his own. Regardless, its meandering misery emphasises its distance from land, the ‘friendly shore’ where all his ‘wishes rest’, now sunken and unreachable. Emily’s position between security and marriage follows Ellena’s trajectory,

¹⁸⁷Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, ed. by Bonamy Dobrée (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 463-464.

showing the pivotal importance for a woman to marry a good, reliable suitor. She is effectively in purgatory between life with a man and the same death Ellena faces when she is left without support and, pivotally, love. The coast in 'The Mariner' represents a sense of security and optimism beyond the unknowable depths of the ocean. As she sits on the beach and writes this poem, the motif of coastal as purgatorial is further reinforced, but in a feminine context. The gothic woman must look to the shore to contemplate love and her future.

Emily's perturbation is also shared by Valancourt, who writes the poem, 'Shipwreck', carved on to the stone gate of the sea watch tower, which she later finds and reads.

'Tis solemn midnight! On this lonely steep,
Beneath this watch-tow'r's desolated wall,
Where mystic shapes the wonderer appal,
I rest; and view below the desert deep,
As through tempestuous clouds the moon's cold light
Gleams on the wave. Viewless, the winds of the night
With loud mysterious force the billows sweep
And sullen roar the surges, far below.
In the still pauses of the gust I hear
The voice of the spirits, rising sweet and slow,
And oft among the clouds their forms appear.
But hark! What shriek of death comes in the gale,
And in the distance what glimmering sail
Bends to the storm? – Now sinks the note of fear!
Ah! Wretched mariners! – no more shall ye say
Unclose this cheering eye to light ye on your way!¹⁸⁸

Gothic shipwrecks are rarely described from the perspective of the drowning mariners themselves, but rather from the perspective of those who watch from the shore, as is the case with this poem. Radcliffe's use of poetry and songs to articulate the voices of the restless dead emphasises the sea's poeticism, displaying the importance of delicate lyricism to the gothic. Her message is subtly portrayed, in true romantic fashion. Valancourt watches above the ocean as he contemplates the shipwrecks that have been. He is even described as resting, in 'cold', unsympathetic light, listening to the 'loud mysterious' force of the ocean below. Again, 'roar' is used, creating an aggressive tone, despite Valancourt himself resting above the scene. He describes hearing 'the voice of spirits',

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 559.

initially 'sweet and low' until they progress into fearful shrieks of 'death' and 'the note of fear'. The voices of the mariners, real or imaginary, beg for recognition and assistance. The final line suggests that an open eye, both of the watchtower and of the metaphorical watcher, are important for preserving both the life and the memory of those lost at sea. The 'light' might not save them, but it eradicates the fear that comes with the gloom of the night and creates a sense of hope for preservation that cannot exist without it. The role of the coast is to protect and preserve the memory of those who have fallen, allowing them, almost, to continue living. In this sense, the coast provides a space between life and death even for those who have already perished. The opportunity to be preserved through their voices and their memories can only occur when the coast and its inhabitants 'unclose' their eyes and stand vigil to their final voyage.

THE COAST AND THE RETURN OF THE REPRESSED

As well as representing purgatory, the voices of the dead are pervasive through the coast as a symbol for the return of the repressed. This can be a return of repressed emotion in the character, repressed sins, or ghosts who have not been silenced and now seek revenge on those who wronged them in life. The sea's role as an unstable burial ground, as previously discussed, facilitates a sense of constant anxiety at the shore that the dead might return. Sue Zlosnik suggests that the possibility of return in the gothic is indicative of the instabilities of time and place which render the self vulnerable. 'Gothic has represented anxieties about time, space and mortality in a secularising world' she writes, 'In the dimension of space, gothic can be claustrophobic [...] Time too presents itself as disturbingly unstable, with a primitive past all too likely to erupt into a present that is also haunted by invitations of a menacing future.'¹⁸⁹ The coast is one of the most unstable sites of the gothic, a vulnerable entity where boundaries between reality and fantasy are permeable. The genre also capitalises on anthropisms of a seemingly timeless nature: the sea, without beginning or end, often occupies a godlike role, whilst the coast is a constant observer. The shore is the perfect space to represent the fluidity between life and death, an expanse where the character's assurances of the burial of sins are undermined. A lot of this has to do with the 'secularising' of the world which Zlosnik describes.¹⁹⁰ The sea, as an eternal and ancient power, often occupies a godlike role in a society where God is gradually disappearing or has retreated to 'claustrophobic' unfriendly churches or abbeys.¹⁹¹ These edifices, as well as shutting strangers out, prevent the influence of God (or new

¹⁸⁹ Sue Zlosnik, 'GlobalGothic at the Top of the World: Michael Faber's 'The Fahrenheit Twins'', in *GlobalGothic*, ed. Glennis Byron (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 65.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

ideas about Him) from coming in. The sea's presence in gothic scenes often introduces what sociologist Zygmunt Bauman describes as the 're-enchantment' of the world with theology, introducing the possibility of a God who has escaped the boundaries that culture has set Him.¹⁹² The terror of the unforgotten sin, the return of the dead, and the unsettling voice of eternal power, wreaks havoc on the gothic coastline. Radcliffe's Spaltro from *The Italian* is constantly haunted by his repressed sins:

No, Signor, I remember it too well, I wish I could forget; I remember it too well. - I have never been at peace since. The bloody hand is always before me! And often of a night, when the sea roars, and storms shake the house, they have come, all gashed as I left them, and stood before my bed! I have got out, and ran out upon the shore for safety!¹⁹³

