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“‘Very Much a Woman of Reason and Propriety’”: Ann Radcliffe’s Female
Gothic Romances and their Eighteenth-century Contexts’

DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

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Souhlasím se zapůjčením diplomové práce ke studijním účelům.

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně a pouze na základě uvedených pramenů a literatury.

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Table of Contents

<u>Introduction</u>	5
1. <u>Radcliffe's Gothic Romance in the Eighteenth-century Context</u>	15
1.1. Generic Ambiguity: Novel and Romance.....	15
1.2. Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Categories. The Sublime, the Beautiful and the Picturesque.....	25
1.3. History and the Past in Eighteenth-century Literature and their Specificities in Ann Radcliffe's Romances.....	31
1.4. The Gothic Genre and the Romance in the Enlightenment Era.....	37
1.5. The Influence of the Sentimental Novel.....	42
2. <u>Space in Ann Radcliffe's Gothic Romance</u>	50
2.1. Outer Travels.....	56
2.1.1. Nature as a Measure of the Character.....	65
2.2. Interiors.....	75
3. <u>Characterization</u>	93
3.1. 'Surface' in Ann Radcliffe's Characterization.....	93
3.2. The Influence of Sentimentalism on Ann Radcliffe's Characterization.....	99
3.3. The Figure of the Villain. Sight as a Means of Asserting Dominance.....	103
3.4. Female Gothic vs. <i>The Monk</i> : Undermining the Female Gothic Sensibility.....	110
<u>Conclusion</u>	119
<u>Summary</u>	129
<u>Bibliography</u>	142

Introduction

In 1977 Ellen Moers in her *Literary Women* coined “Female Gothic” as a new term in literary criticism. In this she seemed to be laying the foundation for a new conception and specific way of thinking about women writers as related to the Gothic genre. Moers in her critical book on women’s writing claims that the Female Gothic is “easily defined: the work that women writers have done in the literary mode that, since the eighteenth century, we have called the Gothic”¹. Nevertheless, along with other terms, Female Gothic was quickly adopted by the feminist critics and especially during the eighties of the twentieth century its interpretation underwent distinct changes. As Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik observe, since the late seventies “it has been increasingly acknowledged that women writers have made use of the non-realist Gothic mode in order to explore the problematic nature of female subjectivity in Western patriarchal culture”². Thus, what was originally conceived of as a specific coinage for the Gothic novels distinct by their female authorship, became a term encompassing the specificities of both woman style of writing and of the woman character as a means for the exploration of female experience.

The application of the term became more focused and consequently rather limited in the late 1980s. This was mainly owing to the essentializing tendencies that marked the gynocritical insistence on the distinctly different character of women’s writing as opposed to the works written by men as the predominant constituents of the literary tradition. Writing as a woman was therefore understood by gynocritics as participating in the construction of the female literary tradition. Due to their stress on gender dimension, Female Gothic in their conception consequently became subject to the “tendencies either to

¹ Ellen Moers, *Literary Women* (London: The Women’s Press, 1980) 90.

² Avril Horner, Sue Zlosnik. “Skin Chairs and Other Domestic Horrors: Barbara Comyns and the Female Gothic.” *Gothic Studies*; May 2004; 6, 1; ProQuest Direct Complete. 90.

psychologically universalize the female mind or to oversimplify the cultural function of Gothic writing”³. Claire Baldick and Robert Mighall argue that “the impact of feminist literary studies upon readings of the Gothic has been ‘mixed’ and that indiscriminate readings of texts have conspired to dehistoricize writing by women”⁴. Thus instead of considering the period of the conception of the literary work as a complex net of political, cultural and social tendencies, the a-historical approach to the gender problems in the treatment of the Female Gothic began to be stressed as crucial by the feminist critics.

Still, an important contribution has to be acknowledged to the gynocritical conception. It mainly proved useful in its focusing on the female subjectivity in the sense of the recently uncovered world of the female experience. In acknowledging the authenticity of women’s private experience, it made a significant step in the revelation of new perspectives, until then neglected, in the analysis of literary works. Yet, with Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823), who is often considered the first woman worthy of the title of a Female Gothic writer, the limits of the gynocritical approach, I believe, become acutely perceptible. Many significant and what I see as the constitutive dimensions of her works, published towards the end of the eighteenth century, would, in my point of view, be lost if focusing on the feminine in them exclusively. Concentrating on the specificities that make her texts distinct as participants in the female tradition would also deprive the analyses of her texts of the many aspects that for me make them fascinating and worthy of attention. In short, dehistoricizing Ann Radcliffe’s works, from my point of view, means making them half.

However, this is not to say that I consider the gender perspective as irrelevant or negligible in the analysis of Radcliffe’s romances. After all, generically gendered distinctions have been pointed out long before the appearance of Moers’ coinage and the

³ Horner, Zlosnik 90.

⁴ Horner, Zlosnik 90.

following feminist interpretations. The difference between the female and male attitudes to the creation of the suspenseful essential in the Gothic fiction was actually drawn by Ann Radcliffe herself more than two hundred years before Moers. In her essay *On the Supernatural in Poetry* (1826) published posthumously, Radcliffe describes the female soul-expanding terrific as opposed to the male contracting and ‘freezingly’ horrific. Moreover, it was probably not by chance that Radcliffe’s plots were and have also become generally accepted as the “classic Female Gothic plots [...] still often defined as the flight of a young woman from a male persecutor in some form (whether father or seducer)”⁵. This label is conspicuously suggestive of the awareness of significant differences that mark the male Gothic plot. Thus, already in the eighteenth century, the authors and the public were conscious of the various approaches of men and women to literary production, though naturally in a much less acute way than their twentieth-century successors.

Far from intending to ignore the gender aspect of Radcliffe’s texts, I will, however, not take it for the starting point of my thesis. The word “female” in the Female Gothic in my conception suggests the acknowledgement of the existence of different characteristics underlying both male and female styles of writing. That is to say, while focusing on other aspects crucial for the rise of Radcliffe’s Female Gothic, the specificities of her writing within the literary tradition of her time as a whole will be highlighted. This complex analysis will then naturally be supplemented by the occasional comparison of her attitude to that of Matthew Lewis, one of her male Gothic writing contemporaries. In a word, I will consider Radcliffe’s work not only within the scope of the Gothic and female fictions but also with regard to both the literary and social context of the eighteenth century. This approach, that does not primarily assert the feminist aspect but does not resign on the feminine either, will, I hope, help to elucidate in what way Radcliffe’s

⁵ Horner, Zlosnik 91.

Female Gothic reaches beyond Moers' "easy" definition and the feminist critics' later conception of this term.

I consider the generic dimension as a crucial criterion for the analysis of Radcliffe's works and that is why a substantial part of the first chapter will be devoted to the general outline of the discussion of the dominant eighteenth-century genres. The significance of the process that Ian Watt describes as "the rise of the novel" will then necessarily be paid due attention to. Ann Radcliffe's decision to officially call her texts "romances" appears rather surprising on the late-eighteenth-century literary scene. This decision of hers to consciously pursue a contrary track to the current generic trends should be proved as being based on the author's reliance on this genre as an adequate carrier of her basic ideas and beliefs.

The publication of her romances shortly after the greatest eighteenth-century novels were written has held an attraction for many critics. Her romances in which she turned back to an indistinct past in a period that praised the meticulously described present in the novels may seem as a rather reactionary step. Radcliffe's indebtedness to the classicist and traditional in literature that supported her good faith in the past and tradition is sufficiently indicated not only in her choice of genre but also in her manifest drawing on some of the greatest of her predecessors within British literary history such as William Shakespeare or John Milton. On the whole, the ancient, medieval and modern sources of her romances serve to suggest something of the complexity of their origins.

As her selective attitude to the acknowledgement of references already suggests, Radcliffe's is a specific conception of the past that is far from being a straightforward indiscriminate adoption of the old times as an ideal setting for her romances. The past is by her always presented as an amalgam of time-tested traditions reconcilable with the

contemporary progressive spirit, which blend, I believe, constituted the essence of her romances.

The number of controversies which are manifested in Ann Radcliffe's works represents for me the most interesting feature of this author's style of writing. Importantly, she does not even fully meet the typical characteristics of the Gothic novel either, the tradition she has been notoriously associated with. Although she always filled her romances with the familiar paraphernalia of the Gothic, in her application these rather "became elements in a total effect and not merely in the excitement of terror alone"⁶. Due to her distinct indebtedness to the basics of the classicist tradition, the tendency to maintain the necessary balance also constituted the ruling principle of Radcliffe's works. Her version of the Gothic is therefore always outweighed by an equivalent amount of enlightened clarity and reason. "In an age that, publicly at least, supported the bright light of intelligible universality, Ann Radcliffe thus urged for the half stated and suggested as well as the overt, for the dark and undefined in company with the clear and articulated."⁷ Her traditionalism, that, nevertheless, did not prevent her from drawing on the contemporary progressive ideas, is exactly what makes Radcliffe's texts interesting but also hard to encompass within one simple analysis.

Importantly, Radcliffe's conversance with the contemporary trends and fashions in literature then finds its reflection in another marked feature, i.e. the sentimental character of her texts. It has been observed by many critics that with Ann Radcliffe one should rather talk about sentimental romances than Gothic novels. Her optimistic view of the human condition and the unfailing belief in the final triumph of the good indeed confirm her works as being rooted in the cult of sensibility. This is also distinguishable in the characterization, description of setting and narrative technique she employed.

⁶ Frederick Garber, "Introduction" to *The Italian* by Ann Radcliffe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981) viii.

⁷ Garber viii.

Elizabeth McAndrew, one of the critics preoccupied with the context of eighteenth-century literature, very aptly described what also in my opinion constitutes the best outline of the essence of Radcliffe's texts. As the critic observes, in Ann Radcliffe's Gothic romances "Imagery, characterization and action are made an impenetrable whole through the spatial and temporal relations among the narrator, his characters and his audience"⁸. Therefore, space and time as rendered in Ann Radcliffe's texts will become the pivotal dimensions of this thesis. These two factors can be said to keep the plot in progress just as they significantly participate in the characterization of the main protagonists. At the same time, space and time in this way adjust the way one should handle the text.

Space will be here not only approached as the necessary displacement of the heroine as suggested in the general definition of the Female Gothic plot. It will be conceived as a complex system of individual spaces and loci, external and internal that, as a whole, constitutes the frame of Radcliffe's romances. Space is very closely connected to the steady movement of the heroine that represents a crucial constitutive element in the characterization of her protagonists.

The aspect of time will not become a subject of an individual chapter but will permeate both the part on spaces as well as on characterization as a crucial aspect for their analysis. Time will be applied in terms of the temporal distance of the setting and in the sense of the past as the equivalent of tradition. What may be called Radcliffe's anachronistic attitude to characterization will be revealed mainly as the author's reliance on tradition as an alternative to the current vogue of novelty and self-reliance. Hers was a dynamic attitude to tradition. The idea of the past and tradition in the eighteenth-century context was predominantly associated with the expiring social system based on the pre-

⁸ Elizabeth McAndrew, *The Gothic Tradition in Fiction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979) 110.

eminent position of the aristocracy, which was generally condemned as retrograde. Contrary to most of her contemporaries, Radcliffe did not see the principle of tradition as the collection of past and reactionary values and beliefs. In her conception, tradition represents a set of values and qualities of which the essential and thus valuable ones are carried over from generation to generation. Each period could then, she further suggests, enrich the tradition with new, different qualities the worth of which can only be tested by time.

Ann Radcliffe also proved an admirable ability to blend various themes and modes of eighteenth-century literature into a distinctive style. As it was the eighteenth-century spirit which Radcliffe tried to reconcile with and prove as contributive for both the literary tradition and society as a whole, the outline of the eighteenth-century dominant literary trends and areas of human activity most closely connected with these will prove helpful. That is to say, in order to fully appreciate what, I believe, represents the main message of Ann Radcliffe's texts, i.e. the blend of tradition and progress, one first needs to define how tradition and progress were generally conceived of at Ann Radcliffe's time.

That is particularly why I consider this outline essential before the analysis of Radcliffe's texts themselves can be carried out. What may seem a relatively longish and detailed delineation of the context will hopefully prove elucidating for an easier treatment of the specificities of Radcliffe's work. The technique applied in this chapter (but similarly in the subsequent chapters) may appear eclectic. Various critical texts and different approaches will be alluded to rather than permanently drawing on a single major source. This approach to the analysis rests with the multilayered character of Radcliffe's texts, all aspects of which simply cannot be outlined within a single study. Different pieces of individual critical approaches (both modern and those by Radcliffe's contemporaries) will therefore be applied to better elucidate important features.

In the clarification of the eighteenth-century genres, Ian Watt proves helpful. Nevertheless, Radcliffe's contemporaries such as Samuel Johnson, James Beattie and Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury and others will also be quoted as significant contributors to the debate. The analysis of spaces will be mostly based on Daniela Hodrová's conception which I found suitable for the study of Ann Radcliffe's texts, especially thanks to its dynamism and the critic's general sense for the complexity of a literary work. The chapter dealing with the characterization will draw on Maggie Kilgour's critical texts that usefully demonstrate Radcliffe's skilful exploitation of current aesthetic trends in both space and characterization dimensions. Elizabeth McAndrew's texts that highlighted Radcliffe's strongly sentimental tendencies in characterization also prove a rewarding source. Finally, Robert Miles and Fred Botting should be mentioned as their studies will be applied especially on the discussions of the sublime and the creation of the suspenseful.

In the same way, the selection of the primary texts has to be limited. In my thesis I am going to focus on Ann Radcliffe's most frequently discussed texts that are usually considered her masterpieces. Critics generally agree that *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) shows great advance in Radcliffe's literary career. It already contains all the main constitutive features of her major romances. Medieval constructions, admirable descriptions of scenery and sentimental characterization are here improved. Together with the introduction of the garrulous servants, another typical feature of Gothic romances, this work then represents what may rightly be called Radcliffean romance and will therefore be used for the demonstration of some theoretical assumptions. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), by many considered Radcliffe's major romance, will naturally be the most amply quoted text. The romance follows the perilous journey of young Emily to Italy and her stay in the castle of Udolpho in the heart of the Alps. The analysis of this travel will mainly

serve to demonstrate the importance of the moderation of sensibility in Ann Radcliffe's conception. At the same time, the Gothic architecture, the medieval castle in particular, will be discussed in *The Mysteries* in relation to the interior spaces in the romances written by this author.

Radcliffe's last major text, published in 1797, *The Italian*, will be used both as supportive of the characteristic features of Radcliffe's romances but, at the same time, as a marked move in her style of writing. The romance, still distinctly in the mould of Ann Radcliffe's Gothic, reveals changes in both the characterization which tends to go deeper here and in the relative lack of former stylistic decorativeness and richness that results in the clearer and more straightforward plot outline of *The Italian*. The surprisingly radical change is traditionally ascribed to the influence of Matthew Lewis' romance *The Monk*, published in 1796. Lewis' professed admiration of Radcliffe's work seems paradoxical with respect to his obvious tendency to subvert, if not directly ironize, his fellow-author's basic beliefs and techniques. Radcliffe's 'reaction' to the publication of *The Monk* thus took the shape of *The Italian* whose form and content both reflect her intention to bring the material of the Gothic romance within the proper limits. In order to accomplish her task, she obviously felt the necessity to resign on some features distinctive of her former works. This resulted in a romance that does not seem to fully fit into what has been generally accepted as the typical Radcliffean Female Gothic romance.

My analysis should finally confirm the ability of Ann Radcliffe, "very much a woman of reason and propriety"⁹, to make tradition and sentiment meet progress and rationality in her romances. The notoriously praised balance between opposite qualities, such as reason and emotion, darkness and light, should all the time again and again be

⁹ Garber viii.

proved as the most prominent and obvious indicators of her praise of moderation in literature as a model for human and society.

1.Radcliffe's Gothic Romance in the Eighteenth-century Context

1.1. Generic Ambiguity: Novel and Romance

The seventeenth- and mainly the eighteenth-century English literary scene underwent relatively important changes and what one could call a rather radical reevaluation of the ways of depiction. The appearance of the novel genre can probably be considered one of the most important events that marked this period. As it is common with the rise of any new phenomenon, the novel also brought about a negation or re-evaluation of the preceding and existing genres. The most frequently quoted one which the novel set out to critically define itself against was the romance. It was this allegedly 'outdated' and retrograde species of literature indebted to the classical tradition in literature that the greatest novelists like Henry Fielding or Samuel Richardson decided to wage their fight against. These authors offered an allegedly better alternative in the form of their 'novels'.

Ian Watt bases his *The Rise of the Novel, Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* on the strict opposition of the novel and the genre of the romance. His study starts with a principle argument that novels were composed as a new form with a special intention to mark themselves off as a more credible and progressive genre of fiction suitable for an enlightened age. This was to be achieved by a complete negation of the old romance. Published in 1957 and being focused on a limited selection of works, Watt's study has proved obsolete and outdated in several ways. His observations on the literary and philosophical background, nevertheless, may be useful for a better understanding of the new trends that appeared in English literature in the course of the eighteenth century.

To a great extent, this tendency in literature reflected the new ideas as propagated by the contemporary philosophy. Especially the stress that John Locke (1632-1704) and René Descartes (1596-1650) laid on sensual perceptions as being the most important source of understanding resulted in the greater importance attributed to individual

experience. As Watt confirms, it was exactly this presumption, i.e. “truth can be discovered by the individual through his senses”¹, that constituted the basis of modern realism.

