

THOSE WHO  
WANDER  
ARE LOST:

*The Rosicrucian Wanderer in  
Godwin's St. Leon & Bulwer-Lytton's Zanoni*

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# Those Who Wander Are Lost:

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## Samenvatting

In deze scriptie wordt de functie en omschrijving van het Gotische figuur van de ‘Rosicrucian wanderer’ verder uitgediept. De ‘Rosicrucian wanderer’ is een zogenaamde ‘Gothic wanderer,’ net als de ‘wandering Jew’ en de vampier. Deze onsterfelijke figuren zijn over het algemeen gedoemd om eeuwig afgezonderd van de mensheid te leven door hun onnatuurlijke levensduur. We onderzochten hoe William Godwin en Edward Bulwer-Lytton, wiens werken binnen het Gotische sub-genre van de ‘Rosicrucian novel’ vallen, hun ‘Rosicrucian wanderer(s)’ neerzetten en welke functie deze figuren in de werken *St. Leon*, van Godwin, en *Zanoni*, van Bulwer-Lytton vertolken

Over het algemeen wordt de ‘Rosicrucian wanderer’ neergezet als een figuur die streeft naar autonomie van God en Zijn regels door onsterfelijkheid en rijkdom te bemachtigen met behulp van verboden, vaak alchemistische, kennis. Dit figuur werd gebruikt door de Gotische schrijvers om de zorgen van de Britten over de Franse Revolutie te reflecteren, en om commentaar te leveren op de Franse Revolutie, in het bijzonder op de opstand tegen de patriarchale autoriteit, de afzetting van de monarchie, welke werd gezien als het hoofd van het sociale systeem, en mogelijke consequenties hiervan. De Britten waren namelijk bang dat het afzetten van de monarchie als gevolg zou hebben dat de sociale eenheden, met name de familie, uit elkaar zouden vallen.

Vergeleken met deze algemene omschrijving gebruikte Godwin, een atheïst, geen religieuze referenties in *St. Leon*. Hij zag de opstand tegen de Franse monarchie niet als een opstand tegen God, zoals andere Britten het definieerde, maar als iets dat nodig was om een betere gemeenschap te creëren. Echter, volgens hem vervulde de revolutionairen de corrupte overheid voor een andere corrupte overheid, waardoor in zijn ogen het doel van hun opstand teniet gedaan werd.. Bulwer-Lytton is het hier over het algemeen mee eens, maar bespreekt in *Zanoni* vooral de spirituele consequenties van de Revolutie. Hij is ook degene die de ‘Rosicrucian wanderer’ herstelt van vervloekte dolers naar verheven Christenen, zoals de Rozenkruisers werden neergezet in de originele Rozenkruiser manifestos.

Sleutelbegrippen: the Rosicrucian wanderer, the Rosicrucian novel, Gothic literature, the Rosicrucian order, *Paradise Lost*, the French Revolution, William Godwin, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, *St. Leon*, *Zanoni*, immortality, secret knowledge, the Second Fall, detachment from society.

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## Introduction

In late eighteenth-century Britain a sub-genre of Gothic literature emerged called the Rosicrucian novel that derived its name from a mysterious seventeenth-century movement known as the Rosicrucian order. This sub-genre had its counterparts in the German *Bundesroman* or *Geheimbundroman* (secret society novel) and *Rosenkreuzerroman* (Rosicrucian novel), indicating that a common predecessor may have inspired similar genres in Germany, and perhaps other parts of Europe. The designation ‘Rosicrucian novel’ in this thesis refers to those mainly Gothic novels that used the pursuit and acquisition of the Rosicrucian concepts of forbidden knowledge and immortality, usually scientific or alchemical in nature, to create the figure of a transgressive wanderer, a figure who has been forced into eternal exile from society because he achieved immortality. This character was used by the Gothic authors to symbolize the much-dreaded social and political outcomes of the French Revolution, in particular the dissolution of social order because of the destruction of the monarchy, the central focus of society.

The wanderer used in the Rosicrucian novel is referred to as the Rosicrucian wanderer. He bears some similarities with the wandering Jew and the vampire, which are other well-known wanderers of Gothic literature. Generally, these Gothic wanderers are depicted as solitary creatures who were alienated from humanity because of their immortality. The Rosicrucian wanderer is a combination of the legend of the wandering Jew and the concepts of forbidden knowledge and immortality of the Rosicrucian myth, which is the accumulation of ideas and notions associated with the Rosicrucian order. The Gothic authors created this type of wanderer in an attempt to rewrite Milton’s wanderers Satan, Adam, and Eve from *Paradise Lost* (1667) as characters who could represent social concerns regarding the French Revolution. They saw these Miltonic wanderers, especially Satan, either as tragic heroes, or as tragic villains, as they defied the laws of the tyrannical patriarchal figure, God, and were placed outside His order by way of punishment. By recreating these characters in the Rosicrucian wanderer, the Gothic authors reflected on whether a rebellion, such as the French Revolution, against a tyrannical authority was justifiable if it improved society, or whether it deserved divine punishment.

During the Reign of Terror (1793-1794), Gothic authors started to question the purpose and legitimacy of the Revolution. They debated how social order would be maintained without the monarchy, the traditional form of government, which had been abolished in France in 1792. The Gothic wanderer symbolized the British fear that the



destruction of the monarchy, as the focus of society, would cause a breakdown of social order, and result in the dissolution of social units, especially the family, and individual alienation. Through the wanderer, the Gothic authors discussed whether these transgressions would destroy the family, or whether the family could survive if recreated under a new social order. The Rosicrucian wanderer was adapted from *Paradise Lost* to become a transgressive, or a sacrificial, figure who seeks to reverse the consequences of the First Fall and restore paradise for himself through the acquisition of the elixir of life and the ability to make gold. The Gothic considered this search for individual paradise a rebellion against God's plan for humanity, and as a desire to exist outside the economic rules of society. However, when he achieves his quest, the Rosicrucian wanderer realizes that his longevity and new abilities displace him from normal human concerns. He has punished himself for his own transgression by alienating himself from humanity and society (Tichelaar 3, 10, 17-18; "French Revolution").

### **The Rosicrucian Myth**

The Rosicrucian novel with its wanderer and ideas on revolution was a product of a long tradition of reformative ideas and thoughts. It originated from two manifestos written and published in the early seventeenth century. These manifestos, the *Fama Fraternitatis* (1614) and *Confessio Fraternitatis* (1615), announced the existence of the reformative secret Rosicrucian order. They were published anonymously in Germany, but copies and translations, in the form of manuscripts, spread all over Central Europe, even before they were published. The manifestos were used to bring the order's origins, ideas, beliefs, and goals to the attention of the readers. They heralded the coming of a reformation, guided by the Rosicrucian order, and claimed that the Rosicrucian order had worked in secret for over a century to prepare humanity for this reformation, which would aid humanity in creating a better world.

Early readers and interested parties took these manifestos as serious and valid sources, proving to them that the Rosicrucians really existed. For this reason, the publication of the manifestos led to a Europe-wide interest in the mysterious Rosicrucian order, resulting in a large variety of academic and literary works, which either defended or attacked the order. Nowadays, however, researchers have ample reason to believe that the Rosicrucian brotherhood did not exist before the manifestos were published, but that the publication of these manifestos brought the movement to life in the minds of the readers instead (McIntosh, *The Rosicrucians* xix; McIntosh, *The Rosy Cross* 27; Gilly 29). Since the manifestos

provided little detail about the professed heritage of the Rosicrucian order and the knowledge that they allegedly possessed, the responding works influenced and expanded the Rosicrucian myth with elements and themes drawn from mainly esoteric sources, often of Hermetic, Gnostic, or Kabalistic origin.<sup>1</sup> We will use the term ‘Rosicrucian myth’ to refer to this accumulative collection of ideas. Initially, the interest in the Rosicrucian manifestos was limited to Central Europe, but eventually the Rosicrucian frenzy also spread to England, where it was able to survive, even after it died down in Central Europe during the Thirty Years’ War.

### **The Use of the Myth in the Novel**

Because of the mystery of the manifestos and the expansion that the Rosicrucian myth went through in the two centuries after the publication of these manifestos, it is unclear what information about the Rosicrucian order managed to reach the authors of the Gothic Rosicrucian novels. As Marie Roberts explains in the introduction of *Gothic Immortals*:

these Gothic novels manifest the influence of the Rosicrucian tradition on English literature, since the ideas planted by the manifestos and the mystical tradition associated with the Rosy Cross germinated in the form of a Rosicrucian novel populated with Gothic immortals. (*Gothic Immortals* 2)

However, according to Tyler Tichelaar, “the Rosicrucian novel does not provide an accurate depiction of Rosicrucianism, but only how Gothic novelists imagined Rosicrucians as transgressors against God and the family” (95). This seems to contradict Roberts’ statement, as it suggests that the authors of the novels did not base their novels on the Rosicrucian ideals and ideas, as Roberts claims, but rather that they used certain elements or themes associated with the Rosicrucian order to create a personal depiction of the Rosicrucian as a transgressive wanderer. In addition, by the time that the first Rosicrucian novel was published, the Rosicrucian myth had expanded and developed into something that no longer solely focused on a reformation of society but rather on the secret knowledge that was the source of the Rosicrucian wisdom, meant to be used to reform and aid humanity. This must have become

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<sup>1</sup> These are all esoteric traditions. Hermeticism is based on the philosophical writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus. Gnosticism is a collection of ancient religions whose members shunned the material world but embraced the spiritual world. Kabalism is a mystical philosophical doctrine based on the concepts of the Jewish Kabala.

the focus of the Gothic authors. It was used by them to create a supernatural entity, the Rosicrucian Gothic wanderer, which enabled the authors to comment on and discuss their own political and social opinions and fears associated with reform, and in particular with the French Revolution. This suggests that the Rosicrucian novel is a prime example of how the Rosicrucian myth has evolved and how the portrayal of the Rosicrucian order in the nineteenth century no longer fully resembles the order described in the seventeenth-century manifestos. Instead, I propose that the Gothic authors of the Rosicrucian novel transformed the image and goals of the Rosicrucian order to create a specific and transgressive literary figure, namely the Rosicrucian wanderer. This figure embodied the anxieties of the age and symbolized the rebellion against patriarchal authority and the possible dissolution of social units which became real threats and issues in the period of the French Revolution. To research this, we need to determine how the individual authors used and altered their information on the Rosicrucian myth, how they depicted the Rosicrucian wanderer, and what concerns regarding the French Revolution the authors discuss through their depiction of the wanderer. To answer these questions, we will examine two Rosicrucian novels to determine what the authors of these novels knew of the Rosicrucian myth and how they adapted this information for their own purposes.

### **The Case Studies**

The two authors whose works we will discuss have been selected because of their differences in political and social background, and in esoteric knowledge. Their Rosicrucian novels were published forty years apart with one written in the restless Gothic period, and the other in the Victorian period.

The first author is William Godwin, a “political philosopher and social reformer” (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 8) who is considered the founder of philosophical anarchism. His Rosicrucian novel, *St. Leon* (1799), focuses primarily on the concept of scientific evolution. It is the first work within the genre and it established the Rosicrucian wanderer as someone who seeks immortality prematurely through alchemical means, and as a result becomes, in a sense, superior to humanity. For that reason, he is excluded from the society of man and thus his gift is turned into a curse. Godwin’s depiction of the Rosicrucian knowledge is rather limited, focusing solely on the elixir of life and the transmutation of metals to create unlimited wealth. This work was a source of inspiration for other Rosicrucian authors, such as Percy and Mary Shelley and Charles Maturin. They interpreted the consequences of the Rosicrucian’s quest for knowledge not only as exclusion from society, but also as a further

alienation from God because the wanderer attempts and succeeds in becoming autonomous and independent from God's laws. The concept of the Rosicrucian wanderer seeking knowledge to become immortal so he can become autonomous from God's order might sound familiar, as Mary Shelley used Godwin's concept in her famous work *Frankenstein* to discuss the morality of certain forms of science. In *Frankenstein*, the Rosicrucian wanderer is torn into two characters, the scientist Victor Frankenstein, the seeker of forbidden knowledge to achieve immortality, and his monster, which bears the consequences of Frankenstein's transgression. Her rendition of the Rosicrucians in the short story "Mortal Immortals" helped pave the way for other authors.

The other author, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, attempts to redeem the transgressions of the Rosicrucian wanderer by depicting his wanderers as chosen and trained members of an ancient and secret brotherhood, which has access to an extensive amount of esoteric and scientific knowledge. As an author, he was as popular as Charles Dickens was, mainly because his novels always focussed on a contemporary topic of interest and varied in subject and genre. However, after his death the public lost interest in Bulwer-Lytton's works and he was forgotten. *Zanoni* (1848), the novel that we will research, is essentially a bildungsroman, as it depicts an adept, Clarence Glyndon, who fails to achieve spiritual fulfilment because of his selfishness, and an ancient immortal, Mejnour, who is too established in his ways to progress to a higher spiritual state. However, it also shows another ancient immortal, Zanoni, who succeeds to reach true spiritual fulfilment by selflessly sacrificing his life for others. This novel absorbs spiritual notions by Hegel<sup>2</sup> to create a multi-dimensional world with a higher spiritual sphere from which the wanderers acquire their wisdom and knowledge. Bulwer-Lytton aimed to transform the Rosicrucian wanderer from a figure of transgression to one of spiritual redemption. His Rosicrucian novels *Zanoni* (1842) and *A Strange Story* (1862) are considered the last works within the Rosicrucian novel genre that pushed the genre from the restless period of the French Revolution into the Victorian period.

Individually, Godwin and Bulwer-Lytton perceived and used the Rosicrucian order very differently, as the descriptions of their Rosicrucian wanderers already suggest. I expect that Godwin had some basic knowledge of the Rosicrucian myth, but did not study it extensively. His novel focuses on social and political issues, and so I suspect that he used his knowledge of the Rosicrucian myth merely to set an example. Therefore, he would have no

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<sup>2</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) was a German philosopher, and a major figure in German idealism. His idealist and historic account of reality revolutionized European philosophy.

difficulty with selecting and transforming certain elements of the myth, and no difficulty with disregarding the image of the Rosicrucian order as it is portrayed in the manifestos, to suit his needs. Bulwer-Lytton, on the other hand, was not only known for his well-researched novels, but also for his interest in esoteric and occult subjects. From this, I assume that his novel provides a more accurate description of the Rosicrucian order, compared to the manifestos, and a more detailed description of the kind of knowledge he believed the Rosicrucian order had access to.

### **Previous Research on Gothic Rosicrucian Literature**

This thesis contributes to the research on Gothic Rosicrucian literature by focusing on the development and the reception of the Rosicrucian myth rather than on the theological and philosophical content of the myth itself. During this research, three sources in particular were of great use. These are *Gothic Immortals: The Fiction of the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross* by Marie Roberts (1990), *The Gothic Wanderer: From Transgression to Redemption* by Tyler Tichelaar (2000), and two works by Christopher McIntosh: *The Rosicrucians: The History, Mythology, and Rituals of an Esoteric Order* and *The Rosy Cross: the Age of Reason*. Roberts' work focuses on certain Gothic novels as Rosicrucian fiction, as a manifestation of the influence of the Rosicrucian myth on English literature. It contains useful information on the novels and the Rosicrucian wanderer, but it lacks an in-depth analysis of those elements that the authors perceived as Rosicrucian. Tichelaar's *The Gothic Wanderer* was a useful additional source of information to Roberts' work, as it discusses the Gothic wanderers, the vampire, the wandering Jew and the Rosicrucian wanderer, in the context of the Gothic period. Tichelaar discusses these characters as Gothic adaptations of the wandering outcast Satan from Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), who is deployed by the Gothic authors to comment upon the French Revolution and its consequences for social struggle and political debate in Britain. These adaptations all stress the concept of the Second Fall, which imitates the original fall from paradise described in Genesis and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Whereas Roberts briefly discusses this concept, and seems not to grasp its possible usefulness, Tichelaar is able to discuss this connection with *Paradise Lost* in more detail. Because of his research, it was possible to discuss Godwin's and Bulwer-Lytton's portrayals of this concept more extensively. McIntosh's works were useful because they discuss the Rosicrucian myth in detail, and were instrumental in summarizing the development of the myth and distinguishing fact from fiction concerning the information available on this topic.

## Chapter Overview

Before examining *Zanoni* and *St. Leon* in more detail, we need to determine what Rosicrucian elements are used by Godwin and Bulwer-Lytton to create their Rosicrucian wanderer.

Therefore, it is necessary to provide a historical background and discuss the manifestos and the development of the Rosicrucian myth in some detail. Chapter one outlines the general history of the Rosicrucian myth by discussing the manifestos, their message, themes, possible authors and the responses they generated. Chapter two continues with focusing on the development and revival of the Rosicrucian myth in England. It briefly discusses the influence of the Rosicrucian myth on English literature, in particular Gothic literature, as this research mainly focuses on these fields. These two chapters will determine which themes and elements associated with the Rosicrucian myth should be taken into consideration during the analysis of the two novels. Chapter three moves the focus of the research from the Rosicrucian myth to the Rosicrucian novel and discusses the Rosicrucian wanderer as an adaptation of Miltonic wanderers in *Paradise Lost*, and in relation to the Gothic period and its contemporary concerns. It also provides more background information on Godwin and Bulwer-Lytton. In order to determine how Godwin and Bulwer-Lytton portray the Rosicrucian wanderer, chapter four will examine the Rosicrucian characters and references to the Rosicrucian myth in the two novels. This sets the stage for chapter five, where we will compare the authors' interpretation of the Rosicrucian elements that we established in the previous chapters. This will distinguish these two portrayals from each other and from the general portrayal of the wanderer as discussed in chapter three. In the concluding chapter, we will answer the question of how the Gothic authors depicted the Rosicrucian wanderer, and how they used the wanderer to reflect on concerns regarding the French Revolution. Based on these results, and on questions left unanswered in this research, this chapter will also provide some suggestions for further research.

## 1. The Development of the Rosicrucian Myth

Before discussing influences of the Rosicrucian myth in the English Rosicrucian novel, we need to take a closer look at the original manifestos and the development of the Rosicrucian myth. Originally, the Rosicrucian manifestos, the *Fama Fraternitatis* and the *Confessio Fraternitatis*, enticed the audience by heralding a secret reformatory order that was the custodian of secret knowledge and a great esoteric heritage. Because of the vagueness and anonymity of the manifestos, some readers felt obliged to add to this heritage and knowledge. So, between the publication of the manifestos, the *Fama Fraternitatis* in 1614 and the *Confessio Fraternitatis* in 1616, and the publication of the first Rosicrucian novel, *St. Leon* by William Godwin, in 1799, the Rosicrucian myth developed into a plethora of works written in response to the manifestos. This chapter will discuss this development from the publication of the manifestos onwards with a special focus on specific ideas and elements that were added to the myth in the following two centuries.