Spaltro tries to forget the dead but finds himself unable to, haunted by their 'gashed' bodies. The sea facilitates this remembrance - it is wrathful in 'roars' and 'storms' which seek to 'shake' or destabilise his attempts to erase the guilt from his life on land. He runs to the shore, a space where he is able to confront his repressed memories, as well as separate himself from the guilt his actions on land have caused him. The sea, able to shake his house with thunderous storms and disturb his sleep, becomes gentler when Spaltro reaches the shore - the beach temporarily offers Spaltro asylum. In this way, the coast encourages Spaltro to address his repressed memories, rather than to continue ignoring them. His 'bloody hand' mirrors Macbeth's description of his returning guilt in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: 'Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand?'¹⁹⁴ The sea refuses to absolve - it relentlessly holds memory and, as the body cannot settle in the ocean, nor can the memory settle in the mind of the murderer. The motif of cleansing here draws attention to the stain imagery that is used multiple times throughout the text to refer to Ellena's murder, and to historical deaths, which cannot be cleansed from memory.

It is difficult to avoid a Freudian interpretation of gothic imagery. Gothic narratives naturally manifest a return of the repressed dynamic – ghosts, unexpected pasts and withheld truths haunt the genre. As Francisco Goya inscribed on his famous etching, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*, a sentiment which is frequently relevant in gothic literature. Gothic readers come to

¹⁹² Simon Marsden quoting Zygmunt Bauman, *The Theological Turn in Contemporary Gothic Fiction*, (Liverpool: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p. 2.

¹⁹³ *The Italian*, p. 267.

¹⁹⁴ William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. by A. R. Braunmuller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 53.

expect that avoidance of problems only leads to a horrifying encounter with them later. Spaltro's attempt to avoid the enchantment of the gothic ocean, full of his secret and murderous past, only magnifies the horror of his confrontation with it. Mary Shelley also uses this technique, amplifying the attempt at clinging to reason to avoid awful psychological consequences in her description of Frankenstein's attempt to bury the body of his female creation.

The remains of the half-finished creature, whom I had destroyed, lay scattered on the floor, and I almost felt as if I had mangled the living flesh of a human being. [...] With a trembling hand I conveyed the instruments out of the room; but I reflected that I ought not to leave the relics of my work to excite the horror and suspicion of the peasants, and accordingly put them into a basket, with a great quantity of stones, and laying them up, determined to throw them into the sea that very night; and in the mean time I sat upon the beach, employed in cleaning and arranging my chemical apparatus.¹⁹⁵

Frankenstein literally tries to hide his sins beyond human reach – the 'mangled' relics he discards are a physical manifestation of the wrongdoing he is attempting to fling away from himself and hide from the sight of others. Described as akin to murder, 'almost' as if he had 'mangled the living flesh of a human being', he foreshadows the mangled corpse of Clerval, found as if washed up on the shore, murdered by the invention of his own hand. In the same way, he has almost murdered Clerval himself by making the monster that killed him. He trembles at the gravity of this act, distracting himself by sitting on the shore, looking out onto the ocean where he attempts to cleanse himself from sin by eradicating it completely, whilst delicately 'cleaning and arranging' the instruments which helped him to perform the act. He tries to cleanse *himself* in this act, treating the coast's ecotone as a space far removed, in nature if not in distance, from the horrors he has enacted on both land and sea. As the scene progresses, Frankenstein works up the courage to discard the body of the creation which could have either condemned the whole world or saved both his life and the lives of his entire family.

Between two and three in the morning the moon rose; and I then, putting my basket aboard a little skiff, sailed out about four miles from the shore. The scene was perfectly solitary: a few boats were returning towards the land, but I sailed away from them. I felt as if I was about the commission of a dreadful crime, and avoided with shuddering anxiety any encounter with my fellow-creatures. At one time the moon, which has before been clear, was suddenly overspread by a thick cloud, and I took advantage of the moment of darkness,

¹⁹⁵ Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, ed. by Marilyn Butler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 142.

and cast my basket into the sea; I listened to the gurgling sound as it sunk, and then sailed away from the spot. [...] Clouds hid the moon, everything was obscure, and I heard only the sound of the boat, as its keel cut through the waves; the murmur lulled me, and in a short time I slept soundly.¹⁹⁶

Frankenstein's guilt plagues him – he shudders with 'anxiety'. His crime hidden beneath the waves, only the coastal voices remain to accompany him. The 'gurgling sound' of the basket falling through the ocean creates the noises of a drowning person, a sound made sharper by the total silence around him. The gurgling is isolated, heightened by his own attention to the gravity of the act, a 'dreadful crime'. The 'murmur' of the sea calms him, lulling him into a slumber that nearly proves fatal for him, and certainly proves fatal for Clerval later in the text. These murmurings appear as false friends, calming Frankenstein, whilst simultaneously appearing as whisperings of disapproval. Through these duplicitous murmurings, his near drowning is secured, and his imprisonment in Ireland made certain, which leads, later, to the death of each of his family members.

