Introduction

> The beginning of liberation comes when women refuse to be "good" and/ or "healthy" by prevailing standard. To be female is to be deviant by definition in prevailing culture…This is equivalent to assuming the role of witch and madwoman…It is then tantamount to a definition of declaration of identity beyond the good and evil of patriarchy's world, and beyond sanity and insanity.
>
> \- Mary Dally, *Beyond God the Father* (1973)[1]

> Reverse everything. Make women the points of departure in judging; make darkness the point of departure in judging what men call light *[…]*
>
> \- Marguerite Duras[2]

Demonization of women in real life as well as in literature and popular culture has been perceived by the feminist critics as a patriarchal strategy employed to subjugate women. Patriarchy, according to them, demonizes women to subdue and mitigate their transgressive potential. So, the texts that represent women as evil and demon are looked upon as misogynist as they embody patriarchal ideologies to legitimize and naturalize the marginalization and subjugation of women. The present study on the select Gothic novels written in a period from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century in England goes against this prevalent trend in feminist criticism by viewing demonization as a subversive act. This study shows how demonization, in turn, empowers women and helps them transgress the accepted gender roles prevailing in society. Locating the root of the demonization of women in biblical

myth of the Great Fall in the Genesis, this study attempts to reinterpret the role of Satan and Eve in a reilgio-cultural context. The word "Satan" was first used in the *Old Testament* not as a proper noun but with the simple meaning - "adversary." In the *Book of Samuel*, David is described as the "Satan" (adversary) of the Philistines. In the *Book of Numbers*, the word was used as a verb to mean "to oppose." Here an angel was sent by God to *satan* (to oppose) Ballam. The word "Satanism" was derived from the French word *satanisme*. The words like "Satanist" or "Satanism" were first used in French and English in the sixteenth century to address all sorts of activities and people opposing Christianity. A Catholic tract in 1565 and an Anglican work in 1559 condemned activities of the Protestant as Satanist[3]. Asbjørn Dyrendal, James R. Lewis and Jesper AA. Petersen in their book *The Invention of Satanism* describe Satanism as "(a)ncient traditions for demonizing opponents, including imaginary ones" (3). The authors again remark in the same book that Satanism has "a history of being a designation made by people against those whom they dislike; it is a term used for 'othering'" (7). In the nineteenth century, the word "Satanist" was used to address the people who led immoral and deviant lives. In the late nineteenth and twentieth century, the word was used to designate people who worshipped Satan directly or followed satanic values. The term Satanism as a religious and cultural movement came to be recognized in 1966 when the Church of Satan was established in San Francisco, California by Anton Szandor Lavey. Ruben van Lujik, in *Children of Lucifer: The Origins of Modern Religious Satanism* (2016) defined Satanism as the "intentional, religiously motivated veneration of Satan" (2). He intends to use the term in the sense of "a (allegedly) purposely religious choice" (2). He uses the word "religious" not in the sense of performing certain rites and rituals but in the real significance of such rituals. The term "Satanism" has been used in this research in the

same sense of intentional veneration of Satan and satanic values in my study. Hence, what is important is not the rituals but the relationship between Satan and the followers of Satanism. The followers of Theistic Satanism believe in the objective existence of Satan, but for the followers LaVeyan Satanism (founded in 1966), Satan is a metaphor or archetype for some ideas like human liberation, pride, carnality, and enlightenment. Though this kind of Satanism was introduced in 1966 by Anton Szandor Lavey, Lujik in his book mentions that the glorification of Satan as a symbol dates back to the late eighteenth century. Lujik remarks:

> The historical genesis of the new image of Satan can be traced with some precision. During the 1780s and 1790s, a circle of Radical artists, poets, and thinkers associated with the Dissenting publisher Joseph Johnson became intrigued with the figure of the fallen archangel. Their source of inspiration was unexpected: the seventeenth-century epic poem *Paradise Lost* (1663) by John Milton… *Paradise Lost* retold the Christian myth of Satan's insurrection and the subsequent fall of Man in verse. (69-70)

Romantic rehabilitation of Satan was important in a historical and religious context. Firstly, when Satan was banished to hell as evil by Christianity, some artists, poets, and philosophers tried to restore his lost glory by portraying him differently from the traditional image of him. Secondly, they restored him from the burial given by Enlightenment rationalism that banished Satan as a superstitious belief. Thus the place of Satan was restored on both ethical and epistemological ground. Peter A. Schock in his book *Romantic Satanism* (2003) has described in detail the social and political context of the transformation of the image of Satan. Schock has studied the works of the Romantic writers and philosophers (William Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft, William Blake, P. B. Shelley, and Lord Byron), known as Romantic Satanists, to

show how they used Satan as an ideological tool to convey their social and political messages of revolution and secularism. Schock remarks:

> In their writing, Blake, Shelley, and Byron turned Milton's fallen angel into different kind of mythic anchor for ideological identification. A figure projecting the oppositional values of their social groups as well as the ambivalence generated by these commitments, Satan served as a rhetorical instrument in controversial or speculative writing…Milton's Satan assumes in the Romantic era a prominence seen never before or since, nearly rivaling Prometheus as the most characteristic mythic figure of the age. (3)

According to Schock, the demise of the belief in the literal existence of Satan in the Age of Reason was essential for his emergence as Romantic Satan, a symbol of joyful transgression. This new Satan was used by the Romantic Satanists as an ideological tool against two autocratic institutions: state and church. "For radical sympathizers with the Revolution like Godwin and Shelley, Satan was no longer an evil insurgent against righteousness and cosmic order, but the mirror image and mythological embodiment of the revolutionary standing up against arbitrary and despotic power" (Lujik 77). They stressed the need for personal freedom and the power of the individual in a protest against the arbitrary power of state and church. This discussion about the origin of Romantic Satanism is relevant to show that at the end of the eighteenth century Satan was no longer seen as a biblical figure or an element of popular superstition but a politically charged symbol for the radical poets and artists of that time. Now comes the most important question: How this transformed archetype of Satan helped women transgress the accepted gender roles? Here, the word "women" (also in the title of my thesis) does not refer to the real women living in the late eighteenth century but the women represented in the Gothic novels written

by various writers (male and female). Gothic novels being a popular genre among domestic women readers of that time presented such powerful and transgressive women characters who might function as fantasy figures for the powerless women readers who could identify themselves with them. However, my primary aim is to find out the demonic and the deviant women in the novels and to show how demonization, in turn, helps them transgress the accepted gender roles. My method of study involves a kind of intentional (mis)reading or counter reading of the biblical myth of the Great Fall reflected in each text. The conventional interpretation of the myth of the Great Fall, which deals with Satan's temptation of Eve and the consequent fall of the humankind from heaven, holds Satan and Eve responsible for the downfall of the humankind. This results in the demonization of Eve by various religious figures down through the ages. My study owes to a great extent to the book *Satanic Feminism: Lucifer as the Liberator of Women in Nineteenth-Century Culture* (2015) by Per Faxneld, a scholar of History of Religion, who has deconstructed this myth of the Great Fall in this book to show Eve as a transgressive figure and Satan as her ally. Her collusion with Satan is seen by Faxneld in positive terms as a step toward the liberation and empowerment of women. Faxneld in his study has coined the term "Satanic Feminism" to refer to a kind of practice of reading that involves "a reinterpretation of Satan, and especially his role in the Edenic myth," and this is "utilized to display non-conformity with the traditional reading of the Bible where Eve's collusion with Satan is seen as a legitimation of the subjugation of all women" (Faxneld 29). As a scholar of religion, Faxneld's method of analysis is based upon a "'hermeneutical principle […] of revolt', a mode of interpretation in which ostensible villains of Scripture are exalted and supposedly good figures condemned" (Faxneld 28). Thus, Satan in Faxneld's study becomes a liberator of the women to help them

transgress their fixed roles in society and attains a Promethean dignity. Faxneld's study has a limitation as his study encompasses a vast area in the sphere of art, literature, and culture taking up a large number of texts from different periods of time in order to find out a homogeneous pattern of representation of the Christian myth of the Great Fall and attempt a "dissident reading" or "counter reading" of them to create a counter-myth. Though Faxneld turns the dominant system of values upside down in the constitution of this counter-myth, his analysis of the individual text appears brief (perhaps due to the extensive nature of his study) lacking contextualization regarding the authors and the contemporary historical and cultural scenario. His interpretation of the Christian myths embedded in the literary texts often fails to relate the texts to their historical, social, cultural context, and the author's biographical information. My study attempts to develop and extend Faxneld's argument by focusing on the selected Gothic novels written during a transition period between late Enlightenment era and the era of pre-Romanticism with a contextual analysis of the social and cultural background. Faxneld's paradigm of the counter-myth, where the binaries between good and evil, light and darkness dissolve, can be theoretically supported by the philosophy of counter-ethics of Marquis de Sade who is said to have a major bearing upon the Gothic fiction written in the late eighteenth century. Sade in his "Reflections on the Novel" connected the genre of Gothic fiction with the historical phenomenon of French Revolution:

> This genre was the inevitable product of the revolutionary shocks with which the whole of Europe resounded. For those who were acquainted with all the ills that are brought upon men by the wicked, the novel was becoming as difficult to write as it was monotonous to read; there was nobody left who had not experienced more misfortunes in four or five years than could be depicted

> in a century by literature's most gifted novelist. It was therefore necessary to call upon hell for aid in the creation of titles that could arouse interest, and to situate in the land of fantasies what was common knowledge, from mere observation of the history of man in this iron age. (Clery 205)

To call upon the hell and examine it with emotional detachment was central to Sade’s philosophy. Sade’s satanic philosophy where virtue becomes vice, and vice becomes virtue, can effectively explain Faxneld’s notion of the religious Satanism. Though Sade is not a philosopher in the current sense of the term, Timo Airaksinen in his book *The Philosophy of the Marquis De Sade* aptly sums up Sade’s philosophy expressed through his literatures. Airaksinen writes:

> My own opinion is that although Sade is a subversive writer, he does fictionally depict the subconscious mind and its repressions in a manner which is convincing. It does not resemble anything we know or have previously thought of. This region is a bizarre conglomeration of all the waste and filth of the subconscious Id, kept intact as long as the processes of decay will allow before it vanishes into nothingness. In spite of such a mystery, Sade allows his audience to see the inner aspect of human life in its entire forbidden glamor. When the gaze is turned inwards, one sees what should not be seen. (9-10)

However, Airaksinen also warns the readers not to take Sade’s inversion of the values too simply. Sade’s inverted world of values, according to him, should not be taken as the mirror image of our normal world. For Sade, true virtue is something rare and even impossible thing. It is like Aristotelian golden mean which is so narrow in its range that one always misses it. He/she either falls short of it or gets excess of it. Virtue, for Sade, is a state of pure innocence. A truly virtuous man should never feel

narcissistic pleasure or pride for his deed. Only people with imperfect virtue will feel guilt or pride for their deeds. In Sade's theory, only the incontinent and continent persons whose actions are highly controlled by the norms of society feel remorse for or pride in their actions. Sade condemns their poorly integrated personality for their narcissism. Airaksinen aptly explains it:

> Continent and incontinent people possess all the narcissistic potential. They struggle, sometimes successfully and sometimes not, against their idiosyncratic tendencies. They lose when their knowledge is challenged by desire and their long-range planning is made futile by the demands of instant gratification. But when they win, they can be proud of themselves, simply because they recognize something they first lacked and then achieved. They may even love their splendid vices, or incomplete virtues, because they are felt to be their own and something *prima facie* good. (185)

Sadean heroes, who are truly evil or wicked, are devoid of incomplete vices or incomplete virtues. They do objective harm to the victims with complete self-knowledge without any guilt or remorse. Airaksinen observes, "Narcissism is a joy which characterizes poorly integrated people, who are typically continent or incontinent. Sade does not want to be one of them" (187). Thus, Sade strips the conventional virtue of its glory and considers it a vice imperfectly veiled by the social mores and customs. On the other hand, true evil or wickedness, for Sade, is glorious, commendable and even heroic. Sade's outrageous celebration of evil to some extent comes close to the Romantic glorification of Satan. Though their theoretical origins are different, they meet on the one conclusion that social values inculcate hypocrisy, and one should transgress them to discover himself in his/her true state. How Sade's transgressive philosophy conduced to the causes of feminism has been shown by

Angela Carter in *The Sadeian Woman* (1978). Carter in this book has tried to show that Sade's pornographic novels are actually proto-feminist. Carter analyzes two women characters of Sade's novels meticulously: Justine and Juliette. Justine is an example of perfect victim. She is tortured and raped repeatedly. She falls from one hand to another and suffers passively without any anger or remorse. On the other hand, Juliette, Justine's sister, is her perfect antithesis. She is rational, aggressive, clever and predatory. She uses her sexuality to gain power. She even kills children and plots genocide. Carter reminds that both of these women are not a "model for female behaviour", but they are only "a description of a type of female behaviour" (79). Carter further remarks, "Justine is the thesis, Juliette the antithesis; both are without hope and neither pays any heed to a future in which might lie the possibility of a synthesis of their modes of being, neither submissive nor aggressive, capable of both thought and feeling" (79). What Carter wants to suggest here is that one should choose to be like Juliette to rein and dominate or to be like Justine to be crushed by society. Since sexuality, for Sade, is the basis of all human actions, and woman has been subjugated in terms of her passive sexual nature, she should use, Carter opines, sexual terrorism to emancipate herself from subjugation and suppression by man. Carter remarks:

> Fucking, says Sade, is the basis of all human relationships but the activity parodies all human relations because of the nature of the society that creates and maintains those relationships…Women do not normally fuck in the active sense. They are fucked in the passive tense and hence automatically fucked-up, done over, undone. (26-27)

Sade, according to Carter, encourages women to be sexual predators and to play an active role in sexual relationships. Sade, in the word of Carter, urges "women to fuck

as actively as they are able, so that powered by their enormous and hitherto untapped sexual energy they will then be able to fuck their way into history and, in doing so, change it" (27). She needs to embrace the so-called vices and become a monster to empower and liberate herself: "A free woman in an unfree society will be a monster" (Carter 27). Thus Carter shows how Sadeian women can help other women to recognize their captivity in the midst of relative autonomy granted by patriarchy.

Defining Gothic and tracing its origin with precision is difficult as the term Gothic has several implications. The term at first referred to the things associated with Goth, the Germanic tribe of the Middle Age, who invaded Rome in the second century A.D. They founded kingdoms in Italy, Spain, and Southern France. Later in the Age of Enlightenment, the term was used in a derogatory sense to denote the past – the Dark Age and its associated barbarism, superstition, extravagant fancies, ignorance, and natural wildness. The word was used with a semantic twist by two persons – Vasari, a Renaissance thinker, and Horace Walpole, a writer and novelist in the eighteenth century. Vasari used the word to refer to the non-Roman and non-Greek architecture and buildings of the twelfth to the sixteenth century. Those buildings were characterized by the pointed arch, rib vault, flying buttress, and intricate sculpture. Excess of this architectural style was contrasted with the neatness and precision of classical architecture. Classical buildings like classical work of arts and written text were always characterized by a sense of uniformity, proportion, and order. The dominant ideology of Enlightenment considered Gothic architecture as deformity indicative of people's lack of taste in a barbaric age. Neve's *Complete Builder's Guide* (1703) rejects "medieval edifices as 'massive, cumbersome and unwieldy'" (Botting 30). Alexander Gerard, in his *Essay on Taste* (1764) argues that Gothic architecture lacks beauty as "they lacked proportion and simplicity" (Botting

30-31). Lord Kames, another philosopher and writer of that time, in his *Elements of Criticism* (1762) argued that beauty of an object emerges from "regularity and simplicity; viewing the parts in relation to each other, uniformity, proportion and order, contribute to its beauty" (Botting 31). These books show how the sense of order, proportion, and uniformity dominated eighteenth century-culture and thought. In this context, Gothic appeared as a dissenting force with its root in barbaric past. However, over time, Gothic with its extravagance, fancy, and wildness was assimilated into mainstream art and literature. The revival of Gothic in later part of the eighteenth century was catalyzed by two things – the publication of Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757) and the Graveyard School poetry. According to Burke, beautiful objects are characterized by smoothness, smallness, delicacy, and coherent variation. They elicit feelings of love and tenderness in mind. On the other hand, sublime objects are characterized by their vastness, obscurity, and immense power. Sublime objects give intimation of something great and infinite, which evokes the emotion of terror. Sublime things can be admired with a feeling of terror from a distance, but it can hardly be loved. Burke says:

> Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling. I say the strongest emotion, because I am satisfied the ideas of pain are much more powerful than those which enter on the part of pleasure. (34).

Burkean sublime is therefore a clear antithesis to the classical idea of pleasure and beauty. It suggests that ugliness, coarseness, and roughness also have the aesthetic

quality to incite the emotions of terror and wonder which are also pleasurable to the human mind. Hugh Blair in his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783) considered Gothic architecture as the source of sublime. He wrote, "A Gothic cathedral raises ideas of grandeur in our minds, by its size, its height, its awful obscurity, its strength, its antiquity, and its durability" (Botting 39). The ruins of these Gothic edifices became the subject and setting for Graveyard poets during the first half of the eighteenth century. These poets who are often regarded as the precursors of the Gothic genre were preoccupied with night, darkness, death, grave, and ruins. Their interest in these unpleasant subjects was not a morbid fascination. Instead, they expressed feelings for sublime by inciting the emotions of terror, awe, and wonder in the readers' mind. They also had a didactic purpose of warning the readers against vanity, pride, corruption, and atheism. Night and darkness, for them, not only created a sense of mystery and uncertainty but made man reflective to look inward into own soul. Edward Young in his poem "Night Thoughts" (1749-51) describes the importance of darkness:

> Darkness has more Divinity for me,
> It strikes Thought inward, it drives back the Soul
> To settle on Herself, our Point supreme!
>
> (V, 128-30)

