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THEORY OF MIND:

REPRESENTATIONS OF VIOLENCE AND PREDATION IN 19TH CENTURY
BRITISH GOTHIC LITERATURE

by Caprice Lyn DeSpain Huse

Thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

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To the Graduate Faculty:

       The members of the committee appointed to examine the thesis of Caprice DeSpain Huse find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my children. Ella and Genevieve, no matter how hard things may be for you in life, my hope is that you always strive to reach your goals. I love you more than you know. To my husband, Jonathan, as he let me read my thesis during the drafting stage to him more often than either of us care to remember, and endured my writing at countless family functions for the last year. Thank you for wrangling kiddos so that I could hide away and work during crunch time. To my parents, because they were a pillar of support when I changed my major to something I loved. They've taught me to do strive for what I enjoy, and always try to do better. This inner drive has motivated me when life circumstance made things seem impossible. Finally, to Leo: You've been my writing inspiration since I started college. I dread the day you are my muse only in memory. I cannot thank those who have supported me during this process enough.

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Abstract

The representations of Gothic literature in this thesis allow for an understanding of the weaknesses in Theory of Mind (ToM). Matthew Lewis' 1796 novel The Monk: A Romance, Emily Brontë's 1847 novel Wuthering Heights, and Bram Stoker's 1897 novel Dracula, represent different examples of deception that interfere with the use of ToM. These interferences demonstrate how devastating the misapplication of ToM can be. The Monk chapter examines the effect of a brutal Sadistic Benefactor, functioning both as a manipulator of situation and emotion. Wuthering Heights is a widely interpreted novel that draws polarized interpretations regarding Heathcliff. The use of Reflective Function allows one to better assess the motives and thought processes of others as an advanced development of ToM. Dracula demonstrates the use of aggressive mimicry. This allows predators to display traits of prey, disrupting accurate readability. These different Gothic antagonists provide examples of interferences that leave people vulnerable.

Introduction

This thesis intends to examine Matthew Lewis' 1796 novel *The Monk: A Romance*, Emily Brontë's 1847 novel *Wuthering Heights*, and Bram Stoker's 1897 novel *Dracula* as examples of the nineteenth-century British Gothic movement. This specific 100-year span of Gothic literature is being examined, as Theory of Mind applications to this genre remain largely unexplored. The focus on this vein of Gothic literature demonstrates examples of confrontation with threatening antagonists. These interactions function to lead readers to recognize potential failures in Theory of Mind. Theory of Mind, also known as ToM, is used to explain these specific instances of literature in order to further inform the narrative purpose of the Gothic villain. ToM allows one to judge others utilizing personal belief systems and world views, as human beings have the desire to seek out and join or create social groups with those they find to be similar in some manner. As an example, outsiders are considered to be a threat to the social fabric of the primary group one is associated with. Outsiders may have different moral compasses, religious standings, or motivations. This skill is also useful when attempting to discern the potential danger of other people. The failure of ToM involves serious misjudgment of another person in a way that extends beyond social faux pas, typically resulting in physical or imminent danger. This can manifest in the mischaracterization of a person who intends physical harm. To help solidify this concept, it is useful to step outside of literature to examine real-life consequences concerning misreading of ToM. Ted Bundy is a well-known serial killer considered to be charismatic and handsome by his victims. His disarming appearance and personality allowed him to skew the ToM of his intended victims, leading to the murder of at least thirty people. This example may seem a bit

horrific, but it is important to recognize that this type of predator can exist in both the real world, and literature. Gothic literature represents the consequences of failed ToM through the use of a variety of potentially threatening character types. These different character types offer different challenges, demonstrating potential weaknesses in ToM.

Gothic literature entered into scholarly discussion during the 1970's. Initially viewed through the lens of psychology, characters and their behaviors were bent into abstract roles, at times depicting possible mental illnesses, reflections of societal pressures, or providing examples for feminist readings. Contemporary criticism continues to find ways to decrypt older texts, for example, suggesting religious understanding, reading into the representation of nature, or possibly reflecting a newer mental health diagnosis. These methods are beneficial, and allow for fluidity of meaning. As an example, *Wuthering Heights* is often considered for psychological character readings. The use of a Freudian lens is often applied to Brontë's characters, infantilizing their behavior. Psychoanalytic readings have their uses, but they also have their risks and limits. In lieu of a psychoanalytic reading, a ToM examination of literature demonstrates a more complex pairing. This offers an understanding of both the emotional interior and the response to exterior circumstance demonstrated by the characters. ToM has intersected with other genres, such as drama and science fiction, and is used as a tool to gain a better understanding of human behaviors and reception of certain genres and ideas in literature. Searches through the MLA Bibliography reveal, however, that nineteenth century British Gothic literature tends to be overlooked. Currently, cognitive theory and Gothic yields only a few relevant hits, and these focus on twentieth century American Gothic literature. The unsettling issues discussed in the Gothic genre are intended to be

directly reflective of human nature, both as an understanding of internal motivation, and external influences. Violence, lust, animalistic tendencies, etc. are all traits kept in check by societal expectation, and Gothic literature allows for the discussion of things to exist on the fringe. It's surprising that ToM is not used more prevalently in Gothic studies, as it provides an underexplored avenue in the behavior and response seen in this body of literature.

While customary critical lenses seek to examine possible functions of literature in society, facets of ToM seek to determine the stable nature of human behavior within social groups as developed over the evolution of humanity. ToM allows for deeper understanding of human interaction at the social level, examining how humans interpret and respond to each other. As Gothic literature is demonstrative of the failings in ToM, it is important to consider these texts a bit more carefully for the meaning they can provide readers. Vera Nunning explores the value of blending both cognitive science and literature in her article "Cognitive Science and the Value of Literature for Life," stating that the 'imagine self' becomes possible when literature invites readers to connect to the behavior of the characters. A reader "cognitively recognizes or shares the feelings of others" in the literature that they read (96). This can be expressed in an altruistic fashion, but Nunning notes that empathy is not always good natured, as the alternative allows for precisely directed actions that allow humans to harm each other more effectively. For example, a sociopathic individual can emulate certain emotions that they may not actually feel. This behavior can be used to gain trust in others for nefarious purposes. Gothic allows readers to see the actions of the antagonist, the moments in which ToM fails, and the consequences characters face as a result of these failures. Keeping this

information in mind, belief systems provide a valuable means of assessment as to the purpose of literature. Liza Zunshine describes this as a thought process that "influences our everyday thinking" (*Strange Concepts* 11). ToM approaches literature with the understanding that there are aspects of represented human behavior based on preconceived expectations; societal structures and belief systems are learned, and social constructs are not a new invention.

These structures exist as a system of societal governing, allowing for the expression of certain human traits, and the expectation of repression of others. Steven Pinker calls this a "Civilizing Process," and it has been occurring over time. Used by Pinker to demonstrate the decline in violence over the span of documentable human history, his research focuses on the conventions and expectations of society, and the effect this has on acceptable behavior. These evolutionary practices affect behavior, in turn affecting expectation of literature. Patrick Hogan mentions that literature is used to demonstrate the ethical nature of the society which created it, and that "emotions are embedded in stories" (*Mind* 83). Hogan is suggesting that the emotions presented are indicative of ethics within a given society. Gothic literature does not embrace the villains it produces as dark heroes, but instead displays them as a warning. Be aware of the unexpected from those you might imagine as incapable of causing you harm. It's not always possible to tell what intentions or motivations are driving others, as there are ways to circumnavigate the internal protection system that is ToM. Intended to work as an adept skill, ToM seeks out base behaviors, separating them from socially constructed etiquette with the understanding of human nature at its most primal. The scenario of a

Ted Bundy interaction, despite his charming and charismatic behavior, should tickle the warning systems in the brain. Be polite, avoid alerting the predator, and get out.

The unique scenarios presented within the several instances of Gothic literature in this thesis allows for the gained insight of ToM blind spots, offering different types of predators for consideration. Each chapter presents an evaluation of the initial critical reception of the specific novel, as well as the different aspect of ToM being affected. The interdisciplinary nature of this body of work allows for a logical explanation concerning the cognitive value that can be gleaned from this type of literature. These novels demonstrate instances of certain human behavior that threaten social standing and acceptance. Even within the convention, it is necessary to demonstrate boundaries and expectations through the development of the Gothic genre. The most extreme novel, in terms of graphic violence, is *The Monk*. Lewis' novel pushed standards surrounding propriety through behavior of both the author and primary character. This chapter will focus on the consequences of misapplication of ToM, as well as looking at a Sadistic Benefactor character, as defined by Lisa Zunshine. Sadistic benefactors provoke emotion from others in cruel ways, as one cannot fake emotion when in pain. The sadistic benefactor will have the advantage of higher standing over the victim in some way. The daemon is the only creature that can hold a higher level of status than Ambrosio, offering false reprieve, in the presented scenario. The second chapter is about Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. This is the least violent of the three novels, seeming to signify a change in the genre during mid-century. This chapter's focus is on Reflective Function (RF), which is an advanced concept built on ToM. Reflective Function is a response or action resulting from one's ToM assessment. RF is demonstrated through a character's

ability to respond to the behavior of others, and the potential thoughts or ideologies they may have. Much like a parent responds to their young children by assumption of needs based on a cry, characters are able to construct real or imagined beliefs and intentions in others. This aspect of RF allows people to determine the best response to others around them. This response can be the result of either a verbal exchange, or an action. The final chapter is on Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. *Dracula* is noted as being violent, as it discusses chopping off heads and the implied consumption of children, but isn't as explicit in description as *The Monk*. *Dracula* will bring the discussion around to predatory behavior through the understanding of Aggressive Mimicry. Aggressive Mimicry is a skill some predators use in order to mimic a less threatening species, and can influence the ToM of intended prey.

It is necessary to take a moment to point out that ToM works in many ways. The novels in this thesis are intended to represent a type of introduction to ToM as a lens. The focus of each chapter is the novel's male antagonist, and their influence on the other characters in the novel. Though the chosen characters are all male, the discussion of gender is not present in the conversation. Instead, these characters have been chosen for the unique anchor they provide within each story, as they allow for the collaborative discussion of Gothic and ToM. More specifically, this allows for the determination of how ToM is working in the particular instances of the sadistic benefactor, RF, and aggressive mimicry. Ambrosio, Heathcliff, and Dracula demonstrate multiple ways that ToM can potentially be misread by both characters and readers. One could potentially examine another character from any of these novels, and will find an appropriate understanding in ToM. These chosen instances of Gothic indicate that this genre is

capable of highlighting how devastating the misapplication of ToM can be. Gothic

antagonists provide examples of deception that interfere with the use of ToM, as these

interferences leave people vulnerable.

Chapter 1

Matthew Lewis' *The Monk***:**

Theory of Mind and Sadistic Benefactors in Gothic Literature

Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* is commonly discussed with a primary focus on the depiction of religion within the novel. This trend in literary assessment can be seen in both historical and contemporary reviews. *The Monk* received a wide range of criticism upon initial release, but the tone in criticism shifted heavily towards the negative once Lewis put his name and parliament status on the second edition. Complaints involved allegations of blasphemy as being the upsetting component, opposed to the traditional Gothic themes present within the novel. Though the content was upsetting for the conventional religious viewpoints during the time, it seems more accurate to suggest that the perception of religious subversion within Lewis' work instead functions to support the religious perspectives of the audience for which he is writing. In support of this alternative reading, the utility of Lewis' main character, Ambrosio, merits close critical consideration. A figure of religious importance, Ambrosio is afforded a certain favor among society, as he is considered morally superior. It is precisely this social favor that allows Ambrosio to wreak havoc as the novel progresses, as those around him fail to accurately assess his intentions and thought processes. Much like many of Lewis' characters have misread Ambrosio, it can be said that reviewers have misread the intention of the novel. It can be tempting to focus solely on the representation of religion in the novel, but it is important to understand the social anxiety demonstrated within Lewis' novel involves consequence of a corrupt individual religious leaders, as opposed to a generalized concept of corrupt religion.