### **The Rosicrucian Manifestos**

The *Fama Fraternitatis* tells about the travels of the Rosicrucian founder, a monk called Christian Rosenkreutz, who travelled to the Middle-East in the fifteenth century. It describes how he established a secret society with trusted people, dedicated to improving and reforming humanity by utilizing the divine knowledge and wisdom he was taught during his journey by what the manifestos called 'Eastern wise men.' To ensure their readers of the order's Christianity, the manifesto explained that even though these Eastern wise men were heathens, their teachings instructed Rosenkreutz how to read from the 'Book of Nature,' which was a medieval concept of nature as a source of divine knowledge. Rosenkreutz returned to Europe to share his newfound knowledge with the learned. However, he failed to get the learned to take notice of his wisdom, as they refused to discard their own beliefs and relearn everything they knew. With this imagery of thinkers rejecting new knowledge because it called into question their beliefs and wisdom, the writers of the manifestos indicated that a reformation was needed in which old philosophies and theories were cast off, and in which new ones were embraced.

The second manifesto, the *Confessio Fraternitatis* is a continuation of the *Fama* and restates its message, justifying it against accusations that had already been voiced against the Rosicrucian order in the year between the two publications. It expands upon the philosophy of the Rosicrucians and explains the allegories contained in the *Fama* in more detail. It also

affirms the essentially Protestant character of the society, by speaking against the Pope and the Church, denouncing the Pope as its spiritual leader (claiming instead the head of the Roman Empire as the true leader) and calling the Church, and the leaders of Europe, corrupt and in need of cleansing. It concludes its message with a prophecy of reformation, and a reassertion of the order's intention to do good in secret. This secrecy indicates that they wanted to share their wisdom with those who would not abuse it for their own gain but would use this knowledge to aid and reform humanity to be as God had intended. This second manifesto was published at a time in which the excitement and frenzy produced by the *Fama* was almost at its highest, and it served to sustain this interest ("The Rosicrucian Manifestos" 3-15, 19-27).

While the manifestos were considered legitimate by at least a number of contemporary readers, most researchers nowadays assume that the manifestos were ultimately fictional works meant to inspire readers to enlighten themselves and thus were meant to set in motion a reform movement (Gilly 27). As Beeler aptly states in *The Invisible College*:

[W]orks originally considered to be factual may be read by later periods as enjoyable fancy or as stylistic masterpieces, once the paramount reality model of a society – on which their initial claim to factual status was based – has changed radically. And this is no doubt true of the Rosicrucian texts. (9)

The reformative message of the Rosicrucian texts spoke to the readers of the early seventeenth century, as they were at that moment at the tail end of a great reformative period, the Protestant Reformation. This reformation started and mainly took place in Germany but eventually spread throughout Europe. The Rosicrucian manifestos are, ultimately, products of the religious and ideological developments that occurred during this period, and thus appealed to the German audience, who, according to Christopher McIntosh in *The Rosy Cross and the Age of Reason*, were dissatisfied with the changes the Reformation had brought. The Reformation had not set in motion the spiritual renewal that many of its advocates had hoped for. As a result, many people turned to the old millenarian dream of a new age, and the Rosicrucian manifestos shared and heralded this dream, hence their popularity (23).

According to Alison Butler in *Victorian Occultism*, the invisibility of the brotherhood – i.e. the fact that they never really revealed themselves, and that there is no solid proof that they actually existed - suggests that the publications were intended to be allegorical, not



factual (74). This proof is strengthened by the large amount of symbolism and allegories in the manifestos. They seem to originate from a fictional idea that man can understand his own nobility and worth by studying the Book of Nature and sharing his knowledge with others (“The Rosicrucian Manifestos” 3). However, while the manifestos were meant to be read as inspirational fictional works, the publications of these manifestos did bring the movement to life in the minds of the readers (Butler 29). The assumption that there was an actual society before the publication of the manifestos seems to have been a misunderstanding that the authors, perhaps, might have intentionally promoted. However, this misunderstanding was ultimately responsible for turning the myth of the Rosicrucian brotherhood into reality (Butler 74; Gilly 29; McIntosh, *The Rosy Cross* 27). Apart from Rosicrucian inspired literature and academic works, the eighteenth century also saw the foundation of several Rosicrucian societies all over the world, especially in England and America.

### **Possible Authors of the Rosicrucian Manifestos, and their Message**

The anonymity of the authors, and hence their inapproachability, enhanced the mystery of the manifestos and the Rosicrucian order, adding fuel to the frenzy. The identity of the author of the manifestos has been a source of speculation since the manifestos were published. Several researchers believe that a group of three German men wrote the manifestos: Johann Andreae, Tobias Hess, and Johann Arndt. These men were discontented with how the Protestant Reformation was progressing and might have written the manifestos to find like-minded people who were interested in the kind of Reformation that they thought was necessary to advance the human race and its knowledge. While there is no clear evidence to suggest these men were the authors of the manifestos, researchers generally agree that, at the very least, Andreae played a significant role in the creation of the texts. However, Andreae never admitted that he had been part of it and in later years made sure to distance himself from the Rosicrucian movement (Gilly 28; Beeler 17). However, the researchers are certain of his involvement because of one of his literary works, called the *Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosencreutz* (1619),<sup>3</sup> which some consider to be the third part of the Rosicrucian texts (Gilly

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<sup>3</sup> The *Chymische Hochzeit* is a first-person narrative from the perspective of Christian Rosencreutz, and tells about his experiences at an allegorical wedding ceremony, symbolising the androgynous marriage of the male and female principles, also associated with the transmutation of lead into gold. In *Gothic Immortals*, Marie Roberts suggests that this marriage can also be associated with the Rosicrucian quest for secret knowledge that can be found in the Rosicrucian novel because the Rosicrucian seeker of knowledge is the male who penetrates the female nature, turning it into a sexual metaphor (104).

27). Others do not consider this work part of the manifestos, mainly because it is clearly a work of fiction, while the manifestos were published as serious, non-fictional works. However, it is worth mentioning because it might have had some influence on the Rosicrucian novels as an earlier version of a Rosicrucian literary text, written by an alleged author of the manifestos (Beeler 11-12; Tichelaar 114).

According to Christopher McIntosh, the message of the manifestos could mean a variety of things to different people, which resulted in a large response of the audience in the form of letters, and academic and literary texts (*The Age of Reason* 26). It seems that the idea of the existence of a mysterious secret order with the means of acquiring divine knowledge was a source of inspiration and excitement for certain groups of people in Germany, especially during a time when social and religious ideas and beliefs were changing. These responses developed the Rosicrucian myth over time as more works were written to defend and attack the Rosicrucians. It should come as no surprise that the defenders were Protestants since the manifestos had an anti-Papal tone, but, surprisingly, the attackers were also predominantly Protestant. It seems that the Catholics were conspicuously indifferent to the manifestos, and with only two written responses against the manifestos, it seems unlikely that the order was secretly Catholic as some attackers suggested. The works defending the order greatly influenced the development of the Rosicrucian myth, adding or emphasizing the importance of certain elements that are now considered integral parts of the Rosicrucian order, such as the order's isolation and invisibility caused by their absence in society, and their alleged immortality. Possibly the most important elements that were transformed during this development were the concept and origin of the Rosicrucian wisdom, and the role of alchemy within the Rosicrucian myth (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 4-5; McIntosh, *The Rosicrucians* 31-32; Gilly 20-21).

### **Rosicrucian Elements**

Wisdom, or knowledge, is the central topic in the manifestos, as the order aims to share divine knowledge and thereby start an intellectual reformation. The manifestos reflect some of the ideas of the Protestant Reformation, which was at its end when the manifestos were published. The manifestos explain that God, in creating Nature, made available to us works and creatures to study, in order to attain divine knowledge. This is referred to as the 'Book of Nature,' a medieval concept of Nature as a source of divine knowledge. A learned Christian is expected to study not only the Bible, but also creation itself, the physical world that is made and sustained by God. Even though it is a source of natural knowledge of God, the

Book of Nature is considered secondary to the Book of Scripture because it does not reveal the transcendent aspects of the divine and it does not require faith to be able to learn from it. In addition, it is unable to induce a spiritual transformation that comes through divine revelation. In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe, texts about the natural world developed alongside the ever more popular representations of nature as a Christian text. In the same period, natural theology became more popular and influenced the development of natural science as a means of knowing and understanding more about God. Later, natural science became a discipline in its own right, with or without reference to a divine creator. Because the Rosicrucian manifestos place great importance on the Book of Nature, as the source of all knowledge of the Rosicrucian and other esoteric movements, they display the increasing interest and ensuing development of natural theology and, in its wake, natural science in the seventeenth century (Gould 210-11). The authors of the manifestos did not necessarily prove that the Rosicrucian order existed but by giving this fictional order the divine knowledge of nature they suggested that these new disciplines might be the key to a better world and urge the reader to take them seriously and not linger on their old and familiar knowledge.

Shortly after the publication of the manifestos, Julius Sperber, author of *Echo der von Gott hocherleuchteten Fraternitet* (1615) transformed the wisdom described in the manifestos into an ancient doctrine dating back to the earliest biblical times. Sperber believed that the Rosicrucians were heirs to this doctrine. He maintained that after the Fall, Adam preserved some of the wisdom he possessed in Paradise. This wisdom was passed down through Noah to Zoroaster, the Chaldeans, the Persians, and the Egyptians,<sup>4</sup> and was preserved in the Jewish Kabala in the form of a doctrine. Then Christ inherited this wisdom, and showed all men eternal bliss, but kept the way to divine wisdom a secret that he only shared with a select few. Later, the wisdom survived only in non-Christian countries but eventually a few Christians rediscovered it, among them not only Rosenkreutz but also several influential philosophers, alchemists and theologians, namely Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535), Johannes Reuchlin (1455-1522), Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-

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<sup>4</sup> Zoroaster, the Chaldeans, the Persians, and the Egyptians are all renowned for their possession of esoteric knowledge. Zoroaster was an ancient Iranian prophet from approximately the sixth century BCE. He founded the religion Zoroastrianism, an ancient semi-dualistic monotheist religion that influenced many other religions. The term Chaldeans is commonly used to refer to the inhabitants in Babylonia, while it originally referred to a specific tribe that lived in the southern part of Babylon. They were influential and highly educated people at the height of the Babylonian empire in the sixth and fifth century BCE.

1494), and Aegidius Gutmann (1490-1584) (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 4-6; McIntosh, *The Rosicrucians* 31-32).

In response to the manifestos, the transmutation of metals and the elixir of life became closely associated with the Rosicrucian order. Originally, the manifestos condemn popular alchemy, describing it as child's play compared to the alchemical knowledge and practices that the Rosicrucian order possesses, and stating that "the true Philosophers are far of another minde, esteeming little the making of Gold, which is but a parergon; for besides that they have a thousand better things" ("The Rosicrucian Manifestos" 14). To make their condemnation more pronounced they dismiss the making of gold through alchemy as a "trivial activity much abused by tricksters". Nevertheless, Rosicrucianism became closely associated with transmuting metal, mainly because of the popularity of alchemy at the time the manifestos were published (*The Rosy Cross* 26; Butler 74-75). According to McIntosh, Michael Maier<sup>5</sup> (1568-1622), "the most prominent alchemical physician in Germany since Paracelsus" (*The Rosicrucians* 32), is responsible for associating this popular type of alchemy with the Rosicrucians. In many works of Maier, the Rosicrucians feature prominently. While his belief that the Rosicrucians held the alchemical secret of producing material gold is stipulated by the manifestos, he seemed to disregard their condemnation of it. He claimed that this secret, but also that of the elixir of life, originally belonged to previous civilizations and were handed down in oral tradition, echoing the manifestos' and Sperber's belief that the Rosicrucian order was heir to ancient traditions. As a result, Rosicrucianism became not only closely associated with transmuting metal, but also with the secret of the elixir of life, which would become the main source of near immortality in the Gothic Rosicrucian novel. It seems that with Maier's influence, the longevity of the Rosicrucians, as the manifestos claim that they were only immune to illnesses, not old age, was transformed into immortality, which suggests that they were able to transcend death and live forever. According to McIntosh, Maier's "powerful advocacy of Rosicrucianism established it firmly as a subject of interest for serious minds" (*The Rosicrucians* 34). Maier described the brethren as hard-working, meticulous, and temperate physicians and chemists, "dedicated to the study of nature and the bringing about of a reformed world" (McIntosh, *The Rosicrucians* 34). He attributed to them the knowledge about the true sciences, astronomy, physics, mathematics, medicine, and chemistry, through which they were able to establish miraculous and rare feats.

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<sup>5</sup> Michael Maier (1568-1622), the court physician of the Emperor Rudolph II, and an alchemist, was a strong advocate of Rosicrucianism and established it firmly as a subject of interest for serious minds. He also strongly reinforced its connection with alchemy (McIntosh, *The Rosicrucians* 34).

## Summary

In this chapter, we contemplated the importance of the Book of Nature as a source of divine knowledge. This knowledge was acquired by the Rosicrucians whose esoteric heritage was traced back by Julius Sperber to Adam, the first man. Michael Maier transformed the Rosicrucian knowledge of alchemy by associating it with popular alchemy (notably the transmutation of metals), even though the manifestos attempt to dissociate the order from this type of practice. Maier also associated the Rosicrucians with the elixir of life, suggesting that they found a way to transcend death altogether, despite the manifestos' claim that they die of old age. Because of the constant development of the Rosicrucian myth, it is difficult to pin down what the Rosicrucian knowledge specifically consisted of. Because of the focus of the Rosicrucian myth on the Book of Nature and Sperber's claim that the Rosicrucians are heirs to wisdom preserved from Paradise, we can assume that it is closely associated with science, specifically natural science and theological science. A more occult or esoteric branch of science heavily associated with the Rosicrucians is alchemy, but there are many more branches of scientific, esoteric, and occult knowledge that are mentioned by various sources as being part of the Rosicrucian knowledge. It seems that for each person, the Rosicrucian knowledge had its own content, while maintaining the importance of natural science and alchemy. Therefore, in our analyses of *Zanoni* and *St. Leon*, we will consider what the authors of the Rosicrucian novels in general, and specifically Bulwer-Lytton and Godwin, considered as Rosicrucian knowledge. We will discuss this in chapter four.

## 2. From Rosicrucian Myth to Gothic Wanderer

In the previous chapter, we discussed the Rosicrucian myth and the development of some of the main ideas of the myth, focusing specifically on the Rosicrucian frenzy in Central Europe, which eventually died down during the Thirty Years War. This chapter will continue that discussion by focusing on the interest in Rosicrucianism in England, which eventually revived the movement throughout Europe, and which will bring us closer to the Rosicrucian novel.

Knowledge of the Rosicrucian order circulated in Britain before the first English translation of the Rosicrucian manifestos by Thomas Vaughan appeared in 1652, which, in collaboration with the Rosicrucian oriented texts by John Heydon,<sup>6</sup> revived interest in the order. In *The Rosicrucians*, McIntosh discusses the possibility of the existence of a Rosicrucian-like movement in Britain before the Rosicrucian manifestos were published, with King James I as protector. The possible existence of a Rosicrucian-like movement before the publication of these manifestos is probable since there was a common interest in Hermetic and Gnostic traditions at that time, which also explains the popularity of the Rosicrucian myth in

England. In 1612, the year of the first recorded manuscript of the *Fama*, Michael Maier, the German alchemical physician who would later have a vast influence on the Rosicrucian myth, sent King James a Christmas message, one of the earliest and largest Christmas cards, which seemed to refer to the existence of a Rosicrucian-like



Figure 1

<sup>6</sup> Philosopher Thomas Vaughan (1622-1666) was editor of the English translations of the Rosicrucian manifestos. John Heydon (1629-1667), occult philosopher, self-titled Rosicrucian, and astrologer, influenced the Rosicrucian myth with his works attributed to the Rosicrucian order.

movement (McIntosh, *The Rosicrucians* 33). A rose with eight petals was drawn in the centre of the parchment, with the stem and the base made up of Latin words, with more Latin words around the petals (see figure 1, Goodall 43). It also contained a message that was written in the eight divisions between the petals, possibly meant as a sort of eight-branch cross. The message translates as follows: “Greetings to James, for a long time King of Great Britain. By your true protection may the rose be joyful” (McIntosh, *The Rosicrucians* 33). However, Maier is not responsible for introducing Rosicrucianism, or a similar movement, to English thinkers. Instead, the English author and Hermeticist Robert Fludd<sup>7</sup> familiarized Maier with the order during Maier’s visit to England some time after 1612, which implies that it is unlikely that James I’s movement was Rosicrucian. Fludd may also have been partly responsible for introducing Rosicrucianism into Freemasonry,<sup>8</sup> together with Francis Bacon and John Dee,<sup>9</sup> with the result that these two movements would become more and more interwoven in the following decades. How he came to know of the Rosicrucian order is not certain, but he might have had direct or indirect access to one of the earlier manuscripts through contacts he made in his youth during travels on the continent (Butler 75; McIntosh, *The Rosicrucians* 41).

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<sup>7</sup> Robert Fludd (1574-1637) might have come into contact with continental Hermeticists during his travels in his youth. He did not deal with the subject of the Rosicrucians in print until 1616, when he produced his first published work *Apologia Compendiaria Fraternalitatem de Rosea Cruce suspicionis et infamiae maculis aspersam veritatis quasi Fluctibus abluens et abstergens* (McIntosh 41). Fludd believed that the Rosicrucian order was an existing order, and owned a letter which he claimed was from the order. He explained that the House of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the *Fama* was not a literal place, but “a spiritual dwelling resting upon the rock which is Christ” (McIntosh, *The Rosicrucians* 42). Similarly, he asserts that the order is a spiritual order, a belief he shared with others, including Bulwer-Lytton.

<sup>8</sup> The Fraternal order of Masons is an international association of men dedicated to ethical refinement, allegedly originating from the medieval guilds of builders and stoneworkers. In 1717, the defining body for Freemasonry around the world was founded in London, called the London Ground Lodge. It presented to the world an association of gentlemen rather than a craft guild, and carried specific ethical and spiritual teachings. They are considered to have had a profound impact on the culture of the eighteenth century and they helped foster a social environment of popular adherence to the Enlightenment. They saw a spiritual order to nature that they thought should be the foundation for an ethical life of harmony and virtue, creating a spiritual life that was lived in this world, not apart from it (Potts 1053-54).

<sup>9</sup> Francis Bacon (1561-1626) was an English philosopher, scientist, and author. He is often called the father of empiricism, the theory that knowledge comes only from sensory experience. John Dee (1527-1608) was an occult philosopher, astrologer, and mathematician. He devoted most of his life to alchemy, divination and Hermetic philosophy.

## The Development of British Rosicrucian Literature

Because of its adaptability, the Rosicrucian myth became an ideal vessel to absorb a large variety of ideas, themes, and beliefs. This is why the Rosicrucian myth is such a rich source of material for writers. Another reason is because this accumulation of ideas created romantic possibilities and the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophers and authors drew inspiration from the manifestos for their own reformatory ideas. As a result, the term ‘Rosicrucian’ turned into a cultural common coin that kept recurring in works of later authors that were not familiar with or wanted to add to the manifestos (Beeler 9).

One of the earlier authors inspired by the manifestos was the philosopher Francis Bacon (1561-1626), whose works show ideals and concepts that are to a certain extent similar to those expressed in the manifestos. At the very least, Bacon knew and made use of the *Fama* and *Confessio* as inspiration for his works, embedding Rosicrucian ideas and thoughts in English philosophy and

The following titles were important influences on the development of the Rosicrucian novel.

