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Literary discussions of gender at the birth of the Gothic novel in the late eighteenth century have grown ever more nuanced and detail-oriented over the years. [We have gone from, for example, Juliann Fleenor’s societal emphasis on relationship to patriarchy to a more literary emphasis throughout Wallace & Smith’s collection *Female Gothic: New Directions*.] [However, to accomplish this more sophisticated approach, scholars have of necessity focused in greater detail on smaller numbers of texts.] My goal, in applying a large-scale digital methodology to this [field], is not to duplicate the research on individual novels carried out by other scholars, but to open up new ways of understanding the relationships within the broader body of texts. Throughout my essay, I will touch upon the implications my findings might have for the way we understand Ann Radcliffe’s works, but my primary interest in is the legibility of the ‘school of Radcliffe’ itself. This ‘school’ was, evidently, readily identifiable to Radcliffe’s contemporaries, but I will argue that its identifying features are not entirely those which seem most notable to modern critics. Over the course of two large-scale literary ‘experiments,’ in which I model the early Gothic novel by means of bibliographic data, I have asked what schools, if any, make themselves apparent, and whether there is cause to believe that the hundreds of women writing Gothic novels wrote observably different books than the hundreds of men doing the same. My preliminary results suggest that male and female schools do indeed exist, but that they do not map neatly to a female/male terror/horror Radcliffe/Lewis binary, and that both gendered schools are dwarfed by a non-gendered Gothic mainstream.

[My interest in placing Radcliffe back into the broadest possible context is in keeping with the voracious habits of her readers. Although Radcliffe was, by the time she published *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, widely recognized as a master of her craft, she was not canonized separately from other Gothic writers either on the shelves of the circulating libraries or in the minds of book reviewers the way that ‘literary fiction’ is separated from ‘romance novels’ today. This readerly voraciousness is particularly [important] in light of John Frow’s articulation of genre as, not a stable set of categories, but a self-defining process. Individual texts, Frow argues, “do not ‘belong’ to genres but are, rather, uses of them” (2), framing genre not as a singular stable identifier for a novel but as a set of expectations that an author may strategically fulfill or foil. Genres thus function by being a bridge between the “social situation” of a reader embedded in real and literary contexts, and a text that “realises certain features of this situation, or which responds strategically to its demands” (14). Rather than reading genre simply to categorize “where a text ‘belongs,’” Frow argues, “we read… for those layers of background knowledges that texts evoke” through their genre relationships, which allow an assessment of “which types of meaning are appropriate and relevant,” and therefore how the text can be made to make sense (101). Accordingly, any investigation of Radcliffe’s use of genre must begin with an understanding of what she’s using.

To take the first steps toward that understanding, I have created and carefully examined visualizations of metadata regarding 208 early Gothic texts. My data derives from Ann Tracy’s bibliography *The Gothic Novel 1790-1830: Plot Summaries and Index to Motifs* and Frederick Frank’s *The First Gothics: A Critical Guide to the English Gothic Novel*; my experimental method is informed by Willard McCarty’s “Knowing: Modeling in Literary Studies” and by Lisa Samuels and Jerome McGann’s “Deformance and Interpretation.” After carrying out a wide range of experiments, I have selected two of the most fruitful to discuss in depth: I have charted the gendered use of 70 Gothic ‘motifs’ identified by Tracy, and [explored Frank’s classifications of the same novels’ various ‘Gothic types’]. Most in need of explanation, I suspect, is my decision not to focus on any of the experiments which involved actual texts, whether literary or bibliographic. Certainly, the early Gothic is uncharted territory for computational stylometry; the one corpus-based analysis which I was able to discover, an MSc dissertation by Stephanie Jones (2010), begins its investigation in 1816, well past the Gothic’s first flourishing. [However, full-text analysis relies on having full texts, which are readily available only for the most critically-examined novels. I don’t wish to replicate this emphasis of attention. My goal is not to examine Radcliffe herself, but the ‘school of Radcliffe’; although I can see less clearly, I can see more broadly, which suits my particular questions.]