Philosophical realism consequently gave rise to the genre of the novel in which it found its ultimate reflection. The classical system of Plato’s Forms and Ideas as representing the “ultimate realities behind concrete objects of the temporal world” was replaced in Locke’s system by the so-called “realities”². As a consequence of his conception, individual experience that is always conditioned by both temporal and spatial circumstances gained crucial importance at the expense of the generalizing trend that had highlighted collective tradition.

Watt writes about the “circumstantial way” of portraying reality that mainly helped the novelists strictly mark their works off from the previous literary tradition. In the classicist tradition, an author’s skill was shown not in the closeness with which he made his words correspond to their objects but in “the literary sensitivity with which his style reflected the linguistic decorum appropriate to its subject”. Linguistic ornateness therefore characterised the classicist texts with which polished and elevated style was always a must. In the previous literary works, Watt maintains, the artists above all aimed at keeping faithful to traditional genres and at meeting of particular generic expectations. As a new genre, the novel, on the contrary, did not feel bound by any formal conventions. It could hence ambitiously set out to portray “not only those varieties of life suited to particular literary perspective”³ but could be free in the depiction of real life with all its aspects. As opposed to the preceding genres, originality in the sense of being faithful to particularities became the critical criterion of the depiction with the novelists. Correspondence between words and reality that was being portrayed then represented the key factor in accomplishing their aims.

¹ Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1957) 12.

² Watt 21.

³ Watt 11.

No matter how contributive Watt's approach may have been, it has obviously proved limiting in its ignorance of other criteria crucial for the eighteenth-century assessment of a literary work. The continual excited literary debates throughout that period make it evident that distinction between the romance and the novel was far from being as clear-cut as Watt would suggest. His concept of "formal realism" understood as a distinguishing feature of the new genre, it must be admitted, at many points corresponds to the characteristics of works by writers like Henry Fielding or Daniel Defoe. Watt's focus on probability and faithfulness of depiction was, nevertheless, an attempt to retrospectively categorize a genre whose notion was still relatively vague, or undefined, at the time the pieces corresponding to this genre, as later defined by Watt, were conceived.

In 1783, James Beattie in his *On the Fable and Romance*, drew a distinction between the old medieval romance and the novel. In this work, Beattie obviously sides with the more realistic depictions when he describes romances as "dangerous recreation' of which a few may be friendly to good taste and good morals while the majority corrupt the heart, and stimulate passions"⁴. In the second half of the eighteenth century that is to say, the didactic and moral aspects were evidently stressed in the evaluation of a work of fiction, be it the more realistic novels or the old romances. According to this criterion, either form actually often did not meet the demands of the critics. As Fred Botting aptly observes:

Neo-classical criticism throughout eighteenth century found much to disapprove of often without any attempt at discrimination, in novels and romances. Works of fiction were subjected to general condemnation as wildly fanciful pieces of folly that served no useful moral purpose.⁵

⁴ James Beattie, "On Fable and Romance" (1783) in: *Novel and Romance: A Documentary Record 1700-1800*, ed. Ioan Williams, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970) pp.309-27. qtd in: Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 1996) 26.

⁵ Botting 25.

“The straying of fancy from the paths of nature”⁶ as encouraged by literature, Botting continues, was mostly considered as dangerous and corrupting for the morals of the reading audience.

Similarly to Beattie, Samuel Johnson also distinguished novels and romances on the basis of their moral usefulness and propriety. In *The Rambler* (1750), he condemns romances as “wildly extravagant and fanciful tales of knights, giants, fabulous entities and marvellous incidents” while praising novels as “the familiar histories’ that possessed the capacity to educate the reader, to convey with greater efficiency a knowledge of virtue and vice”. However, Johnson stresses the importance of further selectiveness of the realism in the familiar histories, where the parts of reality that was to be depicted were to be chosen “on the basis of their propriety and not to be coloured by passion or wickedness”⁷.

Obviously, works were often treated individually by the critics, the major criterion for their evaluation being the ability of each piece to maintain “morality, propriety and virtue, truth, reason, knowledge and taste” that “should always be elevated above fiction, passion, ignorance and depravity”⁸.

While the critics were aware of the origins of the romance genre reaching back into the classical period, novelists in the second half of the eighteenth century, such as Fielding and Defoe, obviously tried to define their works against its later, for them relatively recent modification. The novelists’ criticism of the romance as the embodiment of the previous tradition, that is to say, did not depend on their perfect acquaintance with the pre-1660 form of this genre. They would mostly associate the idea of the romance with the seventeenth-century French romances represented by authors like Madame de Scudéry or Honoré D’Urfé. These romances were not infused with the unreal or supernatural. As

⁶ Botting 25.

⁷ Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler 4* (1750), *Samuel Johnson*, ed. Donald Greene (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) pp. 175-9. qtd in: Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 1996) 27.

⁸ Botting 27.

E. J. Clery points out, they were mainly characterized by their “artificial diction, numerous coincidences, the promiscuous mixing of history and fiction, absurd idealism and over-the-top heroics”⁹.

The literary technique marked by strong emotionalism and idealism was obviously irreconcilable with the principles of the novel form. Paradoxically enough, novelists themselves, whether wilfully or not, included some of the romance elements in their novels which same features often served to raise the novels’ attraction for the reader and his/her consequent greater involvement in the story. The authors were obviously too conscious of the impossibility to ignore emotions if they wanted to make their novels’ message compelling for the readers. Especially Richardson and Fielding applied the techniques that would not be out of place in the romance. Thus, as Clery observes, at the time when the novel genre was experiencing its hey-day “in spite of the rhetoric the dividing line between the novel and romance was not absolutely clear cut”¹⁰.

Michael McKeon in his *The Origins of the English Novel* (1987) points out this principle that in fact also proves the major deficiency of Ian Watt’s “the rise of the novel”. Rather than rising, McKeon would see the genre as being shaped and always reconstituted which continual reprocessing makes the articulation of its basic features hardly feasible. According to McKeon, a new genre never comes out of nowhere. It is always, to some extent, connected with or it even reflects the condition and tastes of the contemporary readership as the representatives of the society at the given time period. A great number of other phenomena necessarily have to be involved in the genre’s shaping. Since thus its birth does not take place in vacuum, it always will be marked and ‘blemished’ by those aspects that helped to form it. With the novel, as has been said, one of these ‘aspects’ also often proved to be the very romance that the authors of novels set out to oppose.

⁹ E. J. Clery, “The genesis of “Gothic” fiction.” *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth Century Novel*. Ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 22.

¹⁰ Clery 23.

The abovementioned atmosphere of generic instability in literature also gave an impulse to the publication of a project specifically designed as an attempt at the reconciliation of the two distinct strains within one literary work. In 1764, Horace Walpole, 4th Earl of Orford, published what is often alluded to as the first Gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto*. Walpole, the youngest son of British Prime Minister Robert Walpole, did not feel satisfied with the novelists' style considering the modern fiction "too probable"¹¹. Instead of the continual stress on progress and clear descriptions, Walpole composes what represents "one of the various attempts around this time to cut a new path in literature by looking back to the past"¹².

However, his reaction did not take shape of the many times derided romance exclusively. In the preface to *The Castle of Otranto*, Walpole characterizes his work as an assemblage of two literary traditions. Fittingly enough, he talks about two kinds of romance — the old and the modern one suggesting thus the obvious indebtedness of the novel to the genre of romance. The work was composed as a form that would "combine unnatural occurrences associated with romance and the naturalistic characterisation and dialogue of the novel"¹³. His attempt, due to being the first in its genre, is naturally clumsy and schematic in many ways. Nevertheless, it deserves mentioning as it actually introduced many features — such as an old medieval haunted building, the persecuted heroine and the feudal usurping lord — that were later to become the typical paraphernalia of the Gothic novel. Also, Walpole's clear indebtedness to Shakespeare's tradition was the first signal of the importance the dramatist would be attributed to by Walpole's followers some twenty years later.

It was not until 1778, following a nineteen-year gap, that another writer took up the tendencies started by Walpole. Significantly, it was a woman novelist, Clara Reeve

¹¹ Clery 24.

¹² Clery 27.

¹³ Clery 24.

who composed the novel *The Old English Baron* in which, similar to Walpole, she designed to “unite the most attractive and interesting circumstances of the ancient Romance and modern Novel”¹⁴. Though appreciative of Walpole’s enterprise, Reeve set out to make up for her predecessor’s frequent violation of the probable. In the preface to her novel Reeve outlines her conception of romance as opposed to ‘history’ in which way she proves to be another important participant in the discussion on the generic problematic of the eighteenth-century literary scene. This author treats history as representing “human nature as it is in real life, alas too often a melancholy retrospect!”. “Romance”, on the contrary, “displays only the amiable side of the picture; it shews the pleasing features and throws a veil over the blemishes”. Reeve can see the greatest contribution of the romance genre in its ability to “continue to excite the attention” which potential, nevertheless, as she stresses always has to be directed to “some useful or at least innocent, end”¹⁵.

Importantly, Reeve highlights Samuel Richardson, a novelist who was notorious for his heavy reliance on the sentimental in his works and who also represented an icon for many of the later sentimental novelists. “Happy the writer who attains both these points, like Richardson!”¹⁶ Reeve concludes. Richardson’s sentimental morality that is based on the individual’s acting with the awareness of and in accordance with the basic moral principles could in Reeve’s conception offer an ideal connection between what was often accepted as opposing tendencies in literature. Kamila Vránková’s comment on Reeve’s work aptly sums up the principle of this author’s enterprise: “The Gothic tale, understood as a successful connection of the ancient romances and the modern novel, is defined within the context of the eighteenth-century sentimental literature.”¹⁷

¹⁴ Clara Reeve, “Preface to *The Old English Baron*,” *Dictionary of Literary Biography. Vol.39*. Ed. Martin C. Battestin (Detroit: Gale Research, 1985) 643.

¹⁵ Reeve. “Preface to *The Old English Baron*” 643.

¹⁶ Reeve. “Preface to *The Old English Baron*” 643.

¹⁷ Kamila Vránková, *Aspects of Gothic Novels in the 19th and 20th – century Fiction. Wuthering Heights, Jane Eyre and Wide Sargasso Sea*. Ph.D. thesis (Prague: Filozofická fakulta, Univerzita Karlova, 2001) 11.

The moral and didactic tendency that was often criticized as missing from the romances could also, as Reeve believed, be successfully balanced with a sufficient degree of probability in a single literary work. In her Gothic Story, Reeve thus accentuated the didactic and exemplary potential of romance as an antidote to the mere ‘melancholy retrospect’ of history as delivered in Walpole’s *Otranto*. That her endeavor which minimized the supernatural almost to nothing was not welcomed with much enthusiasm by the reading public only confirms the generally growing taste for the fanciful and fantastic. Nevertheless, *The Old English Baron*, “the sentimental narrative of usurpation that in Reeve’s view bridged the gap between ancient Romance and modern Novel”¹⁸ represented an important step in the confirmation of the didactic potential of the genre of romance.

Reeve’s interest in the history of prose fiction and her growing concern over the moral duties of the novelist are presented more theoretically in *The Progress of Romance*, published in 1783. In this work, Reeve in detail discusses both the literary and educative levels of the genre of the romance. Just as many other commentators upon this subject, Reeve essentially confirms the relatively conservative attitude to the novel as based on “realism”, whereas romance, according to this writer, rests exclusively with the sphere of fantasy. “The Romance” Reeve maintains, “is an heroic fable, which treats of fabulous persons and things”, while “The Novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the times in which it is written”¹⁹.

Her book is written as a series of conversations among three friends, Euphrasia, Hortensius and Sophronia. All of their sessions seem to be devised not only as

¹⁸ Elizabeth R. Napier, “Clara Reeve,” *Dictionary of Literary Biography. Vol.39*. Ed. Martin C. Battestin (Detroit: Gale Research, 1985) 374.

¹⁹ Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance, Through Times, Countries, and Manners, . . . in a Course of Evening Conversations* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, Literary Theory Full-Text Database, 1999), 23 March 2008. <http://lion.hadwyck.co.uk/searchFulltext.do?id=Z000729294&divLevel=0&queryId=../session/1216113297_22484&trailId=11A8B81AF1C&area=Prose&forward=textsFT&print=Yes>

the argument about the merit of romances as opposed to novels. The dialogue technique also enabled Reeve to conspicuously demonstrate the frequently opposite male and female reading of the same texts. Euphrasia's attempts at defending the romance and asserting her rather 'progressive' conception of the genre are continually attacked from the more traditional stance of Hortentius. Sophronia then represents an arbiter in the whole discussion, being an embodiment of the common reader, i.e. the potential consumer of the texts discussed. Thus she can many times confirm or deny certain assertions of her friends or reconcile the heated debate.

Through the mouth of Euphrasia, in fact the representative of the author's opinions, Reeve voices her relatively daring and unique assertion. She maintains that romances of high quality can be compared to the old traditional epics of Homer and Virgil, except for the tiny difference that they are written in prose. The three disputants meet regularly in the evenings when Euphrasia by giving examples of the romances composed at different times in history tries to convince the others about the deserved merit of this genre. In accordance with Reeve's belief as expressed in *The Old English Baron*, she argues that "containing both good and evil things" the romance "under proper restrictions and regulations will afford much useful instruction, as well as rational and elegant amusement"²⁰. Reeve, to sum up, stresses both the poetic qualities and the perceptual aspect of the romance while conditioning these by the moral integrity of the author and the text. In this way, she actually prepared the soil for Ann Radcliffe's romances which mostly succeeded in involving the reader and stirring his/her imagination without the author even for a moment losing sight of the moral.

Reeve was naturally, just as many of her contemporaries, apprehensive of the potential danger reading of romances might pose to the perceptive abilities of an individual

²⁰ Reeve, *The Progress of Romance, Through Times, Countries, and Manners, . . . in a Course of Evening Conversations*.

if her/his imagination runs riot without restraint. Nevertheless, as James P. Carson observes, according to Reeve, the generally deteriorating morals within English society did not rest mainly with the excessive consumption of romances. Carson claims it was “avarice, hedonism, and a decline of public spirit” which Reeve — along with many other commentators — considered as being a result of the “corrupting effects of commerce on the once-autonomous citizen”²¹.

The spread of materialist interests within the English society at her time thus, for Reeve, represented still more serious danger for the contemporary reader than the “overactive imagination”²² inclined to create worlds where absurdities occasionally appear. In the romance world, on the contrary, the norms cherished for ages such as chivalry and respect for the woman remained the constitutive unshakable principles. Reeve’s support of the romance revival therefore seems to originate mainly from her belief in its potential to rehabilitate morality and respect for the basic values within society the morale of whose representatives was threatened by the commercial spirit and life in relative comfort.

Alongside with the Gothic historical tales, other trends and streams, both literary and aesthetic appeared about the middle of the eighteenth century that seemed to encourage the idea of returning to the past as a rich source of inspiration and imagination. The necessary nourishment for the development of these faculties, their authors believed, had almost disappeared from literature due to their being systematically suppressed by the literary forms focused on realistic depiction. New theories were simultaneously devised about “art and its reception, human nature, and the workings of mind” that in many ways resulted from the growing impatience with “the limitations of neoclassical taste”. As Clery

²¹James P. Carson, “Enlightenment, popular culture, and Gothic fiction.” *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth Century Novel*. Ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 258.

²² Carson 258.

further observes, although these works and trends “did not always relate directly to romance, they helped to create a climate of opinion favourable to its revival”²³.

The Scottish poet James Macpherson’s appearance with his allegedly original yet obviously faked epic poem attributed to a poet of the name of Ossian seemed to be well-timed. It was probably thanks to the welcoming atmosphere of the growing sympathy for the ancient and the lore of magic connected with the idea of the poet as a prophet that in spite of the counterarguments of the academics relatively many people still took this poem as an “irrefutable evidence of a primitive genius”²⁴.

The appeal of the group of ‘Graveyard poets’ who expressed the feelings of melancholy over the transience of human life and who in their elegies voiced the preference for time-tested values further confirmed the general taste for the past. Importantly, with their frequent frank depiction of things in decay and ugliness they also contributed to the emergence of the Gothic mode in literature in the sixties.

1.2. Eighteenth-century Aesthetic Categories. The Sublime, the Beautiful and the Picturesque

The depiction of strange countries and scenes portraying the medieval tottering structures and wonderful unfamiliar landscapes, found an adequate response in the aesthetic theories of an Anglo-Irish statesman and philosopher Edmund Burke (1729-1797). Burke paid special attention to the necessity of rousing people’s imaginative faculties. Feeling strong apprehensions at “a state of indifference or even mental lethargy brought about by a steady diet of the familiar”²⁵ he argues for providing the readership with richer and fresher incentives in literature. What is more, while positive and virtuous

²³ E. J. Clery, “The genesis of “Gothic” fiction.” *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. Ed. Jerrold E.Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 27.

²⁴ Clery 28.

²⁵ Clery 27.

features of characters were applauded in the then popular sentimental novels, the existence of evil in human nature and unpleasing or terrific aspects of life became a point of interest in the sphere of aesthetics. The possible effects of the depiction of these in literature were hence also studied.

With his concept of “pleasing terror” Burke introduced new and untraditional ideas in this discussion. In fact the cornerstone of his aesthetic theory of the sublime was represented by the very conception of pleasure that originates in pain.

Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the idea 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.²⁶

In his *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), Burke, on many instances and exemplary situations, demonstrates the working of the sublime. The study in fact follows up the idea outlined in a text attributed to Longinus believed to be written in the first century AD. Longinus’ text is generally accepted as the first rendering of the sublime and it discusses this category mainly in the context of rhetoric. The text was translated into French by Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux in 1679. Other writers such as the English dramatist John Dennis or the philosopher Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713), were later preoccupied with and further developed or modified the theory of the sublime. Burke’s contribution then consisted mainly in his insistence on the mutual exclusiveness of the sublime and the beautiful. In his treaty he devotes considerable space to various effects and conditions which, if appropriately combined, can result in the impression of the sublime and the beautiful.

²⁶ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. in: Burke’s Works. Vol. I. (London: George Bell & Sons, 1897) 74.

In Burke's interpretation, the sublime can only be perceived at beholding an object immense in size, a thing that is, by all means, always connected in people's minds with some "modification of power"²⁷. Obscurity then represents yet another source of the sublime. The beautiful, on the contrary, is associated in Burke with objects "comparatively small" as beauty should be "light, delicate, smooth and polished"²⁸. The opposition of the sublime and the beautiful in the eighteenth century became distinctly based on the gender polarity. Accordingly, immensity and power evoke the idea of the sublime while delicacy with regularity stand for the female beautiful. This strictly respected polarity will further be elaborated upon in the second chapter of the thesis since this contrast always played a significant role in Ann Radcliffe's nature characterization. Suffice it to say here that it was the harmonious coexistence of both concepts that represented the ideal in Burke's theory. That is to say, according to this philosopher, beauty refines the sublime by keeping it from verging on the horrific and disgusting, the beautiful itself being in turn heightened by the immediacy of the sublime.

The role and the importance of the sublime in the aesthetic experience and its final effect on the constitution of man with respects to Burke's interpretation must also be mentioned. These relationships, in fact, represented an important aspect in the discussion about the imaginative and fanciful in literature, and hence about the romance too, throughout the eighteenth century. In order to experience the sublime, Burke maintains, the mere idea of pain and danger will serve enough. That is to say, in his interpretation "they [the passions] are delightful when we have an idea of pain and danger without being actually in such circumstances"²⁹. Yet, being exposed to either physical or material threat,

²⁷ Burke 94.

²⁸ Burke 132-133.

²⁹ Burke 84.

according to Burke, can only result in the experience of emotions that are “simply painful”³⁰.

He thus put emphasis on a certain detachment of the experienced, or more specifically, on the mediated terrific and dangerous as opposed to immediate experience in order to achieve the desirable feelings. This point that, I believe, constituted the crucial aspect in Burke’s theory coincided with the rise in the publication of various literary works infused with the fanciful that was aimed at stirring readers’ imagination. Tales of mystery, historical narratives and stories set in exotic localities appeared whose authors in the depiction of unfamiliar places and characters from times gone by provided the reading public with opportunities to experience the atmosphere of the sublime. Importantly, Burke’s conception of the sublime represented a powerful stimulus for the writers of Gothic novels as well. In general, it helped to further nourish the growing support for the presence of those elements in contemporary literature that would stimulate imagination and rouse passions of the readers.

In literature Burke stresses the importance of the obscure as the best way of achieving the desired effect on the reader’s imagination. Here he logically puts poetry highest. It is the poet who best of all can, by unusual combinations of words, give a new life to things hardly imaginable or even nonexistent in reality. The preference that he gives to words over the painted art is, indeed, many times manifested in Radcliffe’s romances. Her heroine often feels the inclination to compose a piece of poetry consonant with the state of nature observed and that of her mind rather than depicting it with colours no matter how skilful she appears to be in both.

This dichotomy of the sublime and beautiful is, however, in Radcliffe and many other works of her contemporaries often completed by yet another category of the

³⁰ Burke 85.

eighteenth-century aesthetic; the picturesque. Picturesque literally means “in the manner of a picture; fit to be made into a picture”³¹ and was a word used as early as 1703. In 1768, an English artist and clergyman William Gilpin published his *Essay on Prints* where he defined the picturesque as “that kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture”³².

Throughout the eighteenth century the increasing interest in the rural scenery was largely enhanced by the popularity of traveling with the British. The travel experiences were naturally to “have influence on peoples’ sensibilities and responses”³³. In literary works, the observations of the authors were often supported by their knowledge of landscape paintings whose principles they could apply to the landscapes descriptions in their books. The seventeenth-century landscapist Claude Lorrain with his sunny landscapes and misty mountain tops, wooded hills and flowery meadows proved to be one of the most resourceful artists for many eighteenth-century poets and novelists. Among other painters notoriously associated with the picturesque there were Salvator Rosa or Nicolas Poussin.

“The close relationship between the art of poet, painter and musician”³⁴ as embodied in the picturesque proved fascinating for writers, Ann Radcliffe being one of its greatest admirers. Many times in her romances, the sunlit scenes are underlined by music or steps can be heard in the gloomy spaces so that both the beautiful and horrific could be exploited at their maximums while being always applied with the author’s delicate sense of balance.

The picturesque in fact arose as a “mediator between the opposed ideals of beauty and the sublime, showing the possibilities that existed in between these two rationally

³¹ “Picturesque” *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. 11 May 2008. 21 June 2008
<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Picturesque>>

³² “Gilpin and the Picturesque” *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. 21 May 2008. 21 June 2008.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Gilpin_%28clergyman%29#Gilpin_and_the_picturesque>

³³ “Picturesque” *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. ed. J.A. Cuddon. , 3rd edition (London: Penguin Books, 1992) 709.

³⁴ Kamila Vránková, *The English Gothic and Women Writers*. M.A. thesis (Prague: Filozofická fakulta, Univerzita Karlova: 1994) 45.

idealized states”³⁵. In many ways, it attempted to combine nature with art and to give a place not only to the well-proportioned and conventionally pleasing, but also, to the wild and irregular. While following the strict rules in order to achieve the effect of the picturesque, artists were in fact trying to make nature even more perfect. This tendency marked especially towards the end of the century, in fact seems to be adjusting the dominant neoclassicist strictly mimetic approach to nature. Gilpin talks about texture and composition as the two constitutive aspects of the picturesque:

The texture should be “rough”, “intricate”, “varied”, or “broken”, without obvious straight lines. The composition should work as a unified whole, incorporating several elements: a dark “foreground” with a “front screen” or “side screens”, a brighter middle “distance”, and at least one further, less distinctly depicted, “distance”.³⁶

Obviously, the whole concept of the picturesque was very much dependent on the constant regular variation of scenes with special respect to the proper composition. In Ann Radcliffe’s landscape depictions, “the impact is enhanced by the extensive use of contrast”³⁷ that consequently intensifies the readers’ experience of the picturesque. The relatively quick transitions from the scenes of wild mountainous scenery scattered with banditti to peaceful valleys inhabited by the peasants were thus obviously applied on the basis of her good acquaintance with the contemporary vogue of the picturesque. Ann Radcliffe proved to be skilful at applying the literary techniques and exploiting the tendencies that were fashionable at her time which enabled her to meet the expectations of the reading audience. As Vránková confirms, this author thus managed to respond to the concerns of almost all important areas of human activity in the eighteenth century context:

³⁵“Picturesque” *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*

³⁶ “Gilpin and the Picturesque”

³⁷ Vránková, *The English Gothic and Women Writers*. 45.

Her concern with both the sublime and the picturesque reflect her adoption of the 'acute sensibility', the general aesthetic value of the second half of the eighteenth century, which permeates philosophy, literature, art as well as the psychology of the age.³⁸

The study and exploitation of the aesthetic category of the picturesque developed almost into a cult during the eighteenth century; it even began to be extensively applied in gardening. "This aesthetics manifested itself especially in the English garden or park, planned to produce sentiments and emotions in the beholder, and thus differing from the geometric French garden, abstract, rationally perceived rather than «felt»."³⁹ The gardens were thus often landscaped to look wild and natural and even faked ruins were built to adorn them.

1.3. History and the Past in Eighteenth-century Literature and their Specificities in Ann Radcliffe's Romances

From what has been said it should now be clearer that the past that gained on attraction in the literature of the second half of the eighteenth century was not primarily expected to offer a record of historically significant events. That is to say, the literary works were not understood as mediators of history as an academic discipline. Ian Watt, nevertheless, fittingly described a possible influence of the development of historical studies from the beginning of the eighteenth century upon the general perception of the past. As he points out "The late seventeenth century witnessed the rise of a more objective study of history and therefore of a deeper sense of the difference between the past and the

³⁸ Vránková, *The English Gothic and Women Writers*. 45.

³⁹ "Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos. The Art: Historical and Critical Writings" 22 June 2008. <<http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/servlet/SirveObras/35793064003350273000080/p0000003.htm>>

present.”⁴⁰ The awareness of the flux of time thus, from this critic’s point of view, could become more acute with both writers and readers.

Indeed, the change of an individual over a period of time actually became the main point of preoccupation with the novelists. It was not by accident that they would sometimes be seen as historians of their times. They, accordingly, often called their creations ‘histories’ which after all again confirms the lack of a clear generic delimitation characteristic of the eighteenth-century literary scene. History in their conception mostly followed the life or a section of the life of an individual, offering a detailed report of his/her day-to-day experience.

Yet, for Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, this parallel in fact constituted the main point of criticism when he saw novels as mere copies of reality. “The man of invention”, Shaftesbury maintains, on the contrary, seeks to prevent depiction of “peculiarity” and “minuteness”⁴¹ in favour of expressing the general and eternally true. After all, as E. J. Clery in his study of the eighteenth-century literary context observes: “Critical tradition in the early eighteenth century was still governed by the strong classical preference for the general and universal.”⁴² The relatively strong position of the classical tradition in literary criticism can also be seen in the context of the general acceptance of the novel genre.

This is to say, although very popular with the middle class burghers and gentry, it was never welcomed by the entire scope of the readership. Especially to the more academically and scholarly oriented readers and traditionalist writers also who “wanted to preserve literature from the incursion of popular culture, [...] novels were trash reading”⁴³. Critics’ distrust to novels did not result only from their focus on the ‘crude’ and down-to-

⁴⁰ Watt 24.

⁴¹ Lord Shaftesbury qtd. in: Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1957) 16.

⁴² Clery 16.

⁴³ J. Paul Hunter, “The novel and social/cultural history.” *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth Century Novel*. Ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 25.

earth present reality. Their opposition was also further enhanced by this genre's professed encouragement of urban and mostly ruthless individualism at the cost of the "older, rural, land-centered, solid, stable and predictable Britain of the early generations"⁴⁴.

In this light, romances that offered an idealised picture of life in the past where people lived in accordance with old traditional values would be offered to the reading audience as an alternative to the social standards and qualities constituting their in many ways dissatisfactory everyday reality. Thus the better elucidation of the past did not only raise the general historical awareness but also brought about the conception of an idealised past which would represent the period that tradition originated from. Accordingly, this notion of tradition would strengthen feelings of stability as well as historical continuity. If we talk about novels as a kind of contemporary social history then it may be possible to treat the romances of this time as an idealized and nostalgic image of the past social conditions and their morality

History and past in general obviously played a very important role in the whole Gothic genre. It is not by chance that especially Gothic novels have many times been accused of literary infantilism, that is, of severely neglecting the portrayal of rising and progress. Due to this 'insufficiency' they were sometimes perceived as a kind of regression and bigotry in literature. Gothic novels used especially the potential of the dark Middle-Ages, the indistinct past providing perfect potential for creation of feelings of terror and horror. The Gothic architecture with castles and religious constructions of vast dimensions representing the ideal vehicle for achieving the idea of the sublime proved an excellent response to the contemporary aesthetic demands.

J. M. S. Tompkins comments on the specificity of the past with respect to the role of the medieval setting and architecture in the Gothic novels. She writes about the past

⁴⁴ Hunter 24.

“which, though sometimes nominally historic, is really an elaboration of the impressions made by Gothic architecture on modern sensibility”⁴⁵. In her interpretation the medieval setting was mainly supposed to produce a specific mood of the unfamiliar and thus fearful but also inspiring rather than having the ambition to achieve historical authenticity.

The strict separation of the past with things old and nominally outdated from the present and progressive common at her time represented a challenge for Ann Radcliffe. The past by no means served her only for the evocation of appropriate atmosphere in her works. In accordance with Reeve and along with many of her contemporaries, Radcliffe felt uneasy about the general deteriorating morality that, as they believed, resulted from the growing materialism in the British society.

The past in her romances is thus always identified with and firmly steeped in tradition and time-tested qualities that seemed to be systematically undermined by the preference for individualism as stressed by most novelists. Being based on the travelogues Radcliffe’s romances often provide the reader with a detailed account of the strange countries that the heroine travels through. Historical events of that time or detailed reports of the lives of the locals, however, are not to be found in her works. Her ‘modern’ modified versions of romances take on a form of mosaics that seem to be put together of facts and fabulation while both — not only fiction — can be adjusted so that the best and of course desired effect is achieved.

Radcliffe’s distinctly refined notions of past traditions and social order could meet in her romances with modern and relatively progressive thinking as praised by the author’s contemporaries. Her obviously deliberate blending of the past with the present served Radcliffe a very specific purpose in both her characterization and the deliverance of the didactic message that always comes to the fore in her works. As Tompkins commented,

⁴⁵ J. M. S. Tompkins, *The Popular Novel in England 1770-1800* (London: Methuen & Co, 1961) 259.

“strong infusion of sensibility”⁴⁶ represents a characteristic feature of Radcliffean historical romances for which they are also notorious. The Richardsonian sensibility in the sense of staying true to the basic moral principles and sustaining one’s respectability, indeed, proved to be the main criterion and governing principle of Radcliffe’s best works. These values can then, in her interpretation, only be fostered by showing sufficient respect for the past tradition as the guarantee of unspoilt morality and firmness in keeping to one’s principles.

This was obviously hardly practicable with faithful descriptions of medieval Gothic lifestyle the crude character of which did not provide ideal conditions for the flourish of the sentimental. Obviously, readers would more easily identify with the characters resembling their likes than they could have done with the fifteenth-century, mostly illiterate characters. This may be one of the reasons why eighteenth-century characters, in many ways generalized prototypes of her contemporaries, peopled the medieval setting of Radcliffe’s romances. This fact obviously distressed hardly anybody of her readers. Her books, as long as they corresponded in their depictions to the current aesthetic standards and met the tastes of the readership, were after all not expected to give a detailed true account of history.

The author’s strong attachment to and respect for the past is in Radcliffe’s romances mostly reflected in the heroines’ relation to the old times. For her heroines, the past usually represents their childhood, the happy period of their life that always stands in clear contrast to the threatening and perilous Gothic present. Thus memories of the times gone by often serve the characters as a necessary moral support on their adventures. Maggie Kilgour criticized this unreserved admiration of the past and strong attachment to it distinct in Radcliffe’s romances. In this nostalgic regression the critic distinguishes

⁴⁶ Tompkins 253.

certain unwillingness of the heroines to mature. She supports this argument by quoting other characters occasionally criticizing the heroines' childish behaviour.

Yet, the idealization of the past is based mainly on Emily's desire to stay true to her father's insistence on rational self-control that should balance her inclination to unnecessary emotionalism. In fact, the heroine's unquestioning acceptance of the wisdom and experience of the parent seems to be delivering the author's main didactic message. This, similarly to the conduct books of the moral guardians of her time, rests with the warning against overindulgence in one's fancies and emotions.

Radcliffe's Gothic romances however un-progressive they may seem, do not at all stand in complete opposition to the idea of development and contemporary social trends. Firstly, her indebtedness to the modern spirit is confirmed in her notoriously known 'explanatory method'. Thanks to this strategy the allegedly supernatural events that serve here to enhance the suspenseful are always rationally resolved in her romances and proved as mere projections of the protagonists' overdeveloped imagination. With this technique Radcliffe could manage to appease the contemporary taste for the fanciful and supernatural while controlling any possible excess or the potentially ridiculous by her respect for reason.

Moreover, her heroines are naturally well aware of the impossibility to bring back the past which is, needless to say, often over-idealized or even 'polished' in Radcliffe's presentation. They feel the necessity to adapt to the ever changing conditions and also to find and further shape a mate who could meet the demands of the future mutual life. Radcliffe thus offers a modified version of individualism in her protagonists in whom sufficient respect for old authorities, that is, often to one's parents, and their time-tested principles meets with the necessary moderate adaptability. In her romances she aims at the

creation of ideal conditions for the individual needs to meet the social demands without necessary clashes and excessive suppression of one's own nature.

Thanks to the historical setting of her romances Radcliffe managed to appease the contemporary taste for the fanciful and supernatural while controlling all manifestations of intemperance by her respect for reason. History, as depicted by Radcliffe in the sense of tradition, organically mingles with reasonable reliance on the progressive and enlightened. Neither the 'history' of an individual's life central in novels nor the exact record of historically important events can deliver the message about the importance of human relationships as based on solidarity and mutual love that Radcliffe was trying to highlight in her romances.

1.4. The Gothic Genre and the Romance in the Enlightenment Era

So far not much has been said on the Gothic in the eighteenth-century context and especially on its relation to the romance genre in literature. The very aspect of the more or less coincident emergence of the Gothic and the revival of the genre of romance in the Enlightenment era should finally also be pointed out and looked into. It is a frequently quoted belief that the rise of the Gothic mode in literature should be seen merely as a radical rejection of Enlightenment principles and as a transitory stage on the way to Romanticism. This interpretation, however, can easily be proved as a crude simplification, no matter how convenient it may be. Indeed, the Gothic has many times been defined as an oppositional stance to the emphasis on universal clarity as propagated by the Enlightenment. More precisely, it was supposed to represent the dark side of the Enlightenment, suppressed by the focus on science, light and general surveillance. Thus, it is usually believed that the Gothic brought back dark sides of human psyche, mysteries of nature and the supernatural and unexplained into the culture. Despite different techniques,

in its avoidance of the everyday and return to the past, the Gothic would then in fact in many ways coincide with the romance tendencies.