- *Theomagia* by John Heydon (1664),
- *Paradise Lost* by John Milton (1667)
- *Le Comte de Gabalis* by Mountfaucon de Villars (1670),
- “The Rape of the Lock” by Alexander Pope (1714)
- *Hermippus Redivus* by John Campbell (allegedly) (1748)
- *Undine* by Friedrich De la Motte Fouqué (1811)
- *The Rosicrucians, Their Rites and Mysteries* by Hargrave Jennings (1870)
- Other sources of inspiration are works by Goethe, Michael Maier, Robert Fludd, Thomas Vaughan, Paracelsus, and Agrippa.
- Milton’s *Paradise Lost* probably does not contain hermetic or Rosicrucian influences, but it was a great source of inspiration for the revolutionary minded, such as Bacon, Shelley, Blake, and philosophers like Bulwer-Lytton.

esotericism. According to Roberts, the revolutionary message contained in the Rosicrucian mythologies inspired not only Bacon’s works, but also Tommaso Campanella’s texts.<sup>10</sup> As a result, the manifestos did not only influence philosophers and alchemists, but also became a source of inspiration for literary works, such as popular plays and poetry. One of the earliest

<sup>10</sup> Tommaso Campanella (1569-1639) was an important philosopher of the late Renaissance. He was fundamentally concerned with the philosophy of nature (or science), magic, political theory, and natural religion, but generally his ideas concerned all fields of learning (Ernst).



references to the Rosicrucian order can be found in Ben Jonson's masque *The Fortunate Isles* (1642), in which the Rosicrucians are satirised. The residual influence of these thinkers can also be found in works of later writers such as Swift, who satirised the Rosicrucian order in *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) and *A Tale of a Tub* (1704), and works such as Villars' French novel *Le Comte de Gabalis* (1670), Pope's poetical mythology in "The Rape of the Lock" (1714), and the anonymous *Bridegroom of the Fay* (1727) (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 6; McIntosh, *The Rosicrucians* 107). This popularity of the Rosicrucian order created a rich soil for the Rosicrucian novel, as Gothic authors found Rosicrucianism an easily adaptable subject for their treatment of the quest for forbidden knowledge.

Another source of influence on the Rosicrucian myth and English Rosicrucian literature were the works of the hermetic scientist and philosopher John Dee (1527-1609). His works on Enochian, or angelic, magic found their way into the Rosicrucian order of the Golden Dawn<sup>11</sup> and into the Rosicrucian works of John Heydon. His works also influenced the perception of the Rosicrucian myth in England to include more detailed occult elements, such as the concept of a Rosicrucian spirit world, which greatly resembles the Paracelsian spirit world<sup>12</sup> (Butler 35; McIntosh, *The Rosicrucians* 39; Veenstra 219). This spirit world would resurface in several Rosicrucian works, including Villars' *Comte de Gabalis* (1670), one of the first Rosicrucian novels to be recognized as such. In turn, Villars' work influenced the fantastical elements in Alexander Pope's famous poem "The Rape of the Lock" (1714) and William Godwin's definition of the Rosicrucians and their spirit world in his biography *Lives of the Necromancers* (1834). These, in turn, would also influence the Gothic Rosicrucian novel.

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<sup>11</sup> The Hermetic order of the Golden Dawn is the British Rosicrucian secret society, established in 1888. It is one of the few Rosicrucian-type societies still in existence. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Rosicrucian myth had adopted several other esoteric ideas, particularly Hermetic ones, hence the name Hermetic instead of Rosicrucian, to refer to the wider scale of esoteric ideas this order adheres to.

<sup>12</sup> The Paracelsian spirit world consists of four elemental kingdoms: the sylphs inhabit the air, the undines inhabit water, gnomes inhabit the earth and salamanders inhabit fire. They live longer than humans, as they are less susceptible to diseases. However, they have mortal souls, meaning that when they die, they cease to exist, whereas human souls live eternally in the afterlife. In *Le Comte de Gabalis* these elementals can gain immortality by marrying a human, and according to Villars, the offspring of such marriages were meant to people the earth, instead of the offspring of two humans.

## The Rosicrucian Novel

The designation ‘Rosicrucian novel’, given to the Rosicrucian-associated Gothic sub-genre, was “employed first by Edith Birkhead when identifying [Godwin] as the first novelist to ‘embody in a romance the ideas of the Rosicrucians’” (Roberts, “Mary Shelley” 61). It refers to those, mainly Gothic, novels that use the Rosicrucian concepts of forbidden knowledge and immortality gained through science or alchemy to create a character that is lured into or experiences a Second Fall, a recurrence of the consequences of Man’s original sin. Because of his immortality and his forbidden knowledge, the character becomes a solitary wanderer, removed from society and, more significantly, removed from God. In *The Gothic*

### Rosicrucian novels:

- *St. Leon* by William Godwin (1799);
- *St. Irvyne, or, the Rosicrucian* by Percy Bysshe Shelley (1810);
- (*Frankenstein* (1818) by Mary Shelley);
- *Melmoth the Wanderer* by Charles Maturin (1820);
- “The Mortal Immortal” by Mary Shelley (1833)
- *Transfusion, or the Orphans of Unwalden* by William Godwin Jr. (1835)
- *Zanoni* by Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1842)
- *A Strange Story* by Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1862)

*Wanderer*, Tichelaar explains that the Rosicrucian novel “attempts to rewrite *Paradise Lost* by using elements from the Rosicrucian legend, and [...] combines these elements with the legends of the wandering Jew and the Vampire” (89). The Gothic authors ignored the supposed Christian origins of the Rosicrucian order, and depicted the Rosicrucians as transgressors who sought autonomy from God in their quests for forbidden knowledge, instead of Christians seeking to reform humanity to come closer to God. The quest for immortality was especially popular because of its timing in regard to the social chaos of the French Revolution, as will be further discussed in chapter three (Tichelaar 93).

The first work identified as a Rosicrucian novel, Godwin’s *St. Leon*, significantly influenced the rest of the genre. Godwin used *St. Leon* to comment on possible consequences of some of the ideas of the French Revolution, and the other Rosicrucian authors used similar concepts as those in *St. Leon* to do the same. Authors who were close to Godwin wrote most of the Rosicrucian texts that were inspired by *St. Leon*. For example, his daughter Mary Shelley wrote the short story “Mortal Immortals”, *St. Irvyne* was written by her husband Percy Shelley, and Godwin’s son wrote the obscure *Transfusion, or the Orphans of Unwalden*. Some argue that Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* is also a Rosicrucian novel, as it

contains similar elements associated with the genre, but more subtle (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 2; Bridgewater 94; Ford-Swift 157-58; W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 38). Apart from these novels, C.R. Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* is also part of the Rosicrucian novel genre, as well as Bulwer-Lytton's *Zanoni* and *A Strange Story*.

### Summary

Before we embark on our discussion of the Rosicrucian novel, and in particular its wanderer, in more detail, let us briefly recapitulate our examination of the Rosicrucian myth. In chapter one, we provided a general discussion of the myth in Europe, moving to a more detailed survey of the influence and development of the myth in English literature in chapter two. We saw how topics and ideas from the manifestos, but also later accretions, contributed to the Rosicrucian mythology that lay at the foundation of the Rosicrucian novel. One of the chief ideological elements of the movement is the Rosicrucian knowledge, which emerged as a central topic in the course of the centuries, quite contrary to the concept of intellectual reformation that the Rosicrucians of the original manifestos were trying to achieve. Thus, the Rosicrucian myth focuses more on the tools of this reformation, rather than on its goal. The Rosicrucian concept of knowledge invariably focuses on natural science, or the Book of Nature, as its source. Alchemy can be considered a part of this, but within three centuries, the more popular alchemical concepts of the transmutation of metals and the elixir of life have moved to the foreground, displacing the divine knowledge that the Book of Nature would impart to the seeker. Particularly in England, the Rosicrucian idea of knowledge came to include occult knowledge, such as Enochian magic, and the knowledge how to access a spirit world. However, this later element seems to have manifested itself primarily in literature, and its definition and form differ per author. The expansion of the Rosicrucian knowledge is partly the result of how the Rosicrucian heritage changed from a heritage referring vaguely to esoteric movements and ideas, to a Christian heritage originating from the first man, Adam. However, in literature, the Rosicrucian knowledge has become secret and forbidden knowledge, turning the Rosicrucian wanderer into a transgressor against God as opposed to a devoted follower of God. The authors of the Rosicrucian novel used this image to mirror rebellion against God and the consequential Fall as described in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. These novels were not only inspired and influenced by *St. Leon*, and other previously mentioned sources, but also influenced each other, developing the genre from within. In the next chapter, we will discuss the figure of the Rosicrucian wanderer in relation to the concerns and interests of the Gothic period.

### 3. The Rosicrucian Wanderer

The previous chapters discussed the development of the Rosicrucian myth and the Rosicrucian influences in English literature. In this chapter, we will discuss the Rosicrucian wanderer, the main representative of the order in the Rosicrucian novel, in relation to the concerns of the Gothic period, in particular regarding the French Revolution. According to Tichelaar, the Rosicrucian authors adapted the concept of the transgressive wanderer from Milton's character Satan in *Paradise Lost* and attempted to rewrite Milton's depiction of the Fall of Adam and Eve by combining Rosicrucian elements with the supernatural fiction of the wandering Jew to reverse the consequences of the First Fall (89).

#### **The Gothic Wanderer**

Before focusing on the Rosicrucian wanderer, we need to expand and discuss the topic of the Gothic wanderer in general. The Rosicrucian wanderer shares certain elements and topics with the wandering Jew and the vampire, as they influenced one another. Discussing these elements as solely belonging to the Rosicrucian wanderer would ignore an important part of the development of Gothic literature. The Gothic wanderers are all solitary creatures, and often claim some sort of supernatural power. They are all solitary wanderers because they are no longer human. The wandering Jew is cursed into wandering eternally for his greed and selfishness, while the vampire is an undead creature with human characteristics, which preys on the living for their blood to stay alive. Commonly, the vampire is forced to live in solitude because of its craving for blood, but also because of its aversion to sunlight and garlic. In comparison, the Rosicrucian wanderer initially looks for immortality for the purpose of reformation and benevolence, by becoming independent from Nature's laws and gaining the means to infinite wealth. In this case, immortality is received as a gift and a blessing, but turns into a curse when it forces him to remove himself from society (Ford-Swift 157-58; W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 18; Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 8). The popularity of the wandering Jew inspired Godwin to give his reform novel *St. Leon* a supernatural character. In turn, the Rosicrucian wanderer had some influence on the vampire, as *St. Leon* influenced Bram Stoker's famous work *Dracula* (1897), where the vampire is described as "another highborn alchemist who discovers the secret of eternal life" (Tichelaar 89; W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 38-39; Stoker 263). In the Gothic period, these wanderers were mainly used to reflect on the contemporary social and political concerns regarding the French Revolution.

The supernatural element of the wanderer was used to symbolize the causes of the Gothics' fear for the social consequences of the French Revolution, with the added benefit that the supernatural was a common attraction for the readers. Secret societies such as the Rosicrucian order, but also the Illuminati<sup>13</sup> and the Freemasons, were often a popular choice for realizing this supernatural form, especially because such societies were sworn to work for the increase of human knowledge and the betterment of humanity. In addition, the interest in these societies was nourished by several conspiracy theories that these groups were secretly responsible for the French Revolution and were controlling the events behind the scenes. The Rosicrucians were popular in particular because of their alleged alchemical knowledge of the elixir of life and the transmutation of metals. These secrets grant the Rosicrucian longevity or immortality, which gives him time to manipulate events towards his own purpose, and they also grant him great wealth, which gives him power over nations' economies (Tichelaar 10-12).

### **The Wanderer and the French Revolution**

The French Revolution evoked numerous reactions in England, varying from praise and hope that it would cast off the yoke of tyranny, to trepidation and fear that it would cause the collapse of society or would herald the coming Apocalypse. The Romantic poets hoped that the Revolution was the beginning of a new age that would evolve, an age of peace on earth and the regeneration of humanity. As the Revolution progressed, this optimistic spirit died together with the French monarchy as the Reign of Terror took shape. At this time, the Gothic novelists began to express their doubts about the outcome of the Revolution, and questioned its legitimacy and purpose. They debated how, after the destruction of the monarchy, which used to be the central focus of government, the social order could be maintained in a world that lacked the traditional forms of government. They feared that the monarchy's destruction and the instigation of new legislations by the new French government, which supported the idea that people should be autonomous rather than subservient to a ruler, would result in the dissolution of social units, including the family<sup>14</sup> (Tichelaar 1-5).

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<sup>13</sup> The Illuminati is an overarching term for several secret societies, both real and fictional. Historically the term refers to the Bavarian Illuminati, a society founded during the Enlightenment era, in 1776.

They aimed to oppose superstition, religious influences on public life, and abuses of state power.

<sup>14</sup> In lieu of this, the new French government instigated several laws that lessened the power a father had over his family. Once matured, children were viewed as equals to their fathers. Despite this increased equality and liberty for children in France, there were still many people who feared that the limitation of paternal power

In Roberts' *Gothic Immortals*, David Punter describes the Gothic wanderers "as 'individualist disruptives' who 'burst out of the eighteenth century suddenly and furiously' in a revolt against the constraints of an ordered society" (20). Both the Romantic poets and the Gothic authors adapted the wanderer from *Paradise Lost* to debate the legitimacy of the transgression against the traditional government. They saw rebellion (such as the French Revolution) against the traditional forms of government as equal to a rebellion against God, because these governments were based in traditions that were ultimately sanctioned by God. The Romantic poets interpreted *Paradise Lost* to justify rebellion against tyrannical forms of authority, while some of the Gothic authors used it to portray their belief that such rebellions would result in divine punishment, while other Gothic authors used it to debate whether such transgressions were acceptable if they would result in an improved humanity.

### **The Wanderer and *Paradise Lost***

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton equated wandering with being an outcast and separated from God, a notion that was adopted by the Gothic authors. Satan is portrayed as a wanderer because God casts him out of Heaven in punishment for rebelling against Him, after which Satan constantly seeks to escape his status as an outcast by becoming equal to God and waging war against Him. Because he is placed outside the order created by God, his existence has no real structure or purpose, and he is continuously in search of those. Similarly, when Adam and Eve are cast out of Eden for disobeying God, they are also described as wanderers. By adopting similar elements in their own wanderers, the Romantic and Gothic authors speculated on whether Milton's characters were truly transgressors or whether they were right to rebel against a tyrannical God. Generally, the Gothic authors agreed that Satan, Adam, and Eve were transgressors who deserved punishment, but they also attempted to define what actions should be considered as transgressive, and the seriousness of such an act. This was connected with the discussion of whether the French Revolution was a justifiable rebellion against a tyrannical monarchy. Adam and Eve's forced removal from Eden was horrific to the Gothic because they had transgressed against God, their Father. Similarly, Satan's rebellion had been against the father figure. The Gothic saw this rebellion against a patriarchal authority as the destruction of familial ties, which they feared would also be the result of the French Revolution (Tichelaar 23-25, 30).

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would result in the breakdown of family. They created additional laws that promoted the family to an important part of the nation. Children became the shared responsibility of both parents and the government.

Similar to the other Gothic authors, the Rosicrucian authors use *Paradise Lost* to recreate a Satanic figure of transgression who seeks forbidden knowledge to liberate himself from the laws of God. By adding the need for forbidden knowledge to achieve autonomy, the Rosicrucian wanderer's selfish pursuits for autonomy result in what Francis Bacon referred to as the Second Fall, a reversal of the consequences of Adam and Eve's Fall. This refers to the redemption of humanity from the inevitability of death, which the Rosicrucian wanderer achieves. Bacon saw this as a blasphemy and referred to it as the Second Fall because it represented the reversal of the consequences of humanity's first disobedience through the acquisition of forbidden knowledge, which also instigated the First Fall (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 10). After Satan convinces Eve to eat the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, the original harmony between nature, humans, and God was broken, leaving a transcendent God, a sinful humanity and a degraded Earth in a state of mutual alienation. Adam and Eve became aware of hardened labour, shame of their nakedness, and knowledge of their inevitable death (Roskos 312-14; Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 10). Similarly, the wanderer defies God by acquiring knowledge that allows him to reverse the consequences of eating the forbidden fruit of knowledge, but which places him outside God's order, connecting the consequences of Satan's rebellion in *Paradise Lost* with the original sin of humanity (Tichelaar 95; Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 43). The Rosicrucian characters that achieve their goal of immortality and learn secret knowledge soon discover "the anguish and tedium of coping with immortality, since loneliness and guilt force them to wander in search of spiritual fulfilment" (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 8). In his attempts to become autonomous from God, like Satan in *Paradise Lost*, the Rosicrucian wanderer does not take into account that he will have no human concerns after achieving immortality. He realizes quickly that he is not only freed from the ties of humanity to God, but has also become separated from humanity and all meaning of life. Like Satan, Adam, and Eve, he has been removed from God's order and is without a purpose (Tichelaar 118-19). Similar to the wandering Jew and the vampire, longevity becomes a curse, separating him from society and God.

Apart from referring to the First Fall, the Second Fall also marks the transition of the individual from the state of primitive consciousness to one of self-consciousness, as the Rosicrucian wanderer, like Satan, searches for a higher state of universal consciousness in order to find control over nature for his own selfish purposes. His selfishness grows to the point that he does not recognize his own selfishness in his pretence of benefitting others. The wanderer becomes the epitome of the human who tries to cling to life as long as possible. He

symbolizes the human fear of death as the end of existence, and thereby rejects God's plan for human salvation and eternal life in the afterlife. In surpassing this fear by becoming immortal, he also symbolizes a spirit of rebellion, which is connected with "the Gothic immortal who, as a survivor of death, has transgressed the border between the human and the divine" (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 20, 143). This aspect of the Rosicrucian myth appealed to Gothic authors because Gothic novels thrive on human fears and anxieties. In the Rosicrucian novel, the Rosicrucian wanderer is typically a tragic hero who follows the pattern of the failed quest. The hero, in this case the wanderer, experiences a Second Fall by seeking forbidden knowledge for the wrong reasons, with the result that the knowledge becomes meaningless when he tries to return to his normal life (DeLamotte 54; qtd. in Tichelaar 94).