Moreover, night, darkness, and supernatural figures heighten one's imagination and free man from the shackles of materialism to direct his thought towards spiritual matters. William Collins in "Ode to Fear" (1746) describes the role of darkness and supernatural figures for heightening one's imagination and his spiritual awakening:

> Dark power, with shuddering meek submitted thought,

> Be mine, to read the visions old,
>
> Which thy awakening bards have told.
>
> (II, 53-55)

Death is another popular concept for the Graveyard poets who used it in their poems to express the feelings of transience of human existence and futility of earthly pleasure. It is something that destroys all earthly desires and ambitions. Man may feel helpless and terror at the limitless power of death, but Robert Blair welcomes it in "The Grave" (1743):

> Thrice welcome Death!
>
> That after many a painful bleeding Step
>
> Conducts us to our Home, and lands us safe
>
> On the long-wish'd for Shore.
>
> (II, 706-9)

In the middle of the eighteenth century, Gothic has lost its negative connotation to a great extent. It began to be assimilated into mainstream art and literature as a new kind of aesthetic experience, but it never completely lost its negative connotations. This resulted in disturbing ambivalence in Gothic works. Gothic works became a site of struggle between the enlightened present and the barbaric past, between rational and irrational, between the past and the present. Fred Botting aptly remarks:

> …the past that was labelled Gothic was a site of struggle between enlightened forces of progress and more conservative impulses to retain continuity. The contest for a coherent and stable account of the past, however, produced an ambivalence that was not resolved. The complex and often contradictory attempts either to make the past barbaric in contrast to an enlightened present

> or to find in it a continuity that gave English culture a stable history had the effect of bringing to the fore and transforming the way in which both past and present depended on modes of representation. (15)

In such a cultural context where Gothic bore neither positive nor negative connotation completely, the term for the first time came to be used in literature. Walpole had an interest in the old and ruined buildings and churches and kept a detailed record of their structure and content. Even he reconstructed his own Strawberry Hill in Gothic style. At that time, Gothic was an exotic mode of style used in garden follies and indoor ornament. Walpole was the first to use it to reconstruct the entire castle. His obsession with Gothic led him to apply the Gothic style in literature. The result was *The Castle of Otranto* whose first edition came out in 1764. Walpole was worried about the reception, so he described it as an antique work of Catholic propaganda in the preface of the first edition. When the novel became popular among the readers, he published the second edition in 1768 with a subtitle "A Gothic Story." Horace Walpole used the term Gothic in the subtitle in a historical sense to denote the Dark Age, the Middle Age. He intended to use it against the Enlightenment rationalism and Neo-classical sensibility by reviving the spirit of medievalism characterized by the barbarism, unrestrained passion, irrationality and superstitions. Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* defines the main structure of the genre to a great extent. The novel portrays a feudal world in medieval Italy. Manfred, the feudal lord, exercises his unquestionable power and authority over his subjects. His castle, the castle of Otranto, is haunted by an ancient prophecy that seems to have taken the shape of a gigantic suit of armour. His sickly son Conrad dies when the gigantic armour falls upon him on the day of his marriage to Isabella. Manfred, who is concerned with the continuity of his line, proposes to marry Isabella by divorcing his wife Hippolita as she has failed to

give him a proper heir. Isabella escapes through the subterranean passages of the castle and takes shelter in a local monastery church with the help of a peasant named Theodore. In the end, Manfred is revealed as the son of a usurper and Theodore as the true heir of Otranto. Then, Theodore refuses to obey Manfred and marries Isabella. Walpole's novel also lays down a model of plot which was followed by later Gothic novelists entirely or with some modifications. In this context, M. H. Abrams says:

> Some writers followed Walpole's example by setting stories in the medieval period; others set them in a gloomy castle furnished with dungeons, subterranean passages, and sliding panels; the typical story focused on the sufferings imposed on an innocent heroine by a cruel and lustful villain, and made bountiful use of ghosts, mysterious disappearances, and other sensational and supernatural occurrences. (111)

Victor Sage mentions some other characteristics of the plot of this kind of novel. It comprises various elements that would be taken up in later Gothic novels. Its plot, Sage remarks,

> encodes various obsessions of the later Gothic: the 'authenticating' pretence that the author is merely the editor of a found manuscript; the setting in medieval and 'superstitious' Southern Catholic Europe; the expectation of the supernatural; the conflation of hero and villain; the decay of primogeniture and of feudal and aristocratic rights in general, and the rise of an ambitious bourgeoisie eager to exercise individual freedom in marriage and inheritance; the focus on the victimised, but often defiant, position of women; the use of confined spaces castles, dungeons, monasteries and prisons, to symbolise extreme emotional states by labyrinthine incarceration -