However, in both the eighteenth-century Gothic and romance, the break with the present was actually much less radical. Ann Radcliffe with many of her contemporaries gives sufficient evidence to the fact that a complete negation of their period was by no means the ruling principle of the early Gothic writers. A possible reason for the rising popularity of the romance genre that takes place practically simultaneously with the emergence of the Gothic during the era of Enlightenment with its reign of transparency is very aptly, and as will be proved later, usefully for our purpose explained in the following, Michel Foucault's quotation that discusses the Gothic of Radcliffe's romances:

A fear haunted the latter half of the 18th century: the fear of darkened spaces, of the pall of gloom which prevents the full visibility of things men and truths. It sought to break up the patches of darkness that blocked the light, eliminate the shadowy areas of society, demolish the unlit chambers where arbitrary political acts, monarchical caprice, religious superstitions, tyrannical and priestly plots, epidemics and the illusion of ignorance were formented ... The landscapes of Ann Radcliffe's novels are composed of mountains and forests, caves, ruined castles and terrifyingly dark and silent convents. Now these imaginary spaces are like the negative of the transparency and visibility which it is aimed to establish.⁴⁷

Foucault who in *Discipline and Punish* bases his idea of Enlightenment institutionalism on Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon does not see the Gothic romance as the expression of an open opposition or refusal of all that constituted this era. This author was naturally conscious of the controlling form of knowledge that Enlightenment institutions represented in the lives of people. Bentham himself after all talks about his project as constituting the principle of "a new mode of

⁴⁷ Michel Foucault, "The Eye of Power: a Conversation with Jean-Pierre Barou and Michel Perrot," in *Power/Knowledge*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980) 153-54. qtd. in: James P. Carson, "Enlightenment, popular culture, and Gothic fiction" *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth Century Novel*. Ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 264.

obtaining power of mind over mind, in a quantity hitherto without example”⁴⁸.

Nevertheless, Foucault still believed that eighteenth-century Gothic writers were able to appreciate and preserve relatively enough of Enlightenment standards in order to sift these for what in their perspective represented the truly positive and valuable.

His quotation in fact seems to be suggesting that values as preached by the Gothic could often coincide with those fostered by the Enlightenment authorities. In its frequent depiction of the dark side of things and heavy exploitation of the indistinct and unknown, the Gothic in principle tries to confirm the greater value of the very opposite aspects. That is to say, despite the use of different means of expression, both Gothic and Enlightenment, according to Foucault, seemed to subscribe to very similar beliefs and values.

Contrary to the widespread belief, the Gothic mode was thus not devised as an act of opposition to the Enlightenment as it was by no means desirable to deny the era as a whole. Similarly, the Enlightenment could not be identified with pure rationalism and complete denial of community or solidarity spirit. As James P. Carson confirms, as opposed to the generally encouraged idea “the Enlightenment did not foster possessive individualism in any simple sense”⁴⁹. He testifies his assertion on the existence of social clubs throughout the eighteenth century, which trend started in the 1720s with the appearance of the coffeehouse culture. No matter how exclusive the membership remained with many of these societies, they still assisted in nourishing “culture of the heart”⁵⁰.

⁴⁸ “Panopticon” *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. 6 May 2008. 24 March 2008.

<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panopticon>>

⁴⁹ Carson 265.

⁵⁰ Carson 266.

Foucault especially points out the worth of those Enlightenment tendencies that cherished the cultivation of the individual as contributive for the community. However, this trend goes hand in hand with other qualities similar to both Enlightenment and Gothic traditions. There was a distinct sense of desirability of the society to emancipate itself from feudal structures in the Era of Enlightenment. In the Gothic, though almost exclusively set in the medieval heart of the ancient régime, the setting in fact mostly serves to better show the gradual undermining and the final defeat of the constitutive principles of the ruling system that dominates it. The focus on an individual as susceptible to the moral progress thanks to the steady cultivation by art and culture constituted a substantial pillar with both strains. Appreciation of nature as the means of refining the tastes of man was also preached in the early Gothic and Enlightenment works with similar force.

Radcliffe and other early Gothic writers, however, clearly felt the necessity to stop ignoring or suppressing all ideas of the existence of the dark and potentially dangerous or vicious in the culture. Their technique then obviously did not coincide with the Enlightenment insistence on depicting only those aspects in literature agreeable and proper for the tastes and morality of the readers. Without the full awareness of darkness, Radcliffe believed, a clearer distinction between the good and the evil could never be established.

This presumption gets reflected in Foucault's further reading of the early Gothic works, with special focus on Ann Radcliffe's romances. No matter that it obviously does not correspond to the traditional interpretations, it nevertheless, again, proves surprisingly clarifying, especially for the discussion of the female Gothic:

Instead of revealing social, psychological and spiritual territory that can never be fully illuminated, the Gothic novel seems to map out that dark terrain precisely so that it may be conquered.⁵¹

The widely accepted but rather constrictive view of Gothic literature as attempting deep probes into the human minds, offering thus the psychological portraits of the prevalently vicious protagonists and depicting the anatomy of evil seems to be complicated here by Foucault.

Foucault stresses the importance of exploring the territory of one's activities and identifying the potential dangers so that one would be able to embrace and control them. His concept of mapping the existing dangers and not being dramatically touched by the contact with these then corresponds especially to the idea of the female Gothic romances. The geography of the Gothic novel that often seems to invite the reader for the visit of dark spaces and recesses of the human mind is ideally balanced in the female Gothic variety by the passages filled with light and bliss. On the whole, the proportion is always guaranteed by the Enlightenment all-seeing supervision of the author. The protagonist usually has to go through perilous situations more or less unaccompanied so that she would test and finally prove her integrity and resistance to vice and corrupted morality. The steady, invisible control of the dominant author, results in the heroine's reunion with the community and consequently in the predominance of the light over the dark in the final scenes of these works.

The distinct indebtedness to Enlightenment rationality and discipline strongly infused and supported by the sentimental principles dominant in Radcliffe, is indeed as has been said and as Carson points out, characteristic of the early Gothic. The works do not only draw on Enlightenment values. What is more,

⁵¹ Carson 264.

they often depict and criticize the “violation of just those ideals of sociability and rational intercourse that the Enlightenment prized and promoted”⁵². On many instances, the misuse of individual powers for the suppression of the rights of another human being are depicted as being opposed to the basic principles of communal life and hence as despicable. While cultivation of an individual is strongly supported in the Gothic romance this procedure must also always contribute to the well-being of the community and society as a whole. Both the moral lesson crucial in the works of fiction in 1790s and the community spirit fostered by sentimentalists thus seem to meet in the Gothic romance. All of these trends, paradoxical as it may sound, appear to be the natural outcome of the steady implantation of the basic Enlightenment principles.

1.5. The Influence of the Sentimental Novel

Sophia Lee’s *The Recess* published in 1783 introduced a popular and very effective means to make history more easily accessible to an average reader when the author tried to involve the reading audience emotionally in the plot of her novel. In Lee’s work, as Jane Spencer observed, history is skilfully turned into romance. The author interprets the past as a series of love entanglements giving it thus unprecedented personal and earthbound, yet at the same time more readable and accessible, dimension.

The inclination to ‘popularize’ history as demonstrated by *The Recess* was received with warm welcome by the reading public not only owing to the general lure of the past discussed above. Its popularity could also, to a great extent, be ascribed to the sentimentalizing tendency in the description of historical events which is strongly perceptible in Lee’s work. The cult of sensibility, with the sentimental novel, often acting

⁵² Carson 266.

as a kind of ‘manual’ in which the main precepts of the philosophy of sensibility were demonstrated and exploited, was in full bloom around the middle of the eighteenth century. It was actually well settled in literature by the time the first pieces written in the Gothic mode started to appear in England, only to become subject to criticism and ridicule in the 1770s. The lure of sensibility quickly affected the major areas of human activity. Importantly, it also constituted a significant influence in the creation of a favourable breeding ground for the romance revival thanks to the many similar dominant features of both genres. For this very reason, a short outline of its main features will, I believe, prove useful at this point, with special focus on those later prominent in the work of Ann Radcliffe.

Similarly to the rise of the novel, an initial impulse for the appearance of the sentimentalist movement is to be looked for in philosophy. John Locke’s philosophical system devised an alternative model in opposition to Thomas Hobbes’ idea of human society in which the individual is driven by purely egoistic will to survive. Locke’s belief that each human being is born as a ‘tabula rasa’ with all ideas first originating in senses was not only an important impulse for the novel genre but also became a cornerstone for the whole sentimental movement. Sensual experience began to be upheld as the crucial aspect in the formation of man. Correspondingly, it came into the focus of study and observation and was emphasised and asserted with great enthusiasm.

Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, who represented another impulse for the encouragement of the sentimentalist trend in philosophy, further modified Locke’s main ‘blank sheet’ idea. As Shaftesbury argues, conscience or what he calls ‘moral sense’ is inborn with each human being. This serves man as the source of moral distinctions in her/his whole life and naturally leads the human being to life in goodness since “being virtuous is the end or purpose for which humans were

designed”⁵³. Shaftesbury’s main argument and important contribution regarding the sentimental literature, nevertheless, consists in his seeing man as a sociable being, that is, firstly as a member of a community. Something is good, according to Shaftesbury, if it contributes to the “existence or well-being”⁵⁴ of the system of which it is a part. Thus, ideally it should be a natural instinct of every man or woman to do their best for the continual improvement of the community’s welfare which in turn could make their own existence complete in happiness. Shaftesbury’s philosophical system was then as a whole based on the idea of the harmonious cosmic order within which he defined the position and activity of humankind: “the ultimate end of religion, as well as of virtue, beauty, and philosophical understanding (all of which turn out to be one and the same thing), is to identify completely with the universal system of which one is a part”⁵⁵.

The philosophical systems delineated above logically lead to the praise of revealing one’s feelings and their commendation as worthy of depiction in literature as contrasted to those harmful and despicable in man. Sensibility in the sense of being open to sensations, that is, the ability to feel and to expose one’s feelings became the criterion for appreciating the qualities of an individual. The stimuli for the arousal of feelings, nevertheless, rarely originated from one’s own tragedy or happiness. It was mostly the compassion for the distress of others or sharing of their joy that was the most suitable way to prove one’s true sensibility. This susceptibility to strong sensation at the sight of somebody’s misery or bliss was often externalized in bodily manifestations such as blushing, sighing, crying, weeping or even fainting.

The ability to fully experience any kind of new emotions be they sad or cheerful, did not only confirm the virtue of the individual. Observing and feeling for the misfortunes

⁵³ “Lord Shaftesbury [Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury]” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 13 March 2002, 12 Oct. 2006, 13 April 2008 < <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/shaftesbury/#Aes>>

⁵⁴ “Lord Shaftesbury”

⁵⁵ “Lord Shaftesbury”

of one's neighbour in fact represented a way of gaining experience in the sense of becoming a more sensitive person. Mediated rather than direct personal experience thus represented the cornerstone of the sentimental novels. Here the protagonists mostly test and improve their moral profiles by the intense sharing of other characters' emotions. The more intensive this experience and the more heightened the senses displayed the more this, at the same time, contributed to the further perfection of the moral profile of the person.

In the sentimental literature whose value rather logically rested with its capacity to influence and refine the manners and morality of its readers, both its form and content naturally had to be subservient to the basic philosophy standing behind. The novels are easily identified thanks to the frequent characters of a benevolent young man of exquisite refined feelings and a young beautiful heroine who, being destitute of the support of a friend often appears in troubles. Old fathers who experience misery over the loss of their children or their slip from the path of virtue represent yet another sentimental type of characters.

The aesthetic quality of a woman in distress or of the scenes where the virtue of the protagonist could be demonstrated was exploited vehemently and to the highest pitch, sometimes even at the cost of quality, the depictions almost verging on the absurd. The 'tableaux' which presented the most emotionally tinged scenes usually drawing on a family image or rural scenes were included by the authors with the intention to stop the plot for a moment. In this way, the reader could better and more fully respond to the emotions presented. Sudden and abrupt twists in the story, multiplicity of asides and subplots and even fragments of texts included into the novels assisted in a more accurate reflection of the emotional strain that is often difficult to capture in words. The language rich in adjectives, hyperboles and complex sentences further helped to surge the intensity of the reading experience.

The seemingly predominant atmosphere of escapism in the sentimental novels resulting from the frequent final retreat to a natural and secluded place has been many times highlighted and criticized. This tendency can partially be attributed to the important changes that eighteenth-century English society was undergoing. The rise of the middle class, mostly represented by tradesmen who gradually took the position of the most important stratum of society so far reserved for aristocracy, was naturally accompanied by necessary changes in the values and dominant life style of the whole society. Different stratification did not, however, automatically lead to an absolute denial of all major values of the preceding system. On the contrary, certain nostalgia and an often undeclared hope to achieve the standards of the aristocracy and to adopt something of their life style were distinguishable in the attitudes of the middle-class representatives. One can indeed trace an important tension between what McKeon calls the “supersessionist” and “assimilationist”⁵⁶ strains in the behaviour of this class in their relation to the former social system. The new ‘self-made’ men were too conscious of their success based on personal merits to look up to those who could pride themselves just on lucky birth. At the same time, they felt attracted by the noble style and the idea of determining the social spirit in society was also strongly attractive for them.

This torn and controversial attitude to their predecessors represents a sufficient justification for the fact that the middle-class ideology was only in the process of formation and not completely without the ambitions of holding exemplary status. Hence, following the habit of the members of the aristocracy occupying their grand mansions, many middle-class people, on gaining property enough in the ‘ugly’ greed-driven cities, finally also found retreat in the elysian peace of the secluded localities. Here, in their country residences they would spend the rest of their lives in mutual family happiness. This

⁵⁶Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740* (London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2002) 174.

tendency to contrast innocent unspoiled nature against the vile town driven by intrigues in fact suited the ideals of the sentimental novel and thus it quickly became yet another cliché exploited by this genre.

The topic of the loyalty and devotion of the servants to their benevolent masters also idealised in the sentimental romances was then only another wished-for ideal that the authors tried to maintain in their works of fiction. This love and obedience was supposed to spring from the belief of the servants in the eternal goodness of their masters. Obviously, this feature was again devised mainly as an alternative to the money-based relation of the employer and his employee characteristic of the cash-and-flow milieu that began to pervade the eighteenth-century English society.

The stress on the depiction of and focus on emotions and feelings that represented the hot issue in the debate on the worth of romances in fact coincided with the discussion on the bearable amount of sentiment contained in the literature of sensibility. The need to distinguish between the true feelings and the pretended ones quickly became acute. It is, however, important to realize that emotions did not serve only as the means or technique exploited by the sentimental novel. They actually became for the sentimentalists the focus and main subject of representation. To depict, demonstrate and mainly highlight and recommend the strong susceptibility to feeling while, at the same time, possibly condemn those characters destitute of similar ability became the essence and a so to say 'mission' of the sentimental novel.

To what extent this coincided with the didactic purpose of the pieces concerned soon became subject to debate. As it was already suggested, the emotions depicted in these novels were often heightened to extremity in order to better stress their desirability. The immediacy of sensations that often outran thoughts of the protagonist constituted the principle of the sentimental novel. Emotions are here "the result of acute senses, finely

fashioned nerves, which vibrate at the slightest touch and convey such clear intelligence to the brain that it does not require to be arranged by judgment”⁵⁷. J. M. S. Tompkins’ definition of the sensibility that reflects the predominant strong belief in and dependence on emotions clearly demonstrates the position of reason being somehow weakened by the focus on refined emotions at the time when the sentimental novel experienced its heyday. Reason and prudence would correspondingly often make way for the individual’s reliance on his/her intuition.

In the 1790s, the sentimental, nevertheless, was not similar to the sentimental of the 1760s when the movement achieved its peak. Sentimentalism in its full form was by that time actually perceived as superannuated. Yet, many writers still felt certain nostalgia for its ideals and some even continued to apply techniques of the sentimental novel in their works. It was mainly the general disappointment which the ideals of the French Revolution resulted in that contributed to the gradual loss of beliefs in the sentimental movement. Many of the main qualities praised by the sentimentalists were actually denied by the French violence both of the mob and the state. Excess in emotions would hence mostly be associated with the aggression and ambiguity that the Revolution resulted in.

The important historical event in France was reflected in literature and especially its means of depiction. Emotions continued to be regarded as positive, yet, greater stress was put on their regulation and on their being appropriately directed. People became more acutely aware of the fact that the excessive emphasis on emotions does not automatically guarantee moral purity, virtue and, above all, absence of egoism. Tompkins testifies to this tendency in her analysis of the sentimental movement in the 1790s: “The chief weakness of sensibility is its tendency to relax the mind and suffer it to luxuriate in induced emotions”⁵⁸.

⁵⁷ Tompkins 95.

⁵⁸ Tompkins 98.