A useful lens not previously employed in the consideration of *The Monk* is the cognitive thought process termed "Theory of Mind," or ToM. ToM is the ability to anticipate the thoughts and intentions of others, and is key to survival. This cognitive process is comprised of previous experiences, personal belief systems, perceived intentions, and perspectives, in which mental states or actions are anticipated from others. ToM begins as the realization that one is able to maintain privacy of the mind, and is a perception that develops in humans between the ages of about five and six years old. This concept is an integral building block within the larger framework of cognitive theory. Literature, much like the real world, requires people to constantly infer the emotions and thoughts of those they are observing. Keith Oatley's article "Theory of Mind and Theory of Minds in Literature" discusses theory of mind specific to literature as being Theory of Minds. This idea specifies that "[N]arrative is based on a process of modeling how intentions unfold over time, and the repercussions of these intentions with those of other people. […] because we can assimilate so much of human life to a set of narrative schemas, to understand narrative in this way is to understand mind at a deep level" (19). In other words, readers are able to practice stepping into the headspace of different minded characters in a non-threatening manner. This allows the reader the ability to experience multiple intentions and situations in a way that is not directly confrontational. A potential benefit this may have for readers is that they may gain an understanding of the motivations of others who are experiencing different perspectives and belief systems. Frank M. Lachmann's article "Paul and I Like to Read Good Literature" discusses the implications of the development of theory of mind as allowing people to be able to develop an empathic understanding of others: "[…] the content of our mind is different

from the mind of another person. Our capacity for empathy is one indication of having attained such a perspective" (143). This belief system permits people within a group to feel as though they can effectively sort through those around them, differentiating those who share similar belief systems from those who do not. Though Lachmann discusses that readers may experience empathy, it is worth noting that there is an alternative. These same principles allow for the potential distancing between one's self and those who deviate from expected viewpoints, or those who may potentially threaten the belief system of the primary social group. This uncertainty results in an inquisitiveness regarding the ambiguity of the motivation of others.

This chapter examines the effect that a Theory of Mind (ToM) reading can provide in consideration of Lewis' novel. When paying attention to the viewpoints and narrative choices Lewis makes, one can see the effect of the transparent mind of the villain within this Gothic classic. Though an example of stories nestled within other stories, the focus of discontent for initial readers seems to be Ambrosio's beliefs about the Bible. Initial reception demonstrates a misreading of the thoughts of Ambrosio as representative of the thoughts and beliefs of Lewis, resulting in accusations of blasphemy. These critical reviews from Lewis' peers seem to be a response to his status in parliament. The first edition, bearing only his initials, didn't experience such specifically harsh critique. Much like Ambrosio, a higher level of accountability is placed on Lewis. It can be tempting to focus solely on the representation of religion in the novel, but it is important to understand that the social anxiety demonstrated in Lewis' work, as the damage caused by a corrupt religious leader has devastating consequences. ToM

interpretations would explain the discrepancy between corrupt religion and corrupt leaders that may be causing misreading.

This chapter will address the impact of inaccurate ToM on the part of the characters and critics. Ambrosio does not end up being the true villain, or sadistic benefactor, of the story but readers will have the opportunity to see him persuaded by the real sadistic benefactor. The Daemon, who imposes manipulated situations on Ambrosio, affects his ToM decisions within the novel. More specifically, the sadistic benefactor's actions involve the infliction of emotional trauma, such as pain and suffering, on the intended target. "The glaring mind-reading asymmetry implied by sadistic benefaction […] is thus always a reflection of an existing power asymmetry. […] Access to minds means power; the effective manipulation of minds constitutes abuse of this power" (*Getting Inside* 52-53). Lewis' sadistic benefactor is successful in complete manipulation of the situations Ambrosio finds himself in. The control over Ambrosio's choices, as well as his imminent suffering and death, places the daemon in the position of asymmetrical power. Lewis allows readers to follow the thoughts of Ambrosio as he makes morally corrupt decisions, such as kidnapping, rape, and murder, but does not make the level of manipulation apparent until the end. This impact validates the notion that Lewis is representing a set of ideals and belief systems unique to Ambrosio and his experience, as opposed to representing a massive failing on the part of religion. More simply, Lewis is representing the consequence of a corrupt individual religious leader, as opposed to a generalized concept of corrupt religion. In other words, Lewis is not writing a novel addressing religion as a whole being corrupt, but simply representing a fallen religious leader.

The misunderstanding of religion being used in the novel would eventually become an issue for Lewis. His work was favorably received when under anonymous authorship. The reception of the first edition, employing only the initials M.L., was a commercial success. The second volume of *The Monthly Mirror* published in June of 1796, boasted the following favorable review: "We really do not remember to have read a more interesting production. The stronger passions are finely delineated and exemplified in the progress of artful temptation working on self-sufficient pride, superstition, and lasciviousness" (*Reading Public* 44). This review is impressed with the craftsmanship of the novel, noting how artfully the content is addressed. There are no comments of blasphemy, but the nature of the novel is mentioned. Further: "The whole is very skillfully managed, and reflects high credit on the judgement and imagination of the writer. Some beautiful little ballads are interspersed, which indicate no common poetical talents" (*Monthly Mirror* 98). The reviewer praises the stylistic devises used by the author. Readers do not expect a morality tale when reading Gothic novels, nor do they expect to be confronted with discussion of biblical flaws or the explicit questioning of religion and faith. In other words, readers expect shocking material within Gothic novels.

The novel, being well received, was eventually released as a second edition with Lewis' name and parliament status on the cover. During this time Lewis faced disapproval from other authors and critics regarding the treatment of religion within his work. Harsh criticism not only focused on the treatment of religion, but eventually labeled the author a blasphemer. It is notable that the response of strong disapproval arose once it was revealed that the author was a member of parliament. There seemed to be a sense of moral boundary that was upset upon this discovery. This particular author,

as a person in a position of power and prestige, is expected to value and uphold a specific belief system. The revelation would disturb critics, resulting in the following claims. "The horrible and the preternatural have usually seized on the popular taste, at the rise and decline of literature. Most powerful stimulants, they can never be required except by the torpor of an unawakened, or the languor or the exhausted, appetite" (Bell, 194). The lack of importance that the Gothic novel holds seems to be specifically addressed here, as it is not considered literature of value. The only audience that would want to read this book is either idle or immoral. Similarly noted in *The Annals of Literature*: "Tales of enchantments and witchcraft can never be useful: our author has contrived to make them pernicious, by blending, with an irreverent negligence, all that is most awfully true in religion with all that is most ridiculously absurd in superstition" (197). The reviewer considers the authoring of this material to be harmful. The negative criticism increased around the anxiety of Lewis' role as a Member of Parliament. According to Maclachlan's introduction in *The Monk*, after the release of the following edition, Thomas James Mathias openly criticized the content of Lewis's book, suggesting that legal action could be taken against him for allegedly blasphemous content. The following 1797 *Annals of Literature* review by Coleridge reflects the sentiments concerning blasphemous content. One area of critique concerns how Lewis represents lewd novels as preferred reading over the Bible through the contemplations of one of his characters. Coleridge was disturbed by the comparison:

> […] he has acted consistently enough with that character, in his
> endeavours first to inflame the fleshly appetites, and then to pour contempt
> on the only book which would be adequate to the task of reclaiming them.

We believe it not absolutely impossible that a mind may be so deeply

depraved by the habit of reading lewd and voluptuous tales, as to use even

the Bible in conjuring up the spirit of uncleanness. […] and we believe it

not absolutely impossible that he might extract pollution from the word of

purity, and, in a literal sense, turn the grace of God into wantonness (198).

This is a curious moment in the review, as there is considerably worse behavior

represented throughout the novel. These other moments are commented on as

disqualifying the work for certain audiences, but do not condemn the author in the same

manner as the accusation of blasphemy. The acceptability of Ambrosio's rape and murder

of Antonia for any audience carries an implication that the perceived mistreatment of the

Bible is more a cause for concern within this group than the violent acts perpetuated

throughout the novel. Varied themes of sexuality, incest and rape, gender and gender

crossover, and explicit violence can all be found within *The Monk*, yet these traits remain

overshadowed by the response to what critics claim as Lewis' irresponsible treatment of

religion.

Confronted with the possibility of legal ramifications, and in order to avoid harsh

punishment, Lewis pulled his novel. The work was altered through a quick and deliberate

response on the part of the author, and having removed the content considered to be

blasphemous, it was released as a revised edition the following year. Readers saw an

appeal in the negative critical response and scandal surrounding *The Monk*, resulting in

first editions of the work becoming highly sought after. The following review was written

in 1809 by Mathews & Leigh, and makes note of the material removed from Lewis's

modified edition of *The Monk*:

It will be seen that the vehement criticism of this writer is solely directed

to those parts of the romance, which Mr. Lewis's better reflection has

induced him to cut out. Nay, so firmly is he determined in this castration,

that although he has been offered a thousand pounds to give to the world

another edition of *The Monk* as it originally stood, he has [honorably]

spurned the offer, and threatens to prosecute [anyone] who shall

surreptitiously print it ("Matthew" 447).

The threat of charges over blasphemous content impacted Lewis strongly. People

requested reprints of the earlier edition, but he refused to make it available over concerns

of a retaliation response to the original content. Lewis had pushed the boundaries of

acceptability within earlier editions, and although desirable for readers, those critics who

define the boundaries of acceptability provided feedback that resulted in forced omission

of material. In Fred Botting's 2008 book *Limits of Horror : Technology, Bodies, and*

Gothic, notes that Lewis's initial critics viewed Gothic with disdain, citing Wordsworth's

complaint that popular fiction has a negative effect on literary preference, causing people

to ignore literature of substance. Lewis' *The Monk* was considered to be well written, yet

the content within the novel was viewed as irresponsibly crass. This response further

supports the notion that certain members of society are held to higher standards of

behavior and personal belief. The previous willingness to overlook the more abrasive

content had everything to do with the expectation of the Gothic genre. The important

aspect of this criticism is the continued conversation surrounding the function of religion

within the work of Lewis' novel.

Lewis writes a traditional leader of religion as evil, his character causing more damage than performing good works, which can seem to support the belief that the novel carries an anti-Catholic sentiment. Literary critic R.J. Shork dissects the novel using a religious lens. Shork's article discusses several ways that Lewis doesn't quite get details right concerning particular religious elements in relation to the Capuchin monks, yet compliments Lewis' understanding of the three Catholic saints that cameo within the novel. "I suggest, in conclusion, that Lewis was certainly aware of the iconographic double-entendre in the expression St. Agatha… carrying double"—and that this ingenious combination of Gothic grotesquery and hagiographic accuracy offered connoisseurs of these two not incompatible genres a modest moment of prophetic amusement" (28). The use of religion within the novels is convincingly written with enough command that this particular reviewer considers the work to be poking fun at religion. The readers of both religious material and the Gothic genre should have been able to identify that the content within the novel is working intentionally. "The comic exaggeration is obvious" (28). Shork's perceived intention regarding the use of religion allows the novel to function as a genre aligned with dark comedy.

Alternately, the use of religion within the novel can be viewed as criticism of Catholicism. Melanie Griffin's article "Is Nothing Sacred? Christ's Harrowing through Lewis's Gothic Lens" discusses the novel as a response against religion. "Pairing the sacred with the profane, Lewis creates a work that illustrates the baser qualities of pride, selfishness, and hypocrisy in humans generally, and in Catholicism specifically" (168). Griffin argues that there is a seemingly malicious intention in Lewis' juxtaposition of negative characteristics and Catholicism. Religion performed by Ambrosio is considered

perverse, while Lorenzo is written as a character that can potentially be considered Christ-like through completion of the Harrowing. Ambrosio continues to be considered the embodiment of the villain archetype, as this character's behavior is still appalling to the modern audience. The use of religion in the novel should inform the viewpoint of a corrupt practitioner of religion, as opposed to a representation of religion as corrupt.

When one is able to look past the issue of religion, Lewis demonstrates an awareness within his characters that readers should be able to emulate. Lewis seems to warn that one's perceived level of spiritual purity cannot guarantee a person's true intention. Religious rank is not an accurate litmus test when considering another's mind. The application of ToM to the novel demonstrates how this skill can be both portrayed as developed or deprived in characters. One particular example comes from Antonia's mother, Elvira, seeing through Ambrosio's façade. She is suspicious of his motives concerning her daughter, and plans to surprise them by bursting into the sitting room unexpectedly during one of Ambrosio's visits.

> "Antonia uttered an exclamation of joy, flew toward the door, and found herself clasped in the arms of her mother. Alarmed at some of the abbot's speeches, which Antonia had innocently repeated, Elvira resolved to ascertain the truth of her suspicions. She had known enough of mankind, not to be imposed upon by the monk's reputed virtue" (225-226).