In determining my approach to [intentionally seeing broadly rather than in detail], I draw upon McCarty’s framework of the strengths and limits of “modeling,” with influence from Samuels and McGann’s discussion of “deformance,” to allow for models which are sensitive to certain distinctions but not to others. McCarty, in proposing language to discuss literary models and their epistemological implications, defines a distinction between models “of” something and models “for” something (CITE). Blueprints *of* historical buildings, for example, allow inquiry into the details of something that already exists, whereas blueprints *for* new buildings allow architectural ideas to be explored before they are brought into reality; both ways of modeling, McCarty says, “comprise a practical means of playing out the consequences of an idea in the real world” (CITE), from two different directions. My several attempts to model the Gothic novel, as a genre experienced by its popular readership in the late eighteenth century, are certainly models *of* that genre. As such, their merit at first seems most appropriately evaluated in terms of their compliance with the “fundamental principle” of modeling-of, namely, the “exact correspondence between model and object with respect to the webs of relationships among the selected elements in each” (CITE). By this principle, my essay ought to focus on those preliminary models which retained the most detail about the texts in question: Tracy’s plot summaries, for example, or even a much-smaller corpus of full texts for famous Gothics. However, as McCarty ultimately concludes, “modeling is pragmatic” (CITE); immediately after defining the “fundamental principle” of “exact correspondence,” McCarty describes two reasons it may be violated: when exact correspondence is impossible for practical reasons, and when it has been intentionally distorted in order to study the effects of those distortions.

Exact correspondence is, of course, never a practical option; if there have been no adjustments of scale or materials, [it] is no longer a model at all, but the [thing itself]; tautologically, models are only needed when the thing itself is in some way unsuitable for study (too big, too complicated, or no longer in complete existence), and so models are always “fictional” (McCarty CITE). “Since modeling is pragmatic, the worth of a model must be judged by its fruitfulness.” (McCarty CITE). [The key idea is that models are *constructed*, and the construction of a model makes it sensitive to some areas of difference while eliding others.]

So, pragmatic reasons are one reason a model might diverge in “isomorphic exactness” (McCarty CITE) from that which it models; the other is what McCarty terms “distortion” (CITE), but which Lisa Samuels and Jerome McGann might call “deformance.” Accordingly, if my spreadsheet and graphs model “the Gothic novel”, they also deform it.

I began with the ten-page ‘Index to Motifs’ included at the end of Ann Tracy’s bibliography. Tracy uses the term “motif” broadly to encompass a wide range of plot elements, images, and character types. This index is clearly built for a different kind of scholarly use than that which I have made of it; its intended audience is “scholars with particular interests” (195), such as “garden as a scene of temptation” (200), who wish to locate new books to close-read. Accordingly, Tracy has prioritized presenting a wide range of distinctive individual motifs, such as “hand, cold, seizing heroine” (200), rather than broad categories. Indeed, her preface to the index indicates that highly popular motifs were intentionally excluded: “the abundance of murders,” she says, “argued for the retention… of specialized murders only” (195), and castles have similarly been ignored. Tracy’s omissions work at cross-purposes to my own approach — despite Tracy’s assertion that castles “are so pervasive a device that no purpose can be served by the recitation of two hundred novels that have them” (195), I would have liked to compare them to manor houses, cottages, abbeys, and convents — and I have had to discard much of her work. 138 of her motifs have been disregarded entirely, because they appear in fewer than twenty novels. Additionally, most of the motifs which she breaks down into detailed sub-categories have been reduced back to their stem category. “Poison,” for example, is indexed with categories for “blade,” “chaplet,” “kiss,” “letter,” “orange,” “plant on grave,” and “sacrificial wine” (203), but I have elided these nuances in favor of a broader category of “poison (any),” which applies to [X] novels and thus allows [subcategorization].

This description of my methods emphasizes places where differences between books have been intentionally reduced. However, this [whatever] does not result in a loss of [knowledge]. Instead, [Pivoting metaphor]. [I deform her index to produce a model of the Gothic that is sensitive to what particular elements of the ‘Gothic toolkit’ authors are more likely to use.] [My deformed version of Tracy’s index is now far less useful for locating outlier texts for closer reading, but sensitivity to one thing is traded for sensitivity to another.]