### **The Wanderers in the Rosicrucian Novels**

In the Rosicrucian novels, the Rosicrucian wanderers are used in different ways to reflect similar concerns of the Gothic period. In *St. Leon*, William Godwin used *Paradise Lost*, and his knowledge of the Rosicrucian myth to discuss his beliefs on advancing the human species to achieve immortality through unnatural means, and created a wanderer who possesses the ability to instigate an anarchistic breakdown of society. In Percy Shelley's *St Irvyne* (1810), a solitary wanderer encounters an alchemist, who tries to convince him to join his order by offering him immortality. Initially the wanderer is interested, but ultimately he refuses the offer, as he would have to renounce his faith. When he rejects the alchemist's offer, the devil appears who gives the alchemist the eternal life he yearns for, but in the form of a skeleton, forcing him to live an endless existence as a "dateless and hopeless eternity of horror" (Shelley; Tichelaar 114). Here the Rosicrucian's immortality symbolizes revolutionary change, referring to the fears and concerns of the audience regarding the French Revolution, but this is subordinated to the whims of Gothic terror. Shelley's wife, Mary Shelley wrote a short Rosicrucian story called "the Mortal Immortal" (1833) in which the Rosicrucian wanderers are seekers who are introduced into the Rose-Cross tradition of magician-scientists, by connecting the Rosicrucian wanderer with the alchemist Agrippa, and having the wanderer drink Agrippa's elixir of life under the assumption that it could cure love. In Mary Shelley's famous novel *Frankenstein* (1818), the scientist Victor and his creature form between them another version of the wanderer who has transcended death through magic and science. The monster is the manifestation of the Revolution, which might have been humanity's saviour, had it not been abandoned by educators and guides (Blumberg, qtd. in Tichelaar 13-14). Roberts describes Shelley's portrayal of the Rosicrucian wanderer neatly:



Consuming his way through existence, the Rosicrucian wanderer parasitically steals a life-span to which he is not entitled. A metonymy for alienation, the Rosicrucian, who has been abandoned by death, is left lonely and isolated. (“Mary Shelley” 62)

Charles Maturin condemns the Rosicrucian search for immortality as heretical. His *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), like *Zanoni*, revolves around a sympathetic Gothic wanderer who is associated with Rosicrucian secrets. Unlike St. Leon, but like Percy Shelley’s wanderer, this wanderer has to sign a contract with the devil. This contract grants him one hundred and fifty years of extended life. However, the contract can be revoked if he finds someone to take his place, before his time is up, which he is unable to do. According to Roberts, Maturin moved the Rosicrucian novel into “the realms of theological controversy” (*Gothic Immortals* 121), which would influence Bulwer-Lytton while writing *Zanoni*. However, Bulwer legitimises the Rosicrucian wanderers as individuals searching for mystical truth instead of condemning them, justifying the transgressive acts against authority as righteous if they result in a better future for humanity (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 21). Before analyzing *St. Leon* and *Zanoni* in chapter four, we need a more in depth discussion of the ideas and beliefs that Godwin and Bulwer-Lytton try to express in these works.

### **William Godwin and *St. Leon***

The founder of the Rosicrucian novel, William Godwin, was one of the main authors concerned with these feared outcomes. He created the Rosicrucian wanderer to symbolize the failure of the French Revolution to achieve the millennial age of Reason hoped for by its supporters. He used the Rosicrucian legend to intertwine the wandering Jew trope with the elixir of life, creating a character that gains immortality through forbidden knowledge, while using a popular wandering character. Godwin supported the Revolution’s rejection of patriarchal authority, in both the family and in government, and its consequential reinterpretation of the family and society as environments in which children matured into adults who would become capable citizens of a government that emphasized democratic equality (Tichelaar 9). In his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793), he argues that the corrupted government will become increasingly unnecessary and powerless as the common population is exposed to a gradual spread of knowledge and through this spread human understanding of the world. The novel *Caleb Williams* (1794) continues this line of thought, and popularizes Godwin’s political and social views of the individual victimized by society

even further. In *St. Leon*, these issues are discussed through the struggles of the Rosicrucian wanderer. This, of course, influenced the rest of the genre.

However, *St. Leon* focuses primarily on the concept of scientific evolution. When Godwin started writing *St. Leon*, intellectuals generally assumed that immortality would eventually be achieved through science. Philosophers such as Bacon, Franklin and Condorcet, for instance, believed that immortality could ultimately be achieved through the evolution of art or science, but Godwin believed that immortality would come about through the course of evolution. He thought that the perfectibility of humanity would be a gradual process of increasing knowledge gained through reason and pre-eminence of truth. This improved intellect would then enable the prolongation of life (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 27-28). Godwin believed that a story or a novel would be more successful in teaching a valuable lesson than a philosophical work because of its audience. Because of this, *St. Leon* should be read as a moral work in which the Rosicrucian myth and the adaptation of *Paradise Lost* is used to express his philosophical ideas and to comment on the French Revolution, focusing on reason, rather than on Christianity, as most other Gothic authors would do.

Apart from discussing the feared destruction of social units because of the Revolution, as most Gothic authors did, Godwin's novel also had an atheistic theme. It revolved around the idea that humanity could achieve its own form of earthly paradise rather than wait for the promised Christian afterlife. Instead of focusing on the French Revolution as transgression against God, he focussed on the possibility of man using reason to solve problems and thereby perfect himself. He believed that through this method the human race would evolve by the use of reason to achieve longer and better lives (Tichelaar 96). *St. Leon* expresses these beliefs by discussing the psychological and social consequences of an individual gaining immortality and the possibility to create his own paradise, before humanity has evolved enough to achieve it through natural means. Through this, Godwin expresses his belief that this individualism would result in a complete alienation from society. While Godwin remained atheistic in his portrayal of the Rosicrucian wanderer, the Rosicrucian wanderers were eventually pictured as sinful and transgressive wanderers by the other authors of the Rosicrucian novels, and alienation from society turned into the Second Fall.

### **Edward Bulwer-Lytton and *Zanoni***

Bulwer-Lytton attempted to restore the Rosicrucians to their original form, as described in the manifestos, by depicting them as devout Christians who use divine knowledge to come closer to God despite their contact with the supernatural and their immortality. As opposed to

Godwin, he agrees with the idea forwarded by Bacon, Franklin, and Condorcet that immortality can be achieved through art or science, as his Rosicrucian wanderers symbolise these two ideals, and through them found spiritual elevation. As Zanoni states regarding Christianity, “Knowledge and atheism are incompatible. To know nature is to know that there must be a God” (Bulwer-Lytton 176; Tichelaar 266). Because he wrote *Zanoni* fifty-three years after the fall of the Bastille, and thus was unable to recall the events of the French Revolution personally, he could set *Zanoni* in France at the time of the Revolution without fearing its immediate repercussion on England. He mainly focuses on the Revolution’s spiritual consequences. He compares the path of the Rosicrucian initiate with that of the agent for revolutionary change, as both aspire to become better and make a better world, but are driven by fear (envisioned for both parties as the Dweller of the Threshold), and therefore fail in their quest. The Dweller represents the individual Nemesis, the Devil, who is released into the apocalyptic horror of the French Revolutions. Like an outbreak of the collective human unconscious, the enlarged Dweller will destroy the moribund Age of Reason. With this comparison, Bulwer-Lytton suggests that the revolutionary who only succeeds in creating a dictatorship is little better than the failed neophyte who has released against himself the Dweller, the negative forces of his own frustrated desires. According to Roberts, this encapsulated for Bulwer-Lytton the ‘False Ideal that knows no God,’ a concept that was upheld by the materialistic philosophers. He believed that they dismissed the idea of art as a way to reach other planes of existence and achieve spiritual immortality. During the Revolution, these modern modifications of art became gateways through which horrors such as the Dweller of the Threshold were able to access our plane of existence and wreak havoc. Therefore, Condorcet, Malesherbes, and Robespierre, individuals who have denied the significance of the higher spiritual planes had to enter those regions via the guillotine (Christensen 87-88, 94; J. Godwin 125).

*Zanoni* was not very popular with the British audience because it was too obscure and contained many occult references that the general audience was not familiar with. However, it is considered to be the most famous occult novel ever written, and has been highly praised by occultists (Finley 90, 92). Generally, Bulwer-Lytton was a successful author during his lifetime, even matching Dickens in sales. His works were so popular because his readers could always be assured that his novels held something of interest on a matter of contemporary concern and because his novels varied in subject and genre. He saw his novels as outlets for moral and political instruction, as he was very concerned with being heard and with convincing the public of his views. *Zanoni* was used as an outlet for his political and

spiritual beliefs. While he was born a Christian, he only adhered to the Christian God because he was born into Christianity. He admitted that he could have easily belonged to another religion. He more or less constructed his own religion to adhere to, containing a reverence and acceptance of the hopes and ethics of Christianity, the belief in God, a soul, and an afterlife. He also believed that only humanity was graced with an idea of God and a world beyond what could be perceived. He believed that God existed as the evidence of man's soul, as the concept of a higher spiritual authority came not from man's mind, but from his inherent capacity to receive ideas of God, or the soul, which capacity was not given to the brutes (Mitchell 139). *Zanoni* was a pet-project that he did not expect to be successful, introducing German ideas and language that would seem odd to his normal English audience.

While Bulwer-Lytton is mostly known for his literary career, he was also a politician, a ruthless businessman, a pitiless negotiator of contracts, and a jealous guardian of what was his own (Mitchell 127-28). As a politician, he was never able to settle down on one specific party, he started as a Radical, moved to the Whigs for a while and ended as a Tory. It seems that none of the mainstream options in British politics suited his tastes, but he was adamant in convincing society of his beliefs and views, especially regarding the rights of artists, in particular authors. Generally, Bulwer-Lytton was an eccentric man with a lot of personal insecurities and ideas that did not fit English society. He was ridiculed by critics and fellow-writers for his appearance, ideas, and personality. Unfortunately, he was very much concerned about what others thought of him. He was incapable of letting jokes and negative criticism slide, whether they were aimed at his work or his personality, handling them as a slight against both. Because of these insecurities, he was unable to admit his interest in the occult, and would deny his interest when asked. His constant state of feeling out of time added to social insecurities, and ensured that he was always at odds with his contemporaries and on the margin of society.

## **Conclusion**

Comparing Godwin's and Bulwer-Lytton's use of Rosicrucian elements and their portrayal of the Rosicrucian wanderer should result, according to the information in this chapter, in two very different descriptions, that also differ in some ways from the generic portrayal of the Rosicrucian wanderer. This chapter established that the Rosicrucian wanderer was generally depicted as a pursuer of forbidden knowledge to achieve immortality and evade death. He was also portrayed as someone who experiences a Second Fall because of his selfish pursuits, and as a result alienates himself from human society and, more importantly, the laws and

influence of God. The wanderer symbolized rebellion against patriarchal authority and the authors of the Rosicrucian novels used this character to discuss the worries and concerns of the Gothic audience regarding the consequences of the destruction of the patriarchal authority, the monarchy. As the next two chapters will reveal, Godwin sets the stage for the other Rosicrucian authors, laying the groundwork for a genre in which its supernatural entity allows for wide diversities within certain perimeters. Bulwer-Lytton makes full use of this and implements his own occult and Rosicrucian knowledge to enhance and enrich his Rosicrucian novel. When the Rosicrucian wanderers and factual references in the novels of these two authors have been discussed in chapter four, chapter five will analyse the portrayal of the four main Rosicrucian elements that can be found in these two Rosicrucian novels. These elements are the concept of immortality, the Rosicrucian knowledge assigned to the wanderer, the Second Fall, and the resulting alienation from society.

#### 4. Rosicrucian Wanderers in *St. Leon* and *Zanoni*

Before analysing and comparing the differences between Godwin's and Bulwer-Lytton's Rosicrucian wanderers and associated Rosicrucian themes in chapter five, this chapter will analyse and discuss these Rosicrucian wanderers extensively and compare them with the portrayal of the Rosicrucian order in the manifestos and, if recognizable, other Rosicrucian works.

In total, Godwin's *St. Leon* and Bulwer-Lytton's *Zanoni* contain five Rosicrucian wanderers. Godwin's main Rosicrucian wanderer is St. Leon, who gains the secret knowledge of wealth and immortality from another Rosicrucian called Francesco Zampieri, who is generally referred to as 'the stranger'. Bulwer-Lytton introduces three Rosicrucian characters. Two of them, *Zanoni* and Mejnour, are centuries-old members of an ancient brotherhood that precedes and surpasses, according to the novel, the Rosicrucian order. The third Rosicrucian character is Clarence Glyndon, who strives to become part of the same brotherhood as soon as he learns of its existence because he wants to learn their secrets and become as powerful and influential as *Zanoni*. *Zanoni* has two other influential characters, the opera singer Viola and the village girl Fillide, who warrant some special attention as they influence either the protagonist *Zanoni* or Glyndon, and are important when discussing Bulwer-Lytton's portrayal of the Second Fall.

##### **Rosicrucian wanderers in Godwin's *St. Leon***

The events of *St. Leon* take place during the protestant reformation in the sixteenth century, and it tells the story of a nobleman who meets a Rosicrucian-type stranger after he has lost his wealth through gambling and has moved from a large manor in England to a small cottage in Central Europe with his family. The stranger is looking for someone to whom he can transfer his secret alchemical knowledge, which consists of two branches: gaining immortality and creating wealth. Just before the stranger's death, he shares this knowledge with St. Leon. Immediately after receiving this knowledge, St. Leon notices a change within him, and he feels that his new knowledge disassociates him from humanity. He realizes that the stranger's gift is a curse. The rest of the novel covers the following years during which St. Leon tries to come to terms with his loneliness and continued dissociation from society and his family. Because of St. Leon's use of his new knowledge, his son, Charles, rejects and leaves him. This loss, and the change in her husband, ultimately kills St. Leon's wife. After her death, he also distances himself from his two daughters, who he sends back to England to

live in his old childhood home. His sudden wealth and later attempts at 'aiding' people and poor countries result in suspicion and persecution. He is hunted and eventually imprisoned, first by the Spanish Inquisition and later by a misanthrope, Gabor, whom he once considered his friend. Both the Inquisition and Gabor know or suspect that he has secret knowledge, and they try to extract it from him. Eventually, he is saved from Gabor by his son Charles. By then, St. Leon has used the elixir of life to regain his youth, and so Charles does not recognise him as his father. St. Leon resolves to befriend him and help him. However, this also has near disastrous results, and the novel ends with St. Leon leaving Charles and moving away from human society, accepting his status as an outcast.

### *St. Leon*

Godwin's titular character St. Leon is an English nobleman who becomes a wanderer even before discovering the elixir of life. He loses his parents when he is young, and becomes a lonely orphan without any close connection to the rest of humanity. To elevate his loneliness, he takes up gambling and becomes addicted. Because he was born into a wealthy family, St. Leon does not view money as a necessity. His wealth has separated him from the ordinary struggles of humanity to survive, so he cannot understand the desperation that would lead someone to risk everything on gambling (Tichelaar 80, 131). Eventually he falls in love with his future wife Marguerite and asks for her hand. Her father only allows their marriage if St. Leon promises to take his family to live in the country, and to give up gambling. After he marries her and they have children, St. Leon continues to feel disconnected from humanity, because they live far away from society. On a visit to the city, he returns to his old habits and gambles all his wealth and possessions away. As a result, he and his family become destitute and his gambling debts force him to leave England with his family and move to Central Europe in search of a home and work. Initially, St. Leon falls into a depression because of his impoverished circumstances, but after some misfortunes, he eventually learns to appreciate the simplicity of an impoverished life. He even starts to praise his poverty, by denouncing wealth as having "no other purpose than to deprave the soul, and adulterate the fountains of genuine delight" (W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 137). He proclaims that he will from now on:

desire only to dedicate myself to the simplicity of nature and the genuine sentiments of the heart. I will enjoy the beauty of scenes cultivated by other hands than mine, or that are spread out before me by the Author of the universe. I will sit in the midst of my children, and revel in the luxury of domestic affections; pleasures these, that may

be encumbered, but cannot be heightened, by all that wealth has in its power to bestow! (W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 137)

The Rosicrucian manifestos warn that only the worthy may appeal to the order for initiation and learn their secrets. The greedy and power-hungry will be turned away while the virtuous who seek knowledge to improve and aid humanity are welcomed. In *St. Leon*, this does not happen. His inherited wealth and status blind him to the necessity of human society and the true meaning of life. However, through his continued failures as a wealthy gambler, St. Leon eventually recognized the need for social bonds. As a result, he settles down with his family, stops wandering and is able to embrace life and nature. Around the time that he has finally realized that he can find happiness with his family instead of with money and status, Zampieri arrives.

St. Leon expressed an eagerness to learn in his youth. However, when his mother dies, he abandons his studies in order to enjoy his life as a rich nobleman. This goes against the Rosicrucian notion that knowledge is the most valuable possession a man can have, and shows that St. Leon is unfit to carry their secrets. It is another example of how his greed stops him from reaching his potential as a virtuous human being. When Zampieri offers him his knowledge, St. Leon is not interested at first, as he is content with his family. However, after several conversations with Zampieri, St. Leon starts to consider that the knowledge Zampieri hints at might help him take better care of his family. Just before Zampieri dies, St. Leon accepts his offer, and learns “the great secret of nature, the *opus magnum*, in its two grand and inseparable branches, the art of multiplying gold, and of defying the inroads of infirmity and death” (W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 53). St. Leon decides he will not only help his family with his newfound wealth, but will also use it to reform the world. However, his ensuing rash actions and imprudent ideas only have the opposite effect. St. Leon abuses his newfound gifts by using them to provide a luxurious life for his family, while he keeps them a secret from his family. As a result, his wife, son, and daughters lose their trust in him, and his son leaves him, as he believes that St. Leon gained such wealth through illicit means and he does not want to be associated with him. His wife also stops trusting and loving him, claiming that their marriage is no longer real, and that there is no equality between them (W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 226-27). With this dissolution of the family, Godwin states that St. Leon, as the patriarchal authority of the social unit, should not have kept secrets, or set himself apart from the rest of his family. Godwin considers the ensuing rebellion of St. Leon’s son and wife as acceptable in this case.



St. Leon's tendency to spend a lot of money, for both his family and in aiding a small, impoverished country, also draws attention from external parties. When the art of creating wealth bores him, he starts to study occult knowledge and to experiment with alchemy and occult rituals. People begin to accuse him of sorcery, which attracts the attention of the Spanish Inquisition, of German authorities, and of Bethlem Gabor, a misanthrope who seeks to use St. Leon's infinite wealth for his own purposes. They all imprison him, and during these imprisonments he laments his faith, claiming he had been so much happier when he was poor and surrounded by his family, something that he did not realize when he was still mortal and being convinced by the stranger to accept his knowledge.

Even though St. Leon gains the knowledge of how to become immortal, he does not use this knowledge until much later in the novel, when he is old and near death. He wants to maintain a normal life so he can be with his family until they pass away, instead of having to extract himself from them after a few years because he does not age. However, despite this, immediately after Zampieri shares with him his secrets, St. Leon feels different, and starts to refer to himself as something that no longer belongs to humanity, as an immortal being. Even though he is not immortal yet, it seems that the mere knowledge of how to become immortal makes it impossible for St. Leon not to use it. Whether he is determined to use his possible immortality for good, as he claims, or whether it is just a selfish wish to be acknowledged by society as something god-like, as some of his thoughts and actions claim, will be discussed in a later paragraph.

St. Leon's acceptance of Zampieri's offer to share with him his secret knowledge of multiplying gold and extending life is Godwin's concept of the Second Fall, with all its consequences. It seems that even though St. Leon gains the Rosicrucian form of immortality, by alchemical means, and while his intentions do seem to follow the Rosicrucian goal of reformation, his immortality makes him arrogant. As soon as he is immortal, he considers himself to be above humanity, and thus sets himself apart from them, essentially cursing himself to live in solitude. This is the antithesis to the kind of person the Rosicrucian order would recruit as one of their own, but ties in with the general definition of the Gothic wanderer. Instead, it seems that Zampieri should have approached Charles, because St. Leon, when they meet again, proclaims him as the hero that St. Leon himself should have been: noble, immaterial, kind, and benevolent (W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 421). However, because of these characteristics, Charles would never have given in to the temptation. He exemplifies Godwin's ideal human who would not seek immortality before his time. Despite his pursuit

of scientific immortality, Zampieri seems to be a better representation of the Rosicrucian order, even though Godwin only dedicates a few pages to him.