> all these characteristic modalities spring into being, more or less fully formed, in Walpole's tale. (82)

Written in the Age of Enlightenment, *The Castle of Otranto* seems to reinforce and even uphold the medieval values of feudalism, primogeniture, and patriarchy. These values, which are represented as natural and monolithic, are protected by a gigantic supernatural force. This force crushes the usurper and establishes the true heir to the throne in the novel. The supernatural elements and irrational impulses in *The Castle of Otranto* were toned down in later Gothic novels, especially in the novels written by Ann Radcliffe, Clara Reeve and others who used 'terror narrative' in their writing. This group of novelists led by Ann Radcliffe used "explained supernatural" in which supernatural events are explained rationally at the end of the novels. Heroines of these novels, in the words of Avril Horner, "are complex products of Romanticism and the cult of Sensibility" (116). They adhere to the heroines of Sentimental novels of the eighteenth century, where fine feelings are considered to be signs of nobility and virtue. Fred Botting remarks, "In many ways the text follows the moralistic pattern of eighteenth-century works like Richardson's *Clarissa* (1748–9) in its depictions of suffering virtue, to affirm values of domesticity and female propriety" (70). The heroines of these novels are moved by slightest melancholic thought, and they often faint at the smallest shock. Though in the beginning these heroines suffer from excessive sensibility, they undergo a hazardous journey (both physical and mental) in the novels to get matured and cured of unnecessary emotionalism. By the end of the novel, Radcliffe and her followers try to restore the virtue, morality, and reason and maintain domestic stability. Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) is one of the best examples of novels written within this genre. It tells the story of Emily St Aubert who was brought up by her father in the rural area of southern France. She imbibed

the values of rural simplicity and domestic virtues, but she had the characteristic folly to overindulge in her sensibility. Before dying, her father warned her against excessive sensibility. She was forced to live with her aunt against her will. Emily loves Valancourt, a sentimental young nobleman, but her aunt compels her to marry Marquis Montoni, a mysterious nobleman from Italy. Montoni takes Emily to the castle of Udolpho. Confining her in the castle, he tortures Emily to secure her estates. Emily, however, manages to escape the terror and persecution in the castle by a perilous journey through dark vaults and subterranean passages of the castle. There she experiences various apparent supernatural terrors which are later explained rationally. In the end, she marries Valancourt and gets back her property. The domestic stability and happiness are restored again. The novel leaves a moral that says that the power of vice is not permanent, and virtue triumphs at the end. The castle which is a symbol of tyranny, corruption, and barbarism of the Middle Age is contrasted with the peace and happiness of home governed by the eighteenth-century values. Virtuous heroines with excessive sensibility come in contact with the vicious world, but they manage to get through this by keeping her virtues intact. Her struggle in this hostile environment orders and rationalizes her virtues and cures her of the excess of sensibility. The novels written in this tradition seem to reinforce the Enlightenment values of reason, rationalism, and morality. They are set as a contrast to the other mode of Gothic fiction popularized by M. G. Lewis, William Beckford, Chares Maturin, and Charlotte Dacre et al. This group of writers never explained mysteries and supernatural events and left the text open-ended. These texts are more transgressive in dealing with violent and dark impulses of the human mind without any intention to curb them. Though these texts sometimes give a perfunctory warning

for the transgressors, their moral intention is confusing. They often seem to play with the conventional values of morality and flout them.

Though this study focuses on the transgressive women in the later group of Gothic novels represented by Lewis and others, a short survey of the history of scholarship on these two modes and their interrelation is necessary to establish the relevance and the scope of this study. At the outset of this chapter, it has been clearly mentioned that this study stands apart from the prevalent trend in feminist criticism on Gothic fiction of the eighteenth century. To grasp the line of thoughts expressed by the feminist critics on Gothic fiction of the eighteenth century, a short survey is made of the major critical works since the 1970s on this topic. Critics have argued for two modes of Gothic writing: male and female. Ellen Moers in her *Literary women* (1976), coined the term "Female Gothic" to refer to "the work that women writers have done in the literary mode that, since the eighteenth century, we have called the Gothic" (90). Ann Radcliffe, Clara Reeve, and others, who wrote in the "female mode," according to Moers, represented the coded expression of women's fear and anxiety under the confinement of patriarchal order. Though Robert D Hume before Moers distinguishes between the Terror mode of Gothic associated with Ann Radcliffe and her followers and the Horror mode of Gothic associated with M. G. Lewis and his followers, he focuses on the male-dominated Horror School in his article *Gothic Versus Romantic: A Revaluation of the Gothic Novel* (1969). But Moers considers "Female Gothic" as a "complex tradition", where "woman is examined with a woman's eye, as sister, as mother, as self" (109). Radcliffe and her followers, Moers argues, endowed their heroines with some sort of autonomy and power so that they may resist patriarchal aggression. Radcliffe endowed her heroines with "traveling heroinism" (122). Her heroines undertake hazardous journeys to distant