This moment allows readers to glance directly into the mind of Elvira, noting that she seems to possess a skilled sense of ToM. Ambrosio is esteemed by all within the community as a religious leader, and Elvira understands her disadvantage with regard to her concerns. Elvira's heightened sense of awareness concerning the well-being of her

daughter should allow her to determine potential threats to Antonia. The daemon later reveals that he tips Elvira off, warning her of Ambrosio's design through dreams. This warning allows her to reevaluate her ToM beliefs concerning Ambrosio. As Elvira's primary concern is the care and protection of her daughter, she should be more likely to notice when her daughter is being targeted by a potential predator. Antonia's response upon her mother's unexpected entry into the room allows Elvira to feel vindicated in her suspicions of Ambrosio. This moment demonstrates a risk/reward behavior with regard to ToM. Elvira takes a chance in the act of spying and confrontation of Ambrosio, as he is a person of social favor. The reward to her risky behavior is the discovery that her suspicions are accurate. This situation demonstrates how much leniency those in higher social standings are given. The isolated visits aren't questioned en masse, for example. Elvira is able to consider the moments that raise suspicion upon receiving the warning:

> She reflected on several circumstances […] on being put together seemed to authorize her fears. His frequent visits, which, as far as she could see, were confined to her family; his evident emotion, whenever she spoke of Antonia; his being in the full prime and heat of manhood; and above all, his pernicious philosophy communicated to her by Antonia, and which accorded but ill with his conversation in her presence (225-226).

Elvira has enough knowledge of the conventions within her society to reflect on the odd behaviors that Antonia has managed to miss. This particular section demonstrates her innate ability to read the actions of others as indications of likely cognitive processes. This is an important skill to have when assessing the potential dangers of certain situations. Elvira considers the most offensive behavior of Ambrosio to be the philosophy

he has shared with Antonia. Ambrosio and Elvira do not agree on the interpretation of religion. Specifically, Elvira does not agree with the things that Ambrosio is discussing with Antonia. As Ambrosio is a morally corrupt character at this point, this potentially supports Lewis' intention to uphold the traditional values of religion. Ambrosio has been mishandling his position within the religious institution to further his own impure interests. This perversion marks him to those who pay attention to his behavior, and ultimately leads to his downfall. Elvira's feelings of suspicion indicate a shift in her ToM, as this moment demonstrates that her assessment of this character is beginning to change. By the time Elvira notices her miscalculation, it is too late.

It's important to recognize moments where ToM has failed characters within the novel, and why those moments are meaningful. The flipside within the moment that Elvira decides to enter the room unannounced is seen in the character of Antonia. She is wholly naive about the nature of others. Her sheltered nature seems to have prevented her from practicing her ToM abilities during her younger years. Naivety comes from the lack of exposure to situations that require skepticism or understanding of potentially unpleasant encounters. She, much like some critics, has missed the key signs from Ambrosio that signal red flags. A monk is, as mentioned previously, a person commonly considered to be a safe person, especially with the reputation Ambrosio maintained. Even if Antonia had been aware of the potential danger she placed herself in during this moment, she would not have associated her confusion with signals of threat. This is because one cannot always be entirely sure of the thought processes within the minds of others. Esteem and social status aren't often foolproof indicators of personality, which makes Ambrosio's fall from his earthly status an important moment in the novel.

Leaders, especially in religion, are expected to have higher standards of morality. For this reason, ToM cannot always be relied on. Those in higher positions may be afforded the benefit of the doubt. Ambrosio makes special visits outside of the monastery, which is not allowed. Elvira is thrilled by such favor, as opposed to feeling suspicion over the sudden favor. Lewis' novel pushes readers level of comfort, as the religious leader in the novel commits truly vial deeds.

The implication of moral corruption is further expressed through the use of occult items in the novel, as they are considered a perversion. During the Inquisition that Ambrosio undergoes after murdering Antonia, the mirror with strange figures carved into it from his room is brought out as evidence. The Grand Inquisitor places his small golden cross upon the mirror after some contemplation: "Instantly a loud noise was heard, resembling a clap of thunder, and the steel shivered into a thousand pieces. This circumstance confirmed the suspicion of the monk's having dealt in magic. It was even supposed, that his former influence over the minds of the people was entirely to be ascribed to witchcraft" (361). The mirror is acknowledged as an item of witchcraft, bearing an instant charge of guilt. A pious member of such high regard being caught with these items is cause for great concern. The reason that this moment is important speaks to the response of misreading a religious person. Before now, Ambrosio is a highly respected figure of religion, so the discovery of his lack of piety results in a knee-jerk rejection response from the Inquisition. To think that Ambrosio was so admired, when clearly so morally corrupt, can only be ascribed to mind control at a preternatural level.

Readers are given direct insight into the thoughts of Ambrosio, yet characters must actively attempt to read other characters. Their failure is reflective of the way critics

mistakenly read the author as being blasphemous. The issue arises with the failure to recognize that it is the character's thoughts that are blasphemous. Readers are privy to the mind of someone who is in a downward spiral towards damnation. Ambrosio's own actions condemn him eternally, while his victims experience salvation. The interpretation of Ambrosio as a mouthpiece for Lewis is inaccurate. Coleridge's review directly cites the way the Bible is discussed within the novel as being an area of genuine concern, leading to the claims of blasphemy. Lewis' treatment of the Bible offers insight through narrative viewpoint.

> He examined the book which she had been reading, and had now placed upon the table. It was the Bible. 'How!' said the friar to himself, 'Antonia reads the Bible, and is still so ignorant?' But, upon further inspection, he found that Elvira had made exactly the same remark. That prudent mother, while she admired the beauties of the sacred writings, was convinced that, unrestricted, no reading more improper could be permitted a young woman. Many of the narratives can only tend to excite ideas the worst calculated for a female breast: everything is called plainly and roundly by its name; and the annals of a brothel would scarcely furnish a greater choice of indecent expressions. […] Which but too frequently inculcates the first rudiments of vice, and gives the first alarm to the still sleeping passions (222-223).

This moment is seen explicitly through the mind of Ambrosio. Readers may forget that they are privy to an ongoing thought process within the character's mind. Ambrosio is actively making assumptions about the manner in which Elvira censors information from

the bible. His ToM is not entirely accurate in this sense, as it is muddied by his own viewpoint and belief about the bible. It is beneficial to note that these explanations for the lewdness of the bible, and their ability to awaken sleeping urges reflects more to the mind of Ambrosio. These are obviously the convictions of this specific character, though utilized to address the topic of religion, is not intended to question religion in general. The concerning aspect of this character is his projection of personal belief system. He feels so strongly as an authority on the topic, he does not question if his views might be somehow skewed.

It's unsurprising that humans find comfort in the ability to read others. Ambrosio is a readable character; accessible only to his ever-present audience, he allows for a view of the world as he sees it. Access to his mind allows for a level of transparency, a concept discussed by Lisa Zunshine's *Getting Inside Your Head*. Zunshine notes that cognitive science relates to popular culture through the concept of transparency. "Writers build extremely involved social situations to bring characters to a point at which their bodies fully reveal their minds" (25). The true horror within Lewis' character comes not from the treatment of religion, but for misreading potential that lies within humankind. Depending on the character viewpoint, this can sometimes take until the end of a novel. This is how readers can experience surprise by the actions of characters, though they can sense when things begin to shift in behavior. This is an advantage afforded to readers, as characters within novels tend to miss these subtle cues. When Elvira catches Ambrosio attempting to carry out his plot of rape against Antonia, she confronts him and threatens to expose him to the entire city. There would be no way for him to hide from his

transgressions. Ambrosio has been primed for response rising from the emotional state of desperation. Elvira grabbed him and refused to let him escape.

> Turning round suddenly, with one hand he grasped Elvira's throat so as to prevent her continuing her clamour, and with the other, dashing her violently upon the ground, he dragged her towards the bed. Confused by this unexpected attack, she scarcely had power to strive at forcing herself from his grasp: while the monk, snatching the pillow from beneath her daughter's head, covering with it Elvira's face, and pressing his knee upon her stomach with all his strength, endeavoured to put an end to her existence. He succeeded but too well (262-263).

This is the first murderous inclination readers see in Ambrosio. Perhaps Elvira felt as though a pious member of society might not be above sexual deviance, but would surely never resort to murder. She has a moment where she refrains from calling for help because she doesn't want him to get away, so instead tries to hold him forcibly. Her desperation to declare his guilt to all of Madrid clouds her ability to read Ambrosio properly. The character with the keenest sense of ToM thus far in the novel has made an error in judgment concerning how Ambrosio will react to being backed in a corner. Zunshine notes that "At times we face the deeply uncomfortable realization that we may never fully comprehend the mental states behind this or that action of our own or of other people that seems so strange, so meaningless, so out-of-character" (*Getting Inside* 29). Despite full access to the mind of Ambrosio, his actions are not always predictable. Readers and characters alike cannot correctly apply ToM when considering this character. As the novel progresses, his actions are both meaningless and out-of-character.

The monk that readers see in this moment is far from the character introduced in the first pages of the novel. He has become a perversion of his former self. This one monk, who was considered to be the most pious and revered, is manipulated and corrupted. The shift from using Ambrosio's name to "the monk" is intentional, as it adds to the disturbing aspect of what is being read. It is a reminder of the social status the character holds, and is representative of the very personality type people depend on for religious guidance and admiration. This moment serves as an important reminder that humans' responses are unpredictable, especially when coerced. Self-preservation can have unexpected consequences.

After killing Elvira, Ambrosio is able to carry out his designs on Antonia. He drugs her so that she appears to have passed away. He opts to hide Antonia in a tomb, where he thinks he can keep her long term. Upon threat of discovery by the Inquisition, his accomplice Matilda rushes upon Antonia, intent to end her life with a dagger. Ambrosio swiftly intervenes, saying that his victim has suffered enough. Taking the dagger away, it seems as though he's returning to his previous sensibilities. Readers at this point may feel a sense of security for Antonia, feeling relieved as it seems as though she is going to get away. She tries to run to safety, throwing Ambrosio back into the cornered mind frame Elvira triggers earlier:

> Antonia still resisted, and he now enforced her silence by means the most
>
> horrible and inhuman. He still grasped Matilda's dagger: without allowing
>
> himself a moment's reflection, he raised it, and plunged it twice in the
>
> bosom of Antonia! She shrieked, and sank upon the ground. The monk

endeavoured to bear her away with him, but she still embraced the pillar

firmly (334-335).

This moment is shockingly unexpected. With consideration of this scene, it is important

to interject that certain genres cater to certain character types. When genre is considered,

horror tends to produce some particularly unsavory character types. This is important, as

The Monk is considered a gothic horror novel. In Zunshine's work, she refers to a

character known as a "sadistic benefactors," and horror is no stranger to the sadistic

benefactor. Sadistic benefactors "are not content with merely glimpsing other people's

feelings. […] they want to force others into revealing their feelings through body

language" (*Getting Inside* 45). When applying this character theory to the gothic horror

genre, one can see a brutally motivated version of the sadistic benefactor at play. This

character type prefers to have their ToM confirmed with genuine responses to situations

they've forced on others. Their actions involve emotional trauma, such as pain and

suffering. Through the many atrocities that readers see Ambrosio commit, his motivation

fails to entirely align with modern standards of sadistic benefactors found in horror.

Ambrosio's motives and actions, although still appalling, are motived for a self-

fulfillment driven towards pleasure or self-preservation. There is no address of ToM, nor

any acknowledgment of the desire to see the genuine emotions of pain or fear within

others, as Ambrosio is not the sadistic benefactor of the story. Though Ambrosio is a

disturbing character, he isn't the worst character in the novel.

　　　　Readers can find some comfort in the knowledge that Lewis does not allow

Ambrosio to get away with the atrocities committed through the novel. Aside from the

torture at the hands of the Inquisition, a daemon has come to strike a deal with Ambrosio

as he lay in his dungeon, for the simple cost of his soul. The daemon is presenting a way out of suffering. There is no divine forgiveness, as Ambrosio eventually rejects God. It is revealed that this daemon has constructed his downfall. This is the moment readers are confronted with the novel's brutal sadistic benefactor. Every encounter was carefully crafted with the intention of manipulating him in accordance with the darkest parts of his personality that had been tamped down by devout religious exposure from an early age. The Daemon is quick to note how easily corrupted Ambrosio is, and reminds him of the eternal consequences:

> Know, vain man! that I long have marked you for my prey: I watched the movements of your heart; I saw that you were virtuous from vanity […] It was I who threw Matilda in your way; it was I who gave you entrance to Antonia's chamber; it was I who caused the dagger to be given you which pierced your sister's bosom; and it was I who warned Elvira in dreams of your designs upon her daughter, and thus, by preventing your profiting by her sleep, compelled you to add rape as well as incest to the catalogue of your crimes. Hear, hear, Ambrosio! […] Scarcely could I propose crimes so quick as you performed them. You are mine, and Heaven itself cannot rescue you from my power (375).