### *Zampieri*

While Godwin mentions no possible Rosicrucian sources in *St. Leon*, there are certainly references to elements associated with the Rosicrucian myth, in particular where Zampieri is involved. St. Leon mostly refers to Zampieri as ‘the stranger’. He describes Zampieri as “feeble, emaciated, and pale, his forehead full of wrinkles, and his hair and beard as white as snow. Care was written in his face; it was easy to perceive that he had suffered much from distress of the mind” (W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 155). This description suggests that the stranger is old and has experienced a lot, but the next sentence suggests that he has matured physically, but not mentally: “yet his eye was still quick and lively, with a strong expression of suspiciousness and anxiety” (W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 155). From the start, the narrative hints that Zampieri is more than what he seems. He confesses to have certain secrets that forced him into an exiled life and promises St. Leon that he will share them with him if St. Leon proves to be worthy of them. He seems to be seducing St. Leon, similar to the way that Satan seduced Eve in *Paradise Lost*, enticing him with mysterious knowledge so that ultimately St. Leon will accept his offer, and liberate himself from the ties of humanity. This, of course, is Godwin’s version of the Second Fall. Godwin was an atheist so he would not have used St. Leon to comment on transgressions against God. Instead, he comments on the consequences of total liberty from the rules of society, namely the breakdown of society as St. Leon sees his family fall apart and is eventually forced to live in exile.

Zampieri confesses that he longs for death after a long life of wandering. He chooses to die, or at least knows his time has come, which suggests that he has longevity, and is able to delay death but not transcend it. This conforms with the Rosicrucian form of immortality. While the *Confessio Fraternitatis* states that sickness cannot affect the Rosicrucian order, it stresses that they are able to die. The description of his clothes might also refer to the Rosicrucians: “His garb, which externally consisted of nothing more than a robe of russet brown, with a girdle of the same, was coarse, threadbare, and ragged” (W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 155). This suggests that the stranger is part of a fraternity, as he seems to dress like a poor monk. Godwin adds to this description other references to some of the Rosicrucian customs and traditions described in the manifestos which validate that Zampieri is a Rosicrucian brother, and not part of another immortal sect. For example, he shows a reluctance to communicate with people, as he seems to have a general disdain for humanity, especially

women. Because of this, St. Leon is the only person of his family who is allowed to talk to Zampieri. To the rest of the family he is invisible, another characteristic of the Rosicrucian order.

Other Rosicrucian references are certain customs that Zampieri clings to, which are similar to some of the six central vows of the Rosicrucians. When Zampieri is recruiting St. Leon as his successor, he requests that he is placed in a nameless grave after his death. St. Leon is the only one allowed to know the location, which is another reference to the *Confessio Fraternitatis*. Looking for a successor before the Rosicrucian passes on is another one of the six central vows that the Rosicrucians have to take, as described in the *Fama Fraternitatis*:

1. Cure the sick for free.
2. Adopt the dress of the land in which they live.
3. Meet every year on day C at the house S. Spiritus, or inform each other why they are absent.
4. Look for a successor.
5. Adopt the word C.R. as their Seal, Mark, and Character.
6. Remain secret for one hundred years (“The Rosicrucian Manifestos” 8).

While the other vows are seemingly ignored by Godwin, the last vow is also voiced by Zampieri; he requests that “what you may hereafter know of me, and that no particular that relates to my history shall be disclosed, till at least one hundred years after my decease” (W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 157).

Similar to St. Leon, Zampieri’s immortality forced him to disassociate himself from humanity to avoid being hunted and persecuted. This means that he has to live in solitude, as there is no mention of other wanderers like him or St. Leon. This solitary existence is a key element in Godwin’s Rosicrucian wanderer as it shows the reader the punishment of evading death through unnatural means. St. Leon will go through similar ordeals in the rest of the narrative. While St. Leon and Zampieri initially seem very different in immortality, these observations suggest that they have a lot in common. For example, while Zampieri is explaining all his secrets, the novel only focuses on the “two principle particulars; the art of multiplying gold, and the power of living for ever” (W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 185). He does not teach St. Leon the secrets of medicine and nature that can aid in healing the sick, which is an important part of the Rosicrucian knowledge, according to the manifestos. It seems that he learned all other knowledge through self-study, and while he shares this knowledge with St. Leon, the latter starts to study various subjects on his own as well, indicating a thirst for

knowledge in both wanderers. The way Zampieri talks to St. Leon also suggests that as an immortal, like St. Leon, he sees himself above humanity, calling St. Leon names such as ‘mortal’ and treating him and his family with contempt, refusing to let St. Leon’s wife and children speak with him, or even see him. His hatred for humanity seems to be a reflection of Satan’s hatred for humanity in *Paradise Lost* as they are still part of God’s, or in the case of Godwin, evolutionary, order, while Satan/Zampieri is forced to live apart from this order. There are also some possible references to the First Fall, as his hatred for women might refer to Eve’s transgression, but this is unlikely because of Godwin’s atheism. It seems that Zampieri is what St. Leon becomes at the end of the novel, namely a misanthropic, lonely immortal, disenchanted with life (W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 158-59, 170).

### **Rosicrucian wanderers in Bulwer-Lytton’s *Zanoni***

Compared to Godwin’s portrayal of the Rosicrucian wanderer, Bulwer-Lytton uses similar conventions to portray a different view of the Rosicrucians. While he uses similar Rosicrucian characteristics and elements to those found in the other Rosicrucian novels, he develops them differently, and focuses more on occult themes. *Zanoni* (1842) is set in Italy and France around 1789, with the events of the novel taking place before and during the French Revolution. The novel “features a Rosicrucian-type hero, from whom the title takes its name, who belongs to a secret and ancient society” (Butler 79). It has an undercurrent of several Gnostic and Hermetic ideas. Similar to some of Bulwer-Lytton’s other works, this novel hinges on several Hegelian notions, such as Hegel’s vision on the ‘Geist’ or spirit, his system of dialectics, and a general discussion of the Real versus the Ideal.<sup>15</sup> Divided into

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<sup>15</sup> ‘Geist,’ or ‘Absolute Spirit,’ is a central concept in Hegel’s works and generally refers to a general consciousness, or thought, a single ‘mind’ common to all men (Solomon 642). In *Zanoni*, this is the source of Zanoni and Mejnour’s esoteric knowledge, and takes the form of a sort of spirit world. Hegelian dialectic consists of three stages of development: a thesis, giving rise to its reaction, an antithesis, which contradicts or negates the thesis, and the synthesis, which resolves tension between the two (Fox 43). In *Zanoni*, thesis is science, antithesis is spiritual state or art, and synthesis refers to a higher spiritual state, which Zanoni reaches through death. The concept of the Real versus the Ideal, or Nature versus Spirit, or objectivity versus subjectivity, is a central idea in Hegel’s philosophy. According to Bulwer-Lytton, the Actual state is the imperfect state that all living beings are in, contemplating life, and the Ideal state is what they should be striving for. A fusion between these two states would allow for the true conquest of death and a higher spiritual state. This Hegelian concept was associated with the Rosicrucians in the nineteenth century, especially with the order of the Golden Dawn. The Rosicrucian symbols of the rose and the cross are often seen as symbols of these states (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 9, 146, 179, 191; Butler 81).

seven parts, the novel predominantly revolves around Zanoni, one of two remaining ancient and immortal members of a pre-Rosicrucian order. To become a member, applicants have to go through an initiation, which is attempted by one of the side characters, Glyndon, in the subplot of the novel. This initiation helps the initiate to achieve a higher spiritual state, which is necessary to enter a world beyond the body, and beyond death itself, which resembles Hegel's 'Geist,' and can only be accessed by the most spiritually advanced (Mitchell 136). However, in order to survive the initiation, the novice is first required to dissociate himself completely from humanity: he has to distance himself not only from society, and familial and friendly bonds, but also from his human emotions and feelings. Glyndon is unable to do this and fails the first step of the initiation, and sets free the Dweller of the Threshold, the personification of the human fear of death. He is forced to leave Mejnour's place and return to human society, but is haunted by the Dweller whenever he strives to spiritually elevate himself, for example through art.

Even the successful members of the order are under constant threat of losing this state of spiritual refinement. When Zanoni gives in to his love for a beautiful opera singer, Viola, he loses his powers, as he is allowing himself to come closer to humanity. However, his powers wane slowly, and in the meantime Viola grows afraid of his still-existing powers and flees with Glyndon and Zanoni's child to France, where she is eventually arrested as a traitor of the Revolution. Zanoni saves her from the guillotine by offering his life for hers, and ensures that his death aids in bringing down Robespierre. However, while Zanoni and Mejnour, the other member of Zanoni's brotherhood, strive to reach a higher spiritual state through their successful initiation and through their studies of science and art, the end of the novel reveals that true spiritual fulfilment can only be reached through death. Zanoni's selfless sacrifice allows him to reach the higher spiritual state he and Mejnour have strived for in all their wandering centuries (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 156; Machin 3; Poston 133).

The Rosicrucian knowledge in *Zanoni* is considerably more extensive than Godwin's limited alchemical knowledge. In Bulwer-Lytton's novel, the knowledge of Zanoni and Mejnour is an accumulation of esoteric ideas and knowledge, part of a large and ancient heritage. Zanoni's quasi-Rosicrucian brotherhood is heir to ancient Chaldean wisdom that predates not only the Rosicrucian brotherhood, but also the elder Pythagoreans and the masterpieces of Apollonius<sup>16</sup> (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 173; Franklin; Machin 3). The following branches of knowledge have been recognized: alchemy, herbalism, the power to

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<sup>16</sup> Apollonius was a Greek Neopythagorean philosopher from the first century, whose main interests were Pythagoreanism, the teachings of Pythagoras and his followers, and Occultism.

command elements, which seems to be based on the Paracelsian idea of the spirit world, natural science (or access to the Book of Nature), doctrines of universal sympathies, doctrines of secret affinities in nature, doctrines of hierarchical planes, astrology, spiritualism, and Agrippa's idea of Natural Magic<sup>17</sup> (J. Godwin 126, 128). In comparison, the Rosicrucian manifestos do not explain a lot about the heritage and knowledge of the Rosicrucian order, except for the source of the knowledge from Eastern wise men. However, the accredited heritage in *Zanoni* corresponds directly with what Julius Sperber claimed and what Michael Maier agreed with, namely that the Rosicrucians inherited an ancient doctrine that, according to them, could be traced back to biblical times. When Glyndon asks Mejnour whether he is a Rosicrucian, Mejnour answers:

Do you imagine, [...] that there were no mystic and solemn unions of men seeking the same end through the same means before the Arabians of Damus, in 1378, taught to a wandering German the secrets which founded the Institution of the Rosicrucians? I allow, however, that the Rosicrucians formed a sect descended from the greater and earlier school. They were wiser than the Alchemists, -their masters are wiser than they. (Bulwer-Lytton 148)

The last two sentences suggest that the Rosicrucian order consists of the descendants of the deceased members or failed initiates of *Zanoni*'s order. The quote also contains a clear reference to the *Fama Fraternitatis*, as the wandering German refers to Christian Rosenkreutz, the founder of the Rosicrucian order according to the *Fama*. Bulwer-Lytton also suggests that the Rosicrucians might not have such extensive knowledge, as this older sect, referred to as the Rosicrucians' masters, are wiser than they are. This is also suggested when it is mentioned that some of the failed apprentices of Mejnour joined the Rosicrucians afterwards, which Glyndon does as well.

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<sup>17</sup> Bulwer-Lytton particularly used Agrippa's angelic hierarchy of ten divine emanations as discussed in the tenth chapter of Agrippa's book on Natural Magic in *De Occulta Philosophia* (Agrippa; Godwin J. 128).

*Zanoni and Mejnour*

The two remaining members of this order, the immortals Mejnour and Zanoni, are firmly established as individuals, and in many ways opposites. They differ in appearance, personality, lifestyle and even in their occult powers. These differences and what they symbolise are central to the novel and indicate Bulwer-Lytton's spiritual beliefs. Bulwer-Lytton uses the two quasi-Rosicrucians to express the "dynamics of art and science, the [Real] and the [I]deal. Zanoni becomes the mouthpiece for Bulwer's idealizing principle, while Mejnour reflects the actuality of scientific empiricism" (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 164, 172). In terms of powers and lifestyle, Mejnour describes his life as "the life that contemplates," while Zanoni's is "the life that enjoys" (Bulwer-Lytton 148). He also reveals that their differences cultivate different faculties, and that "each has powers the other cannot aspire to" (Bulwer-Lytton 148) which is probably why Zanoni continually seeks out Mejnour for advice and help, since Mejnour lives for knowledge. These powers also influence the people they socialize with in different ways: "those with whom [Zanoni] associates live better, - those who associate with [Mejnour] know more" (Bulwer-Lytton 148). The choice that Glyndon eventually has to make emphasizes this influence: Zanoni offers him a good life with Viola, whom Glyndon loves even though he will not act on it, and a peaceful home, which would lead him to the same spiritual elevation through a more natural and enjoyable path than through the scientific path that Mejnour offers (Bulwer-Lytton 109). Their appearance and personality also reflect the symbolism of the Real versus the Ideal. The author describes both immortals as Oriental in appearance. This shows in the description of the darkness of Zanoni's eyes and hair, "peculiarities of his shape, [...] the delicate smallness of the hands, and the Arab-like turn of his stately head" (Bulwer-Lytton 60). Mejnour evidently also originates from an Eastern part of the world, determined by the hues of his face: "so sun burnt and swarthy" (Bulwer-Lytton 117). Their origin, and that of their sect, must thus have been in the East, which is where the Rosicrucian knowledge has its origin according to the manifestos. While Zanoni's dress is not described, Mejnour's is; he is "wrapped from head to foot in a long robe, half-gown, half-mantle, such as was sometimes worn by ecclesiastics" (Bulwer-Lytton 117), emphasizing his identity as part of a brotherhood and detachment from human society, as he dresses like a monk. Zanoni's dress is apparently not worth mentioning which might suggest that he blends in with the environment around him. This aligns with his tendency to adapt to the culture of the country that he resides in at that moment, and it is a reference to the vows that are described in the *Fama*, one of

them stating that the Rosicrucians shall adopt the dress of the land in which they reside (“Rosicrucian Manifestos” 8).

In terms of characteristics, Zanoni is described as a rich stranger, with incredible knowledge about seemingly everything, such as different cultures’ manners, nations, cultures, and languages. However, to the people around him he remains mysterious. This is similar to Mejnour’s characteristics, and seems to be distinctive for their quasi-Rosicrucian sect. This also conforms to the mysteriousness and aloofness that the Rosicrucian order in the manifestos exude, as neither Zanoni and Mejnour, nor the Rosicrucian order ever fully expose themselves and their knowledge to society. The author also describes Zanoni as being enraptured with life and humanity:

They all described Zanoni as a man keenly alive to enjoyment: of manners the reverse of formal, - not precisely gay, but equable, serene, and cheerful; ever ready to listen to the talk of others, however idle, or to charm all ears with an inexhaustible fund of brilliant anecdote and worldly experience. (Bulwer-Lytton 60)

Zanoni is clearly someone who is very sociable and enjoys being among people. The last part of the quote suggests that while he is not as dedicated to attaining practical knowledge as Mejnour is, he is in possession of spiritual, more theoretical, knowledge that has been lost to humanity. Mejnour, in turn, prefers solitude, as he is introduced as a “singular recluse” living in an old building in the middle of a desolation: “In the season of the malaria the native peasant flies the rank vegetation round; but he, a stranger and a foreigner, no associates, no companions, except books and instruments of science” (Bulwer-Lytton 18). The last part of the last sentence confirms Mejnour’s devotion to science, and that his goal is to learn and to know more. The first part of the sentence states that he is insusceptible to the disease malaria, and thus suggests that diseases do not affect him. This is another reference to the manifestos, which states that the members of the Rosicrucian order cannot die of illnesses. A later statement of Mejnour, in a conversation with Glyndon, confirms their immunity to natural causes of death, as he reveals that Mejnour and Zanoni are immune to illnesses and old age, but that they can still be murdered or killed in an accident. The Rosicrucian manifestos state something similar, claiming that the Rosicrucians are unable to live beyond their time appointed by God. The difference between the manifestos and the wanderers in *Zanoni* is that Mejnour and Zanoni cannot die of old age as their spiritual state prevents aging unless they allow themselves to become part of humanity again, while the Rosicrucians in the manifestos



die at a God-appointed time, probably of old age (“Rosicrucian Manifestos” 8; Bulwer-Lytton 149).

Mejnour is set further apart from common students of science by the description that he does not have “the absent brow and incurious air of students”, but instead is described as having “observant piercing eyes that seem to dive into the hearts of the passers-by” (Bulwer-Lytton 18). It shows that he has made the world and its inhabitants his study, and studies them from a distance, actively placing himself outside of it. This might be interpreted as him studying the Book of Nature, or God’s creation, of which he feels exempt. Whereas other Gothic wanderers are forced outside God’s order and lament this, Mejnour chooses, or at least prefers, to stand outside of God’s order, whereas Zanoni still has some role in it, influencing persons and events. Mejnour fully embraces his autonomy from God’s order. Because he views himself as an outsider to the world, he has made himself indifferent to whether his knowledge enlightens or destroys, and is content “to remain the mechanical instrument of a more benevolent will”. He admits that he lives “in knowledge – I have no life in mankind” (Bulwer-Lytton 182). He is further described as “an old man, but not infirm, - erect and stately, as if in his prime.” Like St. Leon, this might refer to his immortality. He looks like someone nearing the end of his life, but still has the power and bearing of a limber young man. Perhaps even more than with Zanoni, an air of mystery surrounds him: “None know whether he be [sic] rich or poor. He asks no charity, and he gives none, -he does no evil, and seems to confer no good. He is a man who appears to have no world beyond himself” (Bulwer-Lytton 182). This further confirms that he is detached from humanity and the world. However, the narrator continues, “appearances are deceitful, and Science, as well as Benevolence, lives in the Universe.” This seems to suggest that while Mejnour does his best to detach himself from nature, he will always remain an integral part of it, like science. This in turn suggests that the Rosicrucian wanderer in Bulwer-Lytton’s vision is not exempt from God’s order, but is a tool to improve it.

These two characters symbolize two possible ways of achieving spiritual fulfilment: through art, the Ideal, or through science, the Real. Zanoni is an “Adonian<sup>18</sup> figure whose perpetual youth and beauty makes him an eternal symbol of art” while Mejnour appears as an old man, “of a Saturnian<sup>19</sup> disposition, living a contemplative life marked by philosophical

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<sup>18</sup> Adonian refers to the Greek God Adonis, who was renowned for his exceptional beauty. This term suggests that Zanoni is very handsome.