Here, the coastline mimics what Jacques Derrida calls the 'performative' use of language.¹⁹⁷ The use of the descriptive utterance 'murmur', placed out of context with the tension of the rest of the scene, imbues it with the significance of previous uses. In the gothic, 'every word is parasitic on its previous uses.'¹⁹⁸ Applying Derrida's analysis to this scene, we can see that the language used is indeed culminative and parasitic. The 'murmur' of the sea in this scene has various meanings and significances from usage earlier in the text and in other gothic texts of the period, each building on one another. Shelley's use of murmur attaches itself to other gothic murmurings, which makes its significance more uncannily macabre, and ensures its association with the dead haunting the living. The gothic 'murmur' is a loaded weapon, used to haunt Frankenstein and exploit his guilt. Although the sound itself imparts no direct meaning, it succeeds in condemning Frankenstein by both carrying the significance of other gothic texts which use murmurs, and suggesting that an anonymous watcher is muttering disapprovingly just out of hearing. The ocean acts as an agent in condemning Frankenstein for his actions, a judge of sorts. The mangled creature which he abandons is never allowed conscious speech of her own but is spoken for in her final moments above the ocean, in drowning gurgles and in the murmurings, which surround Frankenstein in his guilt. Here, Frankenstein literally takes part in the "sleep of reason", believing that dumping the body in the ocean will absolve him of his sins against nature, or, at least, hide his sins from observation and

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 143.

¹⁹⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc*, trans. by Samuel Weber (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972), p. 16.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

judgement. Instead, he is condemned to travel the ocean chasing his foe until his death, and the death of his monster.

The ocean extends castigation, voices its concern, and instigates the coast as a location of false security: here, Clerval is found, Frankenstein imprisoned. As characters move further away from the coast in the text, they become more unhappy, losing a sense of hope. Frankenstein's punishment demands that he is unable to simply listen to the voices of the ocean, and instead must become one of their number. The coast is where the results of his repressed sins emerge, and the place where his punishment is given.

Many other gothic authors also establish the coast as a point of return for things repressed or deeply buried. Charles Maturin describes the rantings of condemned and tortured Stanton in his manuscript as akin to a message in a bottle in *Melmoth the Wanderer*: 'He seems, in fact, to have acted like men, who in distress at sea, intrust their letters and dispatches to a bottle sealed, and commit it to the waves.'¹⁹⁹ Hoping that their words might be found, or their sins absolved, they desperately cast letters in the ocean, knowing they head towards a coast they will never reach, just as Maturin's Stanton clings to the possibility his words will re-emerge. The words do, of course, return to the unfortunate John Melmoth, who must face Stanton's manuscript as a precursor to his own meeting with Melmoth the Wanderer. Jean and John Comaroff theorise that 'contemporary figures of dread are [...] conjured out of the economic upheavals and shifts in immigration motivated by new labour practices.'²⁰⁰ As much as 'figures of dread' reflect contemporary political concerns, I would add that traditional gothic monsters are amalgamations of eighteenth-century issues which often haunted the public imagination.²⁰¹ These figures of gothic horror seem to be drawn to the fringe of an unknown, mysterious and even, as Charlotte Mathieson observes, 'empty space where new ideas can be forged away from land.'²⁰² As Mathieson rightly notes, new ideas are forged here, and old ones formed into a new, uncanny significance. It is far from empty, however. The ecotonal nature of the area imbues it with both some of the features and the significance of land and sea. In that regard, it contains elements of the known and possibilities of the new and unknown. The fringe borderline between security and fear is the coast. The sea voices here represent a repression of sin, of memory and of fear – the coast, the boundary between the familiar security of land and the unpredictable vastness of the ocean, is an essential site of their return.

¹⁹⁹ Charles Maturin, *Melmoth the Wanderer*, ed. by Douglas Grant (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 59.

²⁰⁰ Jean and John Comaroff quoted by Fred Botting and Justin D. Edwards, 'Theorising GlobalGothic' *GlobalGothic*, p. 11.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Mathieson, p. 7.

THE COAST AND HISTORICAL GUILT: FROM FATHERS TO SONS

The coast is as a spatial reminder of the sins of the past, where the voices of the long-forgotten dead can be heard. Glennis Byron comments that 'Though haunting can signal the return in spectral forms of cultures and pasts that have been pushed aside, those revenant pasts return often as sites of loss, nostalgia, guilt and betrayal.'²⁰³ The hauntings that Byron observes can occur on the gothic coast, where spectres reflect the characters who receive them, exposing their own personal vendettas. Similar to the return of the repressed motif, historical hauntings can displace buried emotions and allow them to rise to the surface. Beyond this, however, they also come to challenge events that have been culturally repressed. Battles which saw the death of thousands, erased from popular culture, haunt those who seek to divert focus away from them and on to the terrestrial governance *du jour*: antique souls without rest who seek the acknowledgement and retribution they never received come back to haunt those who have forgotten their sacrifice. Wondrich describes the sea's memory: 'The metonymical power of the sea and the shore stands for the world of memory, the past and the abiding legacy of trauma.'²⁰⁴ The sea, holding the floating bodies and unrested souls of those who have been buried there, possesses a depth of antiquity and historical violence that is not remembered on land, but is held forever in the sea's depths. The coast, however, has a different role from the sea, and the two should not be conflated with it. The shore represents a timeless zone between two extremes - land eager to alter its history to suit the cultural establishment, and the sea as a container of true history. It is the point at which two contrasting viewpoints meet, as is shown by Radcliffe's *The Italian*.

And to such a scene as this,' said Vivaldi, 'a Roman Emperor came, only for the purpose of witnessing the most barbarous exhibition! To indulge the most savage delights! Here, Claudius celebrated the accomplishment of his arduous work, an aqueduct to carry the overflowing waters of the Celano to Rome, by a naval fight, in which hundreds of wretched slaves perished for his amusement! Its pure and polished surface was stained with human blood, and roughened by the plunging bodies of the slain, while the gilded gallies of the Emperor floated gaily around, and these beautiful shores were made to echo with appalling yells, worthy of the furies!²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Byron, p. 17.