Death is considered the ultimate revealer of transparency in ToM, as emotions involved in death are intense and varied. In Zunshine's discussion of sadistic benefactors, she cites literary critic Walter Benn Michaels' discussion of *American Psycho* with specific attention on forced transparency: "you can be confident that the girl screaming when you shoot her with a nail gun is not performing (in the sense of faking) her pain." The daemon

has admitted to performing exactly this principle through manipulation of the situation, maintaining an advantage over Ambrosio.

Though supernaturally influenced, Ambrosio's behavior is not excusable. Readers may find themselves feeling some satisfaction with the knowledge that Ambrosio faces eternal suffering and damnation. ToM allows Lewis to place readers as ride along accomplices in the thoughts of Ambrosio, with full awareness of the terror and pain he endures once dropped from above the mountain onto the jagged rocks below by the daemon. He survives the fall for six excruciating days, until a storm causes the river to rise and carry him away on the seventh day. Feelings of revenge and satisfaction may shift so that readers end up feeling regretful for Ambrosio.

Those readers who benefit from a ToM experience will have witnessed the full decline of a religious figure at this point in the novel. It's notable that the mention of the seven days is biblical in theme. Day seven should be a day of rest, something that would have been attained had Ambrosio not sold his soul. Storms are considered to be the wrath and punishment of God. For all of Ambrosio's unacceptable beliefs concerning the bible, and for any moments considered blasphemous by critics, Lewis ensures the most miserable punishment for the monk possible. Knowledge of the true nature of his offences, along with denial of eternal salvation, are paired with a biblically inverted week of suffering. This is a stark contrast to the opening of the novel, which takes place in a church, with an audience intent on hearing Ambrosio speak. The importance of this shift from beginning to end demonstrates that corruption of character would be punishable, even for those in higher or revered social circles. With the full-circle completed by the novel, it can be surprising to reflect on Lewis' contemporary critics and their claims of

blasphemy. Zunshine notes that "Literary critics make a living by reading and misreading minds. […] if other people have the same need to process mental states, what kind of culture must emerge in response to this need? This culture has to continuously feed this need" (*Getting Inside* 11). The literature Lewis' critics complain about at the beginning of this chapter express dissatisfaction with the Gothic genre, as it is believed to cause readers to neglect literature of substance.

ToM allows readers to be mindful of the person they are currently observing the world through. The social status of the offending character warns readers not to take perceived mental processes for granted. The use of a monk demonstrates how corruptible individuals can be. It's important to note that when considering this particular gothic tale, literary value can be defended by the cognitive value it provides for readers. Characters are beneficial, providing a ToM experience for readership. There is a value to the incorrect readings within the novel, as well as the single voice of reason often ignored. *The Monk* serves as a reminder that we can never truly predict the inner workings of another person's mind. An entire range of dangerous predatory behaviors is represented within the character of the monk, who should be the most pious character. This offers readers the opportunity to practice ToM with a level of transparency and security. The use of religion functions to reinforce the belief system of the readership, though presented in a seemingly crass manner aligned with the Gothic tradition. The novel is intended to present an example of a single immoral monk, as opposed to an entirely corrupt religious system.

This instance of Gothic literature demonstrates one of many potential failures of ToM. The benefit for readers in observing failed ToM is learning how to decipher the

behavior of others who may not have the best intentions. This is not to suggest that readers will ever face these villains head-on. Instead, this discussion focuses on ToM as being key to the survival and successful interaction of humans. It is important to understand the subjectivity of value systems, as they directly influence ToM. Gothic antagonists provide readers with a multitude of situations in which either deception is prevalent in some form, or someone (or something) important is being misread. The largest value in the understanding of these failures is awareness, as this skill has the potential to leave people vulnerable.

Chapter 2

Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*:

Reflective Function and Character Response in the Gothic Novel

Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* is open to the interpretation of many diverse lenses. Examined for the richly complex social and gender dynamics provided by the novel, Brontë's work offers readers a wealth of interpretive possibilities. The haunting atmosphere, occasional ghostly Catherine appearance, and the vengeful nature of Heathcliff, all function as Gothic elements signifying very real issues. This novel represents a shift towards the brooding and atmospheric Gothic inclination of Radcliff. The most discussed aspect of the novel, outpacing even the brooding atmosphere, is the character of Heathcliff. Complex, unreadable, and controversial in motivation and character, Heathcliff continues to elude those who would attempt to place him in an easily defined box. His character is more complex, functioning as a vengeful familial representation. The narrative style found in *Wuthering Heights* is responsible for the elusive definition of this provocative character's mindset, while adding to the lack of control over the situation. The novel unfolds through the narrative voice of several characters, none of them being Heathcliff; these characters each have unique points of view into his life. The narrative focus for this chapter is primarily on Nelly, the servant. She moves from Wuthering Heights to the Grange, and back again. This allows her to narrate the interactions between Catherine and Heathcliff for the reader. The narrative structure is important, yet requires an additional layer of understanding provided by cognitive science.

Published in December of 1847, the first edition of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* introduced a character that remains debated today. Initially, critics seemed disturbed by the level of maliciousness seen within the character of Heathcliff. The following review published in *The Examiner* discusses the particular impression left by Brontë's main character:

> This Heathcliff may be considered as the hero of the book, if a hero there be. He is an incarnation of evil qualities; implacable hate, ingratitude, cruelty, falsehood, selfishness, and revenge. He exhibits, moreover, a certain stoical endurance in early life, which enables him to 'bide his time' and nurse up his wrath till it becomes mature and terrible; and there is one portion of his nature, one only, wherein he appears to approximate to humanity (*Examiner* 21).

Brontë's critics are concerned that the novel focuses on the lack of moral reliability within the story. This particular review considers the evil qualities in Heathcliff, paired with the revenge aspect, as demonstrative of the expectations of the genre: There must exist an ill-intentioned antagonist. Gothic requires a villain, and Heathcliff appears to fit the bill. The disjointed aspect mentioned can be ascribed to the narrative style employed by the author. Human thought tends to be disjointed, and it can be difficult to follow a stream of consciousness. This is a difficult feature to replicate in a novel, but seems to be at work in the narrative being discussed by the reviewer here. This discussion of Heathcliff biding his time is influenced by the narrative style represented in the novel. Nelly, the primary narrator, relays her ToM viewpoint of Heathcliff's actions. Readers are kept from his mind, instead relying on Nelly's understanding of his actions. It is

important to remember that Nelly uses her ToM, as well as her understanding of Heathcliff's motivations, to decide how to respond to him throughout the novel. This is why an acknowledgment of narrative choice offers a better understanding of this complicated character, as it is one of the more important features when considering this text through the ToM lens.

Heathcliff is complex and difficult to fully grasp because his mind is never written with transparency. This is likely the reason for polarized opinions surrounding his persona. The article "On Literary Fiction and its Effects on Theory of Mind" by David Kidd, Matino Ongis, and Emanuele Castano discusses the importance of storytelling on sociocognitive processes. One important connection between literature and audience being that "readers understand the characters and relationships in fiction using the same psychological process they use when navigating the real social world" (43). Upon closer consideration of certain moments within the novel, readers may become aware of the potential problem of reading Heathcliff through other characters. In one such instance, Nelly relates a moment in which Hindley is intoxicated, and lacking care in handling his son. He leans over a banister, dangling his son over the space below, when the child unexpectedly frees himself from the grasp of his father. Heathcliff happens to walk under the plummeting Hareton, catching the small child and placing him on his feet.

> There was scarcely time to experience a thrill of horror before we saw that
> the little wretch was safe. Heathcliff arrived underneath just at the critical
> moment; by a natural impulse, he arrested his descent, and setting him on
> his feet, looked up to discover the author of the accident. A miser who has
> parted with a lucky lottery ticket for five shillings and finds next day he

has lost in the bargain find thousand pounds, could not show a blanker

countenance than he did on beholding the figure of Mr Earnshaw above -

It expressed, plainer than words could do, the intensest anguish at having

made himself the instrument of thwarting his own revenge. Had it been

dark, I dare say, he would have tried to remedy the mistake by smashing

Hareton's skull on the steps; but we witnessed his salvation (75).

It is important to understand that Nelly is sharing what she believes Heathcliff's actions

would have been, had there been a lack of audience. Brontë's intentional exclusion from

the mind of Heathcliff requires that readers rely on this interpretation of behavior on the

part of Nelly. Heathcliff's described facial expression could have easily been intense

irritation at Hindley's grossly irresponsible parenting, or perhaps, disgust at his constant

drunken state. Heathcliff's inclination, instead, leads him to catch the child and set him

on his feet. Should this character genuinely be maliciously cruel in nature, it is doubtful

that he would have caught the child and set him down. It is possible readers are seeing a

glimpse of the habitually masked Heathcliff. The description of the child as a wretch

comes from the narrative mind of Nelly, rather than the mind of Heathcliff. As neatly as

this section seems to reveal the mind of Heathcliff, it is important to remember that

readers are being given a second hand interpretation of his thoughts. They must, instead,

rely on the behavior exhibited by the character. This interpretation requires both a

recognition of the mind being read as that of the narrating character, as well as active

practice of ToM on the part of the reader.

Castano, Kidd, and Ongis mention that Reflective Function, or RF, is useful in

analyzing literary texts, as literature tends to "include more sophisticated interpretations

of behavior in terms of mental states" (52). Where ToM is the active reading of others using one's own preconceptions and belief systems, Reflective Function, or RF, is "the developmental acquisition that permits [one] to respond not only to other people's behavior, but to [their] conception of their beliefs, feelings, hopes, pretense, plans, and so on" (Fonagy & Target 679). In other words, RF allows the brain to assess appropriate responses to the actions and beliefs, real or imagined, of others. Peter Fonagy developed the term as a mental process influenced by ToM; therefore, RF cannot exist without some level of developed ToM. Note the use of the word *response* within Fonagy's definition, as this is the aspect that further differentiates RF from ToM. RF is the capacity to respond to other people's behavior, and the potential thoughts or ideologies they may have. To help establish this concept, consider the parent/child relationship. Parents rely on RF to help them assess the needs of an infant who may not be able to effectively make requests on their own behalf. The longer a parent spends with a child, the more adept they are at assessing the child's needs, or upcoming needs. RF permits one to attach mental states and meaning to the behavior of others, allowing for the creation of an appropriate response. Similar to ToM, RF begins to develop in typical children around the age of three or so, and has an effect on attachment and relational skills. The intention of this chapter is not to depart from ToM, but to enhance the understanding it provides through the use of RF seen in literature. For the purposes of this interpretation of *Wuthering Heights*, the RF of other characters provides a way to access an opaque Heathcliff through attention to his responses and behaviors. The narrative viewpoints provided by Nelly indicate moments of her prejudice and misapplied ToM. It is appropriate to posit

that careful consideration of the actions observed by the narrators within the novel allow for a different perspective regarding this character.

Heathcliff is a highly reactive character, often making decisions based on the actions and comments of other characters. Readers only see Heathcliff from an outside perspective, as this controversial character is opaque, meaning that he is best understood through the novel's narrative style. Lisa Zunshine's *Getting Inside Your Head* discusses the appeal of film that does not fully reveal the minds of characters. This same concept applies to our understanding of literature.

> By introducing doubt and ambiguity into our interpretation of characters' mental states, directors create onscreen versions of real-life social complexity. This means that when they grant us our "aha!" moments— that is, when they make us feel that we know exactly what the characters think— we appreciate it much more than we would have if the character had been transparent all the time. The moments of occasional complete access make us feel like brilliant social players (81).

Brontë has created an opportunity for readers to utilize interpretation of the behavior of opaque characters. Understanding ToM is the first step in active participation when reading literature. This concept of opacity makes RF an effective lens when attempting to discern motivation, as readers are never fully exposed to his mind. It becomes important to understand the role that narration plays within the novel. This requires readers to maintain an awareness of both the narrative mind relaying information to them, and the opportunity to observe the responses of Heathcliff in certain situations.