<sup>19</sup> Saturnian refers to the astrological influence of the planet Saturn on one’s disposition, and suggests that Mejnour is a melancholic or sullen man, with a tendency to be bitter, paranoid, or sardonic.

reflection” (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 172). Mejnour is stuck in his perpetual immortality, as he has become a restricted being unable to gather enough empathy or sympathy to care for another and redeem himself in the eyes of God. According to Roberts, the one-sidedness of Mejnour, which was also the error of the revolutionaries of the French Revolution during which *Zanoni* takes place, is the antithesis of the Rosicrucian ideal portrayed in *Zanoni*. By focusing on absolute Freedom, or in Mejnour’s case, science, they remove, in Hegelian terms, the antithesis between the universal and individual will. With this dismissal, Bulwer states, they cut themselves off from genuine sources of inspiration and cut off their paths to a higher spiritual state (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 180; J. Godwin 125). *Zanoni* achieves the true conquest of death, entering into a realm of absolute spirit through the assimilation of the Real and the Ideal (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 8-9). By forfeiting his life for another, *Zanoni* attains the true ideal of a higher spiritual state. However, that is not to say that Bulwer-Lytton disapproves of science and knowledge; by appointing another immortal as its symbol, he suggests that science is an important factor in achieving spiritual fulfilment and in the ascent to Heaven. *Zanoni* explains:

There are two avenues from the little passions and the drear calamities of earth; both lead to heaven and away from hell, -art and science. But art is more godlike than science; science discovers, art creates. [...] The astronomer who catalogues the stars cannot add one atom to the universe; the poet can call a universe from the atom; the chemist may heal with his drugs the infirmities of the human form; the painter, or the sculptor, fixes into everlasting youth forms divine, which no disease can ravage, and no years impair. [...] Your pencil is our wand; your canvas may raise Utopias fairer than Condorcet dreams of. (Bulwer-Lytton 65-66)

With this speech, he tries to convince Glyndon to choose the path of art, and be content with his life, which is another form of spiritual fulfilment that can never be achieved if Glyndon pursues Mejnour and *Zanoni*’s knowledge and secrets through science and alchemy. At the end of the novel, when *Zanoni* has found his peace and is preparing to die, he visits Mejnour in spirit. He observes the man, describing him as a “mechanical agent of a more tender and a wise will, that guides every spring to its inscrutable designs” (Bulwer-Lytton 273), a Faust-like being who creates out of necessity, but without a purpose. He foresees Mejnour living forever in the same state, uncaring how his discoveries change the world. *Zanoni* bids farewell to Mejnour: “I go where the souls of those for whom I resign the clay shall be my

co-mates through eternal youth. At last I recognize the true ordeal and the real victory.” He then urges Mejnour to “cast down thy elixir; lay by thy load of years! Wherever the soul can wander, the Eternal Soul of all things protects it still!” (Bulwer-Lytton 274). In death, the soul is freed from the bindings of mortality, as opposed to the mortal immortality that the Rosicrucian wanderers enjoy.

### *Clarence Glyndon*

While Zanoni is the main character, the novel also contains a subplot revolving around the Englishman Clarence Glyndon. According to Machin, this subplot is essentially a bildungsroman, relating to Glyndon’s spiritual and occult education under Mejnour and the consequences of failing the initiation test Mejnour set for him (3). The test involves facing the Dweller of the Threshold, a spirit symbolizing the human fear of death, and when Glyndon faces it unprepared and fails, the spirit is able to haunt him and stop him from reaching his full potential as an artist. Glyndon is introduced to the story as a young gentleman with a moderate fortune. His appearance is not described, but his personality is discussed at length. His nearest family relation is a much younger sister, who makes an appearance later in the story. He is a good painter and commits himself to the profession of an artist to pass his time. His friends consider him as someone who possesses “no inconsiderable genius, but [is] of a rash and presumptuous order” (Bulwer-Lytton 42). He does not like continuous labour, and prefers to reap the benefits rather than do all the work himself. Like other artists, he is impulsive, seeking pleasure and excitement across Europe. While he set out to travel Europe to study other artists and their works, “pleasure had too often allured him from ambition, and living beauty distracted his worship from the senseless canvas” (Bulwer-Lytton 42). This distraction will prove important later, when he becomes apprenticed to Mejnour. Bulwer-Lytton ends his description of Glyndon’s personality with a summary: “Brave, adventurous, vain, restless, inquisitive, he was ever involved in wild projects and pleasant danger, - the creature of impulse and the slave of imagination” (Bulwer-Lytton 42). This description already foreshadows that he is likely to start new projects without thinking about the consequences, such as attempting to elevate himself to a nobler form of life, similar to the life of Zanoni. He is ambitious, but is likely to get distracted by the pleasures of life, which will result in Glyndon abandoning his ambitions and goals.

When Glyndon tells Zanoni of his aspiration to become like him, and asks him to reveal his secrets, Zanoni tells his secrets reluctantly. Zanoni reveals that he is required to tell them as he is bound to aid Glyndon because one of Glyndon’s ancestors also went through the

initiation of the brotherhood, but failed. While both Zanoni and Mejnour mentioned previous attempts at initiating new members into their society, Zanoni also adds that none have been able to pass the strict tests Mejnour set for initiates, and often the student died as a result. Because of this high death rate of the initiation, Zanoni pleads to Mejnour to change the tests as humanity has changed and the initiates can no longer adapt to the demands of the initiation (Bulwer-Lytton 122). For those who survived, Zanoni and Mejnour are “pledged to warn, to aid, and to guide even the remotest descendants of men who have toiled, though vainly, [...] in the mysteries of the order. We are bound to advise them as our pupils” (Bulwer-Lytton 88), according to the laws of their order. When Glyndon learns of this, he orders Zanoni to receive him as his pupil. Zanoni refuses however, and explains the conditions to him:

No [initiate] must have, at his initiation, one affection or desire that chains him to the world. He must be pure from the love of woman, free from avarice and ambition, free from the dreams even of art, or the hope of earthly fame. The first sacrifice thou must make is – Viola herself. And for what? For an ordeal that the most daring courage only can encounter, the most ethereal natures alone survive! Thou art unfit for the science that has made me and others what we are or have been; for thy whole nature is on fear! (Bulwer-Lytton 88-89)

He clearly believes that Glyndon will be unable to pass the initiation, and that it would be foolish to give up Viola and possibly his life in exchange for the attempt. However, due to the promise to aid all descendants of previous initiates, Zanoni cannot refuse him, and instead gives Glyndon time to reconsider. Glyndon, however, does not. His love for Viola, while real, is not approved of by English society, as she is beneath him in social status. His career as a painter is also frowned upon. He is afraid of what people might think if he chooses these two over knowledge and success, and is determined to become like Zanoni, who is unaffected by the expectations of society. Glyndon cares more for the material prosperity that the secrets can bring than he does for their spiritual wealth, which he is supposed to prefer. If he cared about his spiritual prosperity, he would choose Viola, as she is someone who could instigate this in him, as Zanoni knows very well. As a last bid, Zanoni offers him money, power, and fame to save him from failure and possible death, yet Glyndon chooses knowledge, and, he says to Zanoni, “that knowledge must be thine own. For this, and for this alone, I surrendered the love of Viola; this and this alone, must be my recompense” (Bulwer-Lytton 134). Having made his decision to become Mejnour’s apprentice, he asks him whether Viola will be safe

with Zanoni. Mejnour does not answer him, but instead tells him to forget about her, because his first task is “to withdraw all thought, feeling, sympathy from others” (Bulwer-Lytton 135) and focus entirely on the self. To aid Glyndon in detaching himself from humanity, Mejnour moves him to a remote castle, and takes long walks with him while talking about lighter topics of study. He draws Glyndon in, until he is able to focus entirely on his studies and research. As his mind “became more and more lulled into the divine tranquillity of contemplation,”<sup>20</sup> Glyndon “felt himself a nobler being, and in the silence of his senses he imagined that he heard the voice of his soul” (Bulwer-Lytton 147). This is the spiritual state that he needed to reach. Gradually, Glyndon forgets the outside world and he advances quickly in his studies.

After some progress, Mejnour announces that Glyndon is almost ready for the first initiation stage, which is the confrontation with the personification of the human fear of death, the terrible Dweller of the Threshold. Before this, however, Mejnour will give him a final test to see if he is prepared and worthy for the initiation. He tells Glyndon to continue his work, and prepare his mind by “contemplation and austere thought for the ordeal” (Bulwer-Lytton 159). Mejnour leaves for one month, during which Glyndon must finish his tasks but is not allowed in the room in which they experiment. However, when Glyndon finishes his work in less than two weeks, he becomes restless and his mind starts to wander. His curious and rash nature, which he has successfully repressed with hard work and study, resurfaces, and it becomes harder to resist the thought of entering the forbidden chamber and performing the initiation ritual himself. He starts to believe that Mejnour’s warning not to enter the chamber under any circumstances was belittling and unnecessary. On one of his walks, which he undertakes to avoid the temptation of the forbidden room, he comes across a festival held by the peasants of that district. Here he remembers his age, his past life, when “to live was but to enjoy” (Bulwer-Lytton 160). During the festivities, he meets Fillide, a beautiful young girl who ultimately causes him to fail the initiation, and lures him back to human society. This is what Bulwer-Lytton perceives as the Second Fall.

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<sup>20</sup> Note that ‘contemplation’ is a feature belonging to Mejnour, which means that Zanoni would have had a different approach to teaching Glyndon, namely through art and enjoyment instead of science and contemplation.

*Viola and Fillide*

Bulwer-Lytton uses two women as a link to humanity, as the causes of Zanoni's change and Glyndon's fall. Viola leads Zanoni to a higher spiritual state, while Fillide ensures Glyndon's Fall, his inability to enlighten himself. Viola is an opera singer who grew up surrounded by music, as her father was a passionate composer who lived for his music. She represents ideal beauty and instinct. Instinctually, through her love for and utter immersion in music, Viola is able to achieve a higher spiritual state, like Zanoni and Mejnour. Therefore, she is depicted as the ideal form of humanity, completely in tune with a higher spiritual state, without the need to give up her humanity. This instinctual acceptance of a higher spiritual state is what draws Zanoni to her. To Zanoni, she represents the balance between the Real and the Ideal, as someone who lives on the stage: "between two lives, the Real and Ideal, dwells the life of music and the stage" (Bulwer-Lytton 239). Viola's role as the ideal human in tune with a higher spiritual state is what ultimately leads Zanoni to the higher spiritual state achieved through death. However, Glyndon cannot accept her because of his concern for what the rest of society would think, since "what men respect is the practical, not the ideal" (Bulwer-Lytton 98). This material concern to be accepted in society is ultimately one of the reasons why he fails the initiation (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 164; Franklin).

Fillide, on the other hand, aids in the decline of Glyndon's spiritual growth. She is described as a fiery and jealous young Italian girl, and personifies the materialism of humanity and a destructive, sinful love, or lust. She seduces Glyndon away from his chance for spiritual elevation and convinces him to give up his ambitions for "frivolity and pleasure-seeking" (Poston 157). Where Viola is the Ideal, in tune with her spirituality, Fillide rejects any possibility of a higher spiritual state. She takes after Satan in *Paradise Lost*, rejecting and denying a higher spiritual 'authority,' so to speak, by embracing the transgressions of humanity. She is the epitome of humanity after the original sin: a transgressive, materialistic girl, who is out of tune with nature and a higher being. Her nature ensures that in her presence, Glyndon will never be able to achieve the balance between the Ideal and the Real, but will remain firmly in the Real. Tellingly, when Glyndon is with Viola, he often sees the Dweller, scaring him away from nobler pursuits, but with Fillide it is absent, as she is doing its work of ensuring that Glyndon will never achieve a union between the Real and the Ideal.

## Conclusion

Describing and analyzing these Rosicrucian characters already shows that, while there is an encompassing overall concept of the Rosicrucian wanderer and Rosicrucian elements such as immortality and the secret and forbidden knowledge, Godwin and Bulwer-Lytton both use this concept and these elements to portray nearly opposing views of the Rosicrucian order. Godwin suggests that the Rosicrucian wanderer is removed from society because of his pursuit of unnatural secret knowledge that includes the secret of longevity. Bulwer-Lytton, however, focuses on more spiritual topics and claims that removing oneself from one's humanity and from human society is necessary to access a general consciousness, attained by an extensive range of esoteric and scientific knowledge acquired through the study of nature, which allows the immortal to access knowledge that is lost to humanity. Ultimately, however, both authors agree that true spiritual fulfilment can only be achieved through death, because it is part of evolution, or because it allows the wanderer to become part of the general consciousness. Godwin's wanderer laments his solitary immortality and wishes to become part of society again, and Bulwer-Lytton's protagonist ascends to a higher spiritual plane through selfless sacrifice, while the failed adept is haunted by a manifestation of his own human fears because of his selfishness.

In this chapter, the Rosicrucian wanderers in *Zanoni* and *St. Leon* were analyzed and discussed in relation to the Rosicrucian myth and their authors' use for them regarding contemporary political, social, and in Bulwer-Lytton's case, spiritual concerns. The next chapter will use these discussions of the Rosicrucian wanderers to compare Bulwer-Lytton and Godwin's uses of the Rosicrucian elements associated with the Rosicrucian novel as was established in the previous chapters, meaning the concepts of immortality, Rosicrucian forbidden knowledge, the disassociation from humanity, and the Second Fall.

## 5. Rosicrucianism in *St. Leon* and *Zanoni*

In the previous chapter, we analysed Godwin's and Bulwer-Lytton's Rosicrucian wanderers in more detail. It became clear that the two authors depict the wanderer significantly different. Godwin suggests that the Rosicrucian wanderer is removed from society because of his pursuit of unnatural secret knowledge that includes the secret of longevity. Bulwer-Lytton, however, claims that removing oneself from one's humanity and from human society is necessary to have access to a higher spiritual state, which allows the immortal to access knowledge that is lost to humanity. However, we noticed that both authors agreed that true spiritual fulfilment can only be achieved through death, in Godwin's case because it is part of evolution, and in Bulwer-Lytton's case because it allows the wanderer to become part of a higher spiritual plane.

While there are some significant differences in Bulwer-Lytton's and Godwin's wanderers, the two authors generally make use of the same Rosicrucian elements, inherent to the Rosicrucian wanderer. In this chapter, we discuss and compare the authors' use of these elements, namely, the concepts of immortality, forbidden knowledge, the dissociation from humanity, and the Second Fall.

### **Immortality**

The claim of the manifestos that the Rosicrucian order held the secret of immortality became one of the most popular and important characteristics of the Rosicrucian myth that shaped the Rosicrucian novel. Consequently, the two key characteristics of the Rosicrucian wanderer are, firstly his extended or immortal life, and secondly the forbidden knowledge usually used as a tool to obtain immortality. Depending on the methods used to evade death, the wanderer's extended life can be referred to as longevity or immortality. The term longevity is used when the wanderer can still become old and die when he is unable to, or refuses to, take the elixir of life, as in *St. Leon*. The term immortality is used when the wanderer is forever protected against old age and illnesses after administering the elixir, as in *Zanoni*. The theme of the elixir of life was attractive to the authors of the Rosicrucian novels because it was flexible enough to use in discussions and portrayals of different thoughts. The common accord among the authors of the Rosicrucian novel was that the wanderer seeks and acquires the supernatural existence of eternal life himself, which differs from the other Gothic immortals. Other Gothic immortals, such as the vampire or the wandering Jew, are often cursed or forced to become immortal. In the Rosicrucian's case, he achieves immortality or



longevity through the forbidden knowledge associated with the order. Because the Rosicrucian wanderer achieves immortality to become autonomous from a higher authority, which the other Rosicrucian authors perceived as rebelling against God's order, the wanderer detaches himself, in a sense, from humanity, and is forced to wander eternally as an outcast from humanity, and from God's order. However, Godwin and Bulwer-Lytton interpret this detachment and its causes differently (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 9).

*Immortality according to Godwin and Bulwer-Lytton*

In *St. Leon*, the wanderer realizes quickly that his newfound knowledge of turning base metal to gold and the elixir of life detaches him from humanity. Godwin's concept of immortality greatly influenced the rest of the Rosicrucian authors and similar concepts of immortality can be identified in their works. While *St. Leon* reflects Godwin's atheism and ideals of equality outside a Christian context, later Rosicrucian novels, such as *St. Irvyne*, the short story "The Mortal Immortal," and *Melmoth the Wanderer*, portray the wanderer as someone who wants to achieve immortality for selfish reasons as well, but specifically to become autonomous and free from God's order. In all these texts, the 'secret' cannot be shared, and hence it isolates the wanderer: "the protagonist is either forced into outright deception to maintain some social role, or [is] driven to society's fringes" (Poston 145). However, Bulwer-Lytton rejects the earlier depiction in other Rosicrucian novels of the Rosicrucian wanderer as a being who wants to become free from God's order through immortality. While *Zanoni* does contain a side plot around the failed adept Glyndon, who falls, in a sense, back to humanity instead of becoming an outcast like the other Rosicrucian wanderers, the novel mainly revolves around the successful, spiritually elevated master Zanoni, who uses his knowledge to aid humanity and eventually reaches the higher spiritual state through death.

While both authors approach the concept of immortality in radically different ways, as Godwin focuses on the failed Rosicrucian adept, and Bulwer-Lytton focuses mainly on the successful master, ultimately they both agree that immortality is not part of human nature, and thus the immortal becomes something that only exists on the fringes of human society. As a result, the Rosicrucian wanderers become disillusioned with their acquired immortality in both Godwin's and Bulwer-Lytton's novels. While Bulwer-Lytton depicts wanderers who are content with their mostly solitary eternity, he, as well as the other Rosicrucian authors, shows in his novel that true spiritual fulfilment can only be achieved through death, no matter how close you are to it in life. He shows this with Zanoni's sacrifice, Viola's composition and unwillingness to become immortal like Zanoni and Mejnour, and emphasizes it with

Mejnour's complete detachment from his humanity and therefore his inability to reach the spiritual fulfilment that Zanoni achieves through death. In comparison, when St. Leon realizes that he is no longer part of humanity, he feels that all social bonds have lost their significance, including those with his family (W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 186, 188). In his attempts to reforge those bonds, he comes to realize that happiness exists in human relationships and that spiritual fulfilment is impossible without them. Because of the lack of these bonds, the elixir of life transmutes into the *taedium vitae*, and he starts to tire of his life. In his attempt to establish some form of social connection, St. Leon resolves to use his wealth and longevity to aid humanity in any way he can and to reform the world, like a god, in the hope to gain the love and gratitude of those he helped:

I resolved to pour the entire stream of my riches, like a mighty river, to fertilise these wasted plains, and revive their fainting inhabitants. Thus proceeding, should I not have a right to expect to find myself guarded by the faithful love of a people who would be indebted to my beneficence for every breath they drew? This was the proper scene in which for the possessor of the philosopher's stone to take up his abode. (W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 360)

The wording of this passage, especially the first sentence, suggests that he envisions himself as a god, fertilizing and reviving the sick and the dying. What St. Leon perceives as benevolence is clearly a pretentious and selfish way to ensure people's love for him. He does not care for the restoration of humanity, but is merely interested in what humanity can offer him, as a human god. St. Leon's continued concern for his own happiness and his tendency to only help others when it will benefit him is a continuation of his act against the laws that govern society and nature, and thus it results in further ostracization from humanity and more desperate attempts to rectify this. His hankering to find a higher purpose for his existence and become part of human society again as an elevated being, is a typical Rosicrucian wanderer's desire to restore what has been lost, and mirrors Satan's quest to find a purpose for his existence and attempts to become part of God's order again by becoming equal to God. "Cast down into a vortex of loneliness and guilt, [the Rosicrucian wanderer is] compelled to wander peripatetically in search of spiritual fulfilment" (Roberts, "Mary Shelley" 61).