Certain apprehension concerning exaggeration or even pretence of emotions preoccupied the critics and guardians of the moral within the society more than ever before. They often appealed to the readers' moral integrity to guard against false sensibility "rooted in pride and artifice" or even against "the excess of genuine emotion which is but a mode of our pervading dissipation"⁵⁹. Shortly, restriction of sensibility and necessary self-control that should keep one from succumbing to or expressing extreme emotions were strongly recommended. The same were also demanded of the authors in the depiction of their characters or highly emotional scenes.

To these possible fears it may still be objected that the belief in the original sentimental principles remained mostly unshaken. As Mrs Bonhote in her *Parental Monitor* (1788) maintains: "Sensibility under proper restriction is one of the most pleasing and interesting virtues, which inhabit and give polish to the mind"⁶⁰. Portrayals of the virtuous and sensible thus continued to be considered a praiseworthy mode of literature. As also Radcliffe's romances abundantly testify, some notion of necessary restraint and balance between passion and reason, nevertheless, became more perceptible and prominent in the works to be published.

⁵⁹ Tompkins 99.

⁶⁰ Qtd in: Tompkins 99.

2. Space in Ann Radcliffe's Gothic Romance

The question of space, no matter how essential this dimension may be in Ann Radcliffe's romances, is not easy to handle. Any attempt at definition or strict outline will always necessarily run up against a complex net of other characteristics. Her romances — but this is true about any other literary work — constitute a net of relationships between individual dimensions at different levels all of which are, at the same time, interconnected with both the author and the reader — the interpreter. None of the constituents of a work of art, moreover, represents an unchanging entity but, on the contrary, they all may appear very different from various perspectives and at different moments. Thus setting out to interpret just one of them — in our case the level of spaces — automatically means taking into consideration other levels and features of the literary work, all of which influence and get influenced by this one aspect at the same time.

As Daniela Hodrová in her *Místa s tajemstvím* observes, “in a literary work all is interrelated with everything else [...] every aspect is contained in all other aspects”¹. Analysing Radcliffe's romances from this perspective, it is only logical that the study of space will necessarily engage numerous other discussions, such as that on time, characters, genre and period context of the rise of her work. In the context of eighteenth-century literature where women writers still constituted a rather marginal group, especially the last two mentioned criteria will play important roles in the discussion on a female writer's works. This is to say, limiting oneself to close reading of the problematics of space and place in Ann Radcliffe's work is, in my point of view, impracticable without a certain degree of specification of other aspects that participated in the composing of her romances and have been important for the subsequent numerous interpretations. These specifications,

¹ Daniela Hodrová, *Místa s tajemstvím* (Praha: KLP, 1994) 5. (translated by: Kateřina Klosová)

nevertheless, considering the limited scope of this work, will only be short digressions that should help to better elucidate the problem discussed.

Just as any kind of literary work can be perceived as a net of relationships, spatial dimension also is constituted by a line of places and their interrelationships. As Hodrová further observes, this interlacing of a particular work then usually exceeds its confines and its individual features get in contact with other works and their constitutive parts. This is to say, “a particular work gains its meaning in the context of traditions that contributed to its creation and in the context of which it is also perceived. The same principle can be applied to the analysis of spaces”². The depiction of space in Radcliffe thus gains further meanings in the context of the depiction of space in other works of her time that naturally, in a different way, reflect the same period. However, since it is naturally impossible to ever fully consider all of these aspects it only remains to mention those that most immediately influenced the character of her work. In this respect we must admit that Matthew Lewis’ *The Monk* will at some points indisputably be a helpful text to compare Radcliffe’s work with. It was after all this romance that reportedly gave rise to her last major work, *The Italian*. The publication of the *The Monk* was ‘responsible’ for the significant changes that Radcliffe introduced in *The Italian* and that made the character of many of its features – including that of spaces – so conspicuously different from those in her earlier works.

In order to successfully discuss in detail the spatial level of Ann Radcliffe’s romances, it also proves necessary to first specify and define the terms that will be applied to this analysis. Spaces here will be understood as delimited territories, depicted as three-dimensional and multilayered, through which the heroines travel and which therefore significantly participate in their characterization. Within the context of the Gothic romance, the gloomy and labyrinthine spaces of medieval castles and religious buildings

² Hodrová, *Místa s tajemstvími* 5. (translated by: Kateřina Klosová)

will of course be discussed, as the indispensable paraphernalia of the genre. Radcliffe's contribution to and modification of the perception of these classical topoi will become the main focus of the analysis of internal spaces in her work. The term topos will be applied as a certain conception of a place that traditionally reappears in literature at different time periods in order to be slightly or more significantly modified by different attitudes and tradition specific for that particular era. The term obviously reaches beyond the depiction of spaces. It is rather to be perceived as an expression of the commonplace, the set of associations that became typical of and conventional at a certain period or tendency in literature. Medieval buildings and picturesque landscapes will naturally be the most thoroughly analysed topoi in Ann Radcliffe's Gothic romances.

Spaces in my conception stand for any territory the heroine can either physically or emotionally (illogical as this may seem, the importance of an emotional response to spaces will be demonstrated as crucial with Radcliffe) explore or map, in which way she, at the same time, demarcates her prospective sphere of activity. This 'familiarizing' herself with particular spaces in Radcliffe seems to work as a necessary boost to the heroine's confidence, while at the same time representing an important stimulus for her further discoveries. That is why constant exploration of various spaces constitutes a driving power of Radcliffe's romances.

Not only interior locations but also nature together with landscape will represent one of the main points of focus. Their essential part in the characterization and formal division of Radcliffe's romances necessarily makes the two of these territories the pivotal space dimension in the discussion of Radcliffe's romances. As the distinction but also interdependence between internal, i.e. closed spaces, and the external, i.e. those without the confines of the former ones, also proves to be important in Radcliffe, these will be studied

separately. Further analysis of the similarities and interconnections of these two dimensions will be carried out by means of their comparison.

Places will be rendered rather as specific loci distinguished by their names and mostly only alluded to in the texts. These are associated in heroines' minds with their close ones or with nostalgic memories, together forming one of the most significant aspects in the discussion on such loci. They are not depicted in Radcliffe's work as physically present or vivid, that is, the heroines do not map them or explore them in detail. They more or less represent a mere 'idea' connected in their minds with pleasant or troublesome emotions. Hence they can play a significant part in the heroines' clinging to the ideal past and represent in this way a major source of integrity and stability.

The same terminology (external – internal) will also be applied for the purpose of the character's description in the third chapter since a certain polarity is distinct even on this level. As similar terms will thus be mostly employed in both chapters, I will outline the important ones already at this stage. The external with respect to the characterization will mainly concern the appearance of the characters and its crucial role in Ann Radcliffe's work. The characters' bodies will be dealt with as loci in terms of the space terminology. The surface of the body in Radcliffe stands for a place where emotional response of the protagonist is acted out. In this way the notoriously criticized "surface gliding", typical of this author's work, will hopefully be clarified and partially justified.

The obvious lack of the depiction of the internal, that is, the rather flat psychological characterization of the protagonists, should then also be easier to explain. The bodily, i.e. external is not in Radcliffe's romances outweighed by a complex psychological profile of the character. It is her heroines' emotions, mostly apprehensions, fears and doubts which are often driven to their extremes that here make up for her psychology or for the report on the process of her maturation. The mind of the heroine can

actually be understood as another type of interior space into which the protagonist recedes. Radcliffe does not write about what happened objectively, she rather describes the effect the events have on the protagonist's mind, i.e. what emotions were roused. Also, the heroine's ability to appreciate the aesthetic qualities of nature confirms the delicacy of her mind.

The external – internal opposition outlined above will then be examined with respect to the dichotomy of public and private spheres. That is to say, the proportion of the personal sphere of the individual to the communal space should be briefly touched upon. This relation and especially the tenuous border between these two play a significant role both in Ann Radcliffe's and Matthew Lewis' conceptions of the relationship of an individual and society.

The most obvious and straightforward interpretation of space as depicted in novels is the physical movement of the individual in time from one place to another. Thus the development of characters in the course of time became the general point of interest of the novels from the eighteenth century onwards. This directly proportional interdependence between the temporal and spatial dimensions, nevertheless, cannot be applied to interpretation of Ann Radcliffe's romances. The formative experience in the sense of undergoing a change as a result of one's stay at a particular place at a specific moment is completely missing from her romances. Radcliffe's texts are obviously still indebted to the classical idea of portraying "life by values" as opposed to the modern attempts to depict "life by time"³ which increasingly appeared in the novels of her contemporaries. As a result, her attitude to the temporal dimension is rather vague and non-defined.

³ Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1957) 22.

Similarly, the exterior depictions in Radcliffe's romances prove to be rather 'limited', as opposed to the novels' insistence on "particularized physical descriptions" of the characters' movement that is in these considered a "necessary correlative of time"⁴. Radcliffe's romances break with conventional perceptions of time and especially measurement of time. Precise time is actually never mentioned in her texts. It is taken for granted that time passes in correspondence with the natural cycle. The society is in Radcliffe's romances composed of the young and old generations while the young grow older and old people pass away. However, the time is not measured by years or even days.

The characters intensively experiencing the present can usually remember the past as associated with the era of happiness and safety that they have lost. Being aware of what they once had the misery of the present insufficiency therefore often becomes even more acute with the protagonists. Future is either filled with hopes for the return to the past ideal state or, on the contrary, with the apprehensions of what may come. Thus, the time scale is rather divided into certain "time blocks", each of which is distinctly associated in characters' minds with different kind of emotions. The rootedness of Radcliffe's romances in the sentimental with the dominant role of emotions is hereby reaffirmed.

The specificity of Radcliffe's handling of space with respect to the temporal dimension, as opposed to the same aspect in other contemporary novels, cannot, nevertheless be adequately described without paying due attention to the social background of her time and the gender dimension, which are both equally important in Radcliffe's romances.

⁴ Watt. 22.

2.1. Outer Travels

It may prove useful to borrow Ellen Moers' characterization of what she calls "the external expeditions" of Radcliffe's heroines to begin the discussion on the external spaces in this author's romances. In Moers' interpretation, the propagation of the idea of female selfhood by her creation of a character that this critic alludes to as a "travelling woman"⁵ in fact constituted Radcliffe's most important and praiseworthy contribution to literature.

Being aware of the significantly limited area of activities reserved for women in the eighteenth century, Moers logically focuses on the rather unusual and in some way progressive feature of Ann Radcliffe's romances — her heroines' visits of strange places and foreign countries. At Radcliffe's time travelling was still a pastime affordable predominantly for men, more specifically the well-to-do men. Thus, the majority of the author's descriptions of foreign countries, similarly to those of her women writing contemporaries, was mostly based on travel books written by men as "grand tours were closed to her [i.e. woman] by reason of her sex and social class"⁶. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, women were only slowly starting to travel and it was mainly women of aristocratic background, like Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who could afford long and far distance travels to the real exotic localities.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, nevertheless, the popularity of travelling was growing, especially the domestic travels began to be undertaken even by women. So as not to depict women's situation as completely desperate, Radcliffe's own travelogue, published in 1794, should be mentioned as it also proves a testimony to a relative relaxation of the strict exclusion of women from the travel experience. Yet, her *Journey through Holland and the Western Frontier of Germany* (1795) took this author

⁵ Ellen Moers, *Literary Women* (London: The Women's Press, 1980) 126.

⁶ Moers 128.

“no further afield than the countries she named”⁷. Consequently the travel did not provide her with sufficient material for her south-located plots. For her descriptions in these she then logically must have found inspiration in the numerous travel reports published by her male contemporaries.

Mrs Radcliffe could probably not complain about the insufficiency of the resources for inspiration for her Italy based romances. Travelling indeed belonged to the relatively favourite pastimes of many a young wealthy man for whom these travels often represented a course to maturity and knowledge of the world. For some, nevertheless, they only served as a pleasant diversion. It is, in fact, confirmed several times in her own novels. For instance Mr Verneuil, in *The Romance of the Forest*, when the group met him, “was traveling from Geneva to a distant part of Savoy, merely for the purpose of viewing the country”. (*The Romance of the Forest*: 272) In the same way another character in this novel, M. Amand, in order to improve his health condition and in order to mitigate his misery having lost a wife and a child, makes a tour round France.

This kind of amusement is in Radcliffe’s novels almost exclusively reserved for men. Women travel here only because they have no other option and circumstances beyond their control force them to set out on a journey. Needless to say, their travelling then logically by no means resembles the more or less pleasurable grand tours undertaken by men. Still, it was exactly the lure of encountering and exploring the unfamiliar that made these books so attractive to women readers as they offered an inexhaustible source of new stimuli and delight to the senses. The outdoor expeditions of Radcliffe’s heroines whose travels take them to the far and unfamiliar countries represent in Moers’s interpretation an important source of inspiration for the reader. S/he is here invited to travel together with

⁷ Cloe Chard, “Introduction” to *The Romance of the Forest* by Ann Radcliffe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) xx.

the protagonist through the “exotic, impossible landscape, ever changing, ever delightful to the senses” and to share the “new kind of experience”⁸ with her at the same time.

As it was still mostly indoors that women in Radcliffe’s days were allowed to move freely without necessarily jeopardizing their respectability, domestic novels would seem to be the most appropriate form for the woman novelists. These were naturally published also due to the influence of the realistic trend in literature. However, long time before, exotic tales were similarly popular with women writers. Especially the early romances composed around the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by writers like Aphra Behn or Eliza Haywood were in fact tales of love and adventure set almost exclusively in foreign, often exotic localities. With the appearance of travel books and with the support of the continuing popularity of the historical romance and the abovementioned tales of the fanciful and exotic, the external dimension became to be exploited by women writers with even greater intensity. Moreover, the two spheres soon started to intermingle, the greater freedom of the external expeditions providing women with the necessary stimuli for the demarcation and development of their inner selves. This complex character of space is often recognized as all-important in Radcliffe’s major texts. Aptly combined with the romance framework it in fact represents one of the constitutive features of her works that distinguishes her from other Gothic writers of her time.

The rise in the publication of the travel books also naturally further increased the lure of the exotic and foreign. The readers consuming this kind of literature often felt fascinated and they marvelled at the rich depictions. Significantly, the places portrayed here represented a striking contrast to the familiar surrounding and everyday experience. Therefore, for Moers it is all-important that in Radcliffe’s romances the transport of the heroine to the exotic localities is always connected with the sense of rapture, the

⁸ Moers 128.

experience of the strange and thus disturbance from the commonplace of everyday life. In the eighteenth-century context where mere solitary walking was considered highly suspicious with women, this opportunity must have been perceived as more acutely and intensively enchanting — especially by the female part of the readership — than by us.

To the contemporary reader, familiar with south European countries and their nature, the descriptions of Radcliffe's heroines' travels much more create the impression of "the imaginary planetary travel of the kind familiar to someone like Radcliffe from the old romances". This "lingering, mysterious charm" of Radcliffe's texts results exactly from the already mentioned striking disproportion in distance and time in this author's romances. Radcliffe leaves her heroines to fly "through the air independent of the laws of gravity, time, perspective, and certainly, of real travel"⁹. This technique leads to the overall dreamlike atmosphere of a fairy tale about an 'enchanted lady' uprooted from her everyday reality.

In Radcliffe's attitude, the exact measuring of the flux of time does not play a significant role in comparison to the depth of sentiments and emotions the protagonist experiences on her travels. As precise report on the character's development or maturation did not constitute the purpose of the heroine's travels, the record of particular events at particular moments was considered unnecessary. The author, nevertheless, does not give up on authenticity completely. Her romances, as stressed before, relied heavily on the contemporary travelogues and thus detailed descriptions of both landscape and places she passes through deliver the impression of real travels. The stress on the authenticity of the experience of the traveller, so essential for Radcliffean woman protagonist, is confirmed by Cloe Chard in her introduction to *The Romance of the Forest*: "The descriptions of the

⁹ Moers 127.

foreign [...] are uttered with the authority of the traveler - a form of authority is derived from the traveler's claim to first-hand observation."¹⁰

The current whereabouts and the heroine's emotional response to the particular place, nevertheless, represent the main point of focus. The principle of causality, a constitutive element of most novels that focused on the resulting effect of all events as crucial in the characters' development is again missing from Radcliffe's romances. The heroine's experience does not shape her character significantly, not in the degree at least that one could expect in consequence of extensive travelling. All past events are in her heroines' minds only associated with either positive or negative sentiments, not as particular points that changed their fates dramatically. The home which they are usually forced to leave then represents only a dim and nostalgic memory of the ideal, something they long to return to.

Moers further comments on what comes as the "naïveté of Radcliffe's landscape painting"¹¹ that often evokes an idea of a composition of a picture in the reader's mind rather than simply rendering wild and unbound nature. Many critics noticed and commented upon the changing character of landscape depiction in literature towards the second half of the eighteenth century. Its comparative wilderness, predominately of mountain scenes, became especially conspicuous if compared to the seventeenth-century "formal, geometric gardens"¹². Not surprisingly the academics were quick in distinguishing an obvious connection between the form of landscape and the perceptive mind of the onlooker which actually corresponded to the contemporary aesthetic trends outlined in the first chapter. Martin Price even talks about the impossibility of discussing landscape as separated from the perspective of its perceiver. He develops his argument further by

¹⁰ Chard xix-xx.

¹¹ Moers 127.