When an author writes in a way that allows readers to experience the thoughts of a character, it provides a different experience than when reading the character who remains opaque. This may potentially lead to the frustration that is being seen in the reviews of Brontë's work. Transparent characters are fully capable of displays of unexpected behavior, but the nontransparent characters must be observed with care. Isabel Jaen and Julien Simon's chapter on *Cognitive Literary Studies: Current Themes and New Directions* mentions that "This assertion that engagement with fictional worlds employs the same cognitive processes that we need in real life has had a remarkable resonance among cognitive and empirical literary studies scholars alike" (16). As with any ToM experience, one's personal beliefs and values impact the way they will read others. It is important to recognize that Nelly identifies her feelings for Heathcliff early in her interactions with him, and that she has taken cues from Hindley and Mrs. Earnshaw in regards to her own behavior towards Heathcliff. Massimo Giannoni and Marina Corradi's article "How the Mind Understands Other Minds: Cognitive Psychology, Attachment, and Reflective Function" discusses the process of viewing others to determine response. They note that the act of RF allows one "to interpret human behaviour in intentional terms" and that one "provided with reflective functioning reads human behaviour as meaningful" (276). With this understanding, the behavior of Nelly towards Heathcliff in his early years is worth examining, as it is a clear example of RF within the novel. Nelly uses ToM to interpret the thoughts of those around her, and models her behavior accordingly.

> Hindley hated him, and to say the truth I did the same; and we plagued and
> went on with him shamefully, for I wasn't reasonable enough to feel my

injustice, and the mistress never put in a word on his behalf, when she saw

him wronged. He seemed a sullen, patient child; hardened, perhaps, to ill-

treatment: he would stand Hindley's blows without winking or shedding a

tear, and my pinches moved him only to draw in a breath, and open his

eyes as if he had hurt himself by accident, and nobody was to blame (38).

This reflection from the mind of Nelly is slightly disturbing. Her lens shapes the reader's

understanding of her world, yet she is describing a boy who is being beaten up by his

adopted brother, and who she has admitted to physically harming as well. Readers are

hard pressed not to take some level of pity on his character, as he's positioned as a

victim, even if Nelly cannot see it. Heathcliff is able to withstand his antagonists'

attempts to force him into transparency, and he is developing an understanding of the

world around him. Readers see his RF through his responses to the cruelty he experiences

as one of determination. His response to cruelty leads one to believe that he potentially

came from a hostile environment. As his character is considered an outsider, it is likely

the treatment from Hindley and Nelly are not unexpected. His character is being further

conditioned by his adoptive family.

The narrative voice of Nelly strongly affects the way in which Heathcliff's actions

are interpreted. There are moments when Nelly's perspective of Heathcliff seems to

present a conceivable indication of his mindset, allowing for insight into his RF.

Heathcliff does not become the overbearing figure readers meet in the first chapter until

the death of Catherine. Upon Heathcliff's return to Wuthering Heights, he visits the dying

Catherine at the Linton home. Nelly reluctantly observes the exchange, keeping an eye

out for the return of Edgar. Catherine discusses her impending death, blaming both

Heathcliff and Edgar for her condition. She asks for forgiveness from Heathcliff, stating

that she's forgiven him.

> 'Let me alone. Let me alone,' sobbed Catherine. 'If I've done anything
>
> wrong, I'm dying for it. It is enough! You left me too; but I won't upbraid
>
> you! I forgive you! Forgive me!' 'It is hard to forgive, and to look at those
>
> eyes, and feel those wasted hands,' he answered. 'Kiss me again; and
>
> don't let em see your eyes! I forgive what you have done to me. I love my
>
> murderer – but *yours*! How can I?' They were silent – their faces hid
>
> against each other, and washed by each other's tears. At least, I suppose
>
> the weeping was on both sides; as it seemed Heathcliff *could* weep on a
>
> great occasion like this (163).

This is a highly emotional exchange between two characters that were not as honest about

their romantic feelings during the earlier chapters. The conversation between Catherine

and Heathcliff is presented as authentic, but it is important for readers to remember they

are privy to Nelly's beliefs about Heathcliff; the view is skewed by the narrator. When

first brought to Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff is disliked by all but Catherine and her

father, and Nelly does not express favorable feelings towards him. Returning to the

concepts presented in Fonagy and Target's article, we find the relevance in using RF to

understand this scene when considering the following: "Reflective function concerns

knowledge of the nature of experiences which give rise to certain beliefs and motions, of

likely behaviors given knowledge of beliefs and desires, of the expectable transactional

relationships between beliefs and emotions, and of feelings and beliefs characteristic of

particular developmental phases or relationships" (680). Nelly's reluctant acceptance of

the authentic emotion shown by his character is quite clear through her chosen diction. "Will you ruin her, because she has not wit to help herself? Get up! You could be free instantly. That is the most diabolical deed that ever you did. We are all done for—Master, mistress, and servant" (164). She doubts the intentions of Heathcliff, and is concerned for the consequences of Heathcliff's presence in the arms of her mistress. As concerned as Nelly seems to be for Catherine, her true concern is mostly for herself. Her previous experience is affecting her perceptions of Heathcliff's seemingly genuine motivations. Nelly is watching the exchange, though she cannot let go of her attitude toward Heathcliff. Readers assume that Catherine could have responded to Heathcliff in a myriad of ways, yet her emotionally raw response prompted Heathcliff's genuine emotional response towards her, resulting in him letting his guard down.

Catherine's death is a turning point for Heathcliff. He begins to fully seek vengeance against those that he perceives carry some level of guilt in her loss. Readers begin to notice a more unpleasant Heathcliff as he begins to plot, although readers are forced to experience each step along the way with no clear foresight provided by reading his mind. Many years later, Catherine and Edgar's daughter, also named Catherine, is slowly wooed into spending time with Heathcliff's son. As Linton is sickly, Heathcliff is concerned that he will pass away before the plot for revenge comes to fruition. He eventually begins to behave out of desperation, kidnapping the young Catherine and Nelly. Catherine attempts to attain the key from him, scratching and biting him as hard as she can for her freedom. "Catherine was too intent on his fingers to notice his face. He opened them, suddenly, and resigned the object of dispute; but ere she had well secured it, he seized her with the liberated hand, and pulling her on his knee, administered, with

the other, a shower of terrific slaps on both sides of the head" (170-171). Women being

trapped in a home setting, forced into a role of domesticity they may not entirely

welcome, is not uncommon in Gothic literature. The presence of violence in this scenario

can be startling and upsetting for readers and characters alike. Catherine's failure to

utilize proper ToM leaves her vulnerable to an attack, as she has not been privy to cruelty

at the physical level before this moment. She is ill-prepared to notice the warning signs of

an impending assault, as the possibility of a physical attack is not something she has

experienced before this moment. What can be said of Heathcliff's response? Is it possible

that his RF is not as developed as earlier believed? It's important to address this potential.

Fonagy and Target discuss abnormal RF, noting that "[A]bnormal responses may be in

conflict with social norms because the tendency to take the perspective of others has been

abandoned in that context and, consequently, the moral emotions used to make judgments

about the consequences of actions and regulate behavior are absent. The absence of

reflective function may further exaggerate an antisocial response" (696). Heathcliff's RF

allows him to observe the desperation with which Catherine is fighting for her freedom,

he assesses the situation, and reacts accordingly. He is able to discern her single minded

focus in the moment, exploiting it to force her to behave accordingly. The goal is not to

force emotional transparency out of Catherine. Instead, we see the calm assessment and

resolution of what he considers to be a small problem in his larger plot for revenge. This

would suggest a fully functioning RF within Heathcliff, as opposed to the potential

absence of RF discussed by Fonagy and Target.

As Heathcliff's revenge begins to reach its peak, readers discover a disturbing

aspect of Heathcliff not previously revealed. Revealed through a spoken confession,

Heathcliff admits to Nelly that he believes in ghosts, and had wished for nothing more than the return of his Catherine's spirit. The opacity of Heathcliff seemingly diminishes for a moment. Joseph Carroll's *Reading Human Nature: Literary Darwinism in Theory and Practice* discusses that "Brontë herself presupposes a folk understanding of human nature in her audience. […] By uniting naturalism with supernatural fantasy, she invests her symbolic figurations with strangeness and mystery. From the perspective of evolutionary psychology, the supernaturalism can itself be traced to natural sources in Brontë's imagination" (110). Ghosts are not uncommon in Gothic literature, and Brontë's use of supernatural elements allows for understanding of extreme emotional states. Being haunted by a death is not treated in the same manner as being haunted by a ghost. This physical manifestation gives readers something tangible to help them understand the mind of a character. At times, characters will present information that requires readers to consider things in a different light. Confessions, for example, tend to present possible RF motivations in a way that does not require the independent access of ToM. Heathcliff appears to be making his thought processes known in these types of moments.

> 'Being alone, and conscious two yards of loose earth was the sole barrier between us, I said to myself – '"I'll have her in my arms again! If she be cold, I'll think it is this north wind that chills me; and if she be motionless, it is sleep. 'I got a spade from the toolhouse, and began to delve with all my might – it scraped the coffin; I fell to work with my hands, the wood commenced cracking about the screws, I was on the point of attaining my object, when It seemed that I heard a sigh from someone above, close at the edge of the grave, and bending down. "If I can only get this off;" I

muttered, "I wish they may shovel the earth over us both!" and I wrenched

at it more desperately still. There was another sigh, close at my ear. I

appeared to feel the warm breath of it displacing the sleet-laden wind. I

knew it was no living thing in flesh and blood" (289-290).

Volume II Chapter XV can be read as a sincerely transparent sharing of his mind.

Heathcliff openly admits to an inclination for necrophilia concerning Catherine. Though

not surprising in the Gothic novel, the confession to Nelly is a surprising moment, as it

demonstrates the desperation felt by the character. This is not a moment that one would

expect someone to share, even with those close to them, and highlights the tiredness of

the character. For this reason, this portion of the novel works as a form of confessional

for Heathcliff, producing a change in tone. Readers are expecting certain things up to this

point, and these revelations are quite startling. The loss of his Catherine is far more

impacting than could have been guessed by the average reader. One may question what

happens to RF when trauma is experienced, in this situation the trauma of sudden loss.

Fonagy and Target note that "[T]rauma, is seen as interacting with the domain- and

sitation-specific restrictions upon reflective function" (696). Those who experience

trauma on some level may experience moments in which they are incapable of behaving

at a level deemed acceptable by their society's constructs. Heathcliff's behavior in this

moment crosses the line of rationality, plunging into a territory that obviously causes

concern for Nelly. His behavior pulls him further away from relatability to other

characters in the novel.

ToM is considered well-functioning when one is able to change in accordance to

the people and surroundings they are confronted with. Carroll discusses the shifting

nature of the human mind, stating that "Evolutionists insist that genes constrain and direct human behavior. Cultural constructivists counter that the culture, embodied in the arts, shapes human experiences" (20). Brontë's novel shapes reader experience, and readers would undoubtedly understand Heathcliff differently if the narrative came directly from him. Instead, readers see the shift in Heathcliff's character throughout the novel through Nelly. Brontë's novel supports the cultural constructivists Carroll mentions, and Heathcliff's reaction to the loss of Catherine is not surprising. The closer readers get to the end of the novel, the more they are able to glimpse into the mind of an empathetic Heathcliff. As comfortable as readers are in accepting Heathcliff's words as full transparency, it is important to remember that he is still being relayed through the narrative of Nelly. In the following moment, Heathcliff shares his plot with Nelly, explaining that he no longer cares to carry out his designs against the two houses.

> 'It is a poor conclusion, is it not,' he observed, having brooded a while on
> the scene he had just witnessed. 'An absurd termination to my violent
> exertions? I get levers and mattocks to demolish the two houses, and train
> myself to be capable of working like Hercules, and when everything is
> ready, and in my power, I find the will to lift a slate off either roof has
> vanished! My old enemies have not beaten me – now would be the precise
> time to revenge myself on their representatives – I could do it; and non
> could hinder me – But where is the use? I don't care for striking, I can't
> take the trouble to raise my hand! That sounds as if I had been laboring the
> whole time, only to exhibit a fine trait of magnanimity. It is far from being

the case – I have lost the faculty of enjoying their destruction, and I am too

idle to destroy for nothing (322-323).