²⁰⁴ Wondrich, p. 157.

²⁰⁵ *The Italian*, p. 187.

The Italian's sea is plagued by memories of despotic rulers taking advantage of natural resources and staining the area with blood and shame. The sea itself is directly affected in this conflict - the ocean is so full of bodies that its 'polished surface' is 'roughened' by their sheer multitude and 'stained with human blood'. The coast, depicted as an active onlooker, echoes the 'appalling yells' of the fallen, observing, without feeling, the same impact as the ocean. The ecotonal nature of the space lends to its depiction as an active participant in the narrative. It is anthropomorphised, imbued with the characteristics of the human civilisation which partly constitutes it. Being both nature and land, the coast seems to represent society looking onward, whilst also maintaining its ecological features. In this way, the coast is both human and ecosystem. Although knowledgeable about the insults of the past, it does not seek to revenge the dead, as the sea is often depicted as doing, but instead merely observes everything on each side. The shore does not have the capacity to hold the depths of history that the sea does, nor does it have the topography to erase it. As a result, the shore is a space of observation, without real attachment or allegiance, or an obvious, pervasive sense of morality.

Radcliffe's coasts are the viewing point for many haunted seas, specifically, the Mediterranean Sea. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* also places at the forefront the Mediterranean Sea, which is haunted by the ghosts of Roman soldiers who drowned there. She infuses her narrative with classical writing, taking influence from Homer's *Iliad* and Pope's *Homer*.

she still sat gazing on the vast scene of cloudless sky, and mighty waters, and listened in pleasing awe to the deep-sounding waves, while, as her eyes gazed over the Adriatic, towards the opposite shores, which were, however, far beyond the reach of sight, she thought of Greece, and, a thousand classical remembrances stealing to her mind, she experienced that pensive luxury which is felt on viewing the scenes of ancient story, and on comparing her present state of silence and solitude with that of their former grandeur and animation. The scenes of the *Iliad* illapsed [sic] in glowing colours to her fancy – scenes, once the haunt of heroes – now lonely, and in ruins²⁰⁶

As Emily is leaving Venice, she contemplates the 'deep-sounding waves' which cast her mind to the depth of history that exists in the ocean itself but which she has not seen. In her 'silence and solitude' on the shore, she comes to imagine other coastlines, witnesses of ancient battles in Greece. The sea's 'deep' voice encourages Emily to view the ocean as one total entity, and the shores as the

²⁰⁶*The Mysteries of Udolpho*, p. 206.

only remaining bastions of individual countries' cultural identities. The sea, as Kären Wigen observes, possesses a perspective and history of its own. 'No longer outside of time, the sea is being given a history, even as the history of the world is being retold from the perspective of the sea.'²⁰⁷

Narratives like the *Iliad* arguably bestow history onto the ocean, whereas the sea and coast, which seem to have viewed and participated in everything, have stories of their own to tell. Although literature will always inflect narratives to a certain extent, Wigen is correct in observing that texts often do not portray coastlines with a story to tell and a significance in their own right. The coast, then, abounds with voices unheard, unrecorded, and uninterpreted. The 'haunt of heroes' has become much more macabre, as the coast is 'lonely, and in ruins'.²⁰⁸ Emily is the only witness of the story the ocean has to tell, the listener from the shoreline. As mentioned above, Radcliffe also quotes from Pope's *Homer*:

As when a wave, that from a cloud impends,
And, swell'd with tempests, on the ship descends,
White are the decks with foam; the winds aloud,
Howl o'er the masts, and sing through ev'ry shroud:
Pale, trembling, tir'd, the sailors freeze with fears,
And instant death on ev'ry wave appears.²⁰⁹

The waves here are themselves infused with 'instant death', becoming a funereal 'shroud' for each sailor. The distraught souls of the dead are represented by howling and singing winds which subdue the sailors into silent 'trembling' terror. The excerpt from *Homer* emphasises the personal nature of the voices of the dead – they are representative of individual and familial losses. Radcliffe's haunted oceans emphasise the impact of the ocean's deadliness on land, and, by proxy, the coast. The coast, being the only site from which the bodies can be reached, and the voices heard, serves as a perpetual graveyard for those lost in the depths. As a huge mass grave, bearing no mark or reminder, it adopts an uncanny duality of both safety and insecurity, death and life.

Charles Maturin also depicts the coast as an entrance point to an unending graveyard. As John Melmoth tries to chase the vision of his evil predecessor, the coast forms an unstable barrier from the sea.

²⁰⁷ Kären Wigen quoted by Mathieson, p. 4.

²⁰⁸ *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, p. 206.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 495.

Panting from the fury of the storm, the vehemence of his own exertions, and the difficulty of the task, he was now almost foot to foot, and face to face, with the object of his pursuit, when grasping at the loosened fragment of a stone whose fall could not have hurt a chit, though on its tottering insecurity hung the life-grasp of a man, his hold failed – he fell backwards, - the roaring deep was beneath, seeming to toss its ten thousand arms to receive and devour him.²¹⁰

The ‘ten thousand arms’ that want to ‘receive and devour’ John belong to the multitude of dead in the ocean, all ‘roaring’ in rage. Like the Water-King, the undead are ravenous and evil, seeking further victims to live alongside them. John grasps desperately at the rocky shore, whose fragility he describes as insecure and childlike. This coast, in comparison to the ocean it borders, is weakly unimposing. It does not communicate with or assist in the narrative, but simply observes the action. The coast witnesses the anger that the ocean holds, and the fury of John, but is unable to do anything but observe. Maturin’s oceans are full of allusions to thousands of undead voices, floating aimlessly in the deep, without a resting place. The story itself fits into the motif of historical voices which haunt the living, as Melmoth the Wanderer haunts both his relative and those who live in ignorance of the evils of their forefathers. The sins of the fathers repetitively come upon the sons, with Melmoth the Wanderer as their agent. Immalee, Melmoth’s most innocent victim, is guilty of the sins of her family, who save themselves and abandon her as a baby on a remote island. As Melmoth haunts Immalee, he compares the ocean to hell.