However, in *Zanoni*, Bulwer-Lytton rejects the earlier Rosicrucian novel theme of the Rosicrucian as transgressive wanderer in favour of a tale inspired by his own occult interests and knowledge of the Rosicrucian myth (Tichelaar 267-68). He completely disregards the

wanderer's need to become part of society again. By making isolation from humanity a requisite of becoming a Rosicrucian wanderer, the potential wanderer enters willingly, and entirely aware of what he has to relinquish, into the initiation that will grant him immortality and access to a spiritual plane of existence through which the wanderer can learn lost knowledge and abilities. These abilities, such as divination, visions, communicating with spirits, and the power to influence others, are beyond the reach of the common humans who give in to their basic urges. Detachment from humanity is therefore considered a necessary part of the initiation, so that the initiate casts off his human fears and sins, and reaches an elevated spiritual state, which allows the initiate to complete the initiation rituals necessary to become part of the quasi-Rosicrucian brotherhood. As exemplified by Glyndon, the initiate will not be able to complete the initiation if he is unable to give up his humanity. In addition, as exemplified by Zaroni, when the members of the brotherhood rediscover their humanity by forming a close social relationship with a human, usually romantically or sexually, this connection to a higher spiritual world is lost and they are unable to use their abilities to full capacity. By having initiates of the quasi-Rosicrucian brotherhood in *Zaroni* go through difficult and dangerous tests in which they have to prove their worth, Bulwer-Lytton turns the Rosicrucian wanderer into a positive representation of the Rosicrucian order, and portrays the Rosicrucian as a link between a higher spiritual world and the physical world through esoteric and ultimately scientific knowledge. In addition, by testing the pursuer of the Rosicrucian secrets on whether he would be able to use the knowledge wisely, and by assigning to them the ability to commune with a higher spiritual being, Bulwer-Lytton transformed the Rosicrucian wanderer from a figure of transgression to one of spiritual redemption. He portrays the Rosicrucian as someone who was chosen and trained to ascend to a spiritual state closer to a higher spiritual consciousness, instead of someone who managed to gain this knowledge without such pre-selection.

### **Rosicrucian Knowledge**

The Rosicrucian wanderers obtain immortality or longevity through secret or forbidden knowledge. This Rosicrucian knowledge is the second key characteristic of the Rosicrucian novel and a popular theme in Gothic literature, as the Gothic considered this type of knowledge a threat to social order. In most of the novels, this knowledge is limited to transmuting metal and the elixir of life, as in *St. Leon*, but Bulwer-Lytton provides the reader with a more detailed and broad range of scientific and esoteric information, as has been discussed in chapter four. In the Rosicrucian novel, these Rosicrucian secrets are usually

acquired from a source that has some similarities with the Rosicrucian order described in the manifestos. In *St. Leon*, this source is the Rosicrucian-type monk Zampieri, and in *Zanoni*, the knowledge is gained through the initiation rituals of a Rosicrucian-like brotherhood. The immortality obtained through the elixir of life gives the Rosicrucian wanderer more time to manipulate events or people toward his purpose (Tichelaar 12). In *St. Leon*, the elixir of life takes the straightforward form of a potion, while in *Zanoni* it is an ointment, and merely one of the elements within a larger ritual to initiate an adept into the quasi-Rosicrucian brotherhood that *Zanoni* and Mejnour belong to. This ritual allows the initiate to face his fear of death on a spiritual level, and creates the opportunity to face and overcome this fear and open his mind and spirit to a world that exists apart from the known earthly one. It requires preparation by devoting oneself to study and self-reflection. Bulwer-Lytton does not use the concept of transmuting metal in his novel, although his wanderers do not seem to have difficulty maintaining appearances and estates, but in *St. Leon* it has a central role. It is not specified how St. Leon is able to multiply gold, but it is clear that it has a huge impact on St. Leon's life and his priorities. Other Rosicrucian novels also use transmuting metal as a source of income for the wanderer. Transmuting metal allows the wanderer to create wealth, which is used to sustain his immortal lifestyle, negating the common human necessity for work to survive, and granting him power over nations' economies.

#### *Godwin's Rosicrucian Knowledge*

The Rosicrucian manifestos describe that the transmutation of gold is something on which the Rosicrucian order looks down. However, due to the increased importance of this form of alchemy in relation to the Rosicrucian myth, Godwin employs the hermetic imagery of transmutation to symbolize material prosperity and greed (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 41). In both instances, this material alchemy is merely symbolic of the spiritual transmutation that purifies the Rosicrucian adept on his way to mystical enlightenment. After giving up his gambling habits in favour of his wife and later his family, St. Leon seems to live a content and selfless life. However, when he learns how to transmute gold, his greed and selfishness resurface and his social relationships suffer for it. His son leaves him, and his wife eventually dies of grief over the loss of her son and the change in her husband. During their use of the Rosicrucian secrets, both Zampieri and St. Leon discover that alchemy feeds their greed, in terms of wealth and alchemical or occult knowledge, and poisons any nobler or wholesome feeling or thought they might have had. Even though he loses interest in making gold, St. Leon gives in to other alchemical pursuits to satisfy his greed. When he moves with his

family to a small village in Italy, he starts to dedicate his free time “to chemistry and the operations of natural magic” (W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 266). As mentioned before, Godwin disapproved of alchemical or occult scientific knowledge, such as the elixir of life. While he was fascinated with this elixir, Godwin generally regarded such magical medicines as dangerous illusions of power. This sentiment is also reflected in his work *Lives of the Necromancers*, in which a chapter is devoted to the Rosicrucian spirit world.<sup>21</sup> The reason he wrote this work is that he wanted “to exhibit a fair delineation of the credulity of the human mind. Such an exhibition cannot fail to be productive of the most salutary lessons” (W. Godwin, *Lives of the Necromancers*, preface; Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 34). In this work, he argued that omnipotence would feed the power-seeker’s irrational tendencies. He believed that magic acts as an agent of radical change, which indicated spiritual and moral decay, and occult experimenting acts as the glorification of human irrationality. He wanted to survey how those who believed they had supernatural powers must have felt superhuman. In *St. Leon*, he appoints supernatural powers to an imaginary individual, St. Leon, to portray his belief that it was inevitable that such an individual would abuse these powers of nature as magic itself moves in the unnatural (Poston 136-37; Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 35-36). This is exemplified in not only the consequences of St. Leon’s Faustian bargain for immortality, but also in the further consequences of his experimentations in an Italian village. He is irredeemably tainted because Godwin believed that, according to Poston, “Faustian bargains, like medical quackery parading as direct access to the spirit world, short-circuit not only the working of divine Providence but those of science itself” (138). St. Leon’s irrationality in experimenting with occult and alchemical powers becomes more apparent when he tries to impress his servant with his experiments. As a result, rumours spread through the village that St. Leon is an evil magician, and eventually St. Leon and his family have to flee to prevent being attacked. His alchemical obsession has accelerated his spiritual deterioration and he becomes the epitome of the transgressive Rosicrucian wanderer in search of spiritual fulfilment in all the wrong places (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 41).

Godwin’s fascination with immortality and the possibility of an elixir of life contrasts with his belief that these were unattainable, or should not be attained, through scientific means. As a result, Godwin’s concept of the elixir of life collaborates with the theme of spiritual deterioration through the pursuit of alchemy and material possessions. While he does not give a specific description on how to make the potion, some descriptions hint at its

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<sup>21</sup> The content of this chapter is based on an earlier Rosicrucian work *Le Comte de Gabalis* by Villars and Pope’s epic poem “The Rape of the Lock”.

alchemical creation. It seems easy to make, as it has “certain medical ingredients” (W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 340) that St. Leon’s host is able to gather in one night. In addition, St. Leon is able to make the potion at night while he seems to be dying, old and weakened from his imprisonment by the Spanish Inquisition, so it should not be very difficult to prepare, especially for someone who has some experience with alchemy (W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 342-44). The potion does not stop aging or death, but gives the drinker his youth back. Presumably, as this is a rejuvenating potion, it has to be made and taken every few decades to undo the changes of the aging body and mind. That would mean that this potion postpones death, not evades it altogether. The fact that St. Leon feels younger and revived immediately after drinking the potion suggests that it rejuvenates the drinker’s spirit as well as the body. He feels invigorated and energized after a short, restful sleep induced by the potion (W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 343). Not only does he feel like a twenty-year old, but he also looks like one. When looking in the mirror, he notices that he looks as he did on the day that he married his wife Marguerite. Drinking the potion also solidifies the sense that he no longer belongs to the human race. While he knew that he was immortal before, he still felt human, as he still maintained ties to society through his family. After drinking the potion, realization finally sets in that human society is lost to him:

I can no longer cheat my fancy [sic]; I know that I am alone. The creature does not exist with whom I have any common language, or any genuine sympathies. Society is a bitter and galling mockery to my heart; it only shows in more glaring colours my desolate condition. The nearer I attempt to draw any of the nominal ties of our nature, the more they start and shrink from my grasp. (W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 349)

This passage also shows that he was in denial about the inability to remain part of human society. Now he is finally forced to accept that he is immortal and that all social ties with humanity are broken and cannot be repaired without revealing his immortality. According to St. Leon: “[t]here was a greater distance between me and the best constructed and most consummate of the human species, than there is between him and an ant or mus[qu]ito” (W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 349). Apart from the alienation from humanity, this also shows that he now considers himself as a being that stands above humanity, like a god. This distance that he feels also makes him fully realize how alone he is. With this, Leon exemplifies the failed Rosicrucian adept, who is unable to let go of material prosperity and as a result experiences a spiritual deterioration that can only be resolved by undoing his changes through death.

*Bulwer-Lytton's Rosicrucian Knowledge*

Similar to Godwin, Bulwer-Lytton discusses the concept of gaining immortality through scientific or alchemical means and the consequences for the spiritual state of the immortal. When compared to the selfish St. Leon, who discovers immortality is a curse, “Zanoni and Mejnour are types of Supermen who embody the virtues to which all people should aspire” (Tichelaar 267). For them, immortality is “the art of medicine rightly understood” (Bulwer-Lytton 149). Zanoni attributes his immortality, gift of prophecy and medical successes to his extensive understanding of herbs (Bulwer-Lytton 44, 76-77). This suggests that herb-lore is at the core of their esoteric powers and knowledge. In fact, throughout the novel, magic is closely connected with science, as herbal drugs “combine a medical, scientific, and natural discourse as the power of nature is harnessed and manipulated by herbalist knowledge” (Webb 62). Presumably, with this emphasis on natural science, Bulwer-Lytton uses the concept of the Book of Nature as the basis for the Rosicrucian knowledge in *Zanoni*. With this, Bulwer-Lytton portrays how supernatural events can be explained in rational terms because to him supernatural or spiritual events are too important not to have a scientific basis, while science is too important to ignore and thus has to be used to explain spiritual events (Franklin). According to Webb: “[Bulwer-Lytton’s] words emphasise the folly of astrologers and those who search beyond earthly elements for power” (62). While Godwin would agree with him to some extent, believing that evolution would be the key to immortality, he does not associate the possibility of immortality with God, as Bulwer-Lytton does. Bulwer-Lytton uses spiritual and Christian themes and concepts to depict the Rosicrucians in a positive light, instead of a negative one, as most of the other Rosicrucian authors did. He disagreed with the Gothic portrayals of the Rosicrucian as a transgressor against God and used *Zanoni* to explain the true tenets of Rosicrucianism, which, in his view, acknowledge the existence and importance of God, a higher spiritual authority. He lets Zanoni explain: “Knowledge and atheism are incompatible. To know nature is to know that there must be a God!” (Bulwer-Lytton 136). The members of Zanoni’s quasi-Rosicrucian brotherhood can be considered Christians in practice and belief, partly because of their contact with the supernatural and their immortality (Tichelaar 266). Because of their belief in God and their use of the Book of Nature for a higher purpose, their immortality is established not as a curse, but as a gift, gained through relinquishing human instincts, needs, and fears, to reach a higher spiritual state and to devote their lives to aid humanity in its evolution.

To determine whether they are worthy, candidates for Zanoni and Mejnour’s brotherhood have to go through a difficult initiation. Glyndon wishes to join them in

immortality, and eventually Mejnour allows him to be tutored. In order to prepare for the initiation, Mejnour instructs Glyndon to remove himself from human society and his own humanity, as he claims that: “The elementary stage of knowledge is to make self, and self alone, thy study and thy world. (...) To perfect thy faculties, and concentrate thy emotions, is henceforth thy only aim” (Bulwer-Lytton 135). To help Glyndon reach the right state of mind, he starts with educating his new pupil on lighter topics, such as the various groups of people in the world, “their characters, habits, creeds, and manners” (Bulwer-Lytton 146-47), and the “more durable and the loftier mysteries of Nature” (Bulwer-Lytton 147). With this, Mejnour is able to aid Glyndon in the state of mind needed to start the first elementary stage. When Glyndon’s mind is “lulled into the divine tranquillity of contemplation,” (Bulwer-Lytton 147) he is ready for the next stage, that of contemplation and imagination. Mejnour teaches Glyndon, among other things, the philosophies of those whom he calls the worst of the glorious deceived, “Hermes, and Albert, and Paracelsus” (Bulwer-Lytton 154), in addition to unrecorded esoteric knowledge such as Pythagorean numerology and the chemistry of heat, which is the agent for renewal (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 176). The origin of Mejnour’s brotherhood and that of the Rosicrucians is also discussed during one of these conversations as well as the usefulness and potency of herbs. After this, they move to the stage of trance. Glyndon is brought into a trance and experiences what might be described as an out of body experience, and he has his first vision:

And at last, in the midst of a silver shining atmosphere, he felt as if something burst within his brain, -as if a strong chain were broken; and at that moment a sense of heavenly liberty, of unutterable delight, of freedom from the body, of birdlike lightness, seemed to float him into the space itself. (Bulwer-Lytton 152)

Temporarily freed from his mortal body, he feels true freedom. Because he has been successful in leaving behind his mortal possessions, including his body, Mejnour deems him almost ready for the first initiation test, namely the confrontation with the Dweller of the Threshold, the personification of the human fear of death. To ensure Glyndon is ready for this, Mejnour subjects him to a small test of patience, which he fails when he attempts the ritual necessary to see the Dweller without the permission and presence of Mejnour. This is done in a special, secluded chamber (available in each of the houses that Zanoni and Mejnour own) which is used for alchemical and occult rituals and experimentation. The ritual starts by lighting nine lamps, since “in the lamps of Rosicrucians the fire is the pure elementary



principle... the light attracts towards thee those beings whose life is that light” (Bulwer-Lytton 163). When lit, the light from the lamps grows soft and dim and spreads like a mist over the room, instilling a death-like coldness in the persons in the room. Next, a crystal vial has to be opened, which contains, presumably, the elixir of life, as it sparks a sensation of vigour, youth, joy, and airy lightness. Its “spirit” (Bulwer-Lytton 167), its smell or vapour, has to be inhaled, and the elixir, which is a sort of ointment, has to be rubbed on the temples. When this is done, the mist in the room starts to resemble a snow-cloud, in which shapes can be distinguished, some resembling human form. Eventually the Dweller will reveal itself and the confrontation begins. According to Mejnour, this is merely the first initiation stage that has to be taken to become part of the brotherhood, and a simplified one at that, as previous initiates have all died. However, other stages are not explained, as Glyndon fails the test of patience, confronts the Dweller alone, and nearly dies in the process. Glyndon resembles St. Leon in the sense that he is also a failed adept, greedy to attain immortality. Because he pursues it for selfish reasons, he fails where others have succeeded. This is Bulwer-Lytton’s treatment of the Second Fall, which, in this instant resembles Godwin’s portrayal of the theme. However, Zanoni goes through a similar, yet vastly different experience, when he falls in love with Viola.

### **The Second Fall**

The Second Fall is one of the main recurring themes in the Rosicrucian novel. When we look at the Rosicrucian immortality and knowledge, we notice that many ideas and elements we discussed earlier tie in with either the causes or the consequences of the fall. The two characteristics discussed so far are the catalysts for the fall of the Rosicrucian wanderer. The wanderer is alienated from society and loses any kind of spiritual fulfilment he might have found. However, in each novel, this fall is interpreted differently, and Bulwer-Lytton’s novel discusses similar themes, but from different angles.

#### *Godwin’s Depiction of the Second Fall*

Godwin’s character St. Leon can be seen as the prime example of the transgressive wanderer who experiences a Second Fall, since it served as an inspiration for the rest of the novels. The other Rosicrucian novels mainly adapted Godwin’s portrayal of this fall, adding religious undertones or elements, such as having to sign a contract with the devil for immortality, to suit their needs. St. Leon’s knowledge that he has experienced some kind of fall similar to the one in *Paradise Lost*, immediately after his acceptance of Zampieri’s knowledge, is

emphasized through the imagery he uses to describe himself and his social relationships. After he has lost his wife and sends his daughters to live far away from him with a fortune, he uses such imagery to describe how he feels about their prosperity: “The first sensation I derived from their prosperity [...] was pleasure: my second was that which the devil might have felt, when he entered paradise for the seduction of our first parents” (W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 303-04). He seems to feel that, as the person who provides them with a mansion and income, he is somehow orchestrating their downfall, which later proves to be true. He considers himself similar to Satan, the instigator of humanity’s fall, and something that stands above humanity. His actions also reflect Milton’s Satan, as he attempts to become god-like to find a purpose to his eternal life: “I was like a god, who dispenses his bounties profusely through twenty climates, but who at the same time sits, separate, elevated, and alone, in the highest heaven” (W. Godwin, *St. Leon* 367). However, because he is alone in this god-like state, he is unable to find happiness. Here he alludes to the consequences of the wanderer’s Second Fall; by removing himself from humanity, he is forced to wander, perpetually alone. His benevolence to humanity is a desperate attempt to lift his loneliness with the result that it cannot satisfy him spiritually. The Rosicrucian knowledge has made him arrogant and unsatisfied, a Luciferean state of being. This Luciferean state of being of Godwin’s wanderer is also reflected in Zampieri. Not only does he warn St. Leon about the alienation from society and the dangers of knowing these secrets, but eventually he also manages to convince St. Leon to learn them. St. Leon is not interested at first, because he has finally found satisfaction and happiness in his simple, impoverished life through his family. Zampieri, however, plays the part of the Luciferean seducer and eventually manages to convince St. Leon to partake in forbidden secrets, knowing what alienation and unhappiness it will bring. St. Leon’s greed eventually resurfaces at the prospect of longevity and enormous wealth, and he gives in. In a sense, Zampieri convinces St. Leon to ‘eat from his apple’, and as a result St. Leon is thrown out of the paradise that he was building and that he could have had for the rest of his mortal life: his humble home with his loving family. Like Adam and Eve, he was content with the life he had, but curiosity and the possibility for more, caused him to lose this happiness and to be alienated from it, transforming him into a solitary wanderer forced to spend eternity searching for his place in nature’s order.