This moment is an important one, as it feels like a genuine expression of Heathcliff's

mind. This is likely due to the shift from internal narrative to conversation. He is

willingly transparent here, as he is not facing coercion from any other characters. Readers

may notice this shift, as his motivations have moved from destruction, to complacency.

He recognizes the things in Catherine and Hareton that he loved in his Cathy, and it

seems to appease him in a way:

They lifted their eyes together, to encounter Mr Heathfliff – perhaps, you

have never remarked that their eyes are precisely similar, and they are

those of Catherine Earnshaw. The present Catherine has no other likeness

to her, except a breadth of forehead, and a certain arch of the nostril that

makes her appear rather haughty, whether she will or not. With Hareton

the resemblance is carried farther: it is singular, at all times – then it was

particularly striking: because his senses were alert and his mental faculties

wakened to unwonted activity (322).

After so many years of plotting, he tires of life. A notoriously opaque character with

debated motivation has transitioned throughout the novel. Heathcliff's RF is adjusting

according to the change in perception of the people around him. Where he previously saw

outsiders, responsible for the unhappiness of his Catherine and who treated him as though

his worth was dubious, now he sees reminders of the person he deeply cared for.

This emotional transition in character eventually culminates in a physical

transition through the passing of Heathcliff. Zunshine discusses the expectations that

people eventually develop as a natural response to those they have become accustomed to reading. Heathcliff behaved in a way that influenced those around him. "[T]he same long evolutionary history ensures that I intuitively know that you expect me to read your body in this fashion. That is, I know that you will perform your body language, though not necessarily consciously or intentionally, to influence my perception of your mental states" (*Getting Inside* 14). Heathcliff has carried himself a certain way throughout the novel, with the intention of provoking certain responses from those around him. This is part of his revenge plot against those who diminished him when he was young and incapable of defending himself. Zunshine's statement lets us know that, even if he had not been intentionally intending to exist as a formidable entity in the novel, those around him would likely still interpret his intentions in some similar way. Examining the moment that he is discovered to have passed on, we can see the after effects of this posturing. Nelly discovers him, rain soaked and lifeless after refusing both food and the treatment of a doctor.

> The lattice, flapping to and fro, had grazed one hand that rested on the sill – no blood trickled from the broken skin, and when I put my fingers to it, I could doubt no more – he was dead and stark! I combed his black long hair from his forehead; I tried to close his eyes – to extinguish, if possible, that frightful, life-like gaze of exultation, before any one else beheld it. They would not shut – they seemed to sneer at my attempts, and his parted lips, and sharp, white teeth sneered too! Taken with another fit of cowardice, I cried out for Joseph. (335).

The environment in this scene is described in an eerie fashion. This draws one to consider it as parallel to the remaining physical shell of Heathcliff. As Nelly's ToM still attempts to actively understand the motivations and emotional state of Heathcliff, despite the knowledge of his passing, she interprets everything she observes as being an intentional manifestation of her former master's temperament. Sneers are active displays of contempt and scorn. Despite his change in demeanor, Nelly cannot seem to move past this interpretation. The supernatural aspect of posthumous hate continues to feed her fear, and the description of his facial expressions as sneering clearly attaches a meaningfully intentional mental state to the corpse. This belief system stems from the prejudice she has carried throughout the entire novel towards Heathcliff.

Brontë's narrative style demonstrates the potential to reveal the motives of a non-narrating character. Heathcliff remains complex and opaque throughout the novel, only tipping his hand enough for understanding of motive at the end of his life. Brontë's world relies on human interaction and interpretation, but this interpretation represents different risks for characters within Gothic literature. This particular novel addresses concerns of the death of a family line through a vengeful outsider. For the outsider, the risk is being taken in by a family to escape a current living situation, and being treated as badly as before. There are issues of communication and understanding of motive. Heathcliff is read as a polarized character, either misgiving and evil, or tortured by lost love. ToM and RF allows for a new understanding of the evolution Heathcliff experiences. These aspects of cognitive theory allow for the understanding of the RF he develops about those around him as a new, yet mistreated, member of the Earnshaw family. They carry him through grieving the loss of his Catherine, plotting the downfall of two families, and the release of

his designs. Nelly's narrative works first as a window into the mistreatment of Heathcliff, then offering insight into his mistreatment of those around him, and ending as his final confession. Reflective Function relies on the interpretation of behavior to allow readers to understand his motives and thought processes. Brontë provides glimpses of Heathcliff through Nelly's ToM, allowing for a deeper understanding of her most complex character. Despite Nelly's biased viewpoint, readers are still able to gain some level of insight into the motives driving Heathcliff. This character represents a tortured soul, and readers may not be aware of this until they discover how he has been haunted by Catherine's ghost since her death. Nelly's bias against him clouds her judgement of him.

Chapter 3

Gothic Representations of Predation in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*

Consider, for a moment, the Portia fimbriata spider. Of particular interest is that this spider prefers to prey upon other spiders. A common meal of choice is the Euryattus spider, although both the Portia and the Euryattus are a type of jumping spider. Portias use a form of mimicry to attract their prey. For example, female Euryattus will build a web, and male Euryattus will use specific strings in the web to call the females out for mating. The Portia spider will mimic this mating ritual in order to summon the female Euryattus from her den, ambushing and consuming her as part of the process (Nelson & Jackson 621). A trait among certain predatory creatures, this is known as aggressive mimicry. Aggressive mimicry allows a predator to take on traits of something that is less deadly, providing two distinct advantages (Nelson & Jackson 620). The first benefit allows them to avoid detection while they move in their environment. The second allows them to gain close proximity to their prey, often permitting for an instant ambush scenario. What the Portia fimbriata spider demonstrates in this scenario is the effectiveness of aggressive mimicry when preying upon a similar species.

This skillset should sound familiar, as these are traits that can be seen within Bram Stoker's character of Dracula. His novel presents moments in which Dracula, and his Brides, utilize aggressive mimicry to either move undetected through society, or to gain easy access to a food source. Like the Euryattus spider who assumes she is reading the signal of another Euryattus spider, humans in the novel will find themselves believing that they are reading other humans. This affects the reliability and utility of Theory of Mind in the human characters that find themselves coming into contact with Dracula.

Theory of Mind allows for improved recognition of potentially threatening individuals when socializing with others. While humans may have developed a method to assist them when inferring the behavior of other humans, threats from a mimicking species can prove more challenging. This novel demonstrates how ToM can fail characters, as these characters fail to recognize the lack of human-based mental processes in their predator.

Humankind's existence within a complex society allows for the maintenance of a privileged vantage point at the top of the food chain. Notably, the predators best equipped to compete against these advantages tend to be other humans. This is, perhaps, what makes Dracula such a formidable foe, as he is able to interact with humans at a level that can confuse the warning signals within the brain as a response to ToM interpretations. Although humans are required to be aware of potentially violent intentions from other humans, this isn't necessarily the case in *Dracula*. Violence comes from an unexpected source, as vampires do not exhibit the same warning signals as humans. This makes utilization of ToM problematic. A common discussion in literary criticism revolves around sexuality and violence. Macy Todd's article "What Bram Stoker's *Dracula* Reveals about Violence" discusses the violent nature of Stoker's novel. Todd states that:

> *Dracula* is at base a story of competing forms of violence; the titular Count's mythical violence opposes the hunting party's terrestrial violence. While it is true that at times the latter seems itself to be supernatural, especially in Van Helsing's use of sanctified communion wafers to combat vampires, by and large the rituals and customs that go along with the hunting party's actions are a disguise for conventional violence (361).

Todd's notion of violence between the two opposing forces within the novel accurately describes a natural response discussed through Stoker's use of religious symbols; yet it overlooks the predator/prey relationship at work within the novel. The ability to aggressively mimic humans allows Dracula to more easily manipulate his prey, effectively sidestepping the straightforward violence Todd mentions. Included in the arsenal of this formidable, mimicking predator that feeds off of the life-force of his prey, is the ability to pass on this predatory behavior. This allows him to cultivate his species, as well as create vampires that can lure in a wider range of willing victims. A wider variety of vampires significantly increases the threat they pose to humans, and *Dracula* is a tale of only one of these infectious creatures.

Dracula is often read as a morally corrupt being, offering heavy leanings on religious and sexual interpretations. As the figure of the vampire has changed over the last two centuries, it may be useful to define what a vampire is in the context of this particular tale. Vladimir Bahna's article "Explaining Vampirism: Two Divergent Attractors of Dead Human Concepts" defines a vampire as "a corpse, i.e. a non-living object, to which biological features of a living person are attributed" (290). Biological features represented in this novel include the aging process for the female vampires, and the need for conventional food and drink for both Dracula and his Brides. The interactions between vampires and prey exhibit a lack of sympathy on the part of the predator. This definition is important, as vampires are not sympathetic beings or tortured souls in Stoker's novel. These creatures function only for survival. This attribution of the living is a driving force within Stoker's novel, as the status of vampire implicitly confuses the ToM of the living. Attempting to utilize ToM when confronting a vampire

causes issues with accuracy, as their needs are animalistic in nature, based solely on survival. For the vampire, the utilization of a belief system, or social constructs of a dominant society, are not present as anything more than a trait to be emulated. Though readers may be unable to distinguish the predator from the morally corrupt, it is important that Dracula is recognized for the humanity his character attempts to represent. With this understanding, vampires are distinguishable not as ill-behaved humans or evil, but as a fringe predator intent on survival. The morality of the Portia spider hunting the Euryattus is never questioned. The breed of vampire manifested by Dracula lacks the capacity for genuine human emotion. These particular creatures are not human in any form other than the ascription applied to them by their prey.

This chapter will focus on moments within the novel that exhibit the aggressive mimicry and predatory nature of the vampire, as well as how the ToM of the human characters is affected by Lucy, the Brides, and Dracula, moving from the weakest predator to the deadliest. Lucy is examined first, as she is the youngest of the vampires. Freshly turned, and the wife of one of the core characters, Lucy feeds on children. She is able to mesmerize Arthur by speaking to him, but she lacks the ability to protect herself when sleeping. The Brides of Dracula have a more advanced skillset. Although these vampires still consume the blood of children, they are able to quickly place males under a trance, and protect themselves when asleep. As these vampires remain together, their numbers increase their level of threat. While these traits seem to be of genuine concern as they stand, Dracula has abilities beyond those represented by Lucy or the Brides. The most corpse-like of any vampire character, Dracula's aggressive mimicry is a well-honed skill. He is able to present himself as passably human when interacting with others,

despite the things about him that are strange. Jonathan Harker is a point of discussion, as he spent time as a prisoner in Dracula's castle. His ToM fails to properly understand the danger Dracula posed. Unreadable as a character, Dracula unintentionally provides an advantage to those hunting him by way of Mina. Being forced to consume Dracula's blood, with the help of hypnosis, Mina is able to enter the mind of Dracula. This reveals a lack of response. Mina doesn't read emotions when reading Dracula, yet she has been intentionally applying ToM to his character as they track him.

Lucy is the first human to be turned in the novel. When the group of men confront her in her tomb, the vampire version of Lucy is repeatedly compared to the innocent and pure Lucy through the description in the chapter. The things they notice have everything to do with sexualizing her character. Descriptions such as her "lips were crimson with fresh blood, and that the stream had trickled over her chin and stained the purity of her lawn death-robe" (215) and "Lucy's eyes unclean and full of hell-fire, instead of the pure, gentle orbs we knew" (215). She's even compared to Medusa: "The beautiful colour became livid, the eyes seemed to throw out sparks of hell-fire, the brows were wrinkled as though the folds of the flesh were the coils of Medusa's snakes, and the lovely, blood-stained mouth grew to an open square, as in the passion masks of the Greeks and Japanese. If ever a face meant death—If looks could kill—we saw it at that moment" (216). The mention of Medusa in this section seems intended to cause readers to consider the myth as a parallel to her character, and these descriptions are all posed as an assumption that her human attributes have been corrupted in a similar way. It is not discussed as though they are completely gone or that she has changed in an irreparable way. The fact that Lucy is a vampire, for the human characters in the novel, equates her

to a perversion of herself. She is evil in the eyes of these characters, and they utilize their

ToM to provide this type of reading. Lucy is not being viewed as the emotionally devoid

predator that she has become. Lucy utilizes sexual appeal with suggestion as she pleads

with her husband to come to her, and to join her, stating that "My arms are hungry for

you. Come, and we can rest together" (215). The sound of her voice has a particular ring

to it, acting as the method that allows her to mesmerize her target. This is one aspect of

the vampire that works around ToM interpretations. Arthur, knowing full well what she

is, feels compelled to join her. His companions notice that he's entranced as he moves

towards her, and Van Helsing jumps to his rescue. Her desire to survive the situation she

finds herself in during this scene drives her to call upon Arthur. Much like the Portia

spider, Lucy is signaling that she is something other than a reanimated corpse. This

moment is one of self-preservation, and she's behaving in the interest of her own well-

being. Lucy is able to drop Arthur's defenses by speaking with him. This is an essential

component within the novel, as it demonstrates the effectiveness of the varied body of the

predator.