The charts’ design is meant to render the charts a fruitful body for interpretive readings. The size of each circle, for example, reflects the prevalence of the motif within the body of indexed novels as whole. More subtly, the difference between the two colors in each chart reflects the difference between the percentages. This latter choice is motivated by my desire to identify motifs that have strong predictive power: if a motif is used completely equally by men and women, for example, it is not a useful tool to draw distinctions between two camps. Accordingly, if the motif [is not useful as a tool to distinguish between two gendered camps], its chart doesn’t have two camps. [These largely non-gendered charts turned out to make up the majority of charts overall.]

Nonetheless, an identifiable gendered school does emerge: 29 distinctly male-authored motifs indicate male dominance of largely the things we would expect men to dominate. These motifs suggest that the darkest side of the Gothic was primarily the province of men: death may be slightly female-dominated, but murder is male-dominated, as are blood, corpses, and bones. These motifs suggest that men are more likely not to simply mention death as a plot device or an inevitability, but rather to dwell vividly upon its effects. Similarly, human sacrifice, putrefaction, starvation, and torture all involve directly depicting that which other novels might merely imply. The masculine impulse to 'go farther,' to replace coy allusions with unflinching enactments, is most evident in my sample novels' treatment of incest. General themes of incest are widespread, appearing in 51 of the 208 novels under consideration-- nearly a quarter of the works. However, in 45 of those novels, there are no cases of what Tracy terms "actual" incest, only "incest, literary flirtation with (including false alarms, foiled attempts, threats, and unconsummated incestuous passion)." This kind of narrative discretion is employed roughly equally by both male and female authors, and makes up the vast majority of all depictions of incest. However, six cases of actual, no-narrative-flinching incest are documented-- and all six are by men. To force one's readers to look directly at the horrors depicted, rather than allowing them to become terrified by their own imaginations, is, of course, the technique of the horror-Gothic, as contrasted with the terror-Gothic. Identifying the horror-Gothic as a predominantly male affair comes as no surprise, and accords nicely with the critical tradition of identifying Lewis as the quintessential horror-Gothic writer.

In contrast to the wild abundance of male tropes, in my model of the genre, the ‘Female Gothic’ is defined by only two things: libertines, and miniature portraits. These two motifs together immediately suggest a Female Gothic less like [X] and more like Jane Austen, whose ordered and rational novels are replete with rakes and miniatures. However, their paucity also suggests that this immediate response may be too hasty; [the Female Gothic is outnumbered not just by the Male Gothic but also by the Everybody Gothic]. More than half of the 70 motifs not strongly gendered. Three — “dueling and other single combat,” “elopement (any),” and “relative, lost, discovery of” — are even perfect ties. Moreover, the more popular a motif is— i.e., the larger a role it plays in making up the genre— the more likely it is to be non-gendered. In terms of sheer prevalence, the defining features of the Gothic as a genre appear to be fainting, confinement, abduction, storms, and references to suicide. Only one of those 5 charts shows a notable contrast between men and women, which is in keeping with the bulk of my results.

These results serve as a useful reminder that not all contrasts are necessarily perfect binaries. And indeed, all of the strongly male-dominated motifs are much less common than the more neutral motifs. This model suggests that, rather than a balanced opposition of Radcliffe’s female terror Gothic vs Lewis’s male horror Gothic, the genre as a popular movement was defined by a less-sensationalist (possibly Radcliffean, possibly terror-mode) non-gendered Gothic mainstream, with a subset of male horror Gothic writers making up a minor tradition within it. The existence of a Male Gothic tradition does not require that everything outside that tradition be a perfectly-opposed Female Gothic.