lands without offending proprieties. Moers says, “In Radcliffe’s hands, the Gothic novel became a feminine substitute for the picaresque, where heroines could enjoy all the adventures and alarms that masculine heroes had long experienced, far from home, in fiction” (126). However, the question whether the genre “Female Gothic” is feminist at all has been raised by the later critics. They also ask whether the novels, which fall under the umbrella term “Female Gothic,” represent the transgression of the women or their negotiation and final union with the patriarchal order. They also interrogate the gendered process of dividing Gothic into “male” and “female” mode on the basis of the gender of the writer. Alison Milbank in her *Daughters of the House: Modes of the Gothic in Victorian Fiction* (1992) also interrogates the simple correlation of the plot with the gender of the author and analyses the male writer’s appropriation of the Female Gothic. Kate Ferguson Ellis in her *The Contested Castle: Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology* (1989), deals with both male and female gothic writers. She argues that “in the feminine Gothic the heroine exposes the villain’s usurpation and thus reclaims an enclosed space that should have been a refuge from evil but has become the very opposite, a prison” (Ellis xii). The book subverts the idealization of the home in eighteenth-century middle-class society. The writer shows that home becomes a source of bliss and refuge as well as a prison of torture for eighteenth-century women. This is not a only a theoretical proposition as she adds that in eighteenth-century social life, both in the countryside and growing urban centre there, there is plenty of evidence to support her argument. Though she exposes the heroines of the Female Gothic as helpless victims, she, like Moers, speaks of women’s power and resistance while discussing their role in restoring the safety of the home. She argues that “The safety of the home is *not* a given, nor can it ever be considered permanently achieved. At best it must be restored by women’s activity, not

only within its walls but outside in the world as well" (Ellis xvi). Kari J. Winter in *Subjects of Slavery, Agents of Change: Women and Power in Gothic Novels and Slave Narratives, 1790-1865* (1992) finds parallels between American slave narrative and Female Gothic in a period from 1790 to 1865. She mentions the differences between the "male" and "female" mode of Gothic texts written in England between 1790 and 1865. She considers two factors responsible for these differences: "differing political realities in the lives of male and female authors and the peculiar animosities that inspired English novelists in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century" (Winter 21). Female Gothic, Winter opines, reflects women's fear of unchecked power of man and explores the possibilities of resistance at the same time. Winter argues, "The goal of physical and intellectual liberation required Gothic heroines to search for ways to preserve their dignity while also finding sexual and emotional fulfillment, but the novels are less optimistic about the possibilities" (Winter 67). Anne Williams in her book *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic* (1995) clearly defines the existence of the male and female genre of the gothic. But she does so not on the basis of the gender of the author, but in terms of the narrative, plot, use of the supernatural and use of horror/terror. Following George Lakoff's argument in *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about Mind* (1986), she rejects the traditional assumptions about categories which are based on the supposition that individual items necessarily "belong in categories because they share some essence – or alternatively even a 'family resemblance'" (Williams 18). However, this principle, Lakoff argues, in the words of Williams,

> is not born out by the investigation of cognitive processes. Instead, categories are developed through the use of several predictable principles. These include the notion of 'centrality' that some members of a category are 'basic', more

> authentically belonging to the group than others: that complex categories are organized by 'chaining'." (Williams 18)

Keeping this formula in mind, Williams examines ten pairs of oppositions which are considered by Aristotle as the basic constituents of reality in his *Metaphysics.* Examining this series of oppositions, she suggests that "the headings 'male' and 'female' may be what Lakoff would call 'basic' members of the categories" (19). Though earlier feminists, beginning from Ellen Moers, speak of women's power and some sort of resistance, they also acknowledge that these novels side with the *status quo*. They help the readers internalize the patriarchal ideologies. However, Williams says that the most feminist readings have ignored some crucial aspects of Female Gothic. These are, in Williams' words, "its constructive and empowering function for its female readers" (138). She also adds,"Its comic plot, its emphasis on terror rather than horror, and insistence on the possibilities of female reason (implied by, among other things, its convention of explaining the ghosts) not only affirm the possibilities of 'feminine' strength; they also sketch in the outlines of a female self that is more than the 'other' as purely archetypal or stereotypical" (138). Williams analyses the Female Gothic in a new way in the light of Psyche and Eros myth that gives a different interpretation of Gothic heroine's marriage and union with the patriarchal order. While Williams sees the Female Gothic as subversive and even revolutionary, Diane Long Hoeveler argues *in Gothic Feminism: The Professionalisation of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës* (1998) that it is the originator of modern so-called "victim feminism". Hoeveler examines the works of Ann Radcliffe, Charlotte Smith, Mary Shelley, Jane Austen, et al. to show how these writers helped to define the standard of femininity of their time. The heroines of Gothic novels, Hoeveler says, uphold a model of "'professional femininity' that involves a cultivated pose of

