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Gothic Fiction:
The Beginnings



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Viršelio nuotraukoje:

Friedrich, Caspar David (1774-1840)

Cloister Cemetery in the Snow

1817-19

Oil on canvas

121 x 170 cm

Destroyed 1945, formerly in the National Gallery, Berlin

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FOREWORD

The present handbook has several goals: firstly, it aims at discussing the aesthetic background of the eighteenth century Gothic fiction, focusing on the key aesthetic work of the period, Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), and secondly, it attempts to examine the functions of literary space and the possible meanings it implies in Gothic literature in general and in Ann Radcliffe's (1764 -1823) fiction in particular.

In his *Enquiry* Edmund Burke argues that the two strongest instincts known to man are self-preservation and social impulse. All that directly threatens self-preservation causes terror; and terrifying experiences are the sources of the Sublime. Our experience of the Sublime is far greater in intensity than our experience of the Beautiful. Beauty attracts and reassures; the Sublime intimidates. In the present analysis the aesthetic category of the Sublime is discussed more thoroughly because of its great impact on the "classical" Gothic and on all the genres which developed from it.

The present analysis deals with the five Ann Radcliffe's novels which constitute the bulk of her production; namely, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789), *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), and *The Italian* (1796). The posthumously published *Gaston de Blondville*, despite its real ghost and fewer nature descriptions, is not part of the Radcliffean Gothic, which, in the first place, is famous for its explained supernatural elements. Mrs. Radcliffe's readers must not look for anything like historic precision in her novels. Radcliffe's stories are set in distant ages and in places far away from England. In spite of that, contemporary mode of life, sentiments and concerns of the end of the eighteenth century are introduced into her books.

In order to read Ann Radcliffe's fiction closely focusing on the poetics of space, Juri Lotman's semiotic approach to space in a literary work is especially useful. The analysis draws upon the following works by Yuri Lotman: *Struktura khudozhestvennogo teksta* (1971), "The Origin of Plot in the Light of Typology" (1973), *Universe of the Mind* (1990), and *Izbrannyye statji v trekh tomakh*, vol.1 (1992).

The handbook is addressed to students taking different courses in literature at Vytautas Magnus University as well as to general public interested in literary studies. It may be useful for all levels of academic programs, especially for the students who follow the BA course "Survey of British Literature since 1660" and MA course "Gothic Literature".

References will occur within the text with the following abbreviations of Ann Radcliffe's works:

CAD = *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*. Ed. Alison Milbank. Oxford University Press, 1995.

SR = *A Sicilian Romance*. Ed. Alison Milbank. Oxford University Press, 1993.

RF = *The Romance of the Forest*. Ed. Chloe Chard. Oxford University Press, 1986.

MU = *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Ed. Bonamy Dobree. Oxford University Press, 1980.

I = *The Italian*. Ed. Frederick Garber. Oxford University Press, 1991.

PART I

**The Aesthetic Background
of Eighteenth-Century
Gothic Fiction**



INTRODUCTION TO PART I

THE CHANGING ATMOSPHERE OF THE CENTURY

It is a common knowledge that the eighteenth century is known as the "Age of Reason". However, under a closer and more penetrating scrutiny homogeneity which the designation seems to imply dissolves. Homogeneity, was no more characteristic of the eighteenth century than of any other historical period. The "Age of Reason" appears to be full of complexities and ambiguities. Johann Georg Hamann (1730–1788), who repudiated all rationalistic abstractions and insisted on the primacy of sense experience and imagination, was the contemporary of Richard Price (1723–1791), an uncompromising rationalist for whom "reason [...] is the natural and authoritative guide of a rational being"¹. Yet to view these divisions in the consciousness of the period simply as unrelated polar antithesis, as George Rosen notes², is equally superficial and misleading. Both **reason** and **feeling** were recognized as springs of human behaviour in the eighteenth century and we may assume that contemporaries were aware of the complicated and intricate reciprocal relations between them. As Alexander Pope put it in his *Essay on Man*:

Two Principles in human nature reign;
 Self-love, to urge, and Reason, to restrain,
 ...
 Self-love, the spring of motion, acts the soul;
 Reason's comparing balance rules the whole
 ...
 On life's vast ocean diversely we sail
 Reason the card, but Passion is the Gale.³

Another illustration of the emotional climate of the eighteenth century and its imaginative peculiarities is the cult of melancholy, which distinguishes the second half of the century, to which the pleasures of horror were added and which found its expression in the "Graveyard" poetry and the Sentimental and the Gothic novel.⁴

While speaking about the complexities and ambiguities of the period, it seems relevant to mention the changes of thought and feeling which, according to Bertrand H. Bronson,⁵ were characteristic of the age. At the opening of the eighteenth century there is a weakening of conviction

of the importance of man's personal relation to God the Father. There is a depersonalising of external nature, from the cooperative universal Mother to universal, unalterable physical laws. There is a shrinkage of assurance of the potency of man's rational powers, no longer seen as "infinite in faculty", yet a keener sense of reliance on them.

As the century passes its meridian, values are gradually rescaled and redefined. Nature in a "state of nature" is preferred to nature domesticated. Irregularity enforces a lawless appeal that surpasses rational ordering. Sudden irrational convention and conviction of salvation by faith returns to religion. Emotional assurance tends to supplant the appeal to reason as expressed in logical trains of thought.

This change in ideas was largely influenced by David Hume in the middle of the century. Up to him it was possible to maintain that Reason and Nature go hand in hand. But Hume proves that it is utterly impossible to get outside human perceptions to an objective reality, even so far as to verify in a single instance the relation of cause and effect. "Our reason," Hume says, "neither does, nor is it possible it ever shou'd, upon any supposition, give us an assurance of the continu'd and distinct existence of body. That opinion must be entirely owing to the imagination."⁶ "By the very completeness of his destructive efficacy," as Basil Willey notes, Hume "showed that man cannot live by Reason alone."⁷

If we look at the poetry and fiction of the time, we can observe a freer play of fancy, tendencies of Romantic Imagination which result in the fantastic travel-books, imaginary voyages and, as it was mentioned earlier, the Sentimental and Gothic romances.

As the century proceeded, the aesthetic tastes of the society were changing rapidly as well. A clear preference was developing for the irregular – even the disorderly and wild. A. R. Humphreys makes an interesting remark on the subject: "The attack on geometry is perhaps the most significant fact of eighteenth-century aesthetics."⁸ As the decades pass, Bertrand H. Bronson notes, "we can observe everywhere a relinquishing of mathematical rule, exact equations, right lines, and everywhere a liberation of fancy. [...] the movement is from reason to imagination, from rational to whimsical."⁹

At the end of the century Blake wrote: "Grecian is Mathematic Form: Gothic is Living Form. Mathematic Form is Eternal in a reasoning Memory. Living Form is Eternal Existence."¹⁰

In the present handbook the change in taste in the eighteenth century is discussed briefly only to the extent that it is relevant to the main topic of the analysis.

Notes:

- 1 George Rosen, "Forms of Irrationality in the Eighteenth Century." *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*. Vol. 2. Ed. Harold E. Pagliaro. The Press of Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, 1972, p. 255. Also see Richard Price, *A Review of the Principal Question of Morals*. (3rd ed., 1789) Ed. D. Daiches. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948, p.109.
- 2 G. Rosen, "Forms of Irrationality in the Eighteenth Century," Vol. 2 p. 225.
- 3 John Butt, ed., *The Poems of Alexander Pope*. New Haven:Yale University Press, 1963, pp. 517–19.
- 4 L.J. Bredvold, *The Natural History of Sensibility*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1962, pp. 53–62; 77–97.
- 5 Bertrand H. Bronson, "The Retreat from Reason". *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, Vol. 2. p. 225.
- 6 Quoted in Bertrand H. Bronson, "The Retreat from Reason", Vol. 2, p. 232.
- 7 Basil Willey, *The Eighteenth Century Background*. London, 1940, p. 111. Also see Dabney Townsend. *Hume's Aesthetic Theory: Taste and Sentiment*. Routledge, 2003.
- 8 See A.R. Humphreys, *William Shenstone: An Eighteenth-Century Portrait*. Cambridge, 1937, p. 48.
- 9 B. Bronson, "The Retreat from Reason", Vol.2, p.230.
- 10 Quoted in Robert Kiely, *The Romantic Novel in England*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1972, p. 29.

Suggested study questions for further discussion:

1. How was the relationship between reason and feeling understood in the eighteenth century?
2. How can the emotional climate of the second half of the eighteenth century be characterized?
3. What changes of thought and feeling were characteristic of the age?
4. Who largely influenced the change in ideas in the middle of the century?
5. Discuss the tendencies in poetry and fiction of the time.

Useful Internet Addresses:

"David Hume". Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hume/>

Gothic Fiction: The Beginnings

David Hume: Links

<http://comp.uark.edu/~rlee/semiau98/humelink.html>

Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature: Being An Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning Into Moral Subjects.*

<http://www.class.uidaho.edu/mickelsen/texts/Hume%20Treatise/hume%20treatise1.htm>

Hume, David. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding.*

<http://www.efm.bris.ac.uk/het/hume/enquiry>

Eighteenth-Century Resources

<http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/18th/>

Eighteenth-Century Studies

<http://18th.eserver.org/>

Restoration & 18th Century

<http://vos.ucsb.edu/browse.asp?id=2738>

1. THE RISE OF THE GOTHIC

As the term "Gothic" turns out to be very important in understanding eighteenth-century aesthetic discourse, it seems relevant in this connection to mention a set of cultural and linguistic changes during the century which largely conditioned the later uses of the word.

The word "Gothic" at the end of the seventeenth century and in the early eighteenth century carried a negative connotation. The original meaning was literally "to do with the Goths" or with the barbarian northern tribes; to an age which revered all things classical it was associated with lack of cultivation and taste. In 1697 Dryden stated: "All that hath nothing of the Ancient gust is called a barbarous or Gothic manner."¹ In his *Remarks on Italy* Addison described Siena Cathedral as a "barbarous" building, which might have been a miracle of architecture, had our forefathers "only been instructed in the right way."² In defining a "Gothic" style of writing, he mentions "epigram, forced conceits, turns of wit,"³ having in mind the faults of overelaboration. In David Punter's opinion, "The eighteenth century possessed a somewhat foreshortened sense of past chronology, and from being a term suggestive of more or less unknown features of the Dark Ages, 'Gothic' became descriptive of things medieval – in fact, all things preceding about the middle of the seventeenth century."⁴

In the middle of the eighteenth century with the shift of cultural values the term "Gothic" retained the stock of negative meanings for a while but the value placed upon them began to alter radically. One of the earliest sustained defence of Gothic art appeared in 1762 in Bishop Hurd's *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*. Hurd is interested in defending what is English against what is Greek. Hurd states: "The fancies of our modern bards are not only more gallant, but, on a change of the scene, more sublime, more terrible, more alarming, than those of the classic fablers. In a word [...] the manners they paint, and the superstitions they adopt, are more poetical for being Gothic."⁵ As Robert Kiely notes, "Hurd defends the technical diversity and thematic excess of medieval literature as aesthetic virtues and dismisses the notion that they represent a breach of decorum."⁶

A very important role in the so called Gothic Revival belongs to Horace Walpole whose interest in the Gothic resulted in building a

"Gothic" castle in miniature at Strawberry Hill and writing the first specimen of the Gothic fiction *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) subtitled as a Gothic story. Ketton-Cremer remarks on Horace Walpole's relation to the Gothic:

He brought it into fashion. He was already a well-known connoisseur, an acknowledged arbiter of taste and a man of rank and influence; when he adopted Gothic, talked and wrote about Gothic, built a small but spectacular Gothic house and crammed it with exquisite and precious things, it soon ceased to be regarded as a rather paltry middle-class craze.⁷

Thus, in the later decades of the eighteenth-century the principal application of the term "Gothic" was, as it still is, in the field of architecture but alongside this usage, it started to be applied to literary works. The description of the supernatural and fantastic in the Gothic Tales or the Gothic Romances added to the meaning of "Gothic". The word "Gothic" started to appear as a synonym to words "supernatural", "grotesque" and "fantastic"; and it is this sense of the word that Drake used in *Literary Hours*: "The most enlightened mind, involuntarily acknowledges the power of Gothic agency."⁸

It seems interesting to point out that in writing *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Walpole claimed to write as a revolt against all critical rules:

I have not written the book for the present age, which will endure nothing but cold common sense [...] this is the only one of my books with which I am myself pleased; I have given reins to my imagination till I became on fire with those visions and feelings which it excited. I have composed it in defiance of rules, of critics, and of philosophers.⁹

In the Preface to the second edition of his Gothic story, Walpole tries to explain his desire to create a narrative line that would enable him to bring past and present together into an aesthetic whole. Walpole says of his *Castle of Otranto*:

It was an attempt to blend two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern. In the former all was imagination and improbability: in the later, nature is always intended to be, and sometimes has been, copied with success. Invention has not been wanting; but the great resources of fancy have been dammed up, by a strict adherence to common life. But if, in the latter species, Nature has cramped imagination, she did but take her revenge, having been totally excluded from old romances.¹⁰

When Walpole acknowledged the text as his own work, he located its origin in subconscious forces beyond his control. The text came to him in a dream (Gothic writers will often claim that their stories came to them in dreams), and was written nearly subconsciously.

Shall I confess to you, what was the origin of this romance? I waked one morning, in the beginning of last June, from a dream, of which all I could recover was that I had thought myself in an ancient castle (a very natural dream for a head like mine filled with Gothic story), and that on the uppermost banister of a great staircase I saw a gigantic hand in armour. In the evening I sat down, and began to write, without knowing in the least what I intended to say or relate. The work grew on my hands [...] In short I was so engrossed with my Tale, which I completed in less than two months.¹¹

It seems relevant to mention in this connection that the writings of the earlier authors of Gothic fiction are subtitled either as Gothic stories or romances separating themselves from another kind of long prose fiction flourishing in the eighteenth century, the novel (represented by Defoe, Richardson, Fielding and Smollet). In her own study of literary theory and practice, *The Progress of Romance* (1785), Clara Reeve claims that

The Romance is a heroic fable, which treats of fabulous persons and things. - The Novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the times in which it is written. The Romance in lofty and elevated language, describes what never happened nor is likely to happen. - The Novel gives a familiar relation of such things, as pass every day before our eyes, such as may happen to our friend, or to ourselves.¹²

To most English readers the term "romance" carried implications of the wonderful, the miraculous, and the exaggerated. Many medieval romances are set in distant times and remote places thus making convenient locations for picturesque and marvellous incidents. At the time especially important were Richard Hurd's ideas defending the genre of romance in his *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762). To Hurd, romance was not truth but a delightful and necessary holiday from common sense.

By adopting a mode of romance which was recognized as being separate from everyday life, eighteenth-century Gothic novelists were free to create a fictional world which embodied their fears and fantasies and offered, as Coral Ann Howels notes, "a retreat from insoluble

problems, while at the same time it rendered their fears ultimately harmless by containing and distancing them in a fantasy.”¹³ In Gillian Beer’s opinion, the Gothic novelists had rediscovered the power of sensation, which under the names of “wander”, and “admiration” had always been part of the pleasure of romance. But now “sensation” was linked to the grotesque, the sublime, and the supernatural.¹⁴

Summing up, we may state that such characteristics of the Gothic like extravagance, superstition, fancy and wildness which were initially considered in negative terms became associated, in the course of the eighteenth century, with a more expansive and imaginative potential for artistic and aesthetic production.

Notes:

- ¹ *The Works of John Dryden*. Ed. Sir Walter Scott, rev. George Saintsbury, in 18 vols., London, 1881–1892, XVII, p. 17.
- ² Quoted in Edith Birkhead, *The Tale of Terror*. New York: Russel and Russel, Inc., 1963, p. 17.
- ³ *The Spectator*. Ed. Donald F. Bond. 5vols., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965, vol. 1, p. 269, p. 297.
- ⁴ David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fiction from 1765 to the Present Day*. Longman, London and New York, 1980, p. 5. Also see *A Companion to the Gothic*. Ed. David Punter Blackwell companions to literature and culture. Malden (Mass.): Blackwell, 2005; Angela Wright, *Gothic Fiction: Reader’s Guide to Essential Criticism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007; *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. Ed. Jerrold E. Hogle Cambridge companions to literature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- ⁵ *Hurd’s Letters on Chivalry and Romance*. Ed. Edith J. Morley, London: H. Frowde, 1911, p. 114. Also see James Sambrook, *The Eighteenth Century: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1700–1789*. Second Edition. Longman, London and New York, 1993, p. 138.
- ⁶ Robert Kiely, *The Romantic Novel in England*. Harvard University Press, 1972, p. 28.
- ⁷ Quoted in Lawrence Lipking, *The Ordering of the Arts in Eighteenth-Century England*. Princeton, New Jersey. Princeton University press, 1970, p.146.
- ⁸ Nathan Drake, *Literary Hours or Sketches Critical and Narrative*. London: T. Cadell, Jr. and W. Davies, 1800; reprint edn. New York: Garland, 1970, p. 359.
- ⁹ Quoted in Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*. London and New York, 1995, p. 17.
- ¹⁰ Horace Walpole, *Preface to The Castle of Otranto*. Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 7.

- ¹¹ Quoted in Montague Summers, *The Gothic Quest: A History of the Gothic Novel*. New York, Russel and Russel, 1964, p. 182.
- ¹² *Women Critics 1660–1820. An Anthology*. Ed. by the Folger Collective on Early Women Critics. Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1995, p. 141.
- ¹³ Coral A. Howells, *Love, Mystery, and Misery: Feeling in Gothic Fiction*. University of London, The Athlone Press, 1978, p. 7.
- ¹⁴ Gillian Beer, *The Romance*. Methuen and Co. Ltd, London, 1970, pp. 55–56. For other critical discussions on romance see Robert Kiely's *The Romantic Novel in England*. Harvard University Press, 1972; Northrop Frye's *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance*. Harvard University Press, 1976. Because of the confusion between the terms "Novel" and "Romance," in the present analysis, keeping in line with Coral Ann Howels, the author of the paper refers to Gothic fictions as "Novels." The confusion of terminology is evident in eighteenth-century writers' own usage, e. g. Horace Walpole in *The Castle of Otranto* talks about "Ancient and Modern Romance," while Jane Austen in *Northanger Abbey* calls all long prose fictions "Novels" including Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and Mathew Gregory Lewis's *The Monk*.