Reflecting on the first victim in the novel, readers will recall that Harker does not

experience a deeply vulnerable and trancelike state with Dracula. Bahna explains that

"vampire representations activate complex mental systems associated with disgust and

the possibility of contagion" (295). In the scene discussed in the previous paragraph,

Arthur is disgusted with what Lucy has become, but he cannot help himself when she

chooses to single him out. The varied body of the predator is an essential fragment of the

predator/prey process. With Dracula as a less enticing option for the male characters in

Stoker's novel, it is important to examine his female counterparts. Harker encounters

three female vampires, describing them as follows: "There was something dreamy about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips" (42-43). Dracula is unable to appear alluring to Harker, but his female counterparts experience no such obstacle. They are able, like Dracula, to interfere with Harker's ToM. He notes that there are warning signs, yet finds himself compelled to ignore them. A similar moment can be seen towards the end of the novel when Dr. Van Helsing comes across the graves of one of the three female vampires. Readers are able to follow along in his thoughts as he transitions from killing a monster to standing there, wanting only to stare at her as he begins to develop an artificial infatuation for the vampire.

> Had it but been for myself the choice had been easy; the maw of the wolf were better to rest in than the grave of the Vampire! So I make my choice and go on with my work. She lay in her Vampire sleep, so full of life and voluptuous beauty that I shudder as though I have come to do murder. […] There is some fascination, surely, when I am moved by the mere presence of such an one, even lying as she lay in a tomb fretted with age and heavy with the dust of centuries, though there be that horrid odour such as the lairs of the Count have had. Yes, I was moved--I, Van Helsing, with all my purpose and with my motive for hate--I was moved to a yearning for delay which seemed to parlyse my faculties and to clog my very soul (369).

The repulsion of a corpse, along with the avoidance of a potential contagion, is suddenly of no concern. This predator has successfully bypassed the survival instincts mentioned

by Bahna. Van Helsing comments on the surprise he felt over his own reaction. This recounted moment provides readers with an instance of understanding concerning the power possessed by this type of predator, as they exhibit attributes that allow for self-preservation. This scene demonstrates that the ability of vampires to affect the appropriate utilization of ToM when awake also protects them when unconscious. This bit of information from the thoughts of Van Helsing, along with the recounted feelings of Harker, demonstrate how the female vampires are surviving potential attacks from men who come to kill them. Aggressive mimicry requires that the female vampires override the knee-jerk disgust response. Their survival requires the disarming of the intended victims.

While both Lucy and the Brides of Dracula rely on their ability to mesmerize in these scenes, readers will note that Dracula demonstrates the extra ability of deception. This further lends to the formidability of the vampire as a predator. Intended to both hide from his prey, essentially in the open, Dracula's deception is reminiscent of the aggressive mimicry mentioned earlier in this chapter. He goes out of his way to learn about the culture in which he is attempting to integrate, intending to present himself as a member of the society and not as a potentially untrustworthy foreigner. This notion is concerning on its own, as Stephen D. Arata's article "The Occidental Tourist" points out the decline of the empire happening during this time period. Arata describes *Dracula* as a reverse colonization narrative, describing it as "the crisis of imperial culture" (626). The threat of a perceived outsider posturing as an undetectable local is concerning, as this scenario would lead to the internal decline of society. This removes the hesitation for acceptance most people display with those from outside of their culture. Erik Kwan-Wai

Yu's article "Productive Fear: Labor, Sexuality, and Mimicry in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*"

discusses the misconception that Dracula has lured Harker to his castle as a food source.

Dracula's cunning mind has other plans for the unfortunate soul:

> With regard to Dracula's imperial ambitions and mimic power, it must be
>
> clarified that the reason why he summons Harker to his castle is not to
>
> suck blood. Rather, he uses Harker mainly as an English "informant" to
>
> help improve his own accented English. As a serious, learned
>
> Occidentalist, he also needs Harker's native knowledge to update his huge
>
> archives. Distracted by the scenes of "sexual anarchy," it is all too easy for
>
> readers to forget what Dracula wants from Harker at the beginning of the
>
> story is information, not blood or semen, and that Dracula can be as
>
> austere and diligent a scholar as Van Helsing (160).

Kwan-Wai Yu has pointed out the utility of Harker as a tool for learning. The structure of

this particular novel demonstrates the lengths Dracula's character goes to reach beyond

his own village. Once Dracula moves to England, readers can see his resilience through

the skillset provided by aggressive mimicry when drawing in his prey. The moments he

cannot utilize this skill, however, a more supernatural approach is employed. He is

capable of altering form, as well as utilizing creatures that humans tend to associate as

representative of the darker aspects of nature. The use of bats, wolves, and rats allow

Dracula to gain access to people he would otherwise be unable to reach. This isn't to

suggest that these creatures are embraced by humans, but that they allow him access by

unconventional means. For example, he uses a wolf to gain access to Mina at one point,

as he cannot enter the house she is in. This further demonstrates Dracula's predatory

nature, and the resources he can access in order to gain an advantage over his prey. An examination of the first human character we see within the novel will demonstrate the results of Dracula's predatory features.

The novel opens with the journal entries of Jonathan Harker. Readers will note the transition in Harker's frame of mind from the beginning of this section, to the end of this initial set of journal entries. Harker mentions things about his host that seem to be strange, or unexpected. This sets up the aggressive mimicry design utilized by Dracula. Although he may present himself as human, there is something that seems off to Harker at moments. It is unfortunate that he doesn't fully acknowledge his own intuition that something is different about the "person" he is associating with. He noted how Dracula never ate food with him, for example, and that there were no servants present. Readers can see these moments as being a warning of sorts. Harker eventually realizes that he is a prisoner, and not a visitor free to leave at his leisure. The feeling that something is off, a feeling that looms in the back of Harker's mind since meeting Dracula, can no longer be ignored as he is faced with the truth about his host.

> This time there could be no error, for the man was close to me, and I could see him over my shoulder. But there was no reflection of him in the mirror! The whole room behind me was displayed; but there was no sign of a man in it, except myself. This was startling, and coming on the top of so many strange things, was beginning to increase that vague feeling of uneasiness which I always have when the Count is near (30).

Much like the Euryattus spider taking the mock mating call of the Portia at face value, Harker assumes that Dracula is an eccentric reclusive Count; The signals are misread in

both scenarios. Harker's ToM has taken a bit of time to catch up to the fact that he is in a more precarious position than he had originally realized. It is not until he is confronted with undeniable evidence that something is quite amiss with his host that he understands the true danger of his situation. Once Harker understands that Dracula isn't human, he still attempts to read the vampire with a human lens. "Noticing his quiet smile, with the sharp, canine teeth lying over the red under-lip, I understood as well as if he had spoken that I should be careful what I wrote, for he would be able to read it" (38). At this moment in the novel, Harker is able to understand the aspects of this character that make Dracula a predator. The aggressive mimicry presented on the part of the predatory Dracula has played to the vampire's advantage with consideration of Harker's mindset. His work as a solicitor occupied his mind, the primary focus being his intention to finish the job and leave as quickly as possible. As he becomes more uncomfortable, his journal entries reflect an increased desire to leave Castle Dracula. He has failed to react appropriately to the hardwired signals meant for self-preservation, as he was unaware of the threat he was facing, until it was too late for him to respond.

Van Helsing and Mina work together to analyze the intentions of Dracula, purposefully utilizing ToM. Bahna discusses some important differences in the reading of a human versus the reading of a vampire. "Detecting a human agent leads to a much wider set of inferences regarding his or her mental states, and complex intentions (ToM), compared with the detection of an animal" (291). Bahna's discussion explains the issue these characters are facing when trying to understand the mindset of Dracula. Though the full extent of predator isn't entirely addressed, there is mention of important mental distinctions. "Besides visiting predominantly people from his social environment, the

actions of a vampire are not influenced by personal relations, knowledge or positive or

negative preferences from his previous li[f]e and traditional vampire stories lack any

inferences why the vampire is doing what he is doing, or why he chooses whom to kill"

(291). Although successful in tracking this creature at the closure of the novel, Mina and

Van Helsing assess Dracula with the assumption of human traits. This aligns his character

with their belief system, negating a true understanding of Dracula. They fail to recognize

him as a predator utilizing aggressive mimicry in order to attain food. The following

scene demonstrates the misapplication of ToM in action:

> "The Count is a criminal and of criminal type. Nordau and Lombroso
>
> would so classify him, and qua criminal he is of imperfectly formed mind.
>
> Thus, in a difficulty he has to seek resource in habit. His past is a clue, and
>
> the one page of it that we know— and that from his own lips—tells that
>
> once before, when in what Mr. Morris would call a 'tight place,' he went
>
> back to his own country from the land he had tried to invade, and thence,
>
> without losing purpose prepared himself for a new effort. […] "Then, as
>
> he is a criminal he is selfish' and as his intellect is small and his action is
>
> based on selfishness, he confines himself to one purpose. That purpose is
>
> remorseless" (343-344).

For Mina to note that his intellect is small, and his actions are based on selfishness,

denies the instincts of the predator. There are many aspects of Dracula that are not taken

into account by Mina and Van Helsing during this analysis. The effort placed on mimicry

of a different culture, let alone a different species, the cunning in gaining access to people

and places he cannot conventionally access, and his multiple dens. His focus, as seen by

the reader, is the seamless performance of assimilation within his target group. Stoker isn't writing Dracula as a small brained criminal bent on senseless murder, but his characters seem incapable of reading him differently. It is impossible for a vampire to be a criminal, in the human sense of the word, as his character is driven by instinct. To be evil, Dracula would need to have a moral understanding of these binaries.

Mina and Van Helsing are working on a profile of sorts, and the group does their best to determine where Dracula has gone. Mina takes great care to compile the various information available from those in the circle. Journal entries, patient notes, and even recordings from Van Helsing, are all compiled with regard to chronology. As mentioned by Kwan-Wai Yu, Mina provides the men with detailed information on how to track Dracula, as she "worked out practically all the possibilities of the count's movement" (157). Though the group does their best to remain detail oriented in their pursuit of the Count through standard means, it is important to understand that the corpse aspect of vampirism can be the trickiest to overcome. Application of human traits on a corpse interferes with ToM, as the knowledge that someone has passed does not keep humans from utilizing this skill. Add the ability for a corpse to present themselves as human, and ToM becomes an impossible challenge for the average person. Bahna discusses the disorientation surrounding ToM and corpses. "Several authors have pointed out that after someone's death, people continue to produce intuitions concerning mental states of the dead that contradict our intuitions concerning the biological death of that person. In a way, a dead person is spontaneously counter-intuitive" (290-291). Bahna's point is important because the human characters consistently misread Dracula's motivation. Van Helsing eventually hypnotizes Mina, allowing her consciousness to be able to join with

Dracula, permitting her to relay what she is sensing about the Count's location. She now represents the inner mind of his character, but still does not have access to his thought processes. Despite this subconscious tapping of Dracula, Mina is not privy to his stream of consciousness. She only experiences sound, and physical sensations. The intimate connection does allow for the discovery of a possible location.

> "What do you hear?" I could detect the strain in the Professor's patient voice. "The lapping of the water. It is gurgling by, and little waves leap. I can hear them on the outside." "Then you are on a ship?" We all looked at each other, trying to glean something each from the other. We were afraid to think. The answer came quick: "Oh, yes!" "What else do you hear?" "The sound of men stamping overhead as they run about. There is the creaking of a chain, and the loud tinkle as the check of the captain falls into the ratchet." "What are you doing?" "I am still-oh, so still. It is like death!" The voice faded away into a deep breath as of one sleeping, and the open eyes closed again (313-314).