¹² Martin Price, *The Oxford Anthology of English Literature. The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century*. Ed. Frank Kermode, John Hollander (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973) 619.

elevating the landscape and nature depictions in works of art as actually parallel to the mindscapes of the character, that is, mediated projections of the author:

It is a question that involves more than landscape, for the landscape is the outward and correspondent form of the mind that regards it (and in imagination creates it). Therefore the emergence of the natural scene becomes at the same time the discovery of new metaphors for the powers of mind.¹³

The heroines' minds in Radcliffe's works, thanks to the enlightened education and benevolent upbringing provided by the wise authority of their father, indeed, prove extreme delicacy and responsiveness to the visual aspects. Being well trained in poetry and skilled in the visual art, the pictures which are filtered through their perceptive minds and which the reader is offered in the romances often resemble a delicately rendered piece of art rather than faithfully and physically described nature. The lyrical variations of light and atmosphere contrasted by the description of dark and gloomy nooks often allow the reader to forget the movement of the plot and only indulge in the momentary ambience.

Here yet another of Price's observations can be quoted in order to more closely describe the conspicuously artistic, that is, basically artificial character of landscapes in Radcliffe's texts: "[...] there is the deliberate cultivation of an art that will be reflexive, that is, will reveal the process rather than a finished and selfsubsistent achievement"¹⁴. Radcliffe and those writing in the same mode then "give artfully designed garden landscapes that are meant to evoke a carefully orchestrated set of associations"¹⁵. Nature with Ann Radcliffe is not to be admired for its unrestrained wilderness. Wild nature is by her mediated to the reader in a cultivated garden-like form so that it evokes in him/her a specific and desired emotional response that would be in accordance with the eighteenth-

¹³ Price 619.

¹⁴ Price 619.

¹⁵ Price 619.

century aesthetic taste. The process of reading and interpretation is hence discreetly outlined and carefully directed.

As a result, the experience of nature in Radcliffe is almost exclusively perceived as at least twice mediated. That is to say, it never reads as the observations of wild and spontaneous nature. Or, as Maggie Kilgour says about Radcliffe's 'artificial' treatment of nature descriptions, with this author, "we see the artificial landscape, already shaped by previous authors or painters whose works Radcliffe is drawing upon"¹⁶. Moreover, this perceptible vicariousness is further intensified by the fact that it is mostly the heroine's response to the landscape we get in Radcliffe's books.

Kilgour also cites the rather dismissive idea that often appears in critical essays on Radcliffe's texts. This opinion that "there is no nature in Radcliffe's world, despite the endlessly tedious descriptions of landscape"¹⁷ should, nevertheless, be at least specified, if not revised. The notorious lack of immediacy in Radcliffe, that is to say, does have a special purpose. No matter how important nature descriptions may be, their function in her romances is very specific. Kilgour herself actually builds her argument on this fact when she writes about "human appropriation of the natural world for the human"¹⁸ in Radcliffe's text. In this critic's reading this adjustment can have several forms. It is either

through moralisation in which the human mind, detached from what it sees, reads meaning into landscape, or through poetic creation in which the mind goes to work to shape the natural landscape into a work of art, or through memory in which the natural world becomes associated with the human.¹⁹

This close and sometimes even almost intimate relationship between the perceiver's mind or emotional condition and nature rendering is again closely connected

¹⁶ Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995) 130.

¹⁷ Kilgour 130.

¹⁸ Kilgour 130.

¹⁹ Kilgour 130-131. (in this context, the heroine often projects her feelings to the father or lover onto the parts of landscape she observes)

with the “surface gliding” tendency in Radcliffe’s works discussed in many critical texts. The surfaces that the author offers to the reader are no copies of reality. All nature descriptions in her romances have already been transformed and appropriately shaped for the reader by the period conventions and aesthetic trends which the heroine is an apt mediator of. Moreover, as again Kilgour points out, it is also the literary conventions that the author herself professed which the final portrayal of nature is adjusted to.

No matter how artificial or limiting this attitude may seem, it is finally important to realize that the way in which art shapes nature remains the driving principle of Ann Radcliffe’s texts. Yet, once this is accepted by the readers, they can rely on the fact that in her romances this manifest rule of art over nature “must liberate not enslave it”²⁰. In this respect, Radcliffe actually remains indebted to the neoclassical conception of the nature – art relationship. According to the neoclassical beliefs, nature as a creation of God should serve the artist as the main source of imitation. This imitation, nevertheless, must be based on strict principles which are themselves derived from nature. As a manifestation of the supreme genius of God, nature was distinct in its symmetry, proportion and order.

Alexander Pope, an icon of the neoclassical poetry, derived the standards of taste from the order of nature: „First follow nature and your judgment frame/ By her just standard, which is still the same./Unerring nature still divinely bright,/One clear, unchanged and universal light.”²¹ His attitude to art and criticism is expressed in his conception of nature as the source of poetry’s ‘rules’. In his poetic works, Pope cherished the idea of rules as a self-imposed restriction of an artist who, thanks to this following of the principles, could imitate nature more accurately. Perfect copy of nature is obviously impossible since an artist can never achieve the standard of God’s perfection. Nevertheless,

²⁰ Kilgour 182.

²¹ Alexander Pope, “An Essay on Criticism” Part I. *Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation*. 23 June 2008. <http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?fk_files=21814&pageno=3>

since “true wit is nature to advantage dressed”²², the poets should concentrate on imitation of all natural only and do their best to approach the model. It was therefore the artists’ work to follow the fixed and unchanging system of proportions rather than try to depict the ideas as originating in their own minds which formed the basis of the neoclassical tradition. In the neoclassical conception, rules for composing a piece of art thus copied those of nature which further also ensured the quality of culture and manners of the consumers of art.

In Radcliffe’s romances, nature is correspondingly depicted as a piece of art as it can thus represent the boundless source of the aesthetic stimuli. This approach of art to nature, with respect to what has been said, should automatically ensure the moral improvement of the observer. This type of landscape can also help to enhance man’s taste so that s/he would become a more cultured being. What has many times been criticized as ‘artificial’ in Radcliffe’s romances hence paradoxically helps to ensure the successful accomplishment of the heroines’ troublesome journeys during which their delicacy in taste is constantly reaffirmed and strengthened. Being mediated through the subtle minds of her heroines, Radcliffe hoped, the landscape descriptions would similarly affect the minds of her readers.

In Radcliffe’s romances, however, it is only especially perceptive and delicate minds capable of appreciating the aesthetic beauties that the nature is open to. A detailed demonstration of the supporting ‘power’ of nature as connected with the characters’ evaluation should, I believe, be carried out now. If this is to be accomplished successfully, nevertheless, it seems important to first further specify the theory of the sublime and beautiful, the dominant categories of the eighteenth-century aesthetic that were briefly

²² Pope, “An Essay on Criticism” Part II.

outlined in the preceding chapter, with special regard to Radcliffe's employment of these in her texts.

2.1.1. Nature as a Measure of the Character

As has been suggested, it was mainly Ann Radcliffe's skilfulness in applying the contemporary aesthetic trends in practice that enabled her to exploit the poetic potential of external descriptions almost to its maximum. Radcliffe in her writing obviously followed Burke's conception of the sublime and beautiful in which, as he believed, variety of both often based on contrasts constitutes one of the premises for successful attainment of the fullest reading experience. She in fact, as many critics agreed, achieved almost the level of perfection of depicting the sublime in her work. It was mainly thanks to the relatively quick moves from the beautiful — the category that represents the opposite pole to the sublime — to the sublime, that she managed to create the impression of a varied landscape, a picture that would be praised in many works of the contemporary aesthetics.

Importantly for the discussion of female Gothic, Robert Miles writes about the “manifest gendering”²³ of the sublime in the Pre-romantic and Romantic periods. His interpretation could very well be demonstrated and confirmed on a number of scenes from Ann Radcliffe's romances. I would like to draw attention to a particular passage from *The Italian* where the heroine accompanied by her lover and his servant pass through a mountainous landscape on their escape from the Monastery of San Stefano to Naples. Just as many times in Radcliffe's romances also here “the travellers stopped to admire the scene”. Their appreciations of the natural view are distinctly different obviously depending on gender. As Paolo's perception is more given by his social standing and indelicacy of taste, which feature will be discussed later, it is enough to focus at present on

²³ Robert Miles, *Gothic Writing 1750-1820* (London: Routledge, 1993) 66.

Vivaldi's and Ellena's speeches. "See," said Vivaldi, "where Monte-Corno stands like a ruffian, huge, sacred, threatening and horrid! — and in the south, where the sullen mountain of San Nicolo shoots up, barren and rocky!" (*The Italian*: 158) The qualities Vivaldi concentrates on refer to the distinctly sublime and thus predominantly male features are applied to suggest the majesty of nature observed, its grandeur verging on the dangerous. Ellena's version seems much meeker and softer:

"Mark too," said Ellena, "how sweetly the banks and undulating plains repose at the feet of the mountains; what an image of beauty and elegance they oppose to the awful grandeur that overlooks and guards them! Observe, too, how many a delightful valley, opening from the lake, spreads its rice and corn fields, shaded with groves of the almond, far among the winding hills; how gaily vineyards and olives alternately chequer the acclivities, and how gracefully the lofty palms bend over the higher cliffs." (*The Italian*: 158)

Ellena's sensitiveness to the perfect harmony, undulating lines and delicate symmetry of the fruitful lowlands stands in opposition to the irregular rugged acclivities of the mountains.

Robert Miles' description of the qualities typically associated with the sublime and beautiful perfectly matches the characters' responses: "The sublime stimulus is one of overwhelming power, the potent shadow of a masculine God, while the passive observer is overcome by terror and paradoxical delight." In Miles' reading, the sublime in the late eighteenth-century works is hence significantly "marked by power" whereas beauty is usually associated with the absence of it. The beautiful then implicitly represents the "feminine passive" response to the sublime incentive that "induces reverence"²⁴.

Nevertheless, Ellena's awareness of the 'guard' that the grandeur can provide the beautiful with is also worth noticing. It points to the frequently ambiguous attitude of the heroines to the obviously dangerous and fearful external spaces as well as interiors where

²⁴ Miles, *Gothic Writing*. 66.

they sometimes seek the necessary refuge. Perspective seems to play a significant role here which actually confirms the principle workings of the sublime as outlined by Burke. When only observed from a safe place the landscape can be indulged by the female observer who freely gives in to her emotions, her fears and apprehensions being mitigated by the relative distance. When, however, the heroine is forced to leave her secure shelter and is exposed to the imminent danger, her emotions change and so does the perception of the surrounding scenes by her mind. Thus, the mountains when observed from the ramparts of a castle or a turret of the convent may strike her with the “deep repose of their beauty”, which view is perceived as excitingly sublime and filling one with almost divine feelings. (*The Mysteries*: 318) However, the same mountains become “tremendous crags, impeding over the road”, monstrous and immense in their majesty whenever the heroine is actually surrounded by their steep cliffs. (*The Mysteries*: 225) Comprehensively enough, it is the indirect experience with nature from which the heroines mostly profit and gain strength.

Ellena, the heroine of *The Italian*, is well aware of the capacity of nature to lessen the misery of her confinement and thus more mitigate her suffering of a prisoner. Being kept in the cell of the monastery of San Stefano she is forced to face the relentlessness of the abbess who makes Ellena either accept the veil or be left at the mercy of Vivaldi’s family. These, as Ellena fears, would do anything to prevent her marriage with their son. Ellena has in this situation not much left to her consolation and could easily give in to despair. Nevertheless, on getting access to the turret the aesthetically satisfying view of the surrounding landscape provides her with the necessary spiritual sustenance and she is thus ready to face whatever danger may come. She feels there, high in the turret as if “dwelling with a present God in the midst of his sublime works” which feelings “bring her to the state of elevation.”

How poor the boasted power of man, when the fall of a single cliff from these mountains would with ease destroy thousands of his race assembled on the plains below! [...] Thus man, the giant who now held her in captivity, would shrink to the diminitiveness of a fairy; and she would experience, that his utmost force was unable to enchain her soul, or compel her to fear him, while he was destitute of virtue. (*The Italian*: 91)

This spiritual freedom derived from the eternal source of power that nature provides the Gothic heroines with has been noticed by many critics. Simone de Beauvoir in more detail deals with what she calls ‘female landscape’ specificities. Jane Spencer in her essay interprets De Beauvoir’s ‘concept’ which proves very fitting for the present discussion. According to de Beauvoir, Spencer maintains the landscape in women’s fiction in general works “as an emblem of the young girl’s free self which is threatened by her entry into the male-dominated social world”²⁵. Of course, the heroine’s condition or social position does not change in any significant way. Yet, the importance of regaining moral power to resist or even oppose men’s cruelties on realizing their relative weakness and to protect herself from the slippage from the path of virtue proves to be of the highest importance for the Gothic romance heroine.

As it was suggested and it should further be demonstrated, nevertheless, this seemingly easy and get-at-able source of energy is not accessible to everyone in Radcliffe’s novels. On the contrary, the access and free use of nature’s bounty is strictly limited and, it seems, must always be deserved. In fact, nature and one’s attitude and mainly response to it, or more broadly, to external surroundings in general, serve as the measures of the character’s virtue and sensitivity. These, as has been explained in the introduction, represented the most important characteristic features in the sentimental novel and in female Gothic romance at the same time. Not even architecture, mainly

²⁵ Jane Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist, From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986) 193.

represented by Gothic castles and mansions or religious construction, is excluded, as can be shown on several instances in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.

The susceptibility to being revived by aesthetic delights of nature represents the mark of exceptional delicacy and virtue in Radcliffe's works. Her heroines prove to be extremely responsive to the natural beauties or the sublime and hence its energy stands fully at their disposal. Villains, on the contrary, pay hardly any respect to their surroundings and if so, it is only for purely practical reasons. The responsiveness to nature moreover also proves to be a social matter as the 'access' to feelings of delight of natural beauties is further restricted by class. Thus the servants' appreciation of nature is always limited to their local patriotism. Paolo, in *The Italian*, is always delighted and expresses strong enthusiasm at passing through a landscape that reminds him of his native place. Yet, there are never traces of elevation or delicate rapture that are discernible with the heroines thanks to their subtle and refined minds. In the scene described above, Paolo's exclamations testify to this emotionally strong local attachment. He thus stresses above all the affinities with his home which he can distinguish in the unfamiliar piece of country: "[...] how like are the fishing boats, that sail towards the hamlet below, to those one sees upon the bay of Naples". (*The Italian*: 158)

The heroine, quite understandably, looks for a suitable mate who could participate with her in the delights of nature. It cannot be wondered at then that it is usually a man in some way connected with nature or someone sensitive enough to appreciate its potency that the heroine feels attracted to. Nevertheless, to expect a man completely untouched by civilization, a Rousseauesque noble savage, in Radcliffe's romances would be preposterous. That is to say, this ideal of a 'natural man' in Radcliffe's conception always suggests the 'feminized' prototypic partner typically associated with sentimental novels. From this man, as has been already said, valour at the battle field as a proof of his

worth is the last thing expected. On the contrary, the exceptional sensitiveness to nature taken for granted with him, goes hand in hand with proper upbringing and education worthy of a gentleman. He should not lack any of the qualities appropriate for a man acquainted with manners and trained especially in delicate treatment of women.

Valancourt, the protagonist of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, is an exemplary partner for Emily before he is deluded by the temptations of the city and goes through the necessary purgatory of prison only to come out as a better man. Not surprisingly, it is in the woods where the young people first meet. Valancourt is dressed in the hunter's clothes. These, nevertheless, only serve him to gain respect from people who would refuse a lonely stranger just wandering on his own through the country. He is "pleased with the country, and means to saunter away a few weeks among its scenes". (*The Mysteries*: 32) Theodore in *The Romance of the Forest*, in the same way, first appears in a huntsman's attire in the woods surrounding the abbey. In fact, he rather resembles a natural spirit than a physical being when Adeline meets him.

At first sight, the hunter's clothes seem to indicate power or potential aggression. Yet, Jane Spencer in her analysis of *The Romance of the Forest* specifies the role of the huntsman's attire in the context of Ann Radcliffe's works: "The Radcliffe hero", she observes, "is truly a sheep in wolf's clothing"²⁶ ready to express tenderness with the weak. In a word, he is a perfect cultivated mate for a Gothic romance heroine regularly carrying about a volume of Homer or Petrarch on his solitary walks through the country, his appreciation of natural beauties almost equalling that of the heroine.

With the rest of the characters their responsiveness to nature is more complicated and not strictly defined. Nevertheless, the same sensitivity to natural beauties that is typical of the heroine cannot, almost as a rule, be found in anyone else. Their minds not being well

²⁶ Spencer 204.

tuned to the aesthetic delicacies, nature, and especially its sublime aspect, usually represents only fear and horror of things unknown and vast objects that overreach them. While Adeline in *The Romance of the Forest*, for instance, can feel both fear and admiration for the ancient and sublime things on approaching the deserted abbey, Madame La Motte is only capable of experiencing unreflective horror. In the same way, Emily in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* can appreciate the sight of beautiful nature and she is enraptured and elevated at seeing the sublime mountain reliefs. Madame Cheron, as opposed to her nieces' refined mind, only derides the young woman's fancy in indulging in fantasies instead of keeping down-to-earth enough. This woman is incapable of alleviating the tortures she undergoes in her unhappy marriage and she is therefore all the time consumed by her inclination to rule and dominate others. This, nevertheless, is only a compensation for the humiliation which her husband subjects her to. Not surprisingly, Madame Cheron finally dies destitute of friends, her mind in turmoil of reproach and pain.