Suggested study questions for further discussion:

1. How did the meaning of the term "Gothic" changed over the time? Discuss the meaning of the word "Gothic" at the end of the seventeenth century and in the early eighteenth century and the meaning of it at the end of the eighteenth century.
2. What did "Gothic" mean to Dryden and Addison?
3. Discuss the importance of Horace Walpole to Gothic Revival.
4. How is the term "Gothic" related to literature?
5. What Gothic romances constitute the bulk of Gothic literature in the eighteenth century?
6. Discuss the distinction between the Romance and the Novel made by Clara Reeve in her study of literary theory and practice *The Progress of Romance* (1785).
7. What are the characteristics of the setting of the early Gothic Romances?
8. Discuss and comment critic Coral Ann Howels' words that Gothic fiction offered to the eighteenth century readers "a retreat from insoluble problems, while at the same time it rendered their fears ultimately harmless by containing and distancing them in a fantasy."
9. What implications did the term "romance" carry to most English readers of the time?
10. What words became synonymous to the term "Gothic" at the end of the eighteenth century?

Useful Internet Addresses:

The Gothic Experience Page.

<http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/gothic/history.html>

The Literary Gothic: Web Guide to Gothic literature.

http://www.litgothic.com/index_fl.html

Reeve, Clara. *The Old English Baron*.

http://www.litgothic.com/Texts/old_english_baron.html

Voller, Jack G. "Matthew Lewis". The Literary Gothic.

<http://www.litgothic.com/Authors/lewis.html>

Voller, Jack G. "Clara Reeve". The Literary Gothic.

<http://www.litgothic.com/Authors/reeve.html>

Walpole, Horace. *The Castle of Otranto*.

<http://www.bibliomania.com/0/0/331/2422/frameset.html>

2. THE SUBLIME

In addition to our discussion about the “Gothic”, in order to fully understand the aesthetic context of the eighteenth century, we have to mention such notions as the Sublime, the Picturesque and even the Romantic. No topic of aesthetic enquiry in the period generated greater interest than the Sublime.

The theory of sublimity was more or less derived from Longinus or, as S. Monk calls it, “the pseudo-Longinian”¹ treatise, *Peri Hupsodus*, known for over two centuries as Longinus, *On the Sublime* which came to England from France in Boileau’s translation in 1674. It was in *On the Sublime* that the eighteenth century found ideas that inspired a host of writings examining nature, objects and effects of the sublime, the key aesthetic work of the period being Edmund Burke’s *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). In the Preface to the first edition of the *Enquiry*, Burke noted that “no exact theory of our passions, or a knowledge of their genuine sources”² existed. Moreover, he observed that the ideas of the Sublime and the beautiful were frequently confounded, and that even Longinus had “comprehended things extremely repugnant to each other, under one common name of the Sublime” (p. 39). For Burke, the category of the Beautiful was characterized by its smallness, smoothness, delicacy and gradual variation. It evoked love and tenderness in contrast to vast, magnificent and obscure objects which produced awe and terror, or the Sublime. According to his aesthetics, obscurity – the unknown – is the most fecund source of sublime terror. He writes: “To make something very terrible obscurity seems in general to be necessary” (p. 58), and adds that “A clear idea is [...] another name for a little idea” (p. 63). From what has been written above we may state that the keystone of Burke’s aesthetic is emotion, and the foundation of his theory of sublimity is the emotion of terror:

Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime, that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling [...] terror is in all cases whatsoever, either more openly or latently the ruling principle of the Sublime (p. 39).

It is interesting to note that for Burke, terror – fear of pain – was a terror mixed with a paradoxical delight. Ostensibly, this was because the sublime observer is not actually threatened. Safety in the midst of danger produces a thrilling pleasure.

Burke also discusses power by saying: "I know of nothing sublime which is not some modification of power" (p. 64). However, the idea of power and of fear resulting from a superior force had long before the eighteenth century been associated with sublimity. Even before Burke the power of an angry God expressing His wrath through nature had been considered as the supreme source of the Sublime.

Burke speaks of vastness ("Greatness of dimension is a powerful source of the sublime" (p. 72), infinity ("Infinity has a tendency to fill the mind with that sort of delightful horror which is the most genuine effect, and truest test of the sublime"(p.73) and difficulty ("Another source of greatness is difficulty. When any work seems to have required immense force and labour to effect it the idea is grand" (p. 77) as other sources of the Sublime.

Stefan Morawski points out that Burke's concept of the Sublime was largely accepted in the second half of the eighteenth century even by such celebrities as Reynolds, Johnson, Beattie and Blair. In Morawski's opinion, Burke's *Enquiry* is the best example of the British aesthetic thought in the period between neo-classicism and romanticism.³

Developing Burke's ideas and synthesizing the aesthetic concepts which had been current throughout the eighteenth century, Immanuel Kant in the *Critique of Judgement* (1790) created a philosophical system for the explanation of the Sublime and the Beautiful finding a place for these concepts in his larger system of aesthetic theories.

Kant discusses the Sublime in Part I, Book II of the *Critique of Judgement*, where he isolates the aesthetic experience, showing that the pleasure that we feel in the Sublime and the Beautiful does not result from any cognition of concepts,⁴ but presupposes a "judgment of reflection." Following the fashion of his century, Kant discusses aesthetic judgement from two points of view – the Sublime and the Beautiful:

But there are also remarkable differences between the two. The beautiful in nature is connected with the form of the object, which consists in having [definite] boundaries. The sublime, on the other hand, is to be found in a formless object, so far as in it or by occasion of it *boundlessness* is represented, and yet its totality is also present to thought. Thus the beautiful seems to be

regarded as the presentation of an indefinite concept of understanding, the sublime as that of a like concept of reason. Therefore the satisfaction in the one case is bound up with the representation of *quality*, in the other with that of *quantity* [...] But the inner and most important distinction between the sublime and beautiful is, certainly, as follows. [...] Natural beauty (which is independent) brings with it a purposiveness in its form by which the objects seems to be, as it were, preadapted to our judgment, and thus constitutes in itself an object of satisfaction. On the other hand, that which excites in us, without any reasoning about it, but in the mere apprehension of it, the feeling of the sublime may appear, as regards its form, to violate purpose in respect of the judgment, to be unsuited to our presentative faculty, and as it were to do violence to the imagination; and yet it is judged to be only the more sublime.⁵

The purpose of Kant's philosophy was to defend the existence of a *priori* concepts. In his aesthetics, Kant's purpose is to justify the *a priori* against the merely empirical. It brings Kant to a contention as, S. Monk notes, that "rests upon his recognition of the fundamental volitional and intuitional characteristics of man, such as the absolute authority of the call of duty and the absolute character of the aesthetic judgment."⁶

Discussing the Kantian sublime in his *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*, Jean-Francois Lyotard notes the following: "The sublime feeling is an emotion, a violent emotion, close to unreason, which forces thought to extremes of pleasure and displeasure, from joyous exaltation to terror; the sublime feeling is as tightly strung between ultraviolet and infrared as respect is white."⁷ And later he states, "The sublime feeling is neither moral universality nor aesthetic universalization, but is, rather, the destruction of one by the other in the violence of their differend. This differend cannot demand, even subjectively, to be communicated to all thought."⁸

Kant's point of view has a certain relationship with modes of thought in the romantic era. The study of the Sublime permits one to observe the gradual domination of the standards that characterize the romantic age of English literature. Burke's and Kant's ideas are summed up and nicely reflected in S. T. Coleridge's words:

When I enter A Greek church, my eye is charmed, and my mind elated; I feel exalted and proud that I am a man. But the Gothic art is sublime. On entering a cathedral, I am filled with devotion and with awe; I am lost to the actualities that surround me, and my whole being expands into infinite; earth and air, nature and art, all swell up into eternity, and the only sensible impression left is 'that I am nothing!'⁹

As Fred Botting rightly points out, Gothic and sublime objects also participated in a transformation of notions of individuality, in the mind's relation to itself as well as to natural, cultural and metaphysical worlds.¹⁰ John Baillies' *An Essay on the Sublime* (1747) may serve as a good example of what the sublime meant for an individual's sense of self:

Hence comes the Name of Sublime to everything which thus Raises the Mind to fits of Greatness and disposes it to soar Above her Mother Earth; Hence arises that Exultation and Pride Which the Mind ever feels from the Consciousness of its own Vastness – That Object only can be justly called Sublime, which In some degree disposes the Mind to this Enlargement of itself, And gives her a lofty Conception of her own Powers.¹¹

Thus, we may suppose that the greatness of the Sublime offered intimation of a great power which, in its turn, became the mirror of the power of the human mind and imagination. Gothic romances which drew on the wildness and grandeur of nature for their inspiration and Graveyard poetry elevating the mind to ideas of wonder and divinity, partook of the Sublime.

It seems relevant in this connection to mention that Burke's ideas generated a great interest within the literary circles of the time and found a reflection in contemporary writing. In her essay *On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror*, Ann Laetitia Aikin (later known as Mrs. Barbauld) had set out to explore a "paradox of the heart": "the apparent delight with which we dwell upon objects of pure terror." According to Aikin, the unknown produces the most intense experience of aesthetic terror. She argues that the agony of "suspense," the "irresistible desire of satisfying curiosity," is more painful than the emotional discomfort of observing events transpire, with the result that we avidly dwell upon objects of pure terror "rather than turn away, wondering":

A strange and unexpected event awakens the mind, and keeps it on the stretch; and where the agency of invisible beings is introduced, of 'forms unseen, and mightier far than we,' our imagination, darting forth, explores with rapture the new world which is laid open to its view, and rejoices in the expansion of its powers. Passion and fancy cooperating elevate the soul to its highest pitch; and the pain of terror is lost in amazement. Hence the more wild, fanciful and extraordinary are the circumstances of a scene of horror, the more pleasure we receive from it.¹²

It is interesting to compare Aikin's thoughts with Edmund Burke's; for he insists that "when danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible, but at certain distances, and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are delightful, as we every day experience" (p. 40).¹³

Ann Radcliffe, in her turn, differentiates between the "false" Sublime of horror and the "true" Sublime of terror. In 1826 the *New Monthly Magazine* posthumously published Radcliffe's "On the Supernatural in Poetry." Presented as a dialogue between two speakers "Mr. S." and a person named just "W" who, according to Robert Miles,¹⁴ represents Radcliffe's views, "On the Supernatural in Poetry" sets out the aesthetic justification of Radcliffe's art, directly attacking the sore subject of her imitators and the infamous shudder-novels. She argues that terror is characterized by "obscurity" or indeterminacy in its treatment of potentially horrible events; it is this indeterminacy that leads the reader toward the Sublime. Horror, in contrast, "nearly annihilates" the reader's responsive capacity with its unambiguous displays of atrocity. Terror thus creates an intangible atmosphere of spiritual psychic dread, a certain superstitious shudder at the other world. Horror appeals to sheer dread and repulsion, by brooding upon the gloomy and the sinister, and lacerates the nerves by establishing actual physical contact with the supernatural. Radcliffe writes:

Terror and horror are so far opposite, that the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them. I apprehend, that neither Shakespeare nor Milton by their fictions, nor Mr. Burke by his reasoning, anywhere looked to positive horror as a source of the sublime, though they all agree that terror is a very high one; and where lies the great difference between horror and terror, but in the uncertainty and obscurity, that accompany the first, respecting the dreaded evil.¹⁵

Radcliffe's discrimination between terror and horror in fact reveals the difference between her style of the Gothic, and, for example, that of Mathew G. Lewis. His fiction is full of horror. Nothing is left to a reader's imagination, all is explicitly shown. Hers, rather, is an art of suggestion, very little is shown. Terror occurs more in the minds of characters than in reality, whereas in Lewis' novel terror literally mutilates his characters' bodies.¹⁶

Notes

- ¹ Samuel H. Monk, *The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-Century England*. The University of Michigan Press, 1960, p. 10.
- ² Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. London and New York, 1958, p. 1. Subsequent page references to this text will be given in parentheses following quotations.
- ³ Stefan Morawski, "Swiatopoglad i estetyka Burke'a". *Archiwum Historii Filozofii i Mysli Spoolecznej*, t. 17, 1971, pp. 286–300; Stefan Morawski, "Teoria Estetyczna E. Burke'a," in *Studia z historii mysli estetycznej XVIII I XIX wieku*. Warszawa, 1961, pp.19–50.
- ⁴ Samuel H. Monk, *The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-Century England*, p. 6.
- ⁵ I. Kant, *Critique of Judgement*. Translated, with an Introduction, by J. H. Bernard. Hafner Publishing Co. New York, 1951, pp. 82–83.
- ⁶ Samuel H. Monk, *The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-Century England*, p. 4.
- ⁷ Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*. Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1994, p. 228.
- ⁸ Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*, p.239. Also see Peter Fenves, "Taking Stock of the Kantian Sublime". *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol.28, Number 1, Fall 1994, pp. 74–78.
- ⁹ S.T. Coleridge, "General Character of the Gothic Literature and Art", delivered 1818, collected by Raysor, 1936, pp. 11–12.
- ¹⁰ Fred Botting, *Gothic*, Routledge, London and New York, 1996, p. 40.
- ¹¹ John Baillie, *An Essay on the Sublime (1747)*, Augustan Reprint Society 43, University of California, 1953, p. 4.
- ¹² A.L. Aikin and J. Aikin, *Miscellaneous Pieces, in Prose*. London: J.Johnson, 1773, p. 120, p. 123, p. 125. Also see Robert Miles, *Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress*, Manchester University Press, 1995, p. 47.
- ¹³ The paradox of delight in witnessing suffering as Burke presents it is also discussed by Walter John Hipple, Jr. *The Beautiful, The Sublime and The Picturesque in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetic Theory*. The Southern Illinois University Press, 1957, pp. 87–90.
- ¹⁴ R. Miles, *Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress*, p.46.
- ¹⁵ Ann Radcliffe, "On the Supernatural in Poetry", *New Monthly Magazine*, vol. 16, 1826, pp. 149–150.
- ¹⁶ Here we have in mind Mathew G. Lewis' book *The Monk* (1796) where extreme violence abounds. The scene from *The Monk* where Agnes awakes in the convent crypt with the putrefying body of her dead baby and hears the monk Ambrosio rape and murder his sister may serve as one of many examples of horror scenes which abound shudder-novels.

Suggested study questions for further discussion:

1. Why is Edmund Burke's treatise *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* important in order to understand Gothic aesthetics?
2. What are the key concepts of Burke's aesthetics?
3. What is the source of the Sublime according to Burke?
4. What is the main difference between the Beautiful and the Sublime?
5. How can the category of the Beautiful be characterized?
6. What emotions does the Sublime evoke in the person experiencing it?
7. What is the most fecund source of sublime terror?
8. Define the emotion of terror in Burkeian terms. Discuss the sources of the Sublime.
9. In her essay *On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror* Ann Laetitia Aikin (later known as Mrs. Barbauld) speaks of a "paradox of the heart", i.e. "the apparent delight with which we dwell upon objects of pure terror." Discuss it.
10. What is the difference between horror and terror according to the eighteenth-century Gothic writer Ann Radcliffe?

Useful Internet Addresses:

Aikin, Anna Letitia (later Barbauld) and John Aikin. "On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror, with Sir Bertrand, a Fragment"

<http://www.english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Etexts/barbauldessays.html>

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<http://vos.ucsb.edu/browse.asp?id=317#id224>

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<http://burke.classicauthors.net/SublimeandBeautiful/>

Burnham, Douglas. "Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Theory of Aesthetics and Teleology (*The Critique of Judgment*)"

<http://www.iep.utm.edu/k/kantaest.htm#SH2c>

Crowther, Paul. *The Kantian Sublime: From Morality to Art*.

<http://oxfordscholarship.com/oso/public/content/philosophy/9780198239314/toc.html>

"Kant's Aesthetics and Teleology". Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-aesthetics/#2.7>

Landow, George P. *The Sublime*.

<http://www.victorianweb.org/philosophy/sublime/index.html>

Radcliffe, Ann. *On The Supernatural in Poetry*.

<http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/gothic/radcliffe1.html>

3. THE TASTE FOR THE PICTURESQUE

Edmund Burke in his *Enquiry* distinguishes two aesthetic categories, the Sublime and the Beautiful. As Martin Price notes, "By reducing the beautiful from a comprehensive aesthetic term to the name of a limited and lesser experience, Burke opened the way for others to identify new aesthetic categories."¹ William Gilpin (1724–1804), next, attempted to establish the Picturesque as a third category. We may even speak about the aesthetics of the Picturesque or the taste for picturesqueness which flourished during the late years of the eighteenth century.

The word "Picturesque" came to the English language from French in the later decades of the seventeenth century. In 1685 William Aglionby had said of free and natural execution in painting: "This the Italians call working A la pittoresk, that is boldly"² – a usage strikingly like that of the picturesque school a century later. In 1705 the word was used by Richard Steele in the sense "after the manner of painters,"³ though the manner discussed was most probably allegorical and academic. In the early decades of the eighteenth century, "picturesque" usually bore, as Hipple notes, one of two meanings: when applied to literary style, it meant "vivid", "graphic"; when applied to scenes in nature, and sometimes when applied to imitations of these on canvas or in words, it meant "eminently suitable for pictorial representation"⁴ as affording a well-composed picture, with suitably varied and harmonized form, colours, and lights.

Although "picturesque" was not included in Johnson's dictionary, it was already included in the Supplement published in 1803 by George Mason. In the Supplement "picturesque" is explained as "What pleases the eye; remarkable for singularity; striking the imagination with the force of painting; to be expressed in painting; affording a good subject for landscape; proper to take a landscape form."⁵

It was William Gilpin, who made the "picturesque" the key term of the new aesthetic attitude of which he was himself the earliest exponent. The "venerable founder and master of the picturesque school,"⁶ Gilpin exerted a profound and lasting influence upon the taste not only in England but also in Europe. In his *Essay on Prints* (1768), Gilpin discusses the picturesque beauty in its various aspects of composition, lighting, drawing, expression, execution, etc. Gilpin precedes his *Essay* by an "Explanation of Terms," in which picturesque is defined as "a

term expressive of that peculiar kind of beauty, which is agreeable in a picture.⁷ In addition to the term "picturesque," Gilpin also has the term "Picturesque grace," which is "an agreeable form which may be given even to clownish figure."⁸ These two definitions mean that the Picturesque was sometimes seen as a quality in a scene which the painter obtained when transforming an ugly or mean or unpleasant object into a pleasing picture.

In "On Picturesque Beauty", one of *Three Essays* published in 1792, modifying his earlier definition of the Picturesque, William Gilpin attempted to differentiate between the Beautiful and the Picturesque.