Godwin argues that man can achieve his own earthly paradise through evolution, and offers his protagonist a happy home with a loving family which is lost when he attempts to transcend humanity and overcome his nature.

*Bulwer-Lytton's Depiction of the Second Fall*

In comparison, Bulwer-Lytton attributes the Second Fall to the failure of reaching a form of spiritual elevation that stands above humanity, with the result that the failed adept falls back to the degradations of the material world of humanity. In this case, the seducer in *Zanoni* is not one of the Rosicrucian brotherhood, who has been cursed himself, but rather a young woman, Fillide, who symbolizes the materialistic world and reminds the Rosicrucian adept, Glyndon, of his baser needs and emotions. She is the cause for his decision to disregard Mejnour's warning not to attempt the first initiation test alone, without the proper preparation and state of mind. Glyndon had the aptitude to become part of Zanoni's and Mejnour's brotherhood as long as he was able to cast off his ties with humanity, such as his emotions and social bonds. For a while, he managed this, but he is easily tempted and ultimately fails. After a few encounters with Fillide, Glyndon has forgotten his training with Mejnour, and has surrounded himself with emotions and feelings. He becomes impatient and cynical and breaks both rules Mejnour set for him; he stops studying and philosophizing, and starts enjoying life. He also enters Mejnour's inner room twice, in between visits to Fillide. During his second visit to the room, he decides to perform the ritual that allows him to commune with the spirits. He confronts the Dweller of the Threshold, unprepared and no longer in the elevated state of mind and soul that Mejnour tried to bring him to. As a result, he is unable to overcome his fear for it, cannot command the Dweller as he is supposed to do, and faints. Glyndon proves to be unworthy of the secrets and power of the brotherhood. This failure results in the end of his training, but more importantly, his inability to control the Dweller gives it the power to haunt him. The Dweller of the Threshold symbolizes many things. First and foremost, it symbolizes the human fear of death. When it haunts Glyndon, it becomes a malignant force which personifies Glyndon's "own folly and failure to pursue undivided aims, whether in art or the discipline of the arcana" (Poston 156), and which stops him from pursuing a higher purpose, such as that of an artist. Glyndon is no longer able to paint without seeing the Dweller. In a letter from Mejnour to Glyndon, Mejnour tries to give him a last piece of advice before Glyndon returns to human society in order to help him cope with the Dweller; the Dweller can haunt, but not harm. It will be visible only when Glyndon is not engaged in frivolity and pleasure seeking. Glyndon will have to accept its presence to be able to defeat it. As mentioned before, in Fillide's company the Dweller does not reveal itself because she is doing its work (Poston 157).

Bulwer-Lytton compares the path of Glyndon, the Rosicrucian initiate, with that of the agent for revolutionary change during the French Revolution, as both aspire to become better

and make a better world, but are driven by fear, envisioned for both parties as the Dweller of the Threshold, and therefore fail in their quest. The next passage, Zanoni's observation of Paris during the Reign of Terror, reflects this idea:

Everywhere I see the track and scent the presence of the Ghostly One that dwells on the Threshold, and whose victims are the souls that would ASPIRE, and can only FEAR. I see its dim shapelessness going before the men of blood, and marshalling their way. Robespierre passed me with his furtive step. Those eyes of horror were gnawing into his heart. It hath taken up its abode in the city of Dread. And what in truth are these would-be builders of a new world? Like the students who have vainly struggled after our supreme science, they have attempted what is beyond their power; they have passed from this solid earth of usages and forms, into the land of shadow; and its loathsome keeper has seized them as its prey. (Bulwer-Lytton 237)

In this case, the Dweller represents the individual Nemesis, the Devil, who is released into the apocalyptic horror of the French Revolution. Like an outbreak of the collective human unconscious, the enlarged Dweller will destroy the doomed Age of Reason. With this comparison, Bulwer-Lytton suggests that the revolutionary who only succeeds in creating a dictatorship is little better than the failed adept who has released against himself the Dweller, the negative forces of his own frustrated desires (Christensen 87-88). Glyndon's inability to subdue his fear and ensuing fall ultimately has the same result as Adam and Eve's Fall, and the revolutionary's inability to subdue his personal desires results in another tyrannical authority taking its place. Glyndon had the chance to elevate his soul and become part of an earthly paradise and to be closer to God, if only he could overcome the degradation that humanity has been subjected to after Adam and Eve's Fall. By being unable to subdue the feelings and emotions that originate from the original sin, he is unable to connect with nature and a higher spiritual state and thus, like Adam and Eve, Glyndon falls. Zanoni and Mejnour are the successful Rosicrucian adepts, who have managed to overcome the fears, urges, and feelings that original sin introduced. As a result, they manage to regain the harmony between themselves, nature, and a higher spiritual plane, and are able to access the knowledge and abilities that were available to Adam and Eve in paradise through a general consciousness only accessible to the spiritually elevated.

However, this is merely one of several things that Bulwer-Lytton is trying to convey in association with the Second Fall. With Glyndon, he states that the human soul needs to be

renewed and released from the chains of our ancestors' sins. Once released, the soul is able to reach higher spiritual states, a general consciousness, and use the knowledge attained from this consciousness to act for humanity's improvement, as Zanoní does throughout the novel. Other Rosicrucian novels consider becoming immortal through alchemical or occult means as a Second Fall, in which the wanderer disobeys God's will once again by achieving eternal life without His permission. However, Bulwer-Lytton depicts becoming immortal through alchemical or occult knowledge as an Ascension, where those found worthy are allowed to 'eat from the Tree of Life' through the initiation rituals and to live eternally.

These rituals and esoteric teaching allow Zanoní and Mejnour's souls to reach their full potential, allowing them to communicate with the spirits, as Zanoní does with his spiritual guide Adon-Ai,<sup>22</sup> and connect with a higher consciousness and through this learn knowledge that is unattainable for regular humans. However, while the immortals are enlightened, true spiritual fulfilment can only be achieved through death, and becoming part of the ethereal world. Zanoní is able to find real spiritual fulfilment and true immortality of the soul through Viola, as she symbolizes the balance between the Ideal and the Real, as she was brought up on stage, a place that moves between the two states. His love for her causes him to sacrifice his elevated spiritual state, and eventually his life. By giving up his abilities and connection with the spirit world, he experiences something similar to the Second Fall. He gradually becomes human again. Eventually, he is unable to summon Adon-Ai and the Dweller starts to haunt him. At first, he pays the malignant spirit no heed, but when the Revolutionaries capture Viola in Paris, and condemn her to the guillotine, he bargains with the Dweller to save the lives of Viola and their son. He has become afraid of death, the death

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<sup>22</sup> The name Adonai is considered to be one of the many names of God, originating from Hebrew, where it is the plural of Adon, which means 'lord' or 'father.' Generally, Bulwer-Lytton refers to the inhabitants of Zanoní's spirit world as spirits. However, Adon-Ai is described as the Angel of Faith, the one who guides him towards the right path of enlightenment, and can thus be considered as significant (Finley 95). The use of Adon-Ai can refer to several things. For example, the name has been used to refer to other gods. Bulwer-Lytton might have been aware of that, as the nineteenth century brought many of these origins to light, and he spells it slightly different than is common. The name could mean several other things, as it has several possible language roots. One of these possible roots is an Arabic verb that means 'to be obedient', or 'to cause obedience' (Uittenbogaard). The meaning 'to cause obedience' seems to be the most suitable for the role of the spirit in Zanoní. The Phoenicians used the name Adonai to refer to their fertility God Tammuz, later known as Adonis. This name also recurs in other mythologies and religions. In some cults, he represents death and rebirth, which also suits the theme of the novel (Khalaf). It could also refer to Agrippa's hierarchy of ten divine emanations. Adon-Ai-Melech is lowest in the hierarchy, and is tasked with giving knowledge, understanding, wisdom, and prophecy to blessed souls immediately below the nine fold angelic hierarchy (J. Godwin. 128).

of his wife and child, as he wants to ensure that his wife and son survive to continue his name. However, when he decides that he will sacrifice himself to save Viola, Adon-Ai appears to him again, and chases away the Dweller. His fall has turned into an Ascension as he embraces death at the guillotine to not only save his family but also part of humanity, as he ensures that his death is the cataclysm that ends the reign of Robespierre. It seems that Zanoni is the only Rosicrucian wanderer who successfully reaches spiritual fulfilment by marrying Viola and thus fusing the Ideal and the Real together. By sacrificing himself to save Viola and their son, he not only acknowledges the bond they created between the Ideal and the Real, but he is also able to defeat the Dweller of the Threshold and the Terror of the Revolution. In addition, he demonstrates that the earthly immortality attainable through alchemical means is less desirable than a heavenly afterlife, which gives the soul true freedom to explore the secrets of the universe (Roberts, *Gothic Immortals* 208; Franklin). In comparison, Mejnour, the embodiment of science and the Real, will never be able to find spiritual fulfilment because he has completely detached himself from humanity and put aside his emotions. He has become too advanced in his search for knowledge to be able to find a balance between the Ideal and the Real, like Zanoni has.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, we established that Godwin uses the Rosicrucian myth to create a wanderer who depicts an atheistic view on how man-made shortcuts in evolution lead to alienation from society. This in turn caused other writers to depict the wanderer as a fallen being, who is willing to sell, or has sold, his soul to gain immortality and as a result is alienated from humanity and eternally in search of spiritual fulfilment. However, the last significant Rosicrucian novelist, Bulwer-Lytton, restores the Rosicrucian wanderer to the level of the benevolent Christian that emerges from the Rosicrucian manifestos, a Rosicrucian who attempts to shepherd humanity to a better future. His failed adept goes through the same fall as Godwin's St. Leon does, while his successful Rosicrucian wanderer Zanoni eventually realizes that the only way to find real freedom and spiritual fulfilment is through death, in a heavenly afterlife.

## Conclusion

From the analysis of the portrayal of the Rosicrucian wanderer in William Godwin's *St. Leon* and Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *Zanoni*, we determined how these Gothic authors combined Rosicrucian elements with the legend of the wandering Jew to rewrite the tragic wanderers of *Paradise Lost* in order to create the Rosicrucian wanderer. They mainly used this character to discuss the British concerns regarding the French Revolution, but also used it to express personal beliefs regarding scientific evolution, in Godwin's case, and occult and esoteric topics, in Bulwer-Lytton's case. We delineated the development of the Rosicrucian myth and the extent of the authors' knowledge of the myth as a preamble to the analysis of the authors' use of this knowledge in the creation of their wanderer. Their depictions of the Rosicrucian wanderer were discussed extensively and compared to the general manifestation of the wandering figure in Gothic literature. Through this, we determined the authors' goals for their wanderer and established what sentiments they individually tried to convey through it concerning the French Revolution.

We established that generally, the Gothic authors used the Rosicrucian wanderer as a Gothic wanderer, to reflect on the rebellion against patriarchal authority during the French Revolution. The Gothic either considered this rebellion as a transgression against God, because He ultimately appointed the monarchy, or as a justifiable and necessary act to get rid of a tyrannical authority and through this improve humanity or society. To depict this, they re-imagined the Miltonic wanderers Satan, Adam, and Eve to create a transgressive wanderer who attempts to become autonomous from God, the patriarchal authority, and is punished for his transgression by being removed from God's order as he experiences a Second Fall, the reversal of humanity's First Fall. With this in mind, the transgressive wanderers, even Satan in *Paradise Lost*, turn into tragic heroes who are sacrificed to improve society.

In most of the Rosicrucian novels, the Christian and esoteric doctrine of the Rosicrucian order, as depicted by the manifestos and by Sperber, was transformed into knowledge forbidden to and forgotten by humanity. The Rosicrucian order's idea of longevity, which did not transcend death, but merely allowed the Rosicrucian to live to an old age without illnesses, became immortality similar to that of the other Gothic wanderers, acquired through alchemical knowledge and the elixir of life. The pursuit and eventual acquisition of this forbidden knowledge not only forced the wanderer into eternal exile as punishment, but also gave him more time to influence humanity. Often, the transmutation of

metals is part of this forbidden alchemical knowledge as a solution to the monetary problems that eternal life and aiding humanity would undoubtedly pose.

During the analysis of Godwin's and Bulwer-Lytton's Rosicrucian wanderer, it quickly became apparent that their depictions diverged in certain aspects from the general depiction of the Rosicrucian wanderer. While Godwin is the first British Rosicrucian novelist, and introduced the Rosicrucian wanderer to Gothic literature, he did not depict the wanderer as a transgressor against God, or His laws. Instead, as an atheist and rationalist, he depicted the wanderer as a transgressor against scientific evolution and reason. While Godwin supported the French revolutionaries' rejection of patriarchal authority, in both the family and the government, he did not share the revolutionaries' hope that the Revolution would bring about the millennial Age of Reason. He believed that humanity was not ready for this age from an evolutionary perspective, and therefore he depicted his wanderer, St. Leon, as a failed human, who transcends humanity by acquiring longevity through unnatural means before human ability to use reason evolves enough to achieve longevity through natural means. As a result, St. Leon becomes someone who transcends humanity, and is forced to remove himself from society and wander perpetually in search of spiritual fulfilment that can only be achieved through familial bonds, which are now unattainable for St. Leon, or through death. This is Godwin's rendition of the Second Fall.

However, despite Godwin's disagreement with the revolutionaries regarding the Age of Reason, he was not a conservative, and ardently supported the rejection of patriarchal authority. He applauded the reinterpretation of the family and society as environments in which children matured into adults who would become able citizens of a government that emphasized democratic equality. This is symbolized by St. Leon's family, who renounce him when he starts keeping secrets and stops treating them as equals. His son rejects him, and becomes a strong, successful man on his own. His wife no longer trusts him, and St. Leon loses his power within his family. His secretive nature is also rejected by society, who exiles him, or tries to imprison him. With this, Godwin argued that the corrupted government would become increasingly unnecessary and powerless as the common population is exposed to a gradual spread of knowledge, and an increase of human knowledge of the world.

*St. Leon* contains a surprising number of references to the Rosicrucian manifestos, despite Godwin's radical transformation of the Rosicrucian into a transgressive wanderer. This suggests that Godwin might have read the manifestos, or at the very least read sources that summarize them. He certainly read some texts that were either influenced by Rosicrucian works, such as Alexander Pope's "the Rape of the Lock," or that could be considered



Rosicrucian works, such as *Le Comte de Gabalis* by Villars. It is clear, however, that despite his knowledge of the Rosicrucian order, he disregarded their original image in favour of using their reputation as possessors of the elixir of life for his own purposes.

Bulwer-Lytton used the same elements in *Zanoni* to comment on the events and consequences of the French Revolution as the rest of the Rosicrucian authors did. However, instead of depicting the Rosicrucian wanderer as transgressive, as was done by the other authors, Bulwer-Lytton restored the Rosicrucians to successful spiritual masters of scientific and esoteric knowledge, who have voluntarily detached themselves from their humanity in order to connect to a higher spiritual consciousness and through it come closer to God. Their immortality, or their immunity to natural causes of death, is a result of this connection and the knowledge they attained through it. Bulwer-Lytton's extensive knowledge of the Rosicrucian myth and esoteric movements enabled him to expand the Rosicrucian heritage claimed by the manifestos and Sperber, instead of narrowing it down.

*Zanoni* was an outlet for Bulwer-Lytton's spiritual beliefs, and thus the novel overflows with opinions and topics of discussion. Generally, he agrees with Godwin that humanity can only achieve true spiritual fulfilment through familial bonds or death, but also states that a higher spiritual state can be achieved through studying art and science. Bulwer-Lytton's protagonist Zanoni finds peace in his family, and ascends to a higher spiritual plane after sacrificing himself to save his family. His order brother Mejnour, on the other hand, detached himself completely from humanity, and any form of social bonds. Because of this, he will spend eternity attempting to reach the ultimate state of spirit. Glyndon's failure to surpass his fear of death and consequential haunting by the Dweller on the Threshold cements Bulwer-Lytton's message that acceptance of death and the existence of higher spiritual afterlife is necessary to find peace, or spiritual fulfilment, in life.

Glyndon, the failed Rosicrucian adept, is the most important character used by Bulwer-Lytton in the discussion of the spiritual consequences of the French Revolution. He symbolizes the revolutionaries, who dismiss art, the Ideal, as a gateway to spiritual elevation in favour of reason and science, the Real. Because they are haunted by their fear of death, they invite the devil, the Dweller on the Threshold, into their world, who destroys their Age of Reason. This is Bulwer-Lytton's rendition of the Second Fall. For a while, Glyndon manages to disconnect from humanity, and under Mejnour's tutelage, he reaches a higher spiritual state, transcending the initial state of humanity. However, he is unable to leave humanity behind him, and his inability to overcome the human fear of death causes him to Fall back to humanity, as a recurrence of the First Fall, instead of a reversal of its

consequences. Bulwer-Lytton seemed to agree with the revolutionaries that change was needed, but like Godwin, he disagreed with the French revolutionaries' methods. He considered the revolutionaries equal to the corrupt authority they got rid of, because they instigated a dictatorship in place of the monarchy, replacing one corrupt government with another. Glyndon, and the revolutionaries, set themselves up for spiritual degradation because they worship a false Ideal and dismiss a higher spiritual authority.

During this research, I realized quickly that there were many topics that should be researched in more detail in order to create a more complete picture of the Rosicrucian wanderer, his heritage, and the Gothic authors' use of him. For example, the Second Fall is still a relatively unknown concept, even though we discuss it in this thesis and has been dealt with by Tichelaar. The connection of the Second Fall with *Paradise Lost* should be researched more extensively and I wonder whether the concept can be connected to the other Gothic wanderers, and how the other Rosicrucian authors imagine this concept. In a similar vein, it would be interesting to research how the Rosicrucian novel influenced other literary works, and how it was received in other periods. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* might be an interesting case study for this, because of its popularity. However, before that is possible, we would need to determine whether it really is a Rosicrucian novel. Shelley intended Victor Frankenstein's quest for forbidden knowledge to be comparable to the Gothic wanderer's quest for the Rosicrucian secrets, but does it contain the same elements as the other Rosicrucian novels, as discussed in this thesis?

Another interesting topic would be Bulwer-Lytton's works or his profile as an author of the occult. There is little information on his occult works and personal interests, and *Zanoni* and *A Strange Story* would be interesting case studies for this subject, as they are rich in references to esoteric and occult concepts. In addition, an analysis of Hegelian philosophies in *Zanoni* might aid in the creation of a clear image of Bulwer-Lytton's beliefs and philosophies. Another branch of research might look into works influenced by the Rosicrucian novels. For example, Tichelaar compares Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* with Bulwer-Lytton's *Zanoni*, as he suggests that *A Tale of Two Cities* is a revisiting of *Zanoni* and contains a Rosicrucian hero as well (264-65). It is possible that there are more of such revisits in Victorian literature. It was suggested by Roberts that the Rosicrucian novel influenced the works of Marie Corelli, but so far, no research has been done to prove or disprove this suggestion.

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