They will have a singular accompaniment – the eternal roar of a sea of fire makes a profound bass to the chorus of millions of singers in torture!²¹¹

This line alludes to Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1667), both in its discussion of hell as aquatic (as in the lake of fire), and in its musicality. Milton refers to music in *Paradise Lost* as the most effective language with which to communicate with heaven. ‘With heavenly touch of instrumental sounds/In full harmonick number joined, their songs/Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to Heaven’.²¹² Milton also frequently uses musical imagery to describe the glory of God and His majesty. Milton’s description is referenced in an ironic inversion in Maturin’s novel, where it becomes the language of hell. Maturin emphasises the ‘roar’ of disembodied oceanic voices, being eternal victims, ‘singers in torture’ – the historical gravesite is full of ‘millions’ adding to the ‘chorus’ which haunts all who inhabit the shore, as Immalee does.²¹³ It is inescapable, as hell is to those who are condemned. The

²¹⁰ *Melmoth the Wanderer*, p. 67.

²¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 351.

²¹² John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. by Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) p. 104.

²¹³ *Melmoth the Wanderer*, p. 351.

voices of the dead serve as a permanent reminder and motif of the wrath of God against those who have not atoned for their sins and those who do not believe in Him. This sea-as-hell motif recurs in the text as John Melmoth dreams about his predecessor Melmoth the Wanderer.

He dreamed that he stood on the summit of a precipice, whose downward height no eye could have measured, but for the fearful waves of a fiery ocean that lashed, and blazed, and roared at its bottom, sending its burning spray far up, so as to drench the dreamer with its sulphurous rain. The whole glowing ocean below was alive – every billow bore an agonizing soul, that rose like a wreck or a putrid corpse on the waves of earth's oceans – uttered a shriek as it burst against that adamant precipice sunk – and rose again to repeat the same tremendous experiment! Every billow of fire was thus instinct with immortal and agonizing existence, - each was freighted with a soul, that rose on the burning wave in torturing hope, burst on the rock in despair, added its eternal shriek to the roar of that fiery ocean, and sunk to rise again – in vain, and – forever!²¹⁴

The ocean is 'fearful', 'fiery' and lashes at its observers – the roar from the bottom of the sea casts reference to the bodies which have sunk there. The ocean itself is 'alive' and 'glowing', almost ghostly, inhabited by the 'agonising' souls condemned to stay within it, perpetually shrieking. The emphasis on the eternity of this punishment, being 'immortal' and 'forever', aligns with Wigen's observation that the sea is ancient and wise enough to conjure up its own narrative perspective, with minimal human inflection. The Miltonic allusion, 'sea of fire', depicts the unending flames of hell, an example of biblical elemental wrath, and the total power of God over earth. The coast, on the brink of this hell, is both the entrance to the sea of fire and the exit from it. In other words, the coast is purgatory.

In *The Lovers Tale*, Elinor reads the horrific, hellish story of John Sandal.

Amid the thickest of the fight, in an open boat, he had carried a message from Lord Sandwich to the Duke of York, under a shower of balls, and when the older officers had stoutly declined the perilous errand; and when, on his return, Opdam and the Dutch Admiral's ship blew up, amid the crater of the explosion John Sandal plunged into the sea, to save the half-drowning, half-burning wretches who clung to the fragments that scorched them, or sunk in the boiling waves.²¹⁵

²¹⁴Ibid., p. 539.

²¹⁵ Ibid., p. 461.

The scene she describes is certainly hellish – the ‘boiling’ waves which burn the ‘wretches’ while they drown conjures the image of the sea as a historical site of war very similar to hell. Outcasts from society are forced to come to this place, far away from civilisation and hope, and made to face incredible pain, all whilst knowing the ‘perilous’ nature of their fate. Pivotal, however, Elinor perceives this scene from the perspective of the coast, rather than of the sea. ‘There Elinor sat to catch the blast, let it blow as it would, and imagined she heard the moanings and the cries of drowning seamen.’²¹⁶ As she sits on the coast, she can hear the ‘moanings and the cries’ of the undead, disembodied victims of war. From the distance of dreams and the coast, the voices of the historical deaths that happen in the ocean are the most poignantly clear. A space representing eternal hell for those who have died within it, the coast is almost a precipice, from which to cast sinners toward God and away from sin, a powerful warning. War, encompassing most of the evils of man, is depicted so gruesomely to remind readers of the power this motif holds over real-life actions. Thousands of unburied, unaccounted for bodies lie beneath the ocean floor, with no hope of reprisal. The coast, a barrier to this bloodshed, discourages man from going further, and provides a space to contemplate the unpaid penance of humanity’s original sin.