Burke had linked the Beautiful with smoothness. Polemicizing with Burke, Gilpin suggested that the essential characteristics of the Picturesque was roughness, irregularity and variety. Gilpin writes:

How far Mr. Burke may be right in making smoothness the most considerable source of beauty I rather doubt. [...] we do not scruple to assert that roughness forms the most essential point of difference between the beautiful and the Picturesque, as it seems to be that particular quality which makes objects chiefly pleasing in painting. I use the general term *roughness*, but properly speaking roughness relates only to the surfaces of bodies; when we speak of their delineation, we use the word *ruggedness*. Both ideas, however, equally enter into the Picturesque, and both are observable in the smaller as well as in the larger parts of nature – in the outline and bark of a tree, as in the rude summit and craggy sides of a mountain.⁹

Gilpin finds picturesque beauty in different natural scenes, expressing an appreciation of the scenery of vapour, fog and mists in different atmospheres and lights. In Edward Malins' opinion, Gilpin's sources of pleasure in seeking the Picturesque are threefold: he feels that a follower of picturesque beauty must also be an admirer of the beauty of moral virtue; he senses excitement in the novelty and change which continually take place in the natural scene, and enjoys sketching it.¹⁰ Gilpin states that the woodland scene is the most perishable; yet with buildings, their perishable quality is an advantage, as ruins are among the richest legacies of art, having more picturesqueness in tonal and textural qualities given them by time than any other feature of landscape. In his essay Gilpin asks, "Is there a greatest ornament of landscape than the ruins of the castle?" (p.1055) and produces imaginary sketches displaying the advantages of a ruined construction (see Appendix II). A ruin ivy – clad and mouldering, showing the triumph of nature over man's endeavours,

the quintessence of melancholy satisfied an emotional demand of the time for historical colour and excitement, connected with the growing cult of the Gothic. It is interesting to note that though William Gilpin (despite the sketches) was not in favour of creating ruins as a picturesque accent in parks and gardens, the later decades of the eighteenth century witnessed the fashion of this phenomenon. We read in Garrick and Colman's *Clandestine Marriage* (1766):

Sterling: I'll only show his Lordship my ruins, and the cascade,
and the Chinese bridge, and then we'll go to breakfast.
Lord Ogleby: Your Ruins, did you say, Mr. Sterling?
Sterling: Ay, ruins, my Lord! And they are reckoned very fine
ones too. You would think them ready to tumble on your head. It
has just cost me a hundred and fifty pounds, to put my ruins in
thorough repair. This way, if your Lordship pleases.¹¹

The other two influential theorists of the Picturesque were sir Uvedale Price (1747–1829) and Richard Payne Knight (1750–1824) who discussing and arguing different aspects of the Picturesque brought the theory to its full. As it was already mentioned above, rough objects, according to Gilpin, produced variety and contrast, light and shade, and rich colouring. In the same way Uvedale Price looked for "intricacy" in his *Essay on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1794–1798). "The two opposite qualities of roughness and sudden variation", Price wrote, "joined to that of irregularity, are the most efficient causes of the picturesque."¹² In Pevsner's opinion, "Price wishes to stress the stimulating power and the piquancy of sudden contrasts."¹³ Thus, the cow was preferred to the horse as a subject for pencil; ruined buildings were better than those in good condition; and cart tracks with ruts were considered more picturesque than smooth roads.

Richard Payne Knight's poem *The Landscape, a Didactic Poem in Three Books. Addressed to Uvedale Price, Esq.*, appeared early in 1794. Advocating roughness and variety it attacked the smooth and bare landscapes of the gardener Capability Brown and his followers. In Book 2 Knight gives practical advice for his ideal landscape, after first lamenting what has been done:

Oft when I've seen some lonely mansion stand,
Fresh from th' improver's desolating hand
'Midst shaven lawns, that far around it creep

In one eternal undulating sweep;
 And scatter'd clumps, that nod at one another,
 Each stiffly waving to its formal brother;
 Tir'd with th'extensive scene, so dull and bare,
 To Heav'n devoutly I've addressed my pray'r –
 Again the moss-grown terraces to raise,
 And spread the labyrinth's perplexing maze;
 Replace in even lines the ductile yew,
 And plant again the ansient avenue.
 Some features then, at least, we should obtain,
 To mark this flat, insipid, waving plain;
 Some vary'd tints and forms would intervene,
 To break this uniform, eternal green.¹⁴

In general, Knight operated more in terms of light and colour; for Knight the Picturesque was the ability to see an object purely for its visual effect, to isolate its pictorial qualities. On April 13 of 1777 Knight wrote of the ruins at Paestrum: "The colour is a whitish yellow, which merges here and there into shades of greyish blue. The weather has attacked the stone, which is overgrown with moss and weeds, and neither blackened by smoke, nor rendered hideous by recent additions, as is the wont of ruins in Rome. Thus it is that the tints affect the eye in a fashion at once harmonious, pleasing, and picturesque."¹⁵

Once the appeal of the Picturesque is given moral and religious grounds, we may say that the Picturesque moves toward the Sublime. Already in Gilpin's writings we find the suggestion that the aesthetic and moral may get into conflict: the idle man or the bandit is pictorially more interesting than the industrious citizen, the ruined abbey or the terrible castle may appeal to the picturesque eye more than the busy center of parish life or the peaceful homestead. Gilpin states that the picturesque scenes require men doing "for what in real life they are despised – loitering idly about, without employment."¹⁶ Uvendale Price shared Gilpin's views and noted that a thunderstorm, ship catastrophe or the eruption of the volcano may provide the picturesque scenery.

As Watson notes,¹⁷ it is not difficult to see why the Picturesque was a pervasive movement of taste in the eighteenth century. In the age which was discovering the spreading scene, it provided an equipment for estimating the qualities of a view, and gave the exploring traveller some idea of what to look for (which actually was later laughed at by Jane Austen in *Sense and Sensibility* and *Northanger Abbey*). Moreover,

its characteristics worked in two directions to satisfy the emotional and intellectual demands of the time. In one sense it was neo-classical in the way in which it looked back to a tradition of ideal landscape, the painters and poets. On the other hand, it encouraged descriptive writing, served as the setting of Gothic fiction and looked forward to the romantic movement in its recognition of the power of nature in such things as evening scenes, and its love of abruptness and variety.

Notes

- ¹ Martin Price, "The Picturesque Moment." *From Sensibility to Romanticism. Essays Presented to Frederick A. Pottle*. Ed. Frederick W. Hilles and Harold Bloom. Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 262.
- ² See Walter John Hipple, Jr. *The Beautiful, The Sublime and The Picturesque in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetic Theory*. The Southern Illinois University Press, 1957. p. 185.
- ³ Walter John Hipple, Jr. *The Beautiful, The Sublime, and The Picturesque in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetic Theory*, p. 185.
- ⁴ Walter John Hipple, Jr. *The Beautiful, The Sublime, and The Picturesque in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetic Theory*, p. 186.
- ⁵ See K. Atorova, The Afterword to Ann Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest*, Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*. Moscow, Raduga Publishers, 1983, p. 447.
- ⁶ Hipple, *The Beautiful, The Sublime, and The Picturesque in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetic Theory*, p. 102. Also see Alina Kowalczykova, *Pejzaż romantyczny*. Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków, 1982, pp. 21–24.
- ⁷ J. R. Watson. *Picturesque Landscape and English Romantic Poetry*. London, Hutchinson Educational, 1970, p.19.
- ⁸ J. R. Watson. *Picturesque Landscape and English Romantic Poetry*, p. 19
- ⁹ William Gilpin, "On Picturesque Beauty". *Eighteenth-Century Critical Essays*. Ed. Scott Elledge. Vol. 2. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1961, p. 1048.
- ¹⁰ E. Malins, *English Landscaping and Literature 1660–1840*. London, Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 146.
- ¹¹ Bronson, Bertrand H. "The Retreat from Reason", in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, Vol. 2. Ed. By Harold E. Pagliaro. The Press of Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland and London, 1972, p. 231.
- ¹² Quoted in J. R. Watson, *Picturesque Landscape and English Romantic Poetry*, p. 20.
- ¹³ J. R. Watson, *Picturesque Landscape and English Romantic Poetry*, p. 20.
- ¹⁴ Quoted in E. Malins, *English Landscaping and Literature 1660–1840*, p. 148.
- ¹⁵ N. Pevsner, "Richard Payne Knight". *The Art Bulletin*, XXI, 1949, reprinted in *Studies in Art, Architecture and Design*, pp. 109–25.

- ¹⁶ Martin Price. "The Picturesque Moment." *From Sensibility to Romanticism*, 1965, p. 281.
- ¹⁷ J. R. Watson, *Picturesque Landscape and English Romantic Poetry*, p. 21.

Suggested study questions for further discussion:

1. William Gilpin established the Picturesque as a third aesthetic category (alongside with the Beautiful and the Sublime). In his *Essay on Prints* (1768), Gilpin speaks of the picturesque beauty in its various aspects. Discuss the characteristics of the Picturesque as presented by Gilpin.
2. Gilpin attempted to differentiate between the Beautiful and the Picturesque. Discuss the difference.
3. Gilpin speaks of ruins as the greatest ornament of landscape. Why is it so?
4. Discuss the relation between the aesthetic category of the Picturesque and the growing cult of the Gothic. How can you relate it to Gothic literature?
5. Discuss the influence of Sir Uvedale Price (1747 – 1829) and Richard Payne Knight (1750 - 1824) on the theory of the Picturesque.

Useful Internet Addresses:

Gilpin, William. *An Essay on Prints*.

http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=QMknAAAAYAAJ&cdq=gilpin,+Essay+on+Prints&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=MfdlGMoPfr&sig=8S0zg81p-kkJ5j0T3Im-haWJurQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=1&ct=result

Gilpin, William. *Mission of the North American People, Geographical, Social, and Political*. <http://www.hti.umich.edu/cgi/b/bib/bibperm?q1=aBL0942>

Gilpin, William. *On Picturesque Travel*. From *Three Essays on Picturesque Beauty*, 2nd edition (1794). <http://www.ualberta.ca/%7Edmiall/Travel/gilpine2.htm>

Internet Archive Search: "Gilpin, William, 1724-1804" William Gilpin, *Observations, relative chiefly to picturesque beauty, made in the year 1776, on several parts of Great Britain; particularly the High-lands of Scotland*. (Volume 1) <http://www.archive.org/search.php?query=creator%3A%22Gilpin%2C%20William%2C%201724-1804%22>

Price, Uvedale. *On the Picturesque*. On-Line Philosophy Resources. <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/depts/philosophy/awaymave/onlineresources/price1.htm>

PART II

**The Interpretation of
Space in Ann Radcliffe's
Fiction**



INTRODUCTION TO PART II

THE INTERPRETATION OF SPACE IN GOTHIC FICTION

The aim of Part II is to examine the functions of literary space and the possible meanings it implies in Gothic fiction in general and in Ann Radcliffe's (1764-1823) fiction in particular. When we speak of Gothic fiction, in the first place we have in mind Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron* (1778), Ann Radcliffe's *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789), *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), *The Italian or the Confessional of the Black Penitents* (1797), and Mathew G. Lewis' *The Monk* (1796). Juri Lotman's semiotic approach to space in a literary work is especially useful for the present analysis which is based on the following works: *Struktura khudozhestvennogo teksta* (1971), "The Origin of Plot in the Light of Typology" (1973), *Universe of the Mind* (1990), and *Izbrannye statji v trekh tomakh* (1992).

Lotman speaks about the "plot-space" which "is inhabited" by all kinds of connected and contrasted characters. According to Lotman, "characters can be divided into mobile ones who are free to move about the plot-space, capable of changing their position in the structure of the artistic world, and of crossing the frontier which is the basic topological feature of that space; and immobile ones who are in fact functions of that space"¹. The elementary course of events in a "plot-space" can be reduced as follows: entry into a closed space – exit from it. Since a closed space can be interpreted as "a cave", "a grave", "a house", "a woman" and so may be endowed with the features of darkness, dampness or warmth, entry into it can be interpreted on different levels as "death", "conception" or "return home." Among the universal themes Lotman distinguishes an important opposition of home and anti-home. Thus, in Gothic fiction home means an internal, closed space, the source of security, harmony and creativity; anti-home belongs to the devil, destruction and death:

Home	Anti-home (Castle or its equivalent)
order	chaos
good	evil
good parents	anti-parents
liberty	confinement

clarity	obscurity
happiness	terror
security	danger

Most Gothic novels, especially Ann Radcliffe's, have a three-part division, i.e. they are usually constructed of a series of closed spaces: there is an introductory section, taking place at the heroine's home, which serves as a place of protection to her; then the major portion, which occurs in a villain's castle, and then the final section, which is the heroine's return to the secure world of her home. Thus, such novels have a frame composition: the central, or the Gothic, world is framed by the opening and closing idyllic and sentimental worlds.

Other significant oppositions important for Lotman's poetics are the following: "up(ward)–down(ward)", "right–left", "closed–open", "internal–external", "known (of one's own kind)–unknown (strange)", "inclusive (including "me")–exclusive (excluding "me")", "warmth–coldness", "order–chaos", "close–far away", "good–evil", "light–darkness," etc.².

The boundary or frontier is also very important. It separates the above mentioned oppositions defining the place of an object/subject on one or the other side of the boundary³. In his article "The Origin of Plot in the Light of Typology", Lotman states: "Looked at typologically, the initial situation is that a certain plot-space is divided by a single boundary into an internal and an external sphere, and a single character has the opportunity to cross that boundary"⁴. Depending on which side of the boundary the object/subject is, different moral and/or ethical connotations are applied to it.

It is interesting to note that this "plot-space" is observed and felt from the perspective of a certain "centre of orientation": the hero's or the heroine's⁵. In Ann Radcliffe's novels this centre of orientation is the heroine, who moves from one closed space to another, and whose movement constitutes the plots of the novels. According to Lotman, a hero or a heroine is the element in a piece of a literary work which is capable of moving from one closed space to another, capable of crossing boundaries of different kind⁶. Ann Radcliffe's heroine, unprotected and helpless (an archetypal Gothic heroine) is thrust from her closed world of the past into the Gothic nightmare by some outside forces: the threat of a forced marriage, the will of irresponsible and vain relatives after the death of heroine's parents, etc. The linear movement from one closed

space to another (from home to the nightmare world of the Gothic castle and back through the picturesque landscape), serves as a transitional link. At the same time, the description of landscape has another purpose: the heroine's reactions to the picturesque environment mirror her state of mind, and nature personifies her emotions. In addition to this, as Elizabeth MacAndrew notices, the heroine's "travels are symbolic journeys between different worlds that represent different states of mind she must confront and understand, whether they are in herself or in others"⁷. Moreover, Gothic heroines act, in Alison Milbank's words, as "moral focus and catalyst"⁸: other characters are judged by their behaviour towards them.

As it has been mentioned above, the heroine moves from one closed space to another; i.e. from her home to the Gothic castle where she becomes confined by the Gothic villain. In the end, the heroine escapes the Gothic castle unharmed and, all misunderstandings clarified, marries her hero. The heroine's circular journey brings her back home, to the pastoral retreat from the evils of the world where her suitor now substitutes for her father.

The cyclicity is emphasized by the fact that the heroine returns to her home place a year later. One year is in fact a short period of time; it is the narrative that makes it seem interminably long. The narrative thus both creates a sense of time and delays it. By so doing it creates the illusion that change occurs organically, as part of the natural seasonal rhythm of change, which following Lévi-Strauss, may be called "cyclical-temporal motion"⁹.

In conclusion, literary space in Gothic fiction may be interpreted as a system on which different world models, including ethical, may be built. It becomes possible to give a moral identity to characters depending on the type of the literary space they belong to (the good characters belong to the heroine's and hero's world, the bad ones – to the Gothic world). Such literary space, then, turns into a spatial-ethical metaphor.

Notes:

- ¹ Yuri Lotman, *The Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*. Indiana University Press: Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1990, p. 157.
- ² Yuri Lotman, *Izbrannyje statji v trex tomax*, T. 1., Tallinn: "Aleksandra", 1992, pp. 390–399.
- ³ Yuri Lotman, *Struktura khudozhestvennogo teksta*. Brown University Press, 971, p. 278.

- 4 Yuri Lotman, "The Origin of Plot in the Light of Typology". *Stat'i po tipologii kul'tury*, 2, Tartu, 1973, pp. 9–41. Trans. Julian Graffy, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, London University. Accessed 9 November, 2008.
<http://www.zbi.ee/~kalevi/LotmanPlot.htm>
- 5 Richard Handke, "Unaocznianie przestrzeni w epice a jej percepcja w dramacie". *Przestrzen i literatura*, Wrocław, 1978, p. 46.
- 6 Y. Lotman, *Izbrannyje stat'ji v trex tomax*, T. 1, p. 391.
- 7 Elizabeth MacAndrew, *The Gothic Tradition in Fiction*. New York Columbia University Press, 1977, p. 132.
- 8 Alison Milbank, *Daughters of the House: Modes of the Gothic in Victorian Fiction*. Macmillan, 1992, p. 82.
- 9 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Mythologiques*, 3. Paris, Plon, 1968, pp. 102–106.

Suggested study questions for further discussion:

1. Yuri Lotman distinguishes different types of characters which inhabit a "plot space". What are the characteristics of mobile and immobile characters?
2. What is the elementary course of events in a "plot-space"?
3. How can a closed space be interpreted and what features may it be endowed with?
4. Among the universal themes Lotman distinguishes an important opposition of home and anti-home. What are the characteristics of home and anti-home?
5. What is the meaning of the boundary in a plot-space?
6. What is the basic composition of Ann Radcliffe's novels?
7. What is the center of orientation in Ann Radcliffe's novels?
8. What are the characteristics of an archetypal Gothic heroine?
9. What purpose does the description of landscape serve in Ann Radcliffe's fiction?
10. Discuss the opposition "home – castle".

Useful Internet Addresses:

Lotman, Y. "The Origin of Plot in the Light of Typology".
<http://www.zbi.ee/~kalevi/LotmanPlot.htm>

Lotman, J. *On the Semiosphere*.
<http://www.ut.ee/SOSE/sss/Lotman331.pdf>

The Literary Gothic.
http://www.litgothic.com/index_fl.html

"Radcliffe, Ann". The Literary Gothic.
<http://www.litgothic.com/Authors/radcliffe.html>

4. HOME AS A PROTECTIVE ENCLOSURE

4.1. Home as a Retreat and Protection

It is a common knowledge that a home and a house are important spatial symbols. "The house is one's own space," – Lotman notes, – "a place that is familiar and at the same time enclosed and protected; [...] This is the world of human personality, a world that stands up to the elements and to anything which belittles and denigrates the life of the individual."¹ The importance of the house and home is especially reflected in women's fiction where it functions as one of the main images. In the eighteenth century, with the increasing wealth of the middle classes, a new concern for domesticity and the home as a place of comfort and convenience appeared. As Birgitta Berglund notes in her book *Woman's Whole Existence*,

[...] along with the separation of home from workplace, the new privacy within the home, and the increased attention to domestic comfort, went increasing expectations of the home as a place of happiness, and an idealization of the home as a place of peace and harmony.²

The idealization of a woman as the guardian of these values was closely connected with this idea about the home. Jane Spencer comments in this connection,

The increasing separation of home from workplace in the late seventeenth century and eighteenth century laid the foundations for new bourgeois ideology of femininity, according to which women were very separate, special creatures [...]. In the eighteenth century [...] women were more highly valued, but also more confined to a special feminine sphere, as guardians of the home and of moral and emotional values.³

It is quite natural, then, that Ann Radcliffe starts and finishes her novels, especially the most famous ones, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, *The Italian*, and *The Romance of the Forest* with the description of the heroine's home. The very first words of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* are the following:

On the pleasant banks of the Garonne, in the province of Gascony, stood, in the year 1584, the chateau of Monsieur St. Aubert. From its windows were seen the pastoral landscapes of Guienne and Gascony, stretching along the river, gay with luxuriant woods and vines, and plantations of olives (MU, p. 1).