In order to better define that Gothic mainstream, I turned to a second bibliography, which classified novels by their ‘Gothic type’; here, too, the unbalanced nature of our attempted binary becomes obvious. Frank’s “types” are, like Tracy’s “motifs,” clearly intended for a different sort of scholarly use: for the 178 texts indexed by both authors, he provided 131 unique classifications (CITE APPENDIX). [They were meant to be read by a human who wants to know more about an individual book, not mechanically used to map similarities between a large number of books]. Many of these are “unique” primarily from the point of view of a spreadsheet: “Domestic fiction (various Gothic elements)” and “Domestic fiction (intermittent Gothic elements),” for example, may be subtly different from each other, but [TRANSITION]. I divided each “Gothic type” into a set of tags, and tallied the use of each tag the same way I tallied Tracy’s motifs. The novel *A Suffolk Tal*e, for example, listed in Frank as “Domestic fiction (various Gothic elements)” (315), was tagged as “domestic” and “Gothic elements.” Similarly, Radcliffe’s *Italian*, listed as “Pure or high Gothic (terror and horror modes)” (302), tagged as “high,” “Gothic,” “terror mode,” “horror mode,” and “Radcliffean.” By allowing each individual phrase of Frank’s ‘Gothic types’ to become its own tag, rather than attempting to define my own categories and sort each genre types into them, I allowed the most important categories to emerge on their own. [The axes of distinction to which my model is sensitive are thus based on what is actually seen.]

The eleven tags which correspond to at least nine novels and their respective prevalence are, from most popular to least popular, as follows: “high or pure” Gothic (64); “terror mode” (63); “history” (30); “domestic” fiction (28); “horror mode” (25); “sentimental” fiction (24); “Radcliffean” novels (19, which includes 6 novels by Radcliffe); “chapbook” stories (17); “natural” Gothics, consisting of entirely explained or non-supernatural elements, including those based on authentic contemporary murders (11); “Schauerromantik” novels (11); and “*Monk*-ian” novels classified either as imitations of *The Monk* or as monastic shockers (9, including *The Monk*). The sample is dominated by the high Gothic and by the terror mode, both of which are largely gender-neutral affairs. However, horror is not nearly so evenly matched against terror as we might have hoped — nor as male-dominated. And mingled in with our Radcliffean and Monk-ian novels are all kinds of schools not generally accorded particular importance for the field as a whole: history, domestic, sentimental, naturalized, Schauerromantik.

Indeed, in accordance with the conclusions I drew from Tracy’s motifs, the Male Gothic operates as a distinct minority of the genre as a whole. Even including ‘Monk-ian’ in this list requires a bit of fudging; this category includes 3 texts named as imitations of The Monk, 5 texts named as ‘monastic shockers,’ and The Monk itself — and even then this only provides 9 novels, below my initial arbitrary threshold of 10.

And yet, it seems that the Radcliffean novel, as a categorization, *does* bear scrutiny as a gendered tradition. This bright yellow rectangle suggests that the problem, while hunting for the Female Gothic among Tracy’s motifs, was not a lack of a female-dominated tradition — the problem was the method. The particular deformation of the motif-charts allowed my model to be sensitive only to certain types of information, but the gendered trend suggested by Frank’s gothic types is not defined by flashy plot-devices like skulls and incest. Instead, the emerging ‘school of Radcliffe’ suggested here is deeply tied to the sentimental novel. To be precise about the nature of this connection, I [made several pivot tables] along the same principles of [predictive utility] that structured my examination of Tracy’s motifs. Approaching from one direction, 50% of Radcliffean novels are also high gothic. If you know a book is Radcliffean, you know it is probably high Gothic, terror mode, and sentimental, in that order. Approaching from the other direction, 25% of sentimental novels are also Radcliffean. Gothic types which are likely to include Radcliffean novels are sentimental, naturalized or explained, and high Gothic, in that order.

This may explain the comparison of *Udolpho* to Inchbald’s *A Simple Story* which so puzzled Clara McIntyre. In response to a review which declared Udolpho to be “the best composition of this kind since Mrs. Inchbald’s *Simple Story,*” McIntyre is taken aback by the expression “this kind” (94). She says, “The reviewer must surely be thinking of fiction in general, for, except that they are both fiction, two compositions could hardly be more unlike than *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *A Simple Story*” (94). McIntyre begins to draw a connection based on “the ethical purpose of the book,” which in Inchbald is “rather too obvious for successful art,” but decides that although Radcliffe’s writing “it is true, was strictly moral,” Radcliffe’s “main interest” does not lie in moralizing, and *Udolpho*’s project is along a different line. However, [McIntyre overlooked the importance of moral sentiment.]