As each section of this chapter shows, the voices of the dead in the ocean abound in gothic texts – they serve as warnings, lamentations of loneliness and cries for hope. Section one shows how coastal utterance can intersect life and death, section two shows how it can have the power to unearth the hidden sins of society. The final section depicts the coast as a space which listens to the outcast and the wronged, upholding the rights of the alienated and protesting against a society which ignores them. The coast that diligently watches the actions of man at sea never forgets their actions; the memories, and voices, are engrained into the sand itself. Through analysing the recurring motif of voices of the dead at the coast, it is possible to delineate a better understanding of the eighteenth-century view of the coast in general. It is omniscient, yet strangely powerless against the wildness of the sea. If the sea fills a godlike role in its uncontrollable power, the coast is a reminder that its power does not reach everywhere – it provides a strip of yellow hope upon which characters cast themselves to contemplate, to commiserate, and to save themselves. The gothic coast becomes a space where those who die at sea have a chance to live on through their voice. It is a spiritual intersection where the utterances of the dead can influence the lives of the living. Its position as a natural borderline between water and land facilitates its role as a mediator between

²¹⁶ Ibid., p. 462.

the *heimlich* earth and the vast *unheimlich* sea. This mediation includes its role as listener to the gothic macabre murmur.

CONCLUSION

‘But soon,’ he cried, with sad and solemn enthusiasm, ‘I shall die, and what I now feel be no longer felt. Soon these burning miseries will be extinct. I shall ascend my funeral pile triumphantly, and exult in the agony of the torturing flames. The light of that conflagration will fade away; my ashes will be swept into the sea by the winds. My spirit will sleep in peace; or if it thinks, it will not surely think thus. Farewell.’²¹⁷

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818)

As outlined in the introduction, the coast in the Gothic is a borderline space. It separates civilisation from the sea, whilst also being an ecotonal combination of the two spaces. Conceptually, Gothic authors have taken this boundary motif and used it to expand upon the idea of transgression. Each chapter highlights the importance of the boundary and how the coastline can literally and figuratively embody it. The chapters expand upon the notion of isolation. Normative society in Gothic literature works to discard people and concepts which it finds to be disruptive or unsettling from its defined norms.²¹⁸ The narratives in each chapter articulate the experiences of people on the outside of society, just as the coast is on the edge of land. Characters are oppressed, deviant or female, existing on the periphery of their communities. They repress their notions of difference, inciting a tone of uneasiness which characterises the Gothic genre. Frankenstein’s monster articulates this alienation: he is rejected by his creator (father) and by every other person he meets. He is also denied a companion. His isolation is so encompassing that he is driven to murder, stalking his creator and, finally, to commit suicide. He exists on the fringes of society, unable to integrate properly, after being rejected numerous times. His wish, then, to die on the icy coastline, atop a funeral pile near the sea, compounds his characters perpetual remoteness. He dies as he has lived: on the edge, alienated. The creature’s death and dissolution are parallel in his pursuit of his creator from terra firma to ocean, crossing ecotones, marking his movement from life to death. *Frankenstein* is a novel which continually connects the shore with death. The coastal deaths, however, are always in the creature’s control. His transit across the ecotone, then, is akin to a death march. Frankenstein’s monster is a good example of how truly unsettling the Gothic coast can be. It is the

²¹⁷ Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, ed. Marilyn Butler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) p. 191.

²¹⁸ See Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, translated by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). ‘On the edge of non-existence and hallucination, of a reality that, if I acknowledge it, annihilates me. There, abject and abjection are my safeguards. The primers of my culture.’ P. 2.

setting where many of the novel's most terrifying scenes take place, culminating in this final monologue.

Chapter one focused on how the Gothic novel often uses coastal folklore to heighten descriptions of characters. Both the representations of Bluebeard and Matthew Lewis' depiction of the Water King consolidate ideas of rampant patriarchy. These characters take advantage of women and poor men, using the coast to highlight this. Coastal folklore depicts isolation as vulnerability for characters who do not possess the antiquated traits of success, like masculinity and wealth, that civilisation rewards. Radcliffe's poems, however, highlight the way the fantastical nature of folk lore often works in favour of the isolated. Their otherworldliness, combined with the detachment of the shore, provides a form of escapism for the characters. It lifts their attention away from their persecution and allowing them to feel vindicated. The coast underpins both isolation and vindication. The chapter shows how Gothic narratives use folkloric imagery to demonstrate how societal alienation engenders uncanniness. The coast infuses this theme, providing a literal manifestation of being at the edge of society.

Just as folk-lore explores the lives of those on the fringes of society, Gothic interpretations of theology also focus on those who are segregated. Chapter Two explored how many Gothic novels protest against hegemonic religious belief and practice, highlighting the way religious groups can often exclude people. The coast emerges as a principal setting for spiritual imagery, especially for Radcliffe, who explores Christianity from a 'natural theology' perspective. Churches, scriptures and preachers are criticised in her fiction with the view that a preferable relationship with God can be struck at the coast, when immersed in nature. Discussion of the Red Sea imagery in Gothic narratives such as Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) reveals the coast's reputation as an agent of spiritual justice for the oppressed Israelites, as well as an eternal preserver of history, an unquestioned proponent of justice. The space creates horror and is capable of acting as an agent of divine will. The 'sea of blood' imagery, similarly, reveals how the coast can both protect and attack the oppressed. However, in this interpretation, we can see the sea as the oppressor – punishing evil and wrongdoing in characters – whilst the coast acts as a salvation space which promises protection from the sea. The spiritual imagery presented in the texts demonstrate how the isolated 'other' can be protected at the coastline by a super-natural force beyond our understanding. This can mean condemnation as well as retribution.