This inside access to Dracula' mind assists in the ToM assessment in an unexpected way. What is shown reflects the predatory survival mindset of Dracula. With the loss of his dens, he's trying to get back to Transylvania, and his movements are intended to confuse his pursuers. When reading through this particular passage, it is notable that there are no emotions mentioned. Mina is detecting physical sensations only, and with an impressive level of clarity. Interpretation of physical manifestations in other people are important to recognize when attempting to apply ToM in life and death situations. Mina's survival relies on the accurate reading of Dracula, at the very least, in a spatial aspect. If we accept

Bahna's earlier mentioned claim that the mere existence of a corpse impedes proper ToM utilization, then this should only be further confused by the traits of the vampire. Mina is reading Dracula's presence, but is still unaware of his mind. His internal dialogue and driving belief system are as much a mystery to Mina, as they are to the reader.

Despite having a GPS system in his brain, Dracula does his best to fight for his survival through the end of the novel. Mina is not able to infer his emotional state, yet assumes knowledge of the surrounding area upon entering Transylvania. This indicates that her mental state is being affected by her impending transition. Though she has knowledge of the area that seemingly appears out of nowhere, she is still unable to gain access to the mind of Dracula. Mina will continue to attribute human traits to the vampire overlord, even up to his re-death. Mina recounts the moments up to the group's interception of the vampire, noting the physical aspects of his face both before and during the moment that death takes hold of Dracula.

> I saw the Count lying within the box upon the earth, some of which the rude falling from the cart had scattered over him. He was deathly pale, just like a waxen image, and the red eyes glared with the horrible vindictive look which I knew too well. As I looked, the eyes saw the sinking sun, and the look of hate in them turned to triumph. But, on the instant, came the sweep and flash of Jonathan's great knife. I shrieked as I saw it shear through the throat; whilst at the same moment Mr. Morris's bowie knife plunged into the heart. It was like a miracle; but before our very eyes, and almost in the drawing of a breath, the whole body crumbled into dust and passed from our sight. I shall be glad as long as I live that even in that

moment of final dissolution, there was in the face a look of peace, such as

I never could have imagined might have rested there (375).

She discusses several things in this particular passage relating to physical appearance as indicators of mindset. She describes him as appearing vindictive, having a look that transitions from hatred to triumph, and the feeling of peace that seems to overtake the vampire as he begins to crumble. Jeesum Kim and Chris Davis' article "Emotion Expression in Speech" discusses the perception of emotion, and the importance of reading beyond only physical expression. Visual emotions are often altered by the addition of auditory feedback, "the extent to which a modality influences emotion perception is flexible, adjusting to situation-dependent factors affecting perceived reliability of the source" (903). There is a fluidity in the use of ToM, yet this requires one to exercise more than a single measure of interpretation. Dracula provides no auditory feedback to the situation he is in. It is entirely possible that Dracula utilized mimicry to ward off his attackers. While the sun is out, Dracula remains largely incapable of protecting himself. Projecting an unpleasant image, while being defenseless, is potentially linked to his self-preservation. A vindictive glare can potentially swing towards defensive anger felt when confronting a threat. The shift from hatred to triumph likely indicated his relief at a potential escape, as he effectively functions as a cornered animal in this scene. The peace Mina reads on his face is likely a projection of her own feelings of relief, as his death effectively signifies her rebirth. The success of the group in overcoming a predator assures readers that human ingenuity can overcome even the trickiest opponents.

Within the world of *Dracula*, predation is key to the survival of the vampire species, impacting both the foraging of food and the integration of new vampires. Dracula is driven to practice aggressive mimicry, or he would not be able to navigate in the manner that he does within his world. Despite the success of humans in overcoming the predator, the content can be challenging for certain audiences. For example, Dracula's propensity to consume the young is abhorrent to readers, yet Stoker's novel has never gone out of print. *Dracula* is a novel that continues to remain popular 120 years beyond original publication. Stoker's contemporary critics spoke favorably of the novel's ability to maintain suspense while providing them with a true horror experience, the caveat being a note of caution for certain audience types. Appearing in "The Saturday Review" on July 3, 1897, a review critiqued Stoker's novel as follows:

> Moreover he has been at the pains to get up very carefully all that can be gathered of vampire lore, and has made his book a complete treatise on the habits and customs of these strange beasts. There are many readers who like to sup full of horrors and feel their flesh creep, and "Dracula" is undoubtedly the book for their money. Nervous persons, young children, and sufferers from delirium tremens, will do well not to look within its covers (*The Saturday* 334).

This critique mentions very specifically the lore being relied on in the construction of Stoker's leading vampire. This reviewer is noting a unique difference within Stoker's novel, compared to other Gothic novels, as Stoker pulls from traditional fear. Vampire lore is not a new construct made specifically for this novel. The specific readers being told to avoid the novel seem to be a population that this person considers incapable of

handling the novel's content, perhaps representative of those who are not as strong of mind. Readers utilizing ToM share in this experience as they read these character's thoughts. Isabel Jaen and Julien Jacques Simon's novel *Cognitive Literary Studies: Current Themes and New Directions* discusses the literary effect on readers, stating that "Theorizing about characters and trying to read their intentions on one hand, and simulating them and sharing their emotions on the other, may be at the core of our literary experience. Moreover, by exercising these important aspects of our social cognition, we may be preparing ourselves to face analogous situations that we might encounter in real life" (21). Even before the terminology of the ToM perspective became available, reviewers acknowledge that this type of novel may be affecting for readers, as they experience the dangers within the novel through the characters. A. Constable's follow up review in "The Bookman" from August 1897 noted the following:

> It is something of a triumph for the writer that neither the improbability, nor the unnecessary number of hideous incidents recounted of the man-vampire, are long foremost in the reader's mind, but that the interest of the danger of the complications, of the pursuit of the villain, of human skill and courage pitted against inhuman wrong and superhuman strength, rises always to the top (*The Bookman* 129).

There are two important features discussed within this particular review. The first is that the novel projects a level of intrigue that draws people in, despite the horrific nature of the tale. The second is that the notable characteristics mentioned within the article demonstrate the ability of humankind to overcome something that can be considered as the perfectly tailored predator. Humans rely on their perception of others in order to

understand the intricate workings of their societies, and the character of the vampire works to challenge this notion. It takes a group of humans actively working together to overcome this predator.

Theory of mind provides a previously unconsidered perspective to the world within Stoker's novel. Readers often assume that Dracula is a monster, or a criminal, based on the responses of the human characters within the novel. It should be noted that these personality traits can extend beyond the vampires presented within these pages. The predatory style of Dracula can translate to the human predators within our own society. For example, the diagnosis of sociopathy can potentially be understood through the character of Dracula. The emotions and understanding assumed to exist in everyone are not present in those diagnosed with this condition. Dracula tends to earn some strongly negative feelings. No matter the level of sophistication or evolution a society may experience, it is impossible to fully escape violence. Humans have developed ways of coping with violent individuals in society, and the utilization of Theory of Mind allows for improved recognition of potentially threatening individuals whenever interacting with others. Through inferences of these interactions, humans should be able to determine the potentially harmful situations. While humans may have developed a method to assist them when inferring the behavior of other humans, threats from other species can prove more challenging. Reading this Gothic classic using a ToM understanding allows readers to appreciate that application of personal belief systems may not work accurately when reading those who are vastly different. Misreading on the part of the characters within *Dracula* can prepare the novel's audience for real-life readings, as Gothic literature has shown readers that there are exploitable loopholes in ToM.

Conclusion

These instances of nineteenth-century British Gothic literature demonstrate ways in which Theory of Mind can be circumvented. In other words, the purpose of Gothic literature, at times, demonstrates varied and consistent failures of ToM, as well as highlight potential consequences. This is not to suggest that readers will ever face the horror of being dangled and dropped from above a mountain, left twisted and writhing in pain for a week. Nor will they likely face the near-destruction of their entire family line by an adopted family member, or understand what it means to be preyed upon by a vampire. What this does suggest, instead, is that readers are capable of seeing the risks associated with each of these tales. More simply, the failings of ToM in Gothic literature allow for a potential crossover to real-world application.

The Monk demonstrates consequences of unchecked trust levels held by religious and authoritative figures. Ambrosio is able to get away with deviant behavior as a benefit of his elevated position in society. Failed ToM affects every character in the story, and clouded judgment leads to the demise of both Ambrosio and his victims. *Wuthering Heights* indicates a potential for gained understanding through the Reflective Function, or RF, of Heathcliff. Readers gain an understanding through narrative perspective, as Heathcliff requires both characters and readers to utilize ToM in anticipation of motivation. Readers do not have access to the minds of others in their day-to-day happenings, and this novel works as an example of how this alters viewpoint. Heathcliff is read in many diverse ways, and RF is a tool to inform the understanding that he is not necessarily an antagonist, but that he is responding in a specific way to those around him. Lastly, *Dracula* offers insight into the working mind of a predator, and how this

interferes with proper ToM. The vampire is able to work around triggering standard warning responses. This is reminiscent of those in society, such as sociopaths, who can mimic emotion or responses, but do not actually feel those emotions. The utilization of ToM when confronted with a predator is not always reliable, as they cannot be understood through conventional human belief systems. Essentially, ascribing human emotional states to Dracula is ineffective when attempting to understand his motivations. These instances of Gothic literature all demonstrate facets of failure of ToM.

The benefit for readers in observing failed ToM is learning how to decipher the behavior of others who may not have the best intentions. As key as this feature is to the survival and interaction success of humans, it is important to understand the subjectivity of value systems, as they directly influence ToM. One can never really know what another person is thinking for certain, and Gothic antagonists provide readers with a multitude of situations in which either deception is prevalent in some form, or someone/something important is being misread. ToM is a useful tool in social interactions, but it can also leave people vulnerable. The largest value in the understanding of these failures can be seen in gained awareness.

With regard to the Gothic genre, there does exist the question of whether there are novels, novellas, and penny dreadfuls that would fail to provide a potential ToM reading. When constructing this project, there was no shortage of nineteenth-century British Gothic literature to choose from. One novella that nearly made it into this thesis is Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. It is important to consider both why it didn't make it, as well as why it almost made it. The story is obviously geared towards discussing the mind, as Dr. Jekyll splits himself into two

personae. The novel poses some interesting questions about ToM and mental illness, but does so in a way that did not entirely connect with the other novels in this thesis. This novel produces different forms of significance based on reader perspective. For example, Dr. Jekyll is a successful and respected member of society who keeps good company. Mr. Hyde, on the other hand, is violent, aggressive, and abusive. While this story demonstrates the inability to fully know someone, the interpretation of presented threat is not explicitly agreed upon. The characters in the chosen novels tend to reflect a failure in ToM of others in reading a single type of aggressor, yet it seems this failure is recognizing these two characters as one being. Or, perhaps, recognizing that the potential for one exists within the other, no matter which persona one is considering at present. This novella is still known to the modern day reader, holding some form of significance. For example, it is not uncommon to hear Jekyll and Hyde being used in reference to potential romantic partners. ToM seems to function differently in this particular novel, and further examination may yield a lack of loophole found in the novels chosen for this thesis. Stevenson's novel, like any Gothic novel, is worthy of consideration with regard to the ToM reading.

This thesis seeks to demonstrate some possible ways in which ToM functions as a complimentary lens to the violence found within Gothic. This does not intend to limit the potential of the lens, but instead attempts to offer a method of understanding that can potentially pair with other lenses. It can be useful to consider gender readings or psychoanalytically based readings. For example, how do the psychopath and sociopath interfere with ToM? These are all worthwhile questions when considering both this body of literature and the lens being proposed. The consistent thread connecting all Gothic

literature is the warning provided within the pages. Reading this type of literature, even as a genre clearly pitched as fictional, offers potential real-world ToM application. Despite the knowledge that this skill is intended to enrich or warning us through the interactions we have with those around us, ToM can, and does, consistently fail. Misreading happens, and though it may be under less threatening circumstances, it is important to understand that harmful situations exist. Gothic represents the extreme anxiety within a society, and the missed red flags waving within the novels signpost consequence. The consequence of harm functions as the driving force in *The Monk*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *Dracula*. These examples offer a fraction of the reading potential offered by the Gothic. The use of this lens in literature allows for a deeper consideration of potentially personal vulnerabilities. The hope is that the curiosity surrounding the insight this lens provides inspires others to continue examining texts within the Gothic genre for a fresh perspective.

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