The last instance to contrast the heroine's sensitivity to nature can be identified in Countess de Villefort in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* who can only see in Chateau-le-Blanc a "work of savage art" (*The Mysteries*: 471) In the same way the surrounding country is for the Countess only savage nature, she being acutely aware of its being destitute of finesse and polish of the city life she had been used to and which she was forced to leave for this desolate place. Her husband, on the contrary, can show due respect for the work of his ancestors. Not being spoiled by the life in civilization completely but having only derived useful experience from it, he is happy to return back and live in the midst of nature.

In his attitude to the old castle Count de Villefort proves extreme delicacy in avoiding any attempts at vulgar modernisation. Indeed, he introduces only such changes at the old Gothic chateau that should make the place easier to inhabit while paying special attention to the maintenance of its genius loci. In this way, he in fact manages to reconcile

the good and durable of the past with a bearable degree of progress. The fine matching of the old and modern tendencies in Radcliffe's romances which was highlighted as their distinct feature is thus exemplified in Count de Villefort's character. It has been observed by many critics that it is exactly this type of an aristocrat who can treat the old with appropriate sensitivity that represents an important step towards the formation of that kind of middle-class which Radcliffe would endorse in her novels. With her idealised new middle-class, delicacy in treating the past and respect for traditions goes hand in hand with limited individualism in the sense of striving for and achieving personal happiness.

As the opposite attitudes of the count Villefort and his wife suggest, the traditionally sentimental contrast between the topos of the landscape as representing the natural but also the country values and that of the urban territory serves in Radcliffe as yet another means of characterization. Characters are here according to this criterion always divided into two groups. Those who departed from the 'natural way' are manifestly contrasted to those who managed to remain true to their instincts and nature and are thus still responsive to the slightest stimuli originating in their natural surroundings. Yet, in Radcliffe nature, especially as conceived in this opposition, does not represent the wild element that characters physically need to encounter. Again, as explained above, it is rather mainly understood as the set of qualities promoted by the contemporary aesthetic trends. The delicacy of the perceiver capable of distinguishing the tiny nuances is to be contrasted with complete irresponsiveness of others.

Urban life is not depicted at all in Radcliffe's work. With only a few exceptions it appears in her texts as a mere abstract idea of something negative and unnatural. The heroine's travels in fact very scarcely lead her to the territory of a town or a city. It is mostly from the reports or in the example of an individual whose nature has been 'spoilt' by the sojourn in a city that the reader strongly perceives this contrast. The vices of the city

can be only mediated as it is a necessary premise of the novels of sensibility that it is there where usually a young inexperienced man is as a rule spoiled or ruined by the temptations and luxuries the town abounds in.

The lack or loss of appropriate delicacy is therefore in Radcliffe often ascribed to the influence of city life. Her attitude to urban life reflects the social and life style changes in the eighteenth century. Especially in its second half the size of towns was growing rapidly. The increasing number of inhabitants logically did not provide beneficiary conditions for communal spirit anymore and the former social cohesion was getting loose. The economic system of values went hand in hand with the rise of individualism which, as Ian Watt writes, “fostered private and egocentric mental life” as well as it put stress on “personal relationships”²⁷. This shift from the predominately communal life to urban individualism naturally resulted in the deepening contrast between the rural and urban ways of life. Indeed, city life became associated with relationships based on material interests and loose entertainment, pretence and artifice being often seen as the governing principles. These are in Radcliffe’s romances correspondingly set in strong contrast to nature as an unlimited source of spiritual fortitude. Her obvious conservatism makes her naturally side with the life style based on social cohesion.

Nevertheless, certain ambiguity is perceptible in her protagonists’ characterization. Though mostly depicted as naïve, her heroines can by no means be described as simple country girls. On the contrary, their delicacy, familiarity with decorum and good education make them appear as women perfectly familiar with city manners. This incongruity can be related to the above outlined contemporary tendency of the gentry to move to their country manor houses at Radcliffe’s time. Carrying around with them necessary equipment to ensure the comfortable life they had been used to they would dwell

²⁷ Watt 177.

practically in immediate proximity to nature. Not necessarily intermingling with it directly they could without disturbance appreciate its beauties and contemplate its sublime.

Emily's initial residence in La Vallée is in fact similar to the above described trends. Her father St. Aubert "had known life in other forms than those of pastoral simplicity, having mingled in the gay and in the busy scenes of the world". His experience with city life, Radcliffe continues, "had too sorrowfully corrected his flattering portrait of mankind". It made him retire to the place at the banks of the river Garonne where he intended to spend the rest of his life amidst "the scenes of simple nature" devoted to "the pure delights of literature and the exercise of domestic virtues". (*The Mysteries*: 1) Here he also manages to bring up his daughter and live happily until his wife's premature death. St. Aubert, as Maggie Kilgour observed, actually embodies the genius loci and natural spirit of La Vallée. From her departure onwards, the memories of her home at La Vallée constitute one of the main sources of sustenance throughout the miseries Emily undergoes on her journey. La Vallée, only briefly described at the beginning thus represents a place — that is, as has been said, rather an abstract ideal — the heroine came from and that she at the same time steadily heads for. In the same way, Paris appears in the text just as an abstract idea, the typical representative of urban life destitute of humanity and communal spirit.

It is again St. Aubert who, at the beginning, expresses enthusiasm about Valancourt's purity and unspoilt character: "This young man has never been at Paris." (*The Mysteries*: 36) In his judgement certain apprehensions about Valancourt's future resistance to the temptations of the city reverberate. The uneasiness is unfortunately more than sufficiently confirmed in the young man's short departure from the path of virtue during his stay in Paris. Brought up in accord with her father's principles, Emily becomes too acutely aware of the adverse influence of the spoilt urban atmosphere upon an individual. She correspondingly cannot appreciate the luxury of Naples where Montoni takes her and

she rather longs for the simplicity and peacefulness of her former life. In the same way, she finds it extremely difficult to forgive her to-be husband Valancourt his slippage from honour in Paris.

2.2. Interiors

As has been suggested, the depiction of old medieval not exceptionally ruinous Gothic buildings represents characteristic topoi of Gothic literature that have in fact become almost a cliché connected with this genre. The dark chambers and labyrinthine nets of gloomy corridors have from the very beginning constituted almost indispensable paraphernalia of any piece of Gothic fiction. These are here obviously applied to evoke the desired atmosphere of the unknown, unexpected and terrifying. In this respect, Ann Radcliffe's romances do not represent an exception. Architecture, not exclusively Gothic, also plays an important role in her romances. Most importantly for this discussion, nevertheless, buildings provide the main source of interior spaces, that is, one of the aspects that I also set out to analyze in this work. Radcliffe's is, nevertheless, quite comprehensively, a feminine attitude to the depiction of Gothic interiors as it is through the heroines' perspective that the reader experiences the strained atmosphere ruling within the monstrous edifices.

The Mysteries of Udolpho, the title of one of her best known romances obviously suggests the substantial role the castle is going to play in the romance. It is indeed exactly in this novel where architecture and interiors the edifice of the castle provides become the most conspicuous with this author. For this reason Radcliffe's technique of depicting the interior spaces will from greater part be demonstrated on this particular romance.

Early in the novel, Emily is transported from the idyllic home of La Vallée to the Gothic nightmare reality of Montoni's medieval castle Udolpho surrounded from all sides

with the sinister peaks of the Alps. At the first sight the building strikes her by its magnificence and its ostensible dominance over nature. “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.” (*The Mysteries*: 227) This anthropomorphization of the castle, a description that seems to assign it human features, clearly outlines the following identification of its owner Montoni with his abode that is sustained in the romance throughout Emily’s sojourn within its walls. The sublime, as has been shown, whose qualities are associated with the male in Burke’s interpretation, is naturally perceived as threatening and overwhelming. Emily indeed confirms this fearful respect when on entering its gate she feels “as if she was going into her prison”. (*The Mysteries*: 227)

From the very beginning the castle is thus accepted by the main heroine as a forced confinement in which she is to survive in complete isolation, destitute of a close friend or any means of communication with the outside world. The gloomy dungeon-like atmosphere of the castle is constantly sustained and enhanced in the novel by the mysterious sounds coming as if from nowhere that “run along the vaulted passages so, that one is continually deceived by it”. (*The Mysteries*: 433) Moreover, the idea of imprisonment is confirmed in Montoni’s mysterious hasty reparation of the castle’s fortification. As Maggie Kilgour observed, Montoni “only does changes at Udolpho which will consolidate its power as a feudal fortress”²⁸. Soldiers’ marching and clashing of swords thus become the everyday reality of Emily’s stay at Udolpho. Moreover, she all the time remains ignorant of the subject of Montoni’s secret negotiations with his strange guests who come and leave every day. Kilgour in her analysis also describes Udolpho as a “private space where the freedom of uncontrolled individualism is destructive”²⁹. Udolpho,

²⁸ Kilgour 125.

²⁹ Kilgour 119.

that is to say, represents Montoni's private realm he being the only authority that sets the rules within the castle's walls and that decides the fate of its occupants.

That chastity and virtue represent the all-important values for a woman in Radcliffe's romances does not come surprising considering her strong indebtedness to chivalric romances and the sentimental literature. Their crucial role will, nevertheless, be further specified in a separate discussion on characterization in Radcliffe's romances. Comprehensively, it is thus not the political discussions but the potential arrival of her undesired suitor count Morano that represents the greatest fear of Emily's imprisonment immediately after her arrival. This terrible fear of a possible staining of her chastity makes Emily show extremely strong moral uprightness in stubbornly resisting Morano's proposals. Having once given promise to Valancourt, she is resolved to remain faithful to him under any circumstances. In this stamina she finally proves to be much more consistent than her male counterpart who, for a short period, falls for the luxury of city and forgets about the moral principles crucial for their love.

It is in the room Emily is allotted where she usually retreats whenever any indication of Morano's arrival at the castle appears. In our discussion on the heroine's private chamber Ian Watt's analysis of the role of the closet in the eighteenth-century household may prove helpful. In his study of the rise of the novel this critic writes about the increasing importance of the closet especially for eighteenth-century female part of society. Watt stresses the significance of this space mainly for its providing everybody with the possibility to "be alone whenever they wished"³⁰.

Emily, indeed, can feel relatively free in leaving and going back to her room. Absurdly enough, nevertheless, she is also often sent to her chamber by the male authority,

³⁰ Watt 188.

Montoni. Thus, her room not only represents the necessary asylum for her but can also constitute the place where she is 'grounded' whenever she misbehaves and acts like a child. However, far as the idea of Emily's chamber may be from Watt's description of a Georgian-house closet, his interpretation is still useful for the discussion. It bears some resemblance with the role Emily's chamber plays during her confinement in *Udolpho*. In Watt's own words: the closet "is an early version of the room of one's own which Virginia Woolf saw as the prime requisite of woman's emancipation"³¹.

There can naturally be no discussion about Emily's significant emancipation or assertion of independence of Montoni. Yet, recreating her room to her taste the heroine can do much to make her imprisonment at *Udolpho* more bearable. Equipping the chamber with things familiar and dear to her, she in fact confirms certain tendency to appropriate this space and turn it into the room of 'her own'.

The importance of filling one's room with things familiar is also stressed by Daniela Hodrová's "The Significance of the Room"³² in her *Poetika míst*. As this critic observes, an essential relationship is usually developed between the dweller of the room and the equipment brought here to make the space cosier and more familiar. "Things that we surround ourselves with in our room", Hodrová maintains, "leave an imprint on our aura and similarly, we leave an imprint of ourselves on these things"³³. In this way, an individual quickly develops an intimate relation to the room which henceforth represents a pleasant place of retreat.

Very similar features are distinguishable in Emily's activity who "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". She further took out her drawing utensils and was "tranquil enough to be pleased with the thought of

³¹ Watt 188.

³² "Smysl pokoje" Daniela Hodrová, *Poetika míst* (Praha: H&H, 1997) - translated by: Kateřina Klosová

³³ Daniela Hodrová, *Poetika míst*. 218. (translated by: Kateřina Klosová)

sketching the sublime scene”. (*The Mysteries*: 248) All the time carrying around with her the books and painting equipment that constituted her home at La Vallée, the heroine also brings a bit of the feeling of domesticity wherever she comes. Emily proves exceptionally capable of adapting to new spaces thanks to the few necessary paraphernalia an English lady at any moment was supposed to have on her. These things, that is to say, would be considered as representing the best and most proper means of preoccupation for a young woman of her position. Not even at the time of her confinement does Emily lose her sense of propriety that actually also helps her to sustain certain inner balance.

Hodrová writes about the general characteristics of a room as a place “defined by four walls located within another defined space (a house, a castle, etc.) and which is closed and represents interiority in relation to the landscape, yet one which is open in comparison with places such as prison”. One could say, the author continues, that the room constitutes a space on the border between “the pure inside — i.e. the heart of its dweller — and the pure outside — a landscape, a town, the world”. She further talks about the importance of windows and a door, these ensuring the necessary openness of a room which enables the subject to communicate with the outside world, through which “s/he can get in and get out”³⁴. Hodrová’s conception offers an idea of the room as a sealed space whose boundaries can be crossed in either direction depending on one’s desire. No matter how freely Emily can leave and enter her room she is, nevertheless, unfortunately not the only person who can do so.

Locks on the doors in Watt’s interpretation of the eighteenth-century closet constituted the “modernization on which the genteel insisted”³⁵. Emily is naturally provided no lock so that she could keep herself shut in the chamber and guarantee thus the desired privacy. She is acutely conscious of the importance to protect her own space — the

³⁴ Hodrová. *Poetika míst*. 219. (translated by: Kateřina Klosová)

³⁵ Watt 188.

chamber she is allotted within the walls of Udolpho in order to ensure the feeling of safety as delineated by Hodrová. Her chamber should represent her own territory within the hostile space and she indeed becomes very protective about it. As soon as she finds out that the bolts are on the outside of her chamber she instantly decides to ask Montoni for another room. Within the confines of the terrifyingly dark castle, Emily insists on keeping the small chamber exclusively private. The heroine feels anxious about the potential loss of control over her security which is, as things are, completely given over to the male owner of the castle. Her wish is, nevertheless, rejected as mere vanity and thus Emily is forced to get used to living in constant danger of having her territory intruded upon.

Just as the heroine looks for necessary rest and regains the lost power in her room she gets some spiritual nourishment in an occasional glimpse of the wild and sublime nature surrounding the castle. Though prevented from leaving the premises of the castle she can walk the ramparts and observe the sublime nature surrounding Udolpho. During these occasional emergences from the Gothic darkness to the surface light, Emily can draw the necessary moral strength from nature the potential of which has been discussed above. The mere glance of the bounteous landscape suffices for the heroine to be empowered and thus to better oppose Montoni's domain. The castle is finally not that hermetically sealed as it had seemed to the heroine at the arrival. It, in fact, resembles a porous space where an occasional ray of light is let in which can provide those forced to stay within with a little hope.

This continuous sustenance of power serves the heroine to become more interested in the rest of the castle and to explore not only the adjoining chambers but also those in the other wing of the edifice. She remains in constant search of the enigmatic veiled picture that is reported to be hiding the portrait of the original female owner of Udolpho. This woman, as the rumour has it, mysteriously disappeared long time before

Emily's arrival. Thus the heroine continues in her exploration which at the same time stimulates and enhances her interest in discovering the mystery of Udolpho castle.

As Maggie Kilgour aptly observed "Udolpho is a place of confinement in which the repressed female imagination is able to escape and run riot"³⁶. Emily's imagination, it must be conceded, is strongly nourished by the dismal and gloomy interior of the castle where each sound and movement can be interpreted in innumerable ways. Greater self-control and curbing of one's imagination is naturally demanded for the limiting of these wild fancies and preventing them from exceeding the bearable. The unnecessary indulgence in her fancies about the potential dangers lurking within the walls of Udolpho has been one of the most frequent points of criticism with this protagonist of Radcliffe.

On the other hand, her wild conjectures urge Emily to further and deeper travels through the castle only to reveal their basis as true or false. These expeditions in fact enable her to gradually acquaint herself with the territory she is confined within. As Carson believes, Foucault's reading of female Gothic romances suggests that the demarcation or mapping of one's living space in fact constitutes their principle: "Instead of revealing social, psychological and spiritual territory that can never be fully illuminated, the Gothic novel seems to map out the dark terrain precisely so that it may be conquered."³⁷ That is, instead of keeping her heroines closed in their rooms and analysing the psychology of fear in them, Radcliffe lets them 'travel' through the terrifying terrain of the castle as much as curiosity prods them to. Only on getting acquainted with the possible danger can one learn how to handle and possibly oppose it. Thus, it seems of the highest importance for Radcliffe's heroines to almost literally 'touch through' the territory in order to gain the necessary confidence to continue in their struggle for the escape from the space where their virtue is in a constant danger.

³⁶ Kilgour 121.

³⁷ James P. Carson, "Enlightenment, popular culture, and Gothic fiction." *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth Century Novel*. Ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 264.