The final chapter ventured into the realm of repressed truth re-emerging. It showed how neglected feelings of guilt can place characters outside positions of power, away from society and alienated from their true identities. Purgatory is an important part of this motif. The chapter shows how a

character can exist in a space between life and death, challenging the binaries of mortality. Radcliffe shows her characters in a purgatorial state, often forced into such a position because they are evading persecution. The coast saves characters from death, but also removes characters from civilisation and their lives as they know it. The return of the repressed also features heavily at Gothic coastlines. Characters can embrace their hidden selves at the coastline, re-encountering emotions and events that they have felt pressured to hide from society. Although the coast is also seen as an agent of punishment, it provides salvation. Sins are recognised, exposed, and dealt with. In this way, the coast sometimes deals compassionately with sinners who have been outcast for their misdeeds. It facilitates forgiveness and regrowth as well as punishment. In a similar vein, sins passed from generation to generation also resurface at the shore. Aspects of history pushed to the periphery by polite society - wars, violence and deaths - are recognised. Those who have been forgotten in cultural memory are literally given a voice. The coast is a space which is punctuated by mysterious noises' creating powerful moods and tones which influence characters and narrative. The forgotten or repressed come to life at the coast, because the literal edge of the land can merge with the metaphorical edge of society.

The gothic coast is a space of remembrance, repression and re-emergence. The area represents an ecotonal convergence between human and natural worlds, where geography facilitates and contributes towards meaningful human experience. Rather than detached contemplation, characters are immersed in the space. The coast offers an opportunity for them to become isolated from the socio-cultural world around them, bringing their true nature and motivations to the surface. Gothic novels portray moments of great psychological turmoil at the coast, because it is where truth surfaces. These truths offer information about the characters themselves, but also about the society from which they have come. The coast offers criticisms of the institution of marriage, as shown in Chapter One, of hegemonic religious practice, as shown in Chapter Two, and of humanity's propensity to overlook and ignore the horrors of war, murder, and the outcast, as shown in Chapter Three. The coast is a symbolic setting from which authors can make a myriad of social comments because it offers a level of detachment from society, as well as contributing to a greater, historical narrative. Gothic writers exploit the space's connection with the ocean, and the ocean's reputation for retaining knowledge eternally, to explore ideas of judgement and influence.

The coast is a space which provokes both fear and contemplation of greater unknowns. Although the coast in general is used to achieve many different things, its persistent recurrence and relevance proves its uncanny credentials. Although the coast can provoke dread and uncertainty, it also shows that the purity of nature is Godly, and that to infringe upon its boundaries is evil and akin to tampering with God's creation. Gothic novels use beautiful natural scenery, including coastlines, to

emphasise that Eden-like scenes of natural bliss are impossible when combined with the sin of mankind. Humanity corrupts absolutely: hence why the coast in Gothic texts is flooded by uncanny visions of the character's sins. There are no scenes of the coast which are totally separate from humanity, and no scenes where the coast is totally blissful. This highlights the extent to which the coast is influenced by humanity, informing its uncanniness. As each chapter shows, it is humanity's involvement with the coast, its persistent interference, which brings out these Gothic elements. The space is a retainer for human evil, spilling over from the sea and the land.

This dissertation has drawn attention to the coast as a space which merits further discussion and attention, as well as aquatic settings in general. These spaces, with a newly emerging and understood importance, should be evaluated in further detail for the impact they, specifically, have on narratives, rather than just being regarded as part of the greater 'wilderness' of Gothic texts, which has already attracted a good deal of critical attention. There is potential for further study, both of the coast's use in Gothic texts specifically and of the mode of eco-Gothic criticism in general, where setting is viewed as a serious agent in authors' narrative decisions. This dissertation has only just begun to fully explore the potential impact of the coast in the Gothic genre. There would be merit in a longer form study that covers a larger time scale and more ecotonal or aquatic spaces. As our understanding of the earth changes, too, and ecological studies develop, literature comes to reflect this. A growth of understanding of the environment has led to further articulation of our sense of fragility and peril, which is reflected in more modern Gothic texts. A modern focus on ecology and horror surrounding the coast, akin to Dawn Keetley and Angela Tenga's *Plant Horror*, for example, would be useful to expand our understanding of how the ecotone of the coast creates fear.

As the coast has often been overlooked in Gothic criticism, in favour of forests, moors or marshes, it deserves to be examined as a space holding its own unique relevance as well as contributing to the observations of the role of wilderness which have already been made. These spaces are often focused on because they supposedly are the most 'wild' and remote from civilisation. The coast, however, is very far from the urban – dwellings here tend to either 'communicate' with the shore, as with the abbey in *The Italian*, or are lighthouses which are purposefully remote from greater civilisation and focused instead on small numbers of sailors out in the remote sea, as with *The Sicilian Romance*. Coast and civilisation are, in the Gothic novel, close but disparate. The shore also provokes humility in people, making them aware of their smallness and their relative existential insignificance whilst in sight of the vast power of the ocean and its uncharted depths, knowledge and possibilities. It is anti-civilisation, reinforcing humility of mankind, rather than championing its achievement. EcoGothic criticism shows Gothic authors responding to what they view as an unfair Anthropocene. An ideal Gothic Holocene, then, depicts humanity and nature as equal forces, with

neither party more powerful than the other. The coast is an ecotonal and egalitarian merger of natural and human worlds, representing this sense of idealism.

As well as the shore, there is scope to expand to other aquatic spaces which play a role both in traditional Gothic and new Gothic literature. Rivers, lakes and lochs all occur frequently in the Gothic, particularly in Radcliffe's novels. *The Castles of Athlin and Dubayne* (1789), for example, offers a wealth of examples of the Gothic significance of lochs and tarns. The scope for further research is extensive. Eco-Gothic criticism, in general, deserves far more attention. In a world where our dependence on and our abuse of the environment has never been more pronounced, it is important to highlight the space as an area worthy of respect, and capable of generating fear. As Jonathan Bate suggests in *The Song of the Earth*, 'Neither physically nor psychologically can we live without green things.'²¹⁹ He claims that there is 'one life' both in us and abroad, and that the earth is 'a simple vast ecosystem which we destabilise at our peril.'²²⁰ The fear of ecological destruction has never been greater, yet the fear has always been present in our discussions of nature. Through analysis of Gothic texts, it is possible to discern the duration of this idea, as well as to highlight the sense of human insignificance that nature can provoke. It is also important to note the general neglect of "blue" spaces or aquatic spaces at the expense of land and the "green". "Green thinking" tends to dominate ecocriticism, a phenomenon which Steve Mentz identifies in his book *Ocean*, 'the thinking that goes by the name "blue humanities" replaces ground, land, and earth as dominant metaphors. Instead we remember that the surface of Earth is mostly ocean. [...] In an aqueous environment, nothing stays on the surface forever.'²²¹ His observation that many critical studies focus on the land at the deficit of aquatic spaces, despite the ocean occupying the greater land mass, highlights the extent to which further study is merited. The ecotonal shore, often seen as lacking a distinct identity whilst being associated with either sea or land, also suffers from little critical attention. Perhaps, "yellow" or "brown" thinking should be added to the established ecocritical lexicon of "green" and "blue".

The coast's relationship with humanity has been variously defined through its connection to the mythical, the theological and the historical. As each chapter establishes, these connections have different implications for humanity as a whole. William Hughes expands this idea, suggesting that mankind's responsibility for nature falls into roughly two categories in the Gothic: 'humanity [...] may be scripted variously as the privileged and unabashed holder of an enduring Old Testament dominion; the uneasy, guilt-ridden and unworthy steward of a fragile environment; or a co-equal

²¹⁹ *Frankenstein*, p. 15.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ Steve Mentz, Christopher Schaberg, *Ocean* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020) p. xvi.

and knowing participant in its mysteries and cycles.²²² Gothic imagery around the coast comes either from humanity being knowledgeable of its failure to care for the earth fully, or from humanity's removal from what is supposed to be our natural environment. With both propositions, humanity has wavered from its natural place and exceeded the boundaries of what is acceptable. Nature, God's Eden, has been defiled by humanity's contact. The coast also represents this. Within this comes the inherent implication that mankind is evil, a destructive force, against God and creation. Perhaps the references to spirituality which abound at the Gothic shoreline are supposed to reinforce this transgression – myth recognises the level of fantasy and detachment which humans indulge in to deny this reality, and voices which abound at the coast attempt to call us back to what we have repressed: original sin. The experience of Adam and Eve lives on in Gothic texts, represented in a perpetual state of denial in human characters, and the uncompromising yet alluring bliss offered by natural settings. Gothic writers call attention to inherited guilt around natural spaces, specifically the coast, in order to underline how unnatural terrestrial life is. Marital and religious institutions deviate from the relaxed, unforced and innocent order of life established in Eden, and are therefore unnatural, and surrounded by guilt and unease.

The coast is the perfect setting for societal criticism. As Matthew P. M. Kerr articulates in *The Coastal Cultures of the Nineteenth-Century*, the shore was a space for new idealism in the 1700s and 1800s: 'The zone between sea and land was [...] associated with change and innovation – utopianism, even.'²²³ It was a space where people came to fantasise about new ideas, to critique society and to envision changes which could improve it. He expands on this, claiming, 'The coast could seem to be at once a space of clarity, and misty distance, a terminus or breaking off point, and a place of embarkation – a place of solitude and exhilaration [...] The susceptibility of the coast to such varied conceptions meant that it often functioned as literal grounds for their comparison.'²²⁴ This dissertation reflects this attitude in traditional Gothic authors, exploring the coast's representation as a philosophical space. The coast does not just achieve new utopian ideals by protesting the present order of things in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but it uses settings to start philosophical dialogues and shock readers into imagining new alternatives.

In this way, the coast upholds some of the main features which we associate with Gothic literature. It shocks, probing what is acceptable. The literal edge of the land meets with the metaphorical edge of society to create the trepidation which permeates Gothic coastal imagery. Using the outrageous

²²² William Hughes, "A Strange Kind of Evil': Superficial Paganism and False Ecology in *The Wicker Man*", in *EcoGothic*, pp.58-71, p. 58.

²²³ Matthew P. M. Kerr, *Coastal Cultures of the Long Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), p. 19.

²²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 1.

and fantastical, the Gothic offers a new, reasonable alternative, whilst depicting familiar attitudes as flawed. The Gothic coast has many different uses, and through its examination it is possible to further understand the depths of what the Gothic genre has to offer, as well as to probe the points that the authors make about humanity's relationship with nature and the universe around us. Although our understanding of the Gothic coast across the genre as a whole could benefit from further research and analysis to expose its full meaning, this dissertation begins to redress the gap in the scholarship by focusing on some of the many ways in which the coast can be a vehicle for Gothic meaning. By examining the space's relationship to folk lore, theology and utterance, it is possible to understand the perspective of alienated, isolated and contemplative British Gothic writers who looked outward from an island surrounded by coastlines.

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