As it is seen from the passage quoted right above, Ann Radcliffe establishes the house as the focus of her description. Critics notice that instead of seeing the house within the landscape, Radcliffe makes the reader see the landscape from within the house: "From its windows were seen". In this way the writer seems to indicate the importance of the house making the landscape to be seen as an attribute or an extension to the house, existing in relation to the house and probably subordinate to it.

Moreover, Radcliffe's descriptions of place, as Birgitta Berglund notices⁴, never serve merely to tell the reader just what things are. They almost always have a symbolic function within the structure of the novel. La Vallee (Emily's home in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*) with its beautiful and picturesque countryside stands for the cloistered and sentimental world of the heroine's happy childhood, i.e. for her idyllic past. The heroine lives in harmony with nature and her loving parents in this Edenic world of innocence presided over by the wise and benevolent Monsieur St. Aubert, who

endeavoured, therefore, to strengthen her mind; to endure her to habits of self-command; to teach her to reject the first impulse of her feelings, and to look, with cool examination, upon the disappointments he sometimes threw in her way (MU, p.5).

There, in La Vallee, she is prepared for life in society. Emily's education, supervised by her father, involves, as Maggie Kilgour notices, "learning to find a middle course of balanced self-government, in which sentiment is not repressed into a cold, unfeeling stoicism but controlled by the higher faculty of reason."⁵ Mr. St. Aubert teaches Emily that "happiness arises in a state of peace, not of tumult. It is of a temperate and uniform nature, and can no more exist in a heart, that is continually alive to minute circumstances, than in one that is dead to feeling" (MU, p. 80). Away from the corruption of society, in, using M. Kilgour's words, "a never-never world"⁶ where harmony between parents and child, humans and nature reigns, the heroine spends the happy days of her childhood.

In the description of the heroine's home, Ann Radcliffe expresses, as it has been mentioned above, a contemporary concern for domesticity and the home as a place of comfort and convenience and a contemporary idealization of home as a place of harmony, a retreat from "the world"

where the relationship between the heroine's parents is that of the "dearest friends" which, in its turn, makes the basis for the "companionate marriage,"⁷ a new type of marriage which began appearing in the eighteenth century. The ideal example of the "companionate marriage" is described by the Duc de La Rochefoucauld in 1784:

Husband and wife are always together and share the same society. It is the rarest thing to meet the one without the other. The very richest people do not keep more than four or six carriage-horses, since they pay all their visits together. It would be more ridiculous to do otherwise in England than it would be to go everywhere with your wife in Paris. They always give the appearance of perfect harmony, and the wife in particular has an air of contentment which always gives me pleasure.⁸

Already in 1740 Wetenhall Wilkes published *A Letter of Genteel and Moral Advice to a Young Lady* in which he expressed the view of the married state as an "arena" of domestic happiness.

This state, with the affection suitable to it, is the completest image of heaven we can receive in this life; the greatest pleasures we can enjoy on earth are the freedoms of conversation with a bosom friend [...]. When two have chosen each other, out of all species, with a design to be each other's mutual comfort and entertainment, [...] all the satisfactions of the one must be doubled because the other partakes in them.⁹

As if echoing the contemporary ideas about the familial happiness, Ann Radcliffe portrays the heroine's father, Monsieur St. Aubert (*The Mysteries of Udolpho*) as the man who "loved to read, and to converse with Madame St. Aubert; or to play with his children, resigning himself to the influence of those sweet affections, which are ever attendant on simplicity and nature" (MU, p. 4).

"Simplicity" and "taste" are words that Radcliffe uses very often to characterize La Vallee and at the same time its people. From the very beginning of the novel Ann Radcliffe expresses the idea that houses reflect their owners, and "thus bear witness not only to their taste, but – since 'taste' was an absolute quality in the eighteenth century – to their characters and descriptions as well"¹⁰.

That houses reflect their owners is also obvious for the eighteenth century observer from Henry Fielding's descriptions of buildings in the five letters that he contributed to Sara's *Adventures of David Simple* (1744). A fictional Frenchman describes a journey up and down the

Thames in London. The first half of the letter is given over mainly to a visitor's perception of some of the principal buildings visible from the river. Past New Bridge, on the Middlesex side, they saw the palaces of three noblemen; the palaces which reflect both the position and character of their owners:

The Palaces of these three Noblemen, who do a real Honour to their high Rank, and who are greatly beloved and respected by their Country, are extremely elegant in their Buildings, as well as delightful in their Situation; and, to be sincere, are the only Edifices that discover any true Taste, which we saw in our Voyage.¹¹

The whole of Fielding's essay shows that Fielding's visitor does not look for structure or architectural ornament, and that he cares little for the cult of the classical order. Instead, he relates the buildings to the moral qualities of the people who own or occupy them.

In his book *The Civilized Imagination*, Daniel Cottom notices that taste is closely related to virtue and sensibility in Radcliffe's fiction:

Only a vulgar woman like Mme. Cheron will venture to assert that 'there's no accounting tastes' (MU, p. 111), while a proper character like M. St. Aubert will argue that virtue and taste "are nearly the same, for virtue is little more than active taste, and the most delicate affections of each continue in real love" (MU, pp. 49–50). A universal standard of aesthetic judgement is assumed to be inseparable from proper moral, social, and even political attitudes.¹²

Thus, from the description of Mr. St. Aubert's way of life we learn about his simple habits and simple pleasures, and at the same time his good taste. We read:

Mr. St. Aubert loved to wander, with his wife and daughter, on the margin of the Garonne, and to listen to the music that floated on its waves. He had known life in other forms than those of pastoral simplicity, having mingled in the gay and in the busy scenes of the world [...]. Yet, amidst the changing visions of life, his principles remained unshaken, his benevolence unchilled; and he retired from the multitude 'more in pity than in anger', to scenes of simple nature, to the pure delights of literature, and to the exercise of domestic values (MU, p. 1).

The house of St. Aubert's family is also described as "simple and elegant" (MU, p. 2), and finally we are told that "the same chaste simplicity was observable in the furniture, and in the few ornaments of the apartments, that characterized the manners of its inhabitants" (MU,

p. 2). The same idea about the heroine's home is expressed in *The Italian*. When Vivaldi, the male protagonist of the novel, observes Ellena's house, he draws conclusions about the characters of its inhabitants:

From the style of their residence, he imagined that they were persons of honourable, but moderate independence. The house was small, but exhibited an air of comfort, and even of taste. It stood on an eminence, surrounded by a garden and vineyards, which commanded the city and bay of Naples, an ever-moving picture, and was canopied by a thick grove of pines and majestic date-trees; and, though the little portico and colonnade in front were of common marble, the style of architecture was elegant. While they afforded a shelter from the sun, they admitted the cooling breezes that rose from the bay below, and a prospect of the whole scope of its enchanting shores (I, p. 6).

The fact that Ellena's house in spite of its smallness and simplicity shows signs of comfort, taste and even elegance is thus a sure indication of her worth. Signora Bianchi, Ellena's aunt and guardian in *The Italian*, and Ellena have to support themselves by doing needlework in order to have and maintain a comfortable home:

This expenditure, however, was not an imprudent one, since she preferred the comforts and independence of a pleasant home, with industry, to the indulgence of an indolence which must have confined her to an inferior residence; and was acquainted with the means of making this industry profitable without being dishonourable (I, p. 383).

In *The Mysteries of Udolpho* the heroine shows the same attitude to her home. When Monsieur St. Aubert says to his daughter that he is ruined, Emily's first question is "Must we then quit La Vallee?" After finding out that their home will still belong to them, she says to her father: "My dear father, [...] do not grieve for me, or for yourself; we may yet be happy; - if La Vallee remains for us, we must be happy" (MU, p. 59). On his deathbed Monsieur St. Aubert makes Emily promise that she will never, whatever her circumstances, sell La Vallee. "St. Aubert even enjoined her, whenever she might marry, to make an article in the contract, that the chateau should always be hers" (MU, p. 78). This emphasizes, in Berglund's opinion,¹³ the great value St. Aubert attaches to La Vallee both for its own sake and for the security the ownership of an estate gives.

When Adeline in *The Romance of the Forest* finds a safe refuge with the La Luc family, their home, Leloncourt, resembles the homes of the

heroines in its tastefulness and lack of ostentation: "The chateau was not large, but it was convenient, and was characterized by an air of elegant simplicity and good order" (RF, p.248). "Good order" and "elegant simplicity" of the house reveal the virtuous and charitable character of the owners.

Only the good characters in Ann Radcliffe's fiction show good taste, revere and value their homes. The morally corrupt ones see their homes as status symbols, which can be bought and sold and which, in their turn, mirror their owners' hedonism and lack of taste. The villa of the sensuous and libidinous Marquis de Montalt in *The Romance of the Forest* reveals his hedonism and sexual lust. When carried by force to the villa of Marquis de Montalt, the heroine finds herself in "a magnificent saloon", where silks, silver, Ovidian scenes in fresco, busts of Horace and Anacreon, and a table covered with fruit and drink make a display of wealth and sensuality. Though the house abounds in elegant and extremely expensive objects, the display of such immense wealth is vulgar despite their obvious beauty. Lack of taste in the display of the objects of luxury and the sexual connotations of the place are obvious in the following description of Marquis' dwelling place:

The airy elegance with which it was fitted up, and the luxurious accommodations with which it abounded, seemed designated to fascinate the imagination, and to seduce the heart. The hangings were of straw-coloured silk, adorned with a variety of landscapes and historical paintings, the subjects of which partook of the voluptuous character of the owner; the chimney-piece, of Parian marble, was ornamented with several reposing figures from the antique. The bed was of silk the colour of the hangings, richly fringed with purple and silver, and the head made in form of a canopy. The steps, which were placed near the bed to assist in ascending it, were supported by Cupids, apparently of solid silver. China vases, filled with perfume, stood in several of the recesses, upon stands of the same structure as the toilet, which was magnificent, and ornamented with a variety of trinkets (RF, pp.163–4).

Bad taste is expressed in the display of too many objects – "variety" of paintings, "variety" of silk, silver, theatrical colours "purple and silver" and the very size of the place in which the residence "abounded."

Adeline interprets the splendour of the villa quite correctly when she asks herself: "Is this charm to lure me to destruction?" (RF, p.157). The heroine shows her moral judgement and inner strength by ignoring the luxury of the house and escaping from the villa at first possible occasion.

The close relationship between buildings and people and the notion that a house reflects the moral and aesthetic judgement of its owner is even more obvious in the description of the homes of Monsieur Quesnel, St. Aubert's degraded brother-in-law, and Madame Cheron (later Madame Montoni). The interior of Mr. Quesnel's house displays a bad taste and thus reveals flaws in its owners character: "The heavy walls were hung with frivolous ornaments, and every thing that appeared denoted the false taste and corrupt sentiments of the present owner" (MU, p. 23). Emily's aunt Madame Cheron is also vulgar and insensitive, and "the ostentatious style exhibited in her [...] house and furniture" (MU, p. 118) at the same time reflects "the arrogance and ostentatious vanity of Madame Cheron's conversation" (MU, p. 118).

Thus, unpretentious lifestyle and home as "a shelter for moral and spiritual values" or, in Gaston Bachelard's terms, home as "space for cheer and intimacy"¹⁴ are the main characteristics of the Radcliffean heroine.

At the same time, Maggie Kilgour suggests, heroine's home (especially La Vallee in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*) is "a threshold world"¹⁵. La Vallee is situated on a river (river being an important threshold or boundary symbol)¹⁶ surrounded by beautiful pastoral landscape but cut off from the outside world by mountains that protect it:

To the south, the view was bounded by the majestic Pyrenees, whose summits, veiled in clouds, or exhibiting awful forms, seen and lost again, as the partial vapours rolled along, were sometimes barren, and gleamed through the blue tinge of air, and sometimes frowned with forests of gloomy pine, that swept downward to their base. These tremendous precipices were contrasted by the soft green of the pastures and woods that hung upon their skirts; among whose flocks, and herds, and simple cottages, the eye, after having scaled the cliffs above, delighted to repose (MU, p. 1).

This opening setting thus brings together into a picturesque whole the two types of landscape (the Sublime and the Beautiful) which are polarized later in the text, when Emily's travels take her to places which exemplify the awful sublime of the mountains, the ocean or the Gothic world, or the soft beautiful of a pastoral rural world.

The distinction between the Sublime and the Beautiful in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is clearly derived from Edmund Burke's essay *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757). Burke writes:

For sublime objects are vast in their dimensions, beautiful ones comparatively small; beauty should be smooth, and polished; the great, rugged and negligent; [...] beauty should be light and delicate; the great ought to be solid, and even massive. They are ideas of a very different nature (p. 124).

As in Burke's essay, in Ann Radcliffe's novel these two aesthetic principles have clear gender associations: the Sublime stands for the male, the Beautiful for the female. According to Edmund Burke, "But to call strength by the name of beauty, to have but one denomination for the qualities of a Venus and Hercules, so totally different in almost all respects, is surely a strange confusion of ideas, or abuse of words" (p.106).

In La Vallee these two elements, sublime and beautiful or male and female, are united harmoniously while outside its boundaries they become opposed. It is interesting to note in this connection that it is during her journey with her father through the Pyrenees but before crossing the boundaries of their world, that Emily is fascinated by the benevolent sublimity of the mountains and it is there that she meets a young man named Valencourt, the hero in whom masculinity and sentimentality are combined, and with whom she falls in love.

In general, the closed world of the heroine's home stands in opposition to everything outside its borders; namely, to the artificial and hypocritical city (Paris and Venice) and to the Gothic world with its owner at the centre of it. For Ann Radcliffe's heroine her home is an internal, closed space, the source of security, love and harmony. What lies beyond its walls is, in Lotman's words, chaos and destruction.¹⁷ Furthermore, heroine's house is a real "combatant house", as Bachelard puts it. According to Bachelard's theory of space, the house actively educates its occupant "to cultivate courage in order to confront a world that is harsh, indigent and cold. The isolated house furnishes him with strong images, that is, with counsels of resistance"¹⁸. When unhappy and imprisoned in the castle of Udolpho, Emily St. Aubert often remembers her home in Languedoc and her happy past: "The gentleness and goodness of her parents, together with the scenes of her early happiness, often stole on her mind, like the visions of a higher world" (MU, p. 296). These memories help the heroine resist Montoni's schemes to take over her aunt's estates in France and her own home, La Vallee.

When after experiencing all horrors of the Gothic world the heroine marries the hero, she either returns home (as in *The Mysteries of*

Udolpho) or settles in a villa (as in *The Romance of the Forest* and *The Italian*) which symbolizes the union of the aesthetic opposites of nature and art, the wild and the cultured, the Sublime and the Beautiful:

The chateau was characterized by an air of simplicity and taste, rather than of magnificence, which however was the chief trait of the surrounding scene. The chateau was almost encircled with woods, which forming a grand amphitheatre swept down to the water's edge, and abounded with wild and romantic walks [...]. In front of the chateau the woods opened to a lawn, and the eye was suffered to wander over the lake, whose bosom presented an ever moving picture, while its varied margin sprinkled with villas, woods, and towns, and crowded beyond with the snowy and sublime alps rising point behind point in awful confusion, exhibited a scenery of almost unequalled magnificence (RF, p. 362).

The chateau is simple and full of taste rather than magnificence and it is contrasted with the surrounding nature which in opposition to the chateau is far from simple and orderly. On the contrary, nature "abounded with wild and romantic walks", it is always dynamic with its lake "whose bosom presented an ever moving picture", it is "in awful confusion" and full of magnificence. Although the chateau is situated in a closed space, "encircled with woods," yet in front of the chateau the woods "opened to a lawn" so the boundary between nature and the house is not a very distinct one. There is a further interpenetration of nature and civilization as the margin of the lake is "sprinkled with villas, woods, and towns." The end of the novel, together with the reunion of the lovers, presents indeed a reconciliation of the two types of landscape and in consequence of the two opposing aesthetic categories. Thus, the house is a central image to Ann Radcliffe, the place that defines, reflects and forms her heroine, it is the centre of the heroine's world.

4.2. The Ambiguous Meaning of the Room

If the house is a central image to Ann Radcliffe and the centre of her heroine's world, this is true to an even greater degree about the heroine's own room. Within the house the heroine's room constitutes the very essence of this private world, a retreat within the retreat. On the other hand, the heroine's small room symbolizes her loneliness. Another function of the heroine's room is to serve as a spiritual resort. Moreover, as Murray puts it, the room "serves ambiguously as a retreat from the real

world and a vestibule leading directly, through dream or fancy or secret panel, to the unreal."¹⁹

The happiest function of the room is to serve as a retreat within a retreat. Emily's room in La Valle and Julia's room in the castle of Mazzini in *The Sicilian Romance* emphasize the heroine's need for a private space and serve as a place of the heroine's artistic and intellectual pursuits. In the description of the heroine's room Ann Radcliffe reveals the eighteenth century idea of domestic happiness with its small pleasures – comfort, reading, art, and music.²⁰

Adjoining the eastern side of the green-house, looking towards the plains of Languedock, was a room, which Emily called hers, and which contained her books, her drawings, her musical instruments, with some favourite birds and plants. Here she usually exercised herself in elegant arts, cultivated only because they were congenial to her taste, and in which native genius, assisted by the instructions of Monsieur and Madame St Aubert, made her an early proficient. The windows of this room were particularly pleasant; they descended to the floor, and, opening upon the little lawn that surrounded the house, the eye was led between groves of almond, palm-trees, flowering-ash, and myrtle, to the distant landscape, where the Garonne wandered (MU, p. 3).

The importance of the room is also obvious at the beginning of *The Sicilian Romance*, where Ann Radcliffe describes the room of her heroine Julia who, within the limited space of the castle of Mazzini, marks out "only a small part" as her real home and singles out "a small closet" as her domain, to which she "loved to retire":

Julia, who discovered an early taste for books, loved to retire in an evening to a small closet in which she had collected her favourite authors. This room formed the western angle of the castle: one of its windows looked upon the sea, beyond which was faintly seen, skirting the horizon, the dark rocky coast of Calabria; the other opened towards a part of the castle, and afforded a prospect of the neighbouring woods (SR, p. 5).

In nearly all Radcliffe's novels the windows of the heroine's room overlook onto nature with its sublime, beautiful and picturesque views. A view is extremely important to the heroine, so that her small, secluded, almost secret room (whether at home or in some place of confinement) at the same time affords a feeling of expansion, of greatness and freedom.

When confined, Radcliffe's heroine domesticates the space given to her and creates a room of her own within her prison. When confined in

the monastery of San Stefano Elena (*The Italian*) discovers a small room with a wonderful view upon a glorious landscape outside and after she has been provided with some furniture and books, she regards the room as her own: "Having arranged her books, and set her little room in order, she seated herself at a window, and, with a volume of Tasso, endeavoured to banish every painful remembrance from her mind" (I, pp. 94–95). Commenting this passage, Birgitta Berglund notes that "since the room contains only half a dozen books, a table and a chair, the business of arranging and setting in order clearly has more of a symbolic than a practical purpose"²¹.

In the same way Emily (*The Mysteries of Udolpho*) arranges her things in her room at Madame Cheron's house in Toulouse, in Montoni's mansion in Venice and at the castle of Udolpho, thus putting her own stamp on a part of the structure belonging to her oppressors:

Montoni having refused Emily another chamber, she determined to bear with patience the evil she could not remove, and, in order to make the room as comfortable as possible, unpacked her books, her sweet delight in happier days, and her soothing resource in the hours of moderate sorrow [...]. Her little library arranged on a high chest, part of the furniture of the room, she took out her drawing utensils, and was tranquil enough to be pleased with the thought of sketching the sublime scenes, beheld from her windows (MU, p. 248).

Moreover, when ordered not to leave the peasants' cottage to which she had been taken by Montoni's order and nearly by force, Emily "became fond" of her room in it, "and began to experience in it those feelings of security, which we naturally attach to home" (MU, p. 418). The closed room with the heroine's lute, books and drawing materials emphasizes the room's function as a spiritual resort. The heroine withdraws there not only for physical comfort, but also to cultivate and strengthen her mind as the following example illustrates: "Adeline passed the greatest part of the day alone in her chamber, where, having examined her conduct, she endeavoured to fortify her heart against the unmerited displeasure of Madame La Motte" (RF, p. 82). Thus, although confined, the heroine desires to control her own space and "creates a new, limited subjectivity for herself in her isolation."²²

At the same time the heroine's room parallels her forlorn situation in life and symbolizes her loneliness. In confinement the heroine's room is usually situated at a distance from the rest of the family, it is bare and

cold. This is true about Emily's room at Udolpho and Ellena's turret at San Stefano as well as Adeline's room in the ruined abbey. Though on the one hand the room reinforces the heroine's feelings of loneliness, on the other hand it gives her the solitude which is essential to her. Very often the heroine asks for the "privilege" of avoiding company and remaining in her room. During her time with her aunt Madame Cheron in Toulouse, Emily is always glad when she can retire to the solitude of her room, the only place where she can give vent to her grief and reflect on her forlorn situation. When Julia's father tells her to dress up to meet the Duke de Luovo, her intended husband whom she detests, Julia withdraws to her room "to indulge the anguish of her heart, and prepare for this detested interview" (SR, p. 58). Adeline, who is pursued by the unwanted attentions of the Marquis de Montalt, also frequently retires to her room, "where, being once more alone, her oppressed heart found relief from tears, in which she freely indulged (RF, p. 112). The room, Murray notes, "is to serve as a retreat from oppression into melancholy,"²³ as the heroine's private space where she can be her natural self, give vent to her feelings, cultivate her mind and expand her soul. Thus, the heroine's room is much more than a part of a building; it is a psychological room, an image standing for the integrity of her mind.

Consequently, the ultimate effect of the room, in its silence and solitude, is to serve as a mediator between the heroine and the ghostly sublime horrors that wait for the heroine outside the doors of her room. The enveloping darkness and decay of Adeline's room in the Abbey (*The Romance of the Forest*) suggest obscurity, vastness in space and antiquity in time – Burkian conditions for the sublime terror.²⁴

It [Adeline's room] was spacious and lofty, and what little furniture it contained was falling to decay; [...] The wind was high, and as it whistled through the desolate apartment, and shook the feeble doors, she often started, and sometimes even thought she heard sighs between the pauses of the gust (RF, pp.113–4).

Sleeping in this room the heroine has strange dreams about a dying man who in the end helps the heroine to reveal the secret of her identity. Moreover, the room hides a secret. One night when reading a book "she [Adeline] perceived the arras, with which the room was hung, wave backward and forward" (RF, p. 114). When the heroine examined it, she discovered a hidden door.

The door was held only by a bolt, having undrawn which, and brought the light, she descended by a few steps into another chamber: she instantly remembered her dreams. The chamber was not much like that in which she had seen the dying Chevalier, and afterwards the bier; but it gave her a confused remembrance of the one through which she had passed (RF, p. 114).

Passing through this chamber Adeline finds a whole suite of rooms, terminating in the one which she immediately recognizes as the chamber with the dying man in her dream, and where she finds a manuscript. The very idea of finding the whole suite of rooms behind the door, adds to the surrealistic and dreamlike atmosphere present in the heroine's room.

Furthermore, no lamp ever lights a whole chamber in the heroine's place of confinement ("Anette stood at the door [...] with the light held up to shew the chamber, but the feeble rays spread through not half of it"(MU, p. 253)) making the young lady experience Burkian terror: "the dismal obscurity of her [Emily's] chamber recalled fearful thoughts, but she remembered, that to produce a light she must pass through a great extent of the castle, and, above all, through the halls, where she had already experienced so much horror" (MU, p. 319). To make the situation worse, the door of the heroine's room in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* cannot be bolted from the inside leaving the heroine helpless in any case of danger or possible intrusion:

To call off her attention from subjects, that pressed heavily upon her spirits, she [Emily] rose and again examined her room and its furniture. As she walked round it, she passed a door, that was not quite shut, and perceiving, that it was not the one, through which she entered, she brought the light forward to discover whither it led [...]. Closing the door, therefore, she endeavoured to fasten it, but, upon further examination, perceived that it had no bolts on the chamber side, though it had two on the other (MU, p. 235).

Summing up, it is possible to say that the meaning of the heroine's room is rather ambivalent. While serving as a retreat within a retreat when the young heroine is still at home surrounded by loving parents and devoted servants, the heroine's room in confinement is only a partial refuge to her. Though it remains an important place for the heroine where she can "indulge the anguish of her heart" and find some physical comfort, the room, at the same time, makes the heroine feel a constant suspense as it can never fully serve as protection to her. Moreover, the dreamlike atmosphere and obscurity of the room suggest that the supernatural and the terrible are very likely to happen in the life of the

heroine. It is in her room at the abbey that the heroine of *The Romance of the Forest* discovers the truth about herself and her past. Thus, the heroine's room, as Birgitta Berglund notices, "is a vital link between past and present, [...] and thus one more instance of the way place and identity are linked in Radcliffe".²⁵

Notes:

- ¹ Yuri Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*. Indiana University Press: Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1990, p. 97.
- ² Birgitta Berglund, *Woman's Whole Existence: The House as an Image in the Novels of Ann Radcliffe, Mary Wollstonecraft and Jane Austen*. Lund University Press, 1993, p. 14.
- ³ Jane Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986, p. 15.
- ⁴ B. Berglund, *Woman's Whole Existence*, p.33.
- ⁵ Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*. London and New York, 1996, p. 115.
- ⁶ M. Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*, p. 114.
- ⁷ See Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500–1800*. Penguin Books, 1977, p. 217. Lawrence Stone writes: "Once it was doubted that affection could and would naturally develop after marriage, decision-making power had to be transferred to the future spouses themselves, and more and more of them in the eighteenth century began to put the prospects of emotional satisfaction before the ambition for increased income or status. This, in turn, also had its effect in equalizing relationships between husband and wife" (p. 217).
- ⁸ Quoted in Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500–1800*, p. 220.
- ⁹ L. Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*, pp. 218–219.
- ¹⁰ B. Berglund, *Woman's Whole Existence*, p. 32.
- ¹¹ Quoted in Simon Varey, *Space and the Eighteenth-Century English Novel*. Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 159.
- ¹² Daniel Cottom, *The Civilized Imagination: A Study of Ann Radcliffe, Jane Austen, and Sir Walter Scott*. Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 39.
- ¹³ B. Berglund, *Woman's Whole Existence*, p. 38.
- ¹⁴ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*. Trans. Maria Jolas. Boston: Beacon Press, 1964, p. 48.
- ¹⁵ M. Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*, p. 116.
- ¹⁶ Y. Lotman, *Izbrannye statji v trekh tomakh*, vol.1, Tallinn: "Aleksandra", 1992, p. 403. River, the image of the boundary, separates space into hero's everyday space and the unknown, far away space. Also see Hans Biedermann, *The*

Wordsworth Dictionary of Symbolism, trans. by James Hulbert. Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 1992, p. 285.

- ¹⁷ Y. Lotman, *Universe of the Mind*, p. 191.
- ¹⁸ G. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, p. 46.
- ¹⁹ E. B. Murray, *Ann Radcliffe*. New York: Twayne, 1972, p. 94.
- ²⁰ See Paul Hazard, *Kryzys swiadomosci europejskiej, 1680-1715*. Warszawa, 1974, pp. 258–267.
- ²¹ B. Berglund, *Woman's Whole Existence*, p. 40.
- ²² S. Varey, *Space and the Eighteenth-Century English Novel*, p. 202.
- ²³ E. B. Murray, *Ann Radcliffe*, p. 94.
- ²⁴ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Burke writes: "To make any thing very terrible, obscurity seems in general to be necessary. When we know the full extent of any danger, when we can accustom our eyes to it, a great deal of the apprehension vanishes. Every one will be sensible of this, who considers how greatly night adds to our dread, in all cases of danger, and how much the notions of ghosts and goblins, of which none can form clear ideas, affect minds, which give credit to the popular tales concerning such sorts of beings"(pp. 58–59).
- ²⁵ B. Berglund, *Woman's Whole Existence*, p. 44.

Suggested study questions for further discussion:

1. The house is one of the central images in Ann Radcliffe's fiction. Why is that?
2. Discuss the importance of the word "taste" in relation to Radcliffe's fiction.
3. Discuss the meaning of the heroine's home applying a semiotic approach.
4. Discuss the meaning of the heroine's home applying Burkean ideas of the sublime and the beautiful.
5. What functions does the heroine's room serve and what possible meanings does the image of the room imply?

Useful Internet Addresses:

Voller, Jack G. "Ann Radcliffe". The Literary Gothic.

<http://www.litgothic.com/Authors/radcliffe.html>

"Ann Radcliffe". The Victorian Web. Before Victoria: Selected Authors from the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.

<http://www.victorianweb.org/previctorian/radcliffe/radcliffeov.html>

"Ann Radcliffe". Voice of the Shuttle.

<http://vos.ucsb.edu/browse.asp?id=317#id224>

The Gothic Experience Page.

<http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/gothic/history.html>

The Literary Gothic: Web Guide to Gothic Literature.

http://www.litgothic.com/index_fl.html

5. THE NIGHTMARE WORLD OF THE GOTHIC CASTLE

5.1. The Castle as the Object of the Sublime and the Mysterious

The labyrinthine and claustrophobic space associated with Gothic architecture has been the defining convention of Gothic fiction since Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). This space is usually represented by a castle, a monastery, a convent, or a prison (often in ruins). This architectural space is integral to the psychological machinations of Gothic fiction, and is used to invoke feelings of fear, awe, entrapment and helplessness in characters and readers alike.

The description of the Gothic castle in all Radcliffe's novels is very much a late eighteenth-century one based on the ideas of the sublime and the picturesque. The description, with its emphasis on scenery and architecture, was familiar to contemporary readers from landscape painting, especially that of Salvador Rosa, James Thomson's poetry and Burke's aesthetic theory. The castle itself was also a familiar object. It had appeared in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron* (1777), it had been discussed by Reynolds in his Academy lectures¹, by William Gilpin² in his essays on the picturesque and by Archibald Alison :

The Sublimest of all the Mechanical Arts is Architecture, principally from the durability of its productions: and these productions are in themselves Sublime, in proportion to their Antiquity, or the extent of their Duration. The Gothic Castle is still more sublime than all, because, besides the desolation of time, it seems also to have withstood the assaults of War.³

Though no actual description of the castle's outward appearance is given in *The Castle of Otranto*, the reader's imagination is soon aware of a concentration on the limited sphere of what seems to be a medieval castle. The reader is taken into the castle-yard and the chapel, where a marriage is taking place, and into various rooms, one of which contains the collection of ancestral portraits indispensable to such edifice. The underground portion is full of bewildering vaulted passages, one of which leads through the church of St. Nicolas. An awesome silence reigns in these subterranean vaults, a silence broken only by the creak of rusty hinges as a breath of air somewhere sets an old door moving. In their gloomy shade the maiden, flying from the lord of the castle, can at

first hardly make out the faintly gleaming object in some hiding-place, and then only with difficulty does she perceive it to be the key to the complicated lock of a secret trap-door. The hall is fitted with galleries where the young heroine can, unseen, regard her lover and where she can fall into the inevitable swoon when the tyrant sentences him to death or lifelong confinement in the deepest dungeon of the darkest tower. With some few such strokes Walpole conjures up his castle before the reader, avoiding much detail, but continually stimulating the imagination:

The lower part of the castle was hollowed into several intricate cloisters; and it was not easy for one under so much anxiety to find the door that opened into the cavern. An awful silence reigned throughout these subterraneous regions, except now and then some blasts of wind that shook the doors she [Isabella] has passed, and which grating on the rusty hinges were re-echoed through that long labyrinth of darkness.⁴

Here, as Frederic S. Frank notes, “we have the fundamental imagery of Gothic crisis – a hysterical subterranean wayfarer (typically a trembling maiden) depicted in the act of frightened flight through an atmosphere that Milton might have described as ‘darkness visible’”.⁵

Clara Reeve made an invention which was to become an essential ingredient of all tales of horror – not only an old castle could function as a setting for a Gothic novel but also any other ruined building could serve this purpose. In *The Old English Baron* she makes a deliberate use of an empty suite of rooms which are supposed to be haunted. In the castle of the deceased Lord Lovel, now occupied by an usurper, Baron Fitz-Oven, there is a suite of rooms, which for some secret reason has long been closed. The reader is finally informed that it was in these rooms that the castle’s rightful owner, Sir Walter Lovel, was murdered, his body hidden, and it was the fear of his ghost which gave the rooms the reputation of being haunted. An old suit of armour is still preserved there, the breastplate of which is stained with blood; the murdered man’s bones are under the floor. The furniture is decayed and falling to pieces; the fabrics moth-eaten.⁶ Clara Reeve does not make use of subterranean passages or secret doors – the devices that are explored so often by Ann Radcliffe in her fiction.

In her novels Mrs. Radcliffe depicts the castle’s silhouette in clear and strong lines. It can be situated, for instance, on the coast, on the highest peak of a steep mountain or deep in the woods. The slopes of

the mountain are abrupt and dangerous. The castle is built with Gothic magnificence, its high towers seeming in their proud inaccessible majesty to frown defiance on the whole world; the entire edifice bears witness to the power of its past owners. These outward traits, which in themselves possess an effectivity not to be denied, continue to expand in the writer's imagination, forming a solemn background for her scenes and plot. Everything in the castle, its towers, ramparts, vaulted portals, drawbridge, bear stern impress of ancient might and splendour.

Into the circle of the haunted castle Ann Radcliffe brings the old abbey, monastery and convent. The broken arches and solitary towers of these rise gloomily impressive among the twilight trees, producing an eerie atmosphere tinged with devotion. A monastery of this description can consist of a big group of Gothic buildings, which dismal towers and fear-awakening walls rise proudly, lonely and uncrushed amidst the surrounding dark shadows as in *The Italian*:

Perched high among the cliffs of a mountain, which might be said to terminate one of the jaws of this terrific gorge, and which was one of the loftiest of a chain that surrounded the plains, appeared the spires and long terraces of a monastery; and she [Ellena] soon understood that her journey was to conclude there [...]. Partial features of the vast edifice she was approaching, appeared now and then between the trees; the tall west window of the cathedral with the spires that overtopped it; the narrow pointed roofs of the cloisters; angles of the insurmountable walls, which fenced the garden from the precipices below, and the dark portal leaning into the chief court; each of these, seen at intervals beneath the gloom of cypress and spreading cedar, seemed as if menacing the unhappy Ellena with hints of future suffering (I, p. 64).

The old building in a gloomy forest can also be a former abbey, the past magnificence of which awakens in the spectator a respectful and timid feeling of devoutness. Thick ivy covers the walls, and owls lodge in the deserted towers.

The abbey of St. Augustin was a large magnificent mass of Gothic architecture, whose gloomy battlements, and majestic towers arose in proud sublimity from amid the darkness of the surrounding shades. It was founded in the twelfth century, and stood a proud monument of monkish superstition and princely magnificence [...]. The dim glass of the high-arched windows, stained with the colouring of monkish fictions, and shaded by thick trees that environed the edifice, spread around a sacred gloom, which inspired the beholder with congenial feelings (SR, pp. 116–117).

The halls are paved with marble, the rooms are large and high. In some the gloom is enhanced by the paneling, which is almost as dark as darkness itself. The reader is taken into the rooms and corridors, which long perspectives display a simple nobility of line and breath "a holy calm".⁷ The windows are high and arched, furnished with stained glass and often shadowed by ivy; into the spacious and gloomy chambers they emit a solemn twilight, capable of affecting the heart to extremity of terror. A melancholy silence dwells in these deserted rooms, the tall arches of which are upborne on pillars of black marble.

Already in 1927 when speaking of the power of the ruin over the Gothic imagination, Michael Sadleir rightly applied Burke's arguments about the Sublime and Gilpin's ideas about the Picturesque to the mouldering castle:

To the Gothistic eye [...] a ruin was itself a thing of loveliness – and for interesting reasons. A mouldering building is a parable of the victory of nature over man's handiwork. The grass growing rankly in a once stately courtyard; the ivy creeping over the broken tracery of a once sumptuous window; the glimpse of sky through the fallen roof of a once proud banquetting hall – all of these moved to melancholy pleasure minds which dwelt gladly on the impermanence of human life and effort, which sought on every hand symbols of a pantheist philosophy. Then again, a ruin expresses the triumph of chaos over order, and the Gothistic movement was, in origin at least, a movement toward freedom and away from the controls of discipline.⁸

The castle, Bakhtin remarks, as a literary reminder of an ancestral or Gothic past of "dynastic primacy and transfer of heroic rights" is overlaid or criss-crossed with meanings from legend, fairy-tale, history, architecture, and an eighteenth-century aesthetizing discourse of the sublime⁹. Montague Summers's note that the real protagonist of the Gothic novel is the castle emphasizes a very special feature of that structure: in a sense, the Gothic castle is 'alive' with a power that perplexes its visitors. It tends to have an irregular shape, its lay-out is very complex and mysterious, whether because of an actual distortion of the whole structure or because a part of it remains unknown. In Manuel Aguirre's words, "this basic distortion yields mystery, precludes human control and endows the building with a power beyond its strictly physical structure: the irregular mysterious house is, like the vampire, a product of the vitalistic conception of nature."¹⁰

In addition to this, Radcliffe's setting (the castle) derives its claim to sublimity also from its being "not-here, not-now, an Other place, an

Other time"¹¹. Critics have often remarked on the choice of the exotic, the foreign, the barbaric as the background for and source of Gothic thrills. In other words, the Gothic castle is the world of the Numinous. As David Durant notes, "the ruined castles and abbeys are graphic symbols of the disintegration of a stable civilization; their underground reaches are the hiding places for all those forces which cannot stand the light of day."¹²

In Radcliffe's novels the Gothic castle is in the first place an anti-home, a nightmare version of the heroine's perfect past, in which many of the elements of her home are exaggerated and replayed in a Gothic form¹³. The Gothic space, which provides a scene for the most dramatic events in the novel, is totally different from the other spaces – indicating heroine's home. The gigantic size of the castle is opposed to smallness of heroine's home, its labyrinthine confusion stands in opposition to the elegant and tasteful arrangement of her home, dark and dim castles replace cheerful and full of sunshine homes, the feeling of constant danger and lack of security in the castles is contrasted with the feeling of safety in heroine's home, etc. The heroine's parents are replaced by Gothic substitutes or Gothic opposites. The castle hides some family secret the revelation of which usually helps the heroine to disclose her own identity. At the same time, the Gothic castle is the place of confinement in a literal and figurative sense. Moreover, the castle may be interpreted as the image of the body and, eventually, as the heroine's secret self. In *The Castles of Athlin and Dumbayne* it is the castle itself, which, as many critics observe, is a protagonist rather than a background.

The castles of the title refer to the ancestral homes of two families in feudal Scotland. The structure of the novel offers two castles, two chefs, two elderly noblewomen in grief, two young heroines, two sons restored to the places of heirs, and so on. The doubling applies also to the characters' psychology as nearly each of them is torn by two conflicting emotions. "The effect is that of a diptych," Alison Milbank notices, "in which each set of characters and positions mirrors the other, and comments upon it."¹⁴

The castle of Athlin "venerable from its antiquity, and from its Gothic structure, but more venerable from the virtues which it enclosed" (CAD, p. 3) is the 'good' castle, the seat of the noble Osbert, Earl of Athlin and his family. The castle of Dunbayne, Athlin's binary opposite, is a complete set of mysteries, containing two women prisoners, secret passages and

panels, labyrinthine underground vaults and tunnels. We read, "The edifice was built with Gothic magnificence upon a high and dangerous rock. Its lofty towers still frowned in proud sublimity, and the immensity of the pile stood a record of the ancient consequence of its possessors" (CAD, p.13).

The narrator stresses the exterior impenetrability of the castle and its sublime domination over the natural world. Being Dunbayne's opposite, the castle of Athlin is also built upon a rock but its base is in the sea, and spray is thrown up against its windows as if the castle formed one unit with nature.

These descriptions suggest that Ann Radcliffe was familiar with the travel literature on Highlands of her time. We may suppose that Radcliffe was influenced by Samuel Johnson's *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775) in which he describes, for example, the castle of Slanes as "built upon the margin of the sea, so that the walls of one of the towers seem only a continuation of a perpendicular rock, the foot of which is beaten by the waves."¹⁵

Radcliffe's second novel, *A Sicilian Romance*, starts with the description of the ancestral castle of marquis Mazzini; and the story begins with the retelling the "solemn history" which "belongs to the castle" (SR, p. 1):

On the northern shore of Sicily are still to be seen the magnificent remains of the castle, which formerly belonged to the noble house of Mazzini. It stands in the centre of a small bay, and upon a gentle acclivity, which, on one side, slopes towards the sea, and on the other rises into an eminence crowned by dark woods. The situation is admirably beautiful and picturesque, and the ruins have the air of ancient grandeur, which, contrasted with the present solitude of the scene, impresses the traveller with awe and curiosity (SR, p. 1).

To strengthen the impression Ann Radcliffe adds another description of the castle a few pages later:

The castle of Mazzini was a large irregular fabrick, and seemed suited to receive a numerous train of followers, such as, in those days, served the nobility, either in the splendour of peace, or the turbulence of war. Its present family inhabited only a small part of it; and even this part appeared forlorn and almost desolate from the spaciousness of the apartments, and the length of the galleries which led to them. A melancholy stillness reigned through the halls, and the silence of the courts, which were shaded by high turrets, was for many hours together undisturbed by the sound of any foot-step (SR, p. 5).

In contrast to the castles of Athlyn and Dunbayne which bear clear "moral" connotations of good and bad, the castle of Mazzini in *A Sicilian Romance* seems different because it is the dwelling place of the protagonist of the novel, Julia, and her sister Emilia and eventually may be called "home-prison." For Julia the castle turns into prison when she falls in love with the young Hipolitus, Count de Vereza, but is forced by her tyrannical father to marry his double, the Duke de Luovo.

The castle of Mazzini hides the secret of the father which is expressed literally (the maltreatment of the mother), but in *The Romance of the Forest* the secret is conveyed through the realm of an ancient script. As Robert Miles notes,

This movement from the literal to the figurative, from the 'facts' of the narrative to the uncertain provenance of a long-lost script, firms up the narrative of the phantom; we move from the carceral neither/nor of the first two novels to a more sophisticated version, in which psychic immobility is expressly linked to the buried secret of the father, which returns to haunt, not as aphysical but as a spectral voice, 'rematerialized' as the discovered manuscript.¹⁶

In *The Romance of the Forest* the function of the castle is given to a ruined abbey. The Abbey of St. Clair standing in the middle of the forest and containing the secret of heroine's identity is a source of the sublime, and decay adds to the effect:

It [the Abbey] stood on a kind of rude lawn, over shadowed by high and spreading trees which seemed coeval with the building and diffused a romantic gloom around. The greater part of the pile appeared to be sinking into ruins, and that which had withstood the ravages of time showed the remaining features of the fabric more awful in decay (RF, p.15).

To describe the inside of the Abbey, Ann Radcliffe uses obscurity to heighten the effect of sublimity as Adeline explores this decaying architectural structure:

The partial gleams thrown across the fabric seemed to make its desolation more solemn, with the obscurity of the greater part of the pile heightened its sublimity and led fancy on to scenes of horror. Adeline, who had hitherto remained in silence, now uttered an exclamation of mingled admiration and fear. A kind of pleasing dread thrilled her bosom and filled all her soul (RF, pp. 17–18).

The castle in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is even more impressive. It is detached from society, its isolation is frightening. The castle of Udolpho

stands in a clear opposition to heroine Emily's home, La Vallee. La Vallee was in harmony with the natural world; Udolpho, however, totally dominates the natural world: "Silent, lonely and sublime, it seemed to stand the sovereign of the scene, and to frown defiance on all, who dared to invade its solitary reign" (MU, p. 227).

While following the description of the travellers approaching the castle of Udolpho, the reader has a sense of winding down into a dark enclosed space: the road leading to it is never straight; the labyrinthine quality of the place is hinted at in the description of the valley. If we look at the syntax of the description, we find that the subject, as Carol Howells notices, is non-human: it is a road, mountains, vistas, the sun or the castle – there are no human agents in the passage at all. "The environment is supreme and things have an active life of their own, imposing their own conditions upon the human beings who come here."¹⁷

Even before she enters the castle, Emily has a feeling of entering into isolation and confinement. The description of the landscape around Udolpho helps to convey this feeling. In contrast to the sunny prospects around La Vallee, it is dark and solitary, and the large forests shut out all views as the travellers ascend the mountains. At one point they reach an opening, a sort of amphitheatre of mountains, which affords one last magnificent view of the country all the way down to the Adriatic. After that, the landscape once again closes around Emily, until "they entered a narrow pass in the mountains, which shut out every feature of the distant country, and, in the stead, exhibited only tremendous crags, impending over the road, where no vestige of humanity, or even of vegetation, appeared" (MU, p. 225).

Emily's entrance into the castle also emphasizes her feeling of helplessness and the impossibility of escape: "As the carriage-wheels rolled heavily under the porticulis, Emily's heart sunk, and she seemed, as if she was going into her prison" (MU, p. 227).

Emily's reaction to the first glimpse of the castle is an ambiguous one. Her feelings range from admiration to fear: "Emily gazed with melancholy awe upon the castle"; the sublime features of Udolpho "awakened terrific images in her mind" and "increased fearful emotions".

To emphasize the grandeur of Udolpho Radcliffe speaks of "the gothic greatness of its features", "features [...] awful in obscurity" and the sublimity of the castle. The play of light and shades of darkness add to the effect: "the light died away on its walls, leaving a melancholy purple

tint, which spread deeper and deeper", "the rays soon faded, and the whole edifice was invested with the solemn duskiness of evening" (MU, p. 226).

One of the most frightening aspects of *Udolpho* is its enormous size. While following the description of the castle, the reader visualizes and feels the immense contrast between the huge size of the castle and the small figure of Emily. The castle of *Udolpho* is so large that the reader never knows exactly where Emily is and how on the night of her arrival and on several later occasions she finds herself lost in its labyrinths.

Throughout her stay at *Udolpho*, Emily never totally grasps the layout of the castle, and she continues to find new rooms, corridors and staircases. As Daniel Cottom notes, "The effect [...] is to remind the reader of a maze with a very small animal caught in the middle of it, as the mysteries of *Udolpho* hold Emily in their midst."¹⁸ The labyrinthine aspect of the castle implies a downward movement which in itself carries a negative meaning. (Moving downwards, according to Lotman,¹⁹ means approaching evil or even death).

It is here in the gloomy Gothic castle where the mysterious is present and the supernatural seems possible. When Osbert, the young Earl of Athlin, a prisoner at *Dunbayne*, passed through the secret partition back into his cell after secretly visiting Baroness Malcolm and her daughter Laura,

[...] he perceived indistinctly the figure of a man, and in the same instant heard the sound of approaching armour. Surprise and horror thrilled through every nerve; he remained fixed to the spot, and for some moments hesitated whether to retire. A fearful silence ensued; the person whom he thought he had seen, disappeared in the darkness of the room; the noise of armour was heard no more; and he began to think that the figure he had seen, and the sound he had heard were the phantoms of a sick imagination, which the agitation of his spirits, the solemnity of the hour, and the wide desolation of the place, had conjured up [...] when a sudden blaze of light from the fire discovered to him a soldier of the Baron (CAD, p. 67).

In this way Radcliffe demonstrates her technique of the 'explained' supernatural: she touches upon the possibility of the supernatural but never waits long to explain it. Clery notes in this connection that Radcliffe "introduced the device she would become famous for: apparently supernatural occurrences are spine-chillingly evoked only to be explained away in the end as the product of natural causes."²⁰ Thus,

in *A Sicilian Romance* the mysterious noises emanating from the south wing of Mazzini's castle, where Marchesa of Mazzini is entombed, usurp the girls' and their brother Ferdinand's reason to such an extent that, overcome by superstitious fear, they nearly literally lose control of their thoughts. In the end they find out that it was their unhappy mother's moaning and crying over her unfortunate fate.

The Romance of the Forest provides a far more interesting case. Adeline's waking dreams cannot be fully explained by any natural causes. She is "haunted" by a phantom bearing witness to the buried secrets of her father. In her dreams Adeline repeatedly sees the same man, sometimes healthy, sometimes dying or finally dead. He is as if trying to contact her:

[...] he suddenly stretched forth his hand, and seizing hers, grasped it with violence: she struggled in terror to disengage herself, and again looking on his face, saw a man, who appeared to be about thirty, with the same features, but in full health, and of a most benign countenance. He smiled tenderly upon her and moved his lips, as if to speak, when the floor of the chamber suddenly opened and he sunk from her view (RF, p. 108).

These dreams serve as the driving force urging the heroine to search for the unknown. Adeline discovers a secret passage from her room, which leads her to chambers like those in her dreams. She finds a manuscript written by "the victim of the abbey" during his imprisonment describing his sufferings and begging, "O! ye, who may hereafter read what I now write, give a tear for my sufferings: I have wept often for the distresses of my fellow-creatures" (RF. p.141). Good-hearted Adeline grants the manuscript writer's wish, and, as Jane Spencer notes, "by her tears she establishes the contact desired by the man in her dreams, who is evidently to be identified with the long-dead murder victim".²¹ Eventually, after revealing the manuscript's secret, the young heroine finds out her own identity: the murdered man of her dreams and the writer of the manuscript turns out to be one person, her father, who was imprisoned and murdered by his own brother, Marquis de Montalt.

While describing the events in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and especially those happening in the castle, Ann Radcliffe uses the technique of "the supernatural explained" with mastery and abundance. After the publication of the novel the *Monthly Review* paid tribute to writer's achievement of the seemingly impossible:

Without introducing into her narrative any thing really supernatural, Mrs. Radcliffe has contrived to produce as powerful an effect as if the invisible world had been obedient to her magic spell; the reader experiences in perfection the strange luxury of artificial terror, without being obliged for a moment to hoodwink his reason, or to yield to the weakness of superstitious credulity²².

5.2. The Castle as a Confinement

In addition to being the object of the sublime and the mysterious, the castle stands as the personification of its owner's boundless power. The castle heightens the power of the villain and emphasizes the weakness of his victim. As it has been already mentioned above, young Osbert in *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* finds out that he is not the only prisoner in the castle: the Baron has been keeping his dead brother's wife and daughter confined there for eighteen years. The description of the uncontrollable power of the Baron might have taken its source from Johnson's *Journey* as well:

These castles afford another evidence that the fictions of romantick chivalry had for their basis the real manners of the feudal times, when every lord of a seignory lived in his hold lawless and unaccountable with all the licentiousness and insolence of uncontested superiority and unprincipled power.²³

Baron Malcolm, the embodiment of the evil in the novel, is the forerunner of more sophisticated villain characters such as Montoni or Shedoni in Radcliffe's later novels. Baron is characterized as the man "to whom cowardice was unknown" (CAD, p.86), as one whose "countenance marked the powerful working of his mind, which seemed labouring with an unknown evil" (CAD, p. 87). Malcolm's power over the inhabitants of the castle, his cruel behaviour with his servants and soldiers of his army is emphasized not once in the novel.

Baroness Malcolm and her daughter are confined in the castle in order to deprive them of their rightful property. This fact serves as an example of Malcolm's power over them.

'I come, Madam,' said he, in a voice stern and determined, 'to inform you, that you quit not this castle. The estates which you call yours, are mine; and think not that I shall neglect to prosecute my claim [...]. The apartments you now inhabit shall remain your own; but beyond the wall of the castle you shall not

pass; for I will not, by suffering your departure, afford you an opportunity of contesting those rights which I can enforce without opposition' (CAD, p. 63).

In her book *Art of Darkness* Anne Williams suggests the following interpretation of the above mentioned aspect of the castle: "The Gothic castle also concretely represents what many poststructuralist critics, following Lacan, refer to as "the Symbolic" – "le nom du pere," the Law of the Father [...] It is founded on the distinction between male and female, on the repression of the mother specifically and the female in general".²⁴

In *A Sicilian Romance* the Marchioness of Mazzini is entombed for fifteen years in a dungeon of the castle's south wing by order of her husband who attributing his wife's death to a fever buries her in effigy. Before their flight from the castle the Marchioness explains to her daughter Julia, "the marquis, you know, has not only power to imprison, but also the right of life and death in his domain" (SR, p.180).

It is interesting to note that the castle and its owner, Montoni, in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* form one Gothic unit, so to speak, and it may appear that there is an ontological link between them. The castle seems to reflect, to personify Montoni's absolute power, and even the landscape around it mirrors his personality. The man, the castle and the landscape are unified into one. When Radcliffe characterizes the features of the castle and says that it is "gloomy", "sublime", "melancholy", "silent", "lonely" and "awful", she characterizes Montoni as well. We may even say that the castle of Udolpho is Montoni, an embodiment of his complete power over his wife and niece.

The confinement of Emily and her aunt in the castle of Udolpho seems to prove the absolute power Montoni has over them. The huge size of the castle may imply different degrees of confinement within it: "The more one penetrates into the unknown depths of the building, the more severe the confinement and isolation."²⁵

At Udolpho the fate of Emily's aunt, now Madame Montoni, illustrates these different degrees of confinement. At first she is just confined within the castle itself; then, when she refuses to sign over her property to Montoni, she is imprisoned in a small chamber in a distant part of the building. On her death, finally, she is buried in the underground vaults deep beneath the castle. Birgitta Berglund argues in this connection that "many women in the eighteenth century led lives that would appear to

us unbearably isolated and confined. What Radcliffe does in *Udolpho*, is to dramatize and lay bare this aspect of life."²⁶

In this respect it is interesting to note that in his *Commentaries on the Laws in England*, William Blackstone compared the law to "an old Gothic castle, erected in the days of chivalry, but fitted up for a modern inhabitant"²⁷ reassuring the reader that the old system of property laws developed under feudalism was then in the process of being modernized by a "series of minute contrivances." For women it meant that

By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law; that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband: under whose wing, protection, and cover, she performs every thing.²⁸

The consequences were the following: the husband took control of the whole of his wife's property, he had rights over children, a married woman could not enter into any legal agreement. Ultimately marriage for women meant, as Clery notes, "a kind of civil death."²⁹ It is possible to claim then that the "civil death" required by common law is actualized by Ann Radcliffe in Madame Montoni's death and the fate of other unhappily married female characters that abound in writer's novels (Baroness Malcolm, Marchioness Mazzini, Countess de Villefort, etc.). Summing up, it is possible to use Clery's remark that

Radcliffe employs the libertarian language of natural justice against the oppressive usage of custom, not because she was a radical, but because this was the shape that terror took for the projected reader, middle class and female: the point at which fantasy and reality met and mingled. Her writings, at least at the height of suspense, encouraged reflection on the illusory nature of the law's 'phantom-objectivity', its interested, man-made nature, through a literal-minded representation of the law as haunted house³⁰.

5.3. The Castle as an Image of the Body and the Heroine's Secret Self

Although the castle may be understood as an embodiment of patriarchal authority, the figure of the castle is ambiguous. "This structure has a private and public aspect; its walls, towers, ramparts suggest external identity, 'the corridors of power', consciousness; whereas its dungeons, attics, secret rooms, and dark hidden passages connote the

culturally female, the sexual, the maternal, the unconscious."³¹ Feminist critics Cynthia Griffin Wolf and Ann Ronald suggest that the image of the castle has clear sexual connotations. In Wolff's opinion,

a castle or abbey that is for the most part a safe place, but which has as its foundation some 'complicated maze of underground vaults [or] dark passages' and in its bedrooms 'sliding panels and trapdoors' - this endlessly reenacted fantasy is always figured in terms of 'inner space'. Thus the Gothic building (whatever it may be) that gives the fiction its name may become in this treatment of the tradition a way of identifying a woman's body [...] when she is undergoing the seige of conflict over sexual stimulation or arousal.³²

Ann Ronald suggests that the description of an entrance to a Gothic castle may be read as the description of a seduction or of a possible rape. "The erotic inferences to be drawn from this description", argues Ronald, "are evident."³³ Thus, approaching the castle of Udolpho Emily sees that

the gateway before her, leading into the courts, was of gigantic size, and was defended by two round towers, crowned by overhanging turrets, embattled, where, instead of banners, now waved long grass and wild plants, that had taken root among the mouldering stones, and which seemed to sigh, as the breeze rolled past, over the desolation around them. The towers were united by a curtain, pierced and embattled also, below which appeared the pointed arch of a huge porticullis, surmounting the gates (MU, p. 227).

It is interesting to notice that the image of the castle may ultimately be interpreted as the unknown and labyrinthine depth of the heroine's subconscious. It is best revealed in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.

As the first view of Udolpho castle in the fading light suggests, clear perception is precisely what Emily is deprived of in her imprisonment. Once inside the castle, things become even darker: "She entered an extensive Gothic hall, obscured by the gloom of evening, which a light glimmering at a distance through a long perspective of arches only rendered more striking" (MU, p.228). Literally and metaphorically, Emily is unable to see exactly where she is or what is going on around her. At this point Emily "leaves" the real world. She moves from familiar surroundings into the unknown, and the imagery also changes to portend a sense of "other-worldliness". Servants are mistaken for villainous captors because all are "figures seen at a distance imperfectly through the dusk". Everything seen through Emily's eyes is envisioned through a dim blur;

walls are "massy", ceilings "lofty", faces "menacing" and the corners of rooms "remote". As Ann Radcliffe points out several times in the novel, Emily's life in the castle "appeared like the dream of a distempered imagination" (MU, p. 329).

The fact that most events happening at Udolpho take place at night, adds to the dreamlike feeling. This feeling of unreality, of being caught in a nightmare increases the opportunity to read the heroine's behavior, her fears and fantasies, as the unfolding of her real self. In Norman Holland's and Leona Sherman's words, "the novel combines the heroine's fantasies about the castle with her fears that her body will be violated [...]. The castle is a nightmare house - it admits all we can imagine into it of the dark, frightening and unknown."³⁴ And they add in this connection that "the gothic novel usually says that the castle contains some family secret, so that the castle can also become the core of fantasies based on a childish desire that adulthood be an exactly defined secret one can discover and possess."³⁵

The secrets that the heroine tries to penetrate or is confronted with are the issues of birth, sex and death. In the first place, Emily has doubts about her own identity. She has suspicions about her parents' marriage especially when she discovers her own physical resemblance to a number of women (the late Marchioness and Sister Agnes who, in fact, are the Gothic doubles of each other). Strangely enough, Emily is connected with both of them - the Marchioness turns out to be her aunt and Sister Agnes (or Madame Laurentini, the former mistress of Udolpho) makes Emily her heir. It is Laurentini, driven mad by her passions who says to Emily very important words, which constitute the "central theme"³⁶ of the novel:

You are young - you are innocent! I mean you are yet innocent of any great crime! But you have passions in your heart, - scorpions: they sleep now - beware how you awaken them! - they will sting you even to death (MU, p. 574).

It is true that throughout the whole stay at Udolpho, Emily feels a constant threat of sexual violence. Nevertheless, a kind of confusion creeps into Emily's mind. She becomes "imprisoned within her own consciousness."³⁷ Though she thinks she is in love with Valencourt, Emily finds Montoni and some of his friends "uncommonly handsome" and we are led to suspect that she is attracted to Montoni. Literally and

metaphorically Emily loses her way “in the intricacies of the castle” (MU, p. 258). She is afraid but at the same time she tries to explore the labyrinths of the castle. As Robert Kiely notes,

Emily wants and does not want to know exactly what is going on in the castle; she wants and does not want Montoni to take more notice of her; and she wants and does not want one of his swarthy surrogates to come in one night and possess her.³⁸

It is what Cynthia G. Wolff claims to be the ritualized conflict that takes place between the major figures of Gothic fiction (within the significant boundaries of that “enclosed space”) which represents in externalized form the conflict any single woman might experience. A woman is pictured as trapped between the demands of two sorts of men – a “chaste” lover and a “demon” lover - each of them is really a reflection of one portion of her own longing, her divided “self”.³⁹

Thus, in addition to being an object of Burkian sublime, the Gothic castle, with its pinnacles and dungeons, crenelations, moats, drawbridges, spiralling staircases and concealed doors, realizes, to use Peter Brooks’s words, “an architectural approximation of the Freudian model of the mind, particularly the traps laid for the conscious by the unconscious and the repressed.”⁴⁰ To sum up, the image of the castle is a very ambivalent one - a potential space open to different possibilities.

Notes:

- ¹ See Coral Howels, *Love, Mystery and Misery: Feeling in Gothic Fiction*. University of London, The Athlone Press, 1978, p. 37.
- ² William Gilpin, *Three Essays (1792). Eighteenth-Century Critical Essays*. Ed. Scott Elledge. Vol.2. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1961, pp. 1047–64.
- ³ Archibald Alison, *Essays on Nature and Principles of Taste (1790)*. Quoted in Coral Howels, *Love, Mystery and Misery*, p. 37.
- ⁴ See Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, Oxford University Press, 1964, pp. 25, 27, 40.
- ⁵ Frederick S. Frank, “The Gothic Romance 1762 - 1820.” *Horror Literature: A Core Collection and Reference Guide*. Ed. Marshall B. R.R. Bowker Company, New York, 1981, p.15.
- ⁶ See Clara Reeve, *The Old English Baron: a Gothic Story*, London 1967, p. 618, p. 622, p. 651.
- ⁷ “Holy calm” appears in James Thomson’s *The Seasons*, Summer, line 550.
- ⁸ Michael Sadleir, *The Northanger Novels: a Footnote to Jane Austen*, English Association Pamphlet Number 68, November 1927, p.7.

- 9 Michail Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*. Ed. Michail Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michail Holquist. Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1981, p. 293. Bakhtin also alludes to the symbolic richness of the castle in Gothic fiction in his work *Voprosy literatury i estetiki*, Moskva, 1975, p. 394.
- 10 Manuel Aguirre, *The Closed Space: Horror Literature and Western Symbolism*. Manchester University Press, 1990, p. 92.
- 11 Manuel Aguirre, *The Closed Space*, p. 92.
- 12 David Durant, "Ann Radcliffe and the Conservative Gothic." *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, Vol. 22, Summer 1982, Nr. 3, p. 524.
- 13 Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*. London and New York, 1996, p. 116.
- 14 See Alison Milbank, Introduction to Ann Radcliffe, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*. Oxford University Press, 1995, xxi.
- 15 Samuel Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*. London, 1775, p. 14.
- 16 Robert Miles, *Gothic Writing, 1750 - 1820: A Genealogy*. London and New York, 1993, p. 138.
- 17 Carol Howels, *Love, Mystery and Misery*, p. 35.
- 18 Daniel Cottom, *The Civilized Imagination: A Study of Ann Radcliffe, Jane Austin, and Sir Walter Scott*. Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 62.
- 19 Iu. M. Lotman, *Struktura khudozhestvennogo teksta*. Brown University Press, Providence, 1971, p. 271.
- 20 E. J. Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762 - 1800*. Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 106.
- 21 Jane Spencer, *The Rise of the Women Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen*. Basil Blackwell, 1986, p. 204.
- 22 *Monthly Review*, Nr. 15, November 1794, p. 280.
- 23 Samuel Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, p.120.
- 24 Anne Williams, *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic*. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1995, p. 46.
- 25 Birgitta Berglund, *Woman's Whole Existence: The House as an Image in the Novels of Ann Radcliffe, Mary Wollstonecraft and Jane Austen*. Lund University Press, 1993, p. 68.
- 26 B. Berglund, *Woman's Whole Existence*, p.68.
- 27 William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England (1765)*, 4 vols., 15th ed., with notes and additions by E. Christian. London, 1809, Vol. 3, p. 268.
- 28 William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England (1765)*, Vol.1, p. 441.
- 29 E.J. Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762–1800*, p.125.
- 30 E.J. Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762–1800*, pp.126–27.
- 31 Anne Williams, *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic*, p. 44.

- ³² Cynthia Griffin Wolff, "The Radcliffean Gothic Model: A Form for Feminine Sexuality." *The Female Gothic*. Ed. Julian E. Fleenor. Montreal - London: Eden Press, 1983, p. 210.
- ³³ Ann Ronald, "Terror-Gothic: Nightmare and Dream in Ann Radcliffe and Charlotte Bronte." *The Female Gothic*, p. 179.
- ³⁴ Norman Holland and Leona Sherman, "Gothic Possibilities." *New Literary History*, Vol. 8, Nr. 2, Winter 1977, pp. 281–282.
- ³⁵ Norman Holland and Leona Sherman, "Gothic Possibilities," p. 282. It is interesting to note that according to Norman Holland and Leona Sherman a Gothic castle may be:
- | | | |
|--|----|-------------------------|
| A maternal space | or | A hardness |
| - nurturing | | |
| - and/ or sexual | | |
| - expressed in a geometrical dialectic | | |
| An idealized past | or | The reader's present |
| - big in size | | |
| - a family romance | | |
| An inside | | |
| - a secret | | |
| - to be penetrated | or | - a hardness |
| - enclosing | or | - to be escaped (p.288) |
- ³⁶ Nina da Vinci Nichols, "Place and Eros in Radcliffe, Lewis and Bronte." *The Female Gothic*, p.191.
- ³⁷ Robert Kiely, *The Romantic Novel in England*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1972, p. 77.
- ³⁸ R. Kiely, *The Romantic Novel in England*, p. 75.
- ³⁹ Cynthia Griffin Wolff, "The Radcliffean Gothic Model: A Form for Feminine Sexuality." *The Female Gothic*, p. 212.
- ⁴⁰ Quoted in Neil Cornwell, *The Literary Fantastic: From Gothic to Postmodernism*. Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990, p. 47.

Suggested study questions for further discussion:

1. Discuss Gothic conventions: the setting, characters, and the supernatural.
2. Discuss the setting in Ann Radcliffe's fiction.
3. Read the excerpt from A. Radcliffe's novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (Appendix III) and discuss it relating to the aesthetic thought of the time. Comment on the description of the Sublime and the Picturesque. Discuss Ann Radcliffe's narrated description or word-painting. Point out Gothic images.
4. Discuss the image of the castle applying a semiotic approach.
5. Discuss the castle as an image of confinement. Discuss the castle as the body and the heroine's secret self.

Useful Internet Addresses:

"Ann Radcliffe". Gothic Literature Page.

<http://www.zittaw.com/gliterature.htm>

"Ann Radcliffe". The Victorian Web. Before Victoria: Selected Authors from the Eighteenth and Nineteth Centuries.

<http://www.victorianweb.org/previctorian/radcliffe/radcliffeov.html>

A Glossary of Literary Gothic Terms.

<http://personal.georgiasouthern.edu/~doug/goth.html#info>

The Gothic Experience Page.

<http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/gothic/history.html>

The Literary Gothic: A Web Guide to Gothic Literature.

http://www.litgothic.com/index_fl.html

Voller, Jack G. "Ann Radcliffe". The Literary Gothic.

<http://www.litgothic.com/Authors/radcliffe.html>

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Appendix I

ANN RADCLIFFE: THE GREAT ENCHANTRESS OF THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY

The eighteenth century is an important period for anyone interested in women writing. Women writers, especially those writing Gothic fiction, pervasively used spatial imagery in their fiction. Many critics see the cause of this phenomenon in a rather restrained way of life of the eighteenth century middle-class woman.

For Ann Radcliffe (1764–1823), one of the most celebrated authors of the female Gothic in the eighteenth century England, spatial imagery is very important as well. Though she was not the first woman to write Gothic fiction, Ann Radcliffe was the best known and the best-paid author of this genre.¹ The earlier woman writer of the Gothic romance was Clara Reeve (1729–1807). Reeve earned for herself a reputation of a writer for the book of criticism, *The Progress of Romance* (1785) and for her highly acclaimed by the contemporaries Gothic novel, *The Old English Baron* (first published in 1777 under the title *The Champion of Virtue*). Sisters Sophia and Harriet Lee also contributed to the genre. As Dale Spender notes, “their return to the past to make points about the present – a fundamental feature of their writing – represented quite a change in the direction of the novel.”² The fact that these women writers were soon overtaken by Mrs. Ann Radcliffe does not minimize their achievement in pioneering ways in English novel.

There is very little known about Mrs. Ann Radcliffe's personal life. As it is noted in the *Edinburgh Review* for May, 1823,

The fair authoress kept herself almost as much incognito as the Author of *Waverley*; nothing was known of her but her name on the title page. She never appeared in public, nor mingled in private society, but kept herself apart, like the sweet bird that sings its solitary notes, shrowded and unseen.³

Ann Radcliffe successfully protected herself from the eyes of strangers. She stayed apart from the literary life of her times; she even did not leave letters and diaries, which reveal her personal relationships or passions. The journals, which she kept, record her impressions of external things, rather than her inner life. Ann Radcliffe's life was so calm that when

Christina Rosseti was offered to write Mrs. Radcliffe's biography in John H. Ingram's "Eminent Women Series", she had to abandon an attempt for lack of material. In her letter in *The Athenaeum* Christina Rosseti seeks assistance and explains the situation:

I am scarcely hoping to collect materials for a memoir of Mrs. Radcliffe, the novelist [...]. But all the material as yet known to me falls short of the amount I seek for. Is there any hoard of diaries or correspondence hitherto unpublished which yet the owners might be willing to make public? I would do my best to satisfy such generous owners were they to entrust their treasure to me; above all, I should hope to make my selection with scrupulous delicacy. Failing such hidden stores, I fear my proposed task cannot be executed.⁴

Until very recently the few facts that we know about Ann Radcliffe could be found in the *Annual Biography and Obituary* for 1824, *Life and Writings of Mrs. Radcliffe* prefixed to her last and posthumously published novel *Gaston de Blondville*, and in *The Compact Edition of the Dictionary of National Biography*.⁵ Rictor Norton's book on Ann Radcliffe, *Mistress of Udolpho: The Life of Ann Radcliffe*, published in January 1999 is, as Diane Jacobs notices, an "ingeniously researched biography"⁶ and the source that describes her life in greatest detail so far.

Ann Radcliffe (*née* Ward) was born in London, on 9 July 1764 of middle class parents, William and Ann Ward. Great part of her youth was passed in the society of relatives in easy circumstances. In 1771–1772 Ann Radcliffe (at that time Ann Ward) stayed with her uncle Thomas Benley while her parents prepared for their removal to Bath. At his house in Chelsea and afterwards at Turnham Green she enjoyed the benefit of seeing some persons of literary eminence, "and many of accomplished manners"⁷. Mrs. Piozzi (Hester Thrale), the friend of Johnson and the travel writer, the historian and the critic; Mrs. Montagu, the author of the *Essay on the Writings of Genius of Shakespear*; and Anna Laetitia Barbauld, the editor, the poet, the intellectual as well as future critic of Radcliffe were among the visitors.

In 1781 Sophia and Harriet Lee opened a school for girls and young ladies. Though some sources suppose that Ann Radcliffe attended their school⁸, Ann Radcliffe's biographer Rictor Norton argues that this would have been impossible and has to be abandoned as wishful thinking.⁹ Nevertheless, it is still reasonable to suppose that the publication of Miss Lee's sentimental historical novel with Gothic overtones, *The Recess*

(1785), impressed Ann Ward and it might have served as an impulse for her to write *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789) attempting, in Murray's terms, "a historical Gothic"¹⁰ herself. The *Annual Register* for 1824 notices the following: "It is to be remarked that Mrs. Radcliffe (then Miss Ward), resident in Bath, and acquainted in Miss Lee's family, though too young to have appeared herself as a writer, was among the warmest admirers of *The Recess*"¹¹.

In 1787, at the age of twenty three, Ann Ward married William Radcliffe, a graduate of Oxford, and a student of law. Mr. Radcliffe did not complete his legal studies; he turned to journalism and became the proprietor of the *English Chronicle*. It seems to have been a happy though childless marriage which, apparently, have meant the beginning of Radcliffe's literary career. Mrs. Radcliffe's first book, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, was published two years after her marriage in 1789. In the scanty biographical treatments of Ann Radcliffe's life that we can obtain it is emphasized that it was her husband who encouraged her to write. Her first book was published anonymously, as were the first editions of *A Sicilian Romance* in 1790 and *The Romance of the Forest* in 1791. The author's name appeared on the title-page only when the second edition of *The Romance of the Forest* was published. *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, published in 1794, made her the most popular writer of the day. Commenting on its reception, Sir Walter Scott noted that

the very name was fascinating; and the public who rushed upon it with all the eagerness of curiosity, rose from it with unsated appetite. When a family was numerous the volumes always flew, and were sometimes torn from hand to hand; and the complaints of those whose studies were interrupted, were a general tribute to the genius of the author.¹²

In 1795 *The Mysteries of Udolpho* was followed by *A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794, through Holland and the Western Frontier of Germany, with a Return down to Rhine: to which are added Observations during a Tour to the Lakes of Lancashire, Westmoreland and Cumberland*. The last published book during Ann Radcliffe's lifetime was *The Italian* (1796). *Gaston de Blondville*, though composed in 1802, was published posthumously in 1826; her poems, many of which are contained in her romances, appeared in a separate collection under the title *Poetical Works of Ann Radcliffe* in 1816.

It is important to note that Mrs. Radcliffe's readers must not look for anything like historic precision in her novels. Radcliffe's stories are set in distant ages and in places far away from England. In spite of that, contemporary mode of life, sentiments and concerns of the end of the eighteenth century are introduced into her books.

The influence of Ann Radcliffe on her contemporaries can hardly be over-estimated. The year after the publication of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* Mathew Gregory Lewis wrote *The Monk*. Robert Charles Maturin borrowed many suggestions from her in his *Melmoth the Wanderer* and we may speculate that *Northanger Abbey* would not have been written if Jane Austen had not read and been provoked by Mrs. Radcliffe's books. Charlotte Smith, Eliza Parsons, Eliza Fenwick, Isabella Kelly, Julia Maria Young, Elizabeth Bonhote, Mrs. Carver, George Moore, Regina Maria Roche, Mrs. Patrick, John Palmer, Jr., and Mary Meeke were among Mrs. Radcliffe's followers during the 1790s. The Romantic poets such as Byron, Shelley, Wordsworth and Coleridge were deeply indebted to Ann Radcliffe for some of their most powerful imagery. Keats called her "fine mother Radcliffe."¹³ Ann Radcliffe paved the way for Sir Walter Scott, Robert Louis Stevenson, Charlotte Bronte and many others. She inspired such French writers as Lamarteliere, Seurin, Pujos and Debaytua.¹⁴ Balzac, Gautier and George Sand read Ann Radcliffe's *Le Chateau des Pyrenees*, and she had a great influence upon popular writers such as Ducray-Duminil and Charles Nodier. There are a lot of references to Mrs. Radcliffe in Stendhal's journals which testify that Stendhal liked Ann Radcliffe's fiction. On August 12, 1837 Stendhal expressed his admiration for Ann Radcliffe as follows: "I have noticed that Mrs. Radcliffe's beautiful descriptions do not describe anything; they are the song of a sailor which makes us dream."¹⁵ Mrs. Radcliffe's travel book *A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794, through Holland and the Western Frontier of Germany, with a Return down to Rhine: to which are added Observations during a Tour to the Lakes of Lancashire, Westmoreland and Cumberland* had a powerful influence upon later picturesque travellers and topographical writers. Here we can mention Ebenezer Rhodes' *Peak Scenery* and Joseph Farington's *Britannia Depicta*.¹⁶ Ann Radcliffe's eminence guaranteed that there would be numerous critical studies of her fiction. In the first place, critics recognized Mrs. Radcliffe as a founder of a school. Sir Walter Scott, for instance, claimed that

Radcliffe was a founder of a distinct class of romance: "She led the way in a peculiar style of composition, affecting powerfully the mind of the reader [...]. Mrs Radcliffe, as an author, has the most decided claim to take her place among the favoured few, who have been distinguished as the founders of a class, or school"¹⁷. According to Hazlitt, she made her readers "twice children"¹⁸; Thomas De Quincey called her "the great enchantress of that generation"¹⁹ In discussing the sources of Radcliffe's powers of enchantment critics referred to her poetic sensibility, her pictorial, scenic art, her ability, as Robert Miles notes, "to duplicate a sense of the supernatural, here visionary, there phantasmal"²⁰ Following Edmund Burke's ideas about the origin of the Sublime and the Beautiful, his discussion about pain and pleasure expressed in his treatise *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). Ann Radcliffe became a great poetess of the aesthetics of uncertainty. Coleridge commented upon this prominent feature of her mode of writing as follows: "[...] the same mysterious terrors are continually exciting in the mind the idea of supernatural appearance, keeping us, as it were, upon the very edge and confines of the world of spirits, and yet are ingeniously explained by familiar causes."²¹ As Coleridge suggests, Radcliffe's art was to leave the reader on the borderline between the phantasmal and the real, between superstition and common sense, the supernatural and natural. Hazlitt noted in this respect that "All the fascination that links the world of passion to the world unknown is hers, and she plays with it at her pleasure: she has all the poetry of romance, all that is obscure, visionary, and objectless in the imagination"²². Thus, when playing with superstition and the explained supernatural, Ann Radcliffe pleased the taste of her age and played upon this taste in a way that clearly moved her readership.

Ann Radcliffe died at the age of fifty-nine on February 7, 1823 in London.

Notes:

- ¹ Ann Radcliffe received 500 pounds from Messrs. Robinsons for the copy of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and 800 pounds for the copy of *The Italian*. See *Annual Biography and Obituary* for 1824, vol. 8, p. 96.
- ² Dale Spender, *Mothers of the Novel*. Pandora Press: London and New York, 1986, p. 233.
- ³ *Edinburgh Review*, XXXVIII, May, 1823, p. 360.

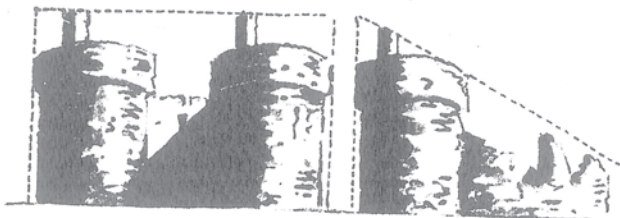
- ⁴ Quoted in Rictor Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho: The Life of Ann Radcliffe*. Leicester University Press, 1999, p. 5. Also see Richard Davenport-Hines, *Gothic: 400 Years of Excess, Horror, Evil and Ruin*. Fourth Estate, London, 1998, p. 147.
- ⁵ See *Annual Biography and Obituary* for 1824, vol. 8, London, 1824, p. 98; *The Compact Edition of the Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 2, Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 1726; *Life and Writings of Mrs. Radcliffe*. Prefixed to *Gaston de Blondville*. London, 1826, pp. 5–7.
- ⁶ *New York Times Book Review*, April 25, 1999.
- ⁷ R. Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho: Life and Writings of Mrs. Radcliffe*, p.6.
- ⁸ See *A Dictionary of British and American Woman Writers, 1600–1800*. Ed. Janet Todd. Methuen, London, 1984, p. 262; Spender, *Mothers of the Novel*, Pandora Press: London and New York, 1986, p. 233.
- ⁹ R. Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho: The Life of Ann Radcliffe*, p. 47.
- ¹⁰ E. B. Murray, *Ann Radcliffe*. New York: Twayne, 1972, p. 15.
- ¹¹ Quoted in Clara Frances McIntyre, *Ann Radcliffe in Relation to her Time*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920, p. 11.
- ¹² Quoted in Anne Elwood, *Memoirs of the Literary Ladies of England*. Henry Colburn, London, 1843, vol. 1, p. 159.
- ¹³ *The Letters of John Keats*. Ed. Hyder Edward Rollins. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956, vol. 2, p. 62. In a letter to Reynolds John Keats wrote: "I am going among Scenery whence I intend to tip you the Damosel Radcliffe – I'll cavern you, and grotto you, and waterfall you, and wood you, and water you, and immense-rock you, and tremendous sound you, and solitude you. I'll make a logement on your glacis by a row of Pines, and storm your covered way with bramble Bushes." *The Letters of John Keats*, vol. 1. p. 245.
- ¹⁴ Harold Wade Streeter, *The Eighteenth Century English Novel in French Translation*, Benjamin Bloom. Inc. New York, 1970, pp. 120–122.
- ¹⁵ "J' ai remarque que les belles descriptions de Mme Radcliffe ne decrivent rien; c' est le chant d'un matelot qui fait rever." Quoted in Rictor Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho: The Life of Ann Radcliffe*, p. 257.
- ¹⁶ See R. Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho: The Life of Ann Radcliffe*, p. 121.
- ¹⁷ Sir Walter Scott, *On Novelists and Fiction*. Ed. I. Williams. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968, p. 110.
- ¹⁸ William Hazlitt, *Lectures on the English Comic Writers*. London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1907, p. 167.
- ¹⁹ Thomas De Quincey, *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey*. Ed. David Masson. Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1889-90, vol. 3, p. 282.
- ²⁰ Robert Miles, *Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995, p. 11.
- ²¹ *Coleridge's Miscellaneous Criticism*. Ed. T. M. Raysor. London: Constable, 1936, p. 356.
- ²² W. Hazlitt, *Lectures on the English Comic Writers*, p. 165.

Appendix II

WILLIAM GILPIN'S ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE PICTURESQUE

Index of Plates:

Ruin illustrated with regard to its general form.



with regard to its parts.

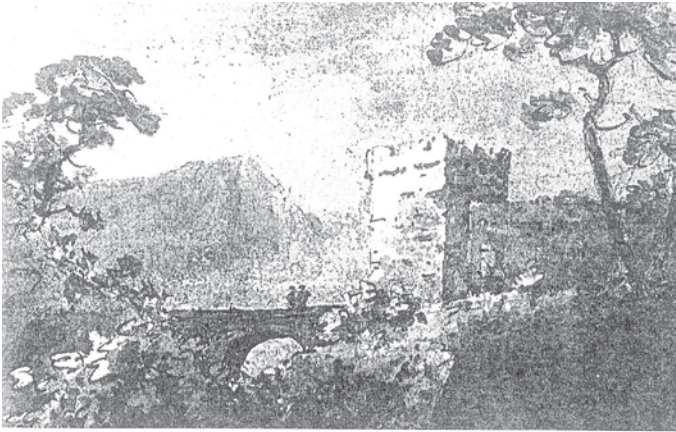


with regard to Decorations.



Plate I. Ruin illustrated by William Gilpin.

See Malins, Edward. *English Landscaping and Literature 1660–1840*. London: Oxford University Press, 1966.



Plates IIa and IIb. William Gilpin, *Landscape Composition*.

Fry Gallery, London.

See Andrews, Malcolm. *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760–1800*. Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1989.

Appendix III

ANN RADCLIFFE, *THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO*. AN EXTRACT. VOLUME 2, CHAPTER 5

Montoni did not embark on the Brenta, but pursued his way in carriages across the country, towards the Apennine; during which journey, his manner to Emily was so particularly severe, that this alone would have confirmed her late conjecture, had any such confirmation been necessary. Her senses were now dead to the beautiful country, through which she travelled. Sometimes she was compelled to smile at the naiveté of Annette, in her remarks on what she saw, and sometimes to sigh, as a scene of peculiar beauty recalled Valancourt to her thoughts, who was indeed seldom absent from them, and of whom she could never hope to hear in the solitude, to which she was hastening.

At length, the travellers began to ascend among the Apennines. The immense pine-forests, which, at that period, overhung these mountains, and between which the road wound, excluded all view but of the cliffs aspiring above, except, that, now and then, an opening through the dark woods allowed the eye a momentary glimpse of the country below. The gloom of these shades, their solitary silence, except when the breeze swept over their summits, the tremendous precipices of the mountains, that came partially to the eye, each assisted to raise the solemnity of Emily's feelings into awe; she saw only images of gloomy grandeur, or of dreadful sublimity, around her; other images, equally gloomy and equally terrible, gleamed on her imagination. She was going she scarcely knew whither, under the dominion of a person, from whose arbitrary disposition she had already suffered so much, to marry, perhaps, a man who possessed neither her affection, or esteem; or to endure, beyond the hope of succour, whatever punishment revenge, and that Italian revenge, might dictate. – The more she considered what might be the motive of the journey, the more she became convinced, that it was for the purpose of concluding her nuptials with Count Morano, with that secrecy which her resolute resistance had made necessary to the honour, if not to the safety, of Montoni. From the deep solitudes, into which she was immersing, and from the gloomy castle, of which she had heard some

mysterious hints, her sick heart recoiled in despair, and she experienced, that, though her mind was already occupied by peculiar distress, it was still alive to the influence of new and local circumstance; why else did she shudder at the idea of this desolate castle?

As the travellers still ascended among the pine forests, steep rose over steep, the mountains seemed to multiply, as they went, and what was the summit of one eminence proved to be only the base of another. At length, they reached a little plain, where the drivers stopped to rest the mules, whence a scene of such extent and magnificence opened below, as drew even from Madame Montoni a note of admiration. Emily lost, for a moment, her sorrows, in the immensity of nature. Beyond the amphitheatre of mountains, that stretched below, whose tops appeared as numerous almost, as the waves of the sea, and whose feet were concealed by the forests, extended the Campagna of Italy, where cities and rivers, and woods and all the glow of cultivation were mingled in gay confusion. The Adriatic bounded the horizon, into which the Po and the Brenta, after winding through the whole extent of the landscape, poured their fruitful waves. Emily gazed long on the splendours of the world she was quitting, of which the whole magnificence seemed thus given to her sight only to increase her regret on leaving it; for her, Valancourt alone was in that world; to him alone her turned, and for him alone fell her bitter tears.

From this sublime scene the travellers continued to ascend among the pines, till they entered a narrow pass of the mountains, which shut out every feature of the distant country, and, in its stead, exhibited only tremendous crags, impending over the road, where no vestige of humanity, or even of vegetation, appeared, except here and there the trunk and scathed branches of an oak, that hung nearly headlong from the rock, into which its strong roots had fastened. This pass, which led into the heart of the Apennine, at length opened to day, and a scene of mountains stretched in long perspective, as wild as any the travellers had yet passed. Still vast pine-forests hung upon their base, and crowned the ridgy precipice, that rose perpendicularly from the vale, while, above, the rolling mists caught the sun-beams, and touched their cliffs with all the magical colouring of light and shade. The scene seemed perpetually changing, and its features to assume new forms as the winding road brought them to the eye in different attitudes while the shifting vapours,

now partially concealing their minuter beauties and now illuminating them with splendid tints, assisted the illusions of the sight.

Though the deep vallies between these mountains were, for the most part, clothed with pines, sometimes an abrupt opening presented a perspective of only barren rocks, with a cataract flashing from their summit among broken cliffs, till its waters, reaching the bottom, foamed along with unceasing fury; and sometimes pastoral scenes exhibited their "green delights" in the narrow vales smiling amid surrounding horror. There herds and flocks of goats and sheep, browsing under the shade of hanging woods, and the shepherd's little cabin, reared on the margin of a clear stream. presented a sweet picture of repose.

Wild and romantic as were these scenes, their character had far less of the sublime, than had those of the Alps, which guard the entrance of Italy. Emily was often elevated, but seldom felt those emotions of indescribable awe which she had so continually experienced, in her passage over the Alps.

Towards the close of day, the road wound into a deep valley Mountains, whose shaggy steeps appeared to be inaccessible, almost surrounded it. To the east, a vista opened, that exhibited the Apennines in their darkest horrors; and the long perspective of retiring summits, rising over each other, their ridges clothed with pines, exhibited a stronger image of grandeur, than any that Emily had yet seen. The sun had just sunk below the top of the mountains she was descending, whose long shadow stretched opening of the cliffs, touched with a yellow gleam the summits of the forest, that hung upon the opposite steeps, and streamed in full splendour upon the towers and battlements of a castle, that spread its extensive ramparts along the brow of a precipice above. The splendour of these illumined objects was heightened by the contrasted shade, which involved the valley below.

"There," said Montoni, speaking for the first time in several hours, "is Udolpho."

Emily gazed with melancholy awe upon the castle, which she understood to be Montoni's; for, though it was now lighted up by the setting sun, the gothic greatness of its features, and its mouldering dark grey stone, rendered it a gloomy and sublime object. gazed, the light died away on its walls, leaving a melancholy purple tint, which spread deeper and deeper, as the thin vapour crept up the mountain, while

the battlements above were still tipped with splendour. From those too, the rays soon faded, and the whole edifice was invested with the solemn duskiness of evening. Silent, lonely and sublime, it seemed to stand the sovereign of the scene, and to frown defiance on all, who dared to invade its solitary reign. As the twilight deepened, its features became more awful in obscurity, and Emily continued to gaze, till its clustering towers were alone seen, rising over the tops of the woods, beneath whose thick shade the carriages soon after began to ascend.

The extent and darkness of these tall woods awakened terrific images in her mind, and she almost expected to see banditti start from under the trees. At length, the carriages emerged upon a healthy rock, and, soon after, reached the castle gates, where the deep tone of the portal bell, which was struck upon to give notice of their arrival, increased the fearful emotions, that had assailed Emily. While they waited till the servant within should come to open the gates, she anxiously surveyed the edifice: but the than, that overspread it, allowed her to distinguish little more a part of its outline, with the massy walls of the ramparts, and to know, that it was vast, ancient and dreary. From the parts she saw, she judged of the heavy strength and extent of the whole. gateway before her, leading into the courts, was of gigantic size and was defended by two round towers, crowned by over-hanging turrets, embattled, where, instead of banners, now waved long grass and wild plants, that had taken root among the mouldering stones, and which seemed to sigh, as the breeze rolled past, the desolation around them. The towers were united by a curtain, pierced and embattled also, below which appeared the pointed arch of an huge portcullis, surmounting the gates: from these, the walls of the ramparts extended to other towers, overlooking the precipice, whose shattered outline, appearing on a gleam, that lingered in the west, told of the ravages of war. - Beyond these was lost in the obscurity of evening.

While Emily gazed with awe upon the scene, footsteps were heard within the gates, and the undrawing of bolts; after which an ancient servant of the castle appeared, forcing back the huge folds of the portal, to admit his lord. As the carriage-wheels rolled heavily under the portcullis, Emily's heart sunk, and she seemed, as if she was going into her prison; the gloomy court, into which she passed, served to confirm the idea, and her imagination, ever awake to circumstance, suggested even more terrors, than her reason could justify.

Another gate delivered them into the second court, grass-grown and more wild than the first, where, as she surveyed through the twilight its desolation - its lofty walls, overtopped with briony, moss and nightshade, and the embattled towers that rose above, – long-suffering and murder came to her thoughts. One of those instantaneous and unaccountable convictions, which sometimes conquer even strong minds, impressed her with its horror. The sentiment was not diminished, when she entered an extensive gothic hall, obscured by the gloom of evening, which a light glimmering at a distance through a long perspective of arches, only rendered more striking. As a servant brought the lamp nearer, partial gleams fell upon the pillars and the pointed arches, forming a strong contrast with their shadows, that stretched along the pavement and the walls (MU, pp. 224–228).

Raškauskienė, Audronė

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Mokomojoje knygoje *Gothic Fiction: The Beginnings* trumpai apžvelgta XVIII a. estetinė teorinė mintis, vyravusi to meto Anglijoje, bei jos įtaka žymiausias XVIII a. anglų gotikinės literatūros rašytojos Annos Radcliffe (1764–1823) kūrybai. Pirmojoje knygos dalyje pristatoma bei analizuojama XVIII a. estetinė mintis, turėjusi didelę įtaką ne tik XVIII a. britų gotikinei literatūrai atsirasti, bet ir veikusi kultūros reiškinius bei literatūros žanrus, vėliau kilusius iš klasikinės gotikinės literatūros (pvz., siaubo romaną, mokslinę fantastiką ir kt.). Remdamasi Edmundo Burke, Imanuelio Kanto, Williama Gilpino bei Uvendale Price darbais, autorė aptaria gotikinės literatūros termino bei paties žanro kilmę, estetines didingumo bei grožio kategorijas.

Antrojoje knygos dalyje erdvės semiotika Annos Radcliffe kūryboje analizuojama remiantis G. Bachelardo, C. Levi-Strausso bei J. Lotmano darbais.

Skaitytojo dėmesys atkreipiamas į uždarą erdvę kaip į vieną svarbiausių erdvių gotikinėje literatūroje, į šios erdvės interpretaciją bei galimas reikšmes.

Knyga skirta studentams filologams, studijuojantiems literatūros bei kultūros istoriją bei visiems, besidomintiems literatūra bei literatūrologija.

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