My results here suggest a call back to an older school of criticism, which saw French sentimental novels— rather than German horror stories— as the forbears of the Gothic. [These frameworks are sensitive to different aspects of the Gothic.] Ernest Baker, for example, argues that “[t]he sources of Gothic romance… are to be sought in the popular variant of the fiction of sensibility evolved by the Abbé Prévost and elaborated later on by Baculard d’Arnaud. The exciting adventures, the violent emotions, the gloomy scenes, forests, and antres, castles, dungeons, and graveyards, in the abbé’s novels and the plays and stories of Baculard, were to be the distinctive features of Gothic romance throughout its course. It was all a derivative of the cult of emotion” (175). In this history of the genre, [German influences are superficial set-dressing rather than inherent to the genre]: “Some novelists sought only to conjure up a witching atmosphere of awe and vague apprehension; others employed the most violent shocks of physical anguish and fear. They all dabbled in the supernatural, either playing upon or playing with feelings of superstition; and, later on, those who had become acquainted with German folk-lore and its ghosts and elves and goblins found their account in satiating the greediest appetites for crime, diabolism, and nameless horrors” (Baker 176). [Even the supernatural is relevant primarily because it allows authors to manipulate readers’ “feelings of superstition” in service of varying gradations of fear.] [What Baker is sensitive to is the emotional content.]

These earlier approaches have largely been superseded now, partly for their now-charming willingness to render emotional judgments on authors — Baker’s excoriation of “that amoral person [Laurence] Sterne” for being a “debauched sentimentalist” who “fondled his sensibility,” “aware of his vice, and voluptuously enjoying all its sweetness” (95), for example, evaluates *Tristram Shandy* along markedly different lines than would now be considered fruitful — but more subtly problematic in these earlier works is the teleological assumption that the history of the novel must be the history of the *realist* novel. J.M.S. Thompkins, for example, founds his dismissal of the Gothic in his assumption that the ‘goal’ of the novel itself is to become realist: “the average novelist paid, on the whole, very little attention to the probable, and the novel in consequence slipped farther away from reality, as though a window on to the other world had been changed to a magic lantern" (57). However, we can reject this assumption without rejecting Thompkins’ observation that ‘fantastic’ plot elements did not render the Gothic a fundamentally different sort of story than those which preceded it: in the Gothic, he argues, "the accepted themes were repeated in a shallower tone and overlaid with all the romantic incidents of disguise, abduction, lost heirs and mistaken identity, which had been for hundreds of years the story-teller's stock in trade” (57), rendering these stories [as functionally the same as what he terms the sensational novel.]

These critics suggest viewing the Gothic in terms of its relation to sensation, sentiment, and sensibility — all of which, Baker argues, are distinguished from each other only by “intensification”, and not in terms of fundamental type (120). [What does this model allow us to see? — in some ways it’s a return to Punter as well (?), to talk about the operation of fear itself (“a continuous oscillation between reassurance and threat” (423)). We can also use this model to be aware again of Radcliffe’s literary innovation with regards to suspense — “her most important contribution is a matter not of theme, but of structure.” (McIntyre 77).]

[My method has been, in its assumptions, necessarily historicist — sensitive not to retroactive critical distinctions, but attempting to describe a body of works as it relates to itself.] [I have chosen not to ask what qualities will cause a novel to be categorized by my bibliographers as ‘Gothic,’ but rather what constitutes ‘normal’ within this pool.] [In doing so, I have found evidence of both a Male Gothic and a Female Gothic that are in keeping with some critical conceptions.] [However, I remain persuaded that the most striking result is the large body of works that fall into neither category, and the unbalanced or awkwardly non-parallel nature of any binary distinctions one might wish to draw.] [McCarty argues that “a good model can be fruitful in two ways: either by fulfilling our expectations, and so strengthening its theoretical basis, or by violating them, and so bringing that basis into question” — of these, he says, “failure to give us what we expect is by far the more important result” (CITE).]