Emily's gradual mapping out of Udolpho's territory therefore enables her to become more familiar with this building. No matter how terrifying its turrets and sharp the outlines may be, the edifice gradually loses on the tinge of the dreadful and strange. Women's ambiguous approach to confinements was pointed out before in connection with the sublime. Jane Spencer confirms this ambivalence with respect to spaces as presented in the women's Gothic: "Women are always represented as persecuted, deprived of power, and imprisoned, yet the places that confine them often protect them too"³⁸. On her return to Udolpho, having undergone a journey through the hostile country that bears the evidence of a recent battle, Emily actually welcomes the asylum Udolpho provides her with. The dangers that "threatened her from without, had engrossed all her apprehensions" and she rather accepts the bleak familiar than the terrifying and endangering strange outside the castle. (*The Mysteries*: 349)

Similar to her depiction of castles, churches and monasteries that represent religious institutions in her romances are also treated with some ambivalence by Radcliffe. What under some circumstances proves to be a sanctuary where the persecuted heroine can look for a hiding place, at another moment appears as a place sheltering rigidity, the passions of the dwellers being here not appeased but only walled in and thus intensified. This reserved and rather vigilant attitude of the characters to the professed asylum of peace probably stems from the author's specific conception of religion. At the same time, it, to a great extent, relies on her interpretation of proper authority as capable of creating either beneficiary or harmful conditions for the inmates.

After what has been said so far, it will probably not come as a big surprise that Radcliffe's heroines do not often prove to be devoutly religious in the sense of adherence to an institutional religion. Her 'religion' seems to be closely connected with her belief in

³⁸ Spencer 194.

the powerful source nature represents. It thus usually rather approaches a form of personal religion hard to define that is not delimited by any institutional rules. It does not resemble the protestant doctrine that underlies the morality as preached by the novels either.

Radcliffe's religious belief does not encourage the idea of an "essentially man-centred world" nor the world where "the individual was responsible for his own scale of moral and social values"³⁹.

In many ways, it draws inspiration from Rousseau's picture of vicarie Savoyard in his *Emile*, as Chloe Chard observed in her in many ways inspiring introduction and thorough notes to *The Romance of the Forest*. It is a "natural religion" expounded by Rousseau, that Chard describes as "emphasizing the superiority of 'rational' belief over a religion based on revelation, and the superiority of the 'simple' and 'sublime' tenets of the gospels over elaborate, ritualistic religion of the (Roman Catholic) Church"⁴⁰. As it can be seen from Chard's specification, especially the Roman Catholic Church with its reliance on form and surface marked by bombast and richness was often treated with suspicion by English Protestant writers as an opulent cover for vice and corruption. Tellingly enough, Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* is set in Spain, a country where the Catholic faith was devoutly followed, probably most of all European countries.

Radcliffe's wariness of extremes, nevertheless, does not automatically mean an unreserved rejection of all kinds of institutional religion. On the contrary, she kept to the belief that the rules of any institution can be reconciled with the interests and happiness of an individual. For this ideal state to come up, nevertheless, the institution has to be run by a reasonable and benevolent person who beware of any misuse of his/her potential power.

The contemplations that her heroines are often immersed in while observing a stimulating piece of nature do not remain at the level of visual pleasure or aesthetic

³⁹ Watt 177.

⁴⁰ Chard 386.

appreciation only. The elevated senses are often transposed to an even higher level such as one can experience when feeling a part of a whole system devised by God, the creator and originator of everything. His goodness is amply manifested in everything that surrounds man in his daily life. Kilgour aptly describes this specific religious potential of nature in Radcliffe: “On a religious level,” she writes, “nature is the veil of God, according to the biblical and allegorical tradition invoked by both Burke and Radcliffe in order to reaffirm a sense of connection between the natural and the supernatural”⁴¹. This almost deistic system espoused in Radcliffe’s novels brings back Lord Shaftesbury’s philosophy hinted at in the chapter dealing with context. It constructs the idea of the harmonious cosmic order in which “To truly appreciate the beauty of the world”, according to Shaftesbury, “is to revere the world's Creator, which reverence also gives rise to love for all the Creator's creatures”⁴².

Fittingly enough, Ellena finds the greatest consolation and almost unearthly feelings in a chamber at the top of the convent’s turret. As Hodrová points out, the tower “has represented a point of intersection between two, potentially three spatial dimensions – between heaven and earth or heaven, earth and hell; it is the place of communication between man and God”⁴³. It may be this symbolic connection between the depths of the earth and the elevations of heaven that fills the protagonist with the feelings of transcendence. It is here, in touch with heaven where she becomes fully aware of the spiritual freedom as her main weapon in the fight against the potential cruelties of the abbess. As if to further confirm this unearthly feeling, from the bird view perspective, people seem ridiculously tiny and insignificant compared to the immensity of the heavenly sphere she can here feel a part of.

⁴¹ Kilgour 129.

⁴² “Lord Shaftesbury [Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury]” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 12 Oct. 2006, 13 April 2008 < <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/shaftesbury/#Aes>>

⁴³ Hodrová, *Poetika míst*. 209. (translated by: Kateřina Klosová)

In spite of their respect for everything godly, Radcliffe's heroines never willingly accept the veil of the order. This would naturally represent an obstacle to their final happy union with the man they love. It is the earthly love that is a dominant power driving all of her novels which again points to their strongly romance potential. Moreover, the sentimental principle also predominates in her novels where love of one's neighbour on earth comes prior to the expectation of the reward in Heaven. Thus "Do as you would be done unto" is in fact the ruling motto of most of her heroines' activities and is recommended to all people who aim for living in virtue. (*The Romance of the Forest*: 73) The principle of sensibility, benevolence and ability to feel for and with others, are again and again confirmed in Radcliffe's Gothic romances.

Emily, in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* does not need to look for an asylum in a convent neither is she forced to join the votaresses. Yet, after she finds out the truth about Valancourt and his being corrupted by the sojourn in Paris, all her dreams about mutual future seem to be shattered. She therefore shuns the presence of other people, preferring to be left to the contemplation of her misery. It is at these moments of forlornness that Emily considers "how much suffering she might have escaped, had she become a votaress of the order, and remained in this retirement from the time of her father's death". (*The Mysteries*: 640) She therefore resorts for a short time to the close monastery of St. Clair. She is pleased by this "tranquil retirement of the convent, where she experiences a renewal of all the maternal kindness of the abbess, and the sisterly attentions of the nuns". (*The Mysteries*: 566) The monastery and its occupants supervised by a kind abbess thus supply the heroine's lost family rather than stressing their religious function.

It is in *The Italian* where the depiction of religious institutions gains on even greater ambivalence and the rigidity and lack of compassion of characters representing authorities is sometimes portrayed as their dominating principle. The main protagonist of

this romance, importantly, shows ability unprecedented with Radcliffe's characters to distinguish between proper perusal of authority by those who have it at their disposal and the misuse of one's position as a mere mask covering hypocrisy and rigidity. Ellena first seeks refuge in the Monastery of San Stefano only to meet here the relentlessness of the abbess. This woman's religious belief is so much blended with terrestrial interests and courtly machinations that she is incapable of feeling compassion for even a lonely orphan like Ellena. Thus instead of providing Ellena with asylum she, on finding out what this girl is escaping from, insists on her paying for her crime. The heroine is expected either to take the veil or leave the convent and being left at the mercy of Vivaldi's revengeful mother. Ellena, an unusually resistant and, one feels almost tempted to say, self-sufficient heroine, at this point proves her strong determination not to give in to the false authority. While being kept a prisoner in the monastery, she many times shows resistance to the threats of the abbess. At one moment, she even dares to openly criticize the profanity that underlies the allegedly pious religious institution.

The sanctuary is profaned [...] it is become prison. It is only when the Superior ceases to respect the precepts of that holy religion, the precepts which teach her justice and benevolence, that she herself is no longer respected. The very respect which bids us revere its mild and beneficent laws, bids us also to reject the violators of them: when you command me to reverence my religion, you urge me to condemn yourself. (*The Italian*: 85)

This harsh and extremely frank voicing of Ellena's true sentiments represents a significant step on the way of Radcliffe's heroine to greater self-reliance. Emily would often hesitate to question the authority of her usurping and dominating aunt just on the basis of family relation. The opposition to a religious institution would therefore be unthinkable for this predecessor of Ellena. However, Ellena in the comparable situations is able to rely on her instinct and ability to discern the good from the evil in order to

sufficiently oppose the latter. She can only believe in and respect such authority that fully deserves its name and hence adequate admiration.

Fortunately enough for her there appears a soul mate residing in the monastery who finally helps her to escape and who, not surprisingly in the context of the Gothic genre, finally proves to be Ellena's own mother. The Church of Santa della Pieta later stands in strong contrast to the cruelties and bigotry Ellena had to face in San Stefano. Here she seeks asylum after she arrives with Schedoni to Naples and waits for her true origin to be revealed by her alleged father to the Marchessa Vivaldi. At this spot, close to her home, Ellena finally finds a hearty welcome of the Superior, "who had known her from her infancy, and, from the acquaintance which such long observation afforded, had both esteemed and loved her". (*The Italian*: 299) Indeed, it is mainly thanks to the "wisdom and virtue" of this kind woman presiding over the sisterhood that the church can provide the happiness and harmony a house of God should do. "She was dignified without haughtiness, religious without bigotry, and mild, though decisive and firm." (*The Italian*: 299-300)

Such balance between good and benevolent but also firm guidance is the quality that Radcliffe recommends and upholds. She obviously considers it necessary for any institution to provide an individual with profitable abode to thrive. Ideally, in return, he/she can then repay the institution with due respect for its rules while showing spontaneous evidence of his/her own feelings of happiness. Only under these conditions a familial atmosphere of intimacy and understanding for the miseries and joys of others can arise. Such qualities, Radcliffe believed, should be considered natural characteristics of a convent or monastery.

Under the control of the authority of the villain the heroine cannot obviously feel safe or thrive either. Radcliffe's villains are the prototypical representatives of the eagerness for power and dominance who usually represent a strong contrast to the

benevolence and supervision of the reasonable father figure. Montoni in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is a perfect example of the unscrupulous desire for power and domination. His avarice forces him to rashness and urges him to show domination over the weaker, he being ready to suppress anybody's rights to achieve his goals.

The good father who recommended self-control and avoidance of excess is replaced in the middle part of the novel with a Gothic antipole. Montoni represents a surrogate male authority who constantly reproaches Emily for her overindulgence in imagination and tendency to give in to superstition. These fancies of hers are usually interpreted by Montoni as a form of childish apprehensions which reflect Emily's unwillingness to mature and to face reality with sufficient courage. On the other hand, when it comes to settling the question of property and Montoni needs Emily's consent to become the only heir to his former wife's possessions he expects meek submission and obeisance of a child. What is his surprise and anger when he finds Emily opposing his will with valour worthy of a 'heroine'. He appeals to her sense of womanhood ordering her to show behaviour appropriate for her sex. From his perspective, this means uniformity of conduct and obedience to the male authority. All of these proving to be inefficient, Montoni finally resorts to threats: "You speak like a heroine [...] we shall see whether you can suffer like one." (*The Mysteries*: 381)

At this point, even though trembling with fear, Emily shows unprecedented moral resistance and independence. The idea of keeping the property for herself and her partner actually makes her refuse to give in to Montoni's extortions, irrespective of the dangers that may await her. This unexpected firmness when property is concerned that does not seem to fit into the overall oversensitivity and fearfulness of the heroine was observed by Ellen Moers.

The critic can see the main motivation for the sudden determination in the importance of the maintenance of decorum and respectability expected from a proper lady. As property was often considered “the woman’s main guarantee of her security in the respectable class”⁴⁴ Emily, of course, is obliged to do anything to meet the expectations. The same moral firmness would later almost make her give up her future happiness in the marriage with Vivaldi whose past is marked by a stain on his moral profile as a result of his imprudence. The betrayal of respectability is simply incompatible with the decently female no matter how much beloved the ‘sinner’ might once have been.

All authorities in Radcliffe’s romances, however, are not depicted as tyrannical and insensible as that of the abbess of San Stefano or Montoni. Thus, the prototypical representatives of the new bourgeois as embodied in the main protagonists do not need to rise exclusively on the complete negation of the obsolescent aristocracy that exemplify contemptible authorities. With respect to Burkes’ suspiciousness of abrupt and radical changes, harsh and hasty denial of old system does not appear in Radcliffe. On the contrary, changes always take place gradually as time passes as if respecting the organic processes in nature. Maggie Kilgour observes that the middle class whose position is finally established at the end of Radcliffe’s romances is formed “in continuity with as well as antagonism against older aristocratic order”⁴⁵.

The problematic rise of the middle class that was commented upon in the previous chapter and more times later in the text is reflected in Radcliffe’s work in the revision of the old aristocracy. The life style and values typical for the preceding dominant social stratum are not eradicated but rather ‘restored’ in the succeeding generation. The new ideal class in this process also embraces some of the characteristics of the ‘reprobate’ aristocracy. Radcliffe’s Gothic romance hence, may also be read as a literary reaction to

⁴⁴ Moers 136.

⁴⁵ Kilgour 138.

what McKeon describes as “the crisis in attitudes towards how the external social order is related to the internal state of its members”⁴⁶ throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

There still remains one space that represents the fearful aspect of institutional religion to discuss. It is the inquisition that plays a considerably important role in *The Italian* and that in a way again confirms the difficulty to unambiguously outline Radcliffe’s approach to both religion and institutions. The final part of this novel takes place practically exclusively in the abode of the Holy Inquisition. Vivaldi, on being arrested and forced to part with Ellena, is here kept prisoner until his determination slackens and he confesses to the crimes he has not committed. It is important to bear in mind that Inquisition was mostly associated by English people with the southern Catholic countries. As has been said, Catholicism was usually seen as based on pretence where the façade only served to cover corruption and the absence of true faith. The Catholic Church, nevertheless, also represented to English minds the extreme of institutional rigidity and control irreconcilable with their Protestant faith. Thus mere mention of the Holy Inquisition would automatically evoke in the readers, mostly familiar only with its outer forms, the fearful picture of “black-hung torture chamber, candles, hooded attendants”, in short, an object worthy of “Protestant abomination”⁴⁷. It is with this presumption that Radcliffe’s descriptions have to be approached and assessed.

In part, the writer keeps them true to the general more or less superficial and hasty disapproval of her English readers. Vivaldi is kept in his dark cell, ignorant of what his accusation consists in and having no idea of his future fate. He often has to depend on his sense of hearing only, his eyes always covered under the black hood when he is led to the inquiries. At these moments, his sight is as if doubly veiled – by the black hood that covers

⁴⁶ Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740* (London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2002) 174.

⁴⁷ J. M. S. Tompkins, *The Popular Novel in England. 1770-1800* (London: Methuen, 1969) 278.

his head but also by his ignorance of the sin committed. The sense of hearing, nevertheless, often proves unreliable. At one moment, it misleads Vivaldi to make false uncovering, he being convinced until the latest moment that the person he reveals is the one he had met before. He has nobody to rely on, no friend to confide in and is from time to time visited by a stranger whose existence or motivations are unknown to him.

Vivaldi's susceptibility to wild imaginings and vain fears that many times exceeds those of the heroine and that is amply demonstrated throughout the novel, moreover, increases the general atmosphere of suspicion and conspiracy. It has been observed by David Punter that the final scenes of the novel set in Inquisition, in fact, only crown the overall character of general conspiracy and uncertainty of *The Italian*. This feature, the critic maintains, distinguishes the late romance from its more predominately sentimental predecessors written by Ann Radcliffe. Indeed, *The Italian* is wholly pervaded by the feelings of anxiety from the stay in the perpetual darkness, of the constant fruitless search of the true motivations of one's enemies and, in fact of the very identity of the opponent. This mood results in a greater degree of introspection at the cost of the notorious "surface gliding" tendency of Radcliffe's novels.

It is in the abominable Inquisition where the dark crimes of the archenemy Schedoni are revealed and he is revenged upon in the most ironical way imaginable – being poisoned by his own hand. The mysterious visitor to Vivaldi's cell proves to be a man acquainted with Schedoni's machinations and – rather surprisingly with regard to the general view of the institution – thanks to the righteousness of the grand-inquisitor the Marchesa's confessor is found guilty while Vivaldi's innocence is proved. The ideas of twisted truth and forced confessions notoriously associated with the institution of the Holy Inquisition are in a way reformed in Radcliffe's *The Italian*. This slight revision has been treated with suspicion by some critics. One has to admit that the considerably wide space

devoted to the descriptions of the dreaded place leaves some trace of unease in the reader, despite the final happy union of Ellena and her lover.

The gloomier atmosphere in *The Italian* should, nevertheless, be seen in the light of the circumstances that gave impulse to its creation. Its relation to Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* and this novel's being an important stimulus for the composing of *The Italian* will be discussed in the next chapter of the thesis. The political and social environment in England towards the end of the eighteenth century as reflecting important events in European politics should however also be taken into consideration.

As has been said, the literature of the late 1790s became more introspective and less optimistic as a result of the embitterment triggered by the French Revolution. The outcome of the Revolution left the British, "obsessed with social changes"⁴⁸, with feelings of both exhilaration and terror. It importantly represented a stimulus for further rethinking of the questions of the social order and the distribution of power. The greater space that Radcliffe provides in her last romance to the depiction of secret negotiations and plotting was therefore also most probably the result of this predominantly sceptical and rather pessimistic mood pervading the society. J. M. S. Tompkins, after all, confirms that this era of uprooted value system is in particular reflected in Gothic fiction of that time. As she observes, "in 1790s a confusing sense of the relativity and ambiguity of evil is already beginning to haunt the gothic novel"⁴⁹. That is to say, the features of the nineteenth-century Gothic fiction that offered more complex portrayals of characters' personalities were slowly beginning to show in some of the late eighteenth-century works.

⁴⁸ Robert Miles, "The 1790s: the effulgence of Gothic." *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth Century Novel*. Ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 55.

⁴⁹ Tompkins 284.

3. Characterization

3.1. 'Surface' in Ann Radcliffe's Characterization

Surfaces have often been described