wise passiveness and controlled emotions" (xv). It is actually a propagandized form of model conduct for women. Here, women play the role of professional victim with controlled emotions and sensibility. According to Hoeveler, this is an "antifeminist notion" in which "women earn their superior social and moral rights in society by positioning themselves as innocent victims of a corrupt tyrant and an oppressive patriarchal society" (2). The most recent development in the field is found in E.J. Clery's historical and contextual reading of the Female Gothic in *Women's Gothic: From Clara Reeve to Mary Shelley* (2000). She gives a picture of women writers in the Romantic period, who were writing under unfavourable conditions where they often had to hide their identity while publishing their books. However, they were influenced by the powerful figure of Sarah Siddons as an ideal of female genius. Clery shows how the figure of Sarah Siddons helped to break the patriarchal assumption that women were not capable of experiencing and communicating noble, elevated, and sublime passions found in tragedy. Whether sublimity is a means of transgression for the women or a way to contain the threats posed to patriarchy by women is a subject of debate among the critics. Donna Heiland in *Gothic & Gender: An Introduction* (2004) argues that "gothic's fascination with the sublime, which is by definition an experience so overwhelming that it holds the promise of breaking through the boundaries of patriarchy and every social structure, but which often does just the reverse and upholds those structures by quenching opposition to them" (5). Heiland in her study shows that though sublime experience or any sublime figure in Gothic novels leads to the transcendence of the boundaries of the physical world and the transgression of the social structure, it does so at the cost of exploitation, oppression, and dehumanization of some women characters.

My Survey of major critical works from 1976 shows that most of the feminist critics link the two modes of writing "male" and "female" with the gender of the writers, but in many cases, this easy formula does not work. Most of the critics are less optimistic about the complete transgression of the patriarchal values. Anne Williams, E. J. Clery and Diane Long Hoeveler in their studies speak of women's protest and resistance which were, however, conditioned by patriarchy. The heroines of Radcliffe's novels showed passive strength and courage against patriarchal aggression, but they did so without transgressing the roles of proper and virtuous women. Their limited strength and their partial resistance to patriarchal aggression are actually a reflection of the compromised status of autonomy that some educated women enjoyed at that time. So the feminist critics never accept the fact that women could really overthrow and reject the Enlightenment values of reason, rationalism and morality. In this context, the main point of my study is to show how women transgressed the norms and codes of behavior in society governed by the values of the Enlightenment. Some women characters in the Horror mode of Gothic fiction written in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century break away from the order of the Enlightenment in the sense that their world is governed by excessive passions, madness, wildness, cruelty, and irrationality. They act on their instincts and impulses. They appear to be marginalized as primitive and demon in the novels, but the novels often seem to side with them. Though they are punished for their transgressions, the innocents and virtuous are also not spared. Suffering and destruction of the virtuous imply that these novels do not conform to the *status quo*. They do not have any stable, ethical standard to convey moral messages to the readers. Though the narrators in the novels sometimes give statutory moral warnings (possibly to escape the clutch of law), they seem to take a deep interest in describing many terrible and heinous

activities of these women. These women are powerful characters who often dominate and even control the action of the other rational and virtuous characters in the novels. The increase in the number of female readers and the popularity of novels among those women readers brought these powerful and transgressive women characters of these novels in close contact with the literate and even semi-literate women who stayed at home in the later half of the eighteenth century England. There is a possibility that these powerful and demonic women would have acted as fantasy figures for the eighteenth-century women who could dream about absolute power and sexual freedom through these characters. This threatened the social order governed by patriarchal values. This was evident in men's anxiety expressed in many fictional and non-fictional literary works of the time about the moral corruption of women addicted to reading novels.[4] To understand the influence of these fictional demonic women characters on the female readers in the eighteenth century, one needs to know the historical and cultural context in which these novels emerged and the social and cultural position of women in the Age of Enlightenment. The first chapter of this thesis attempts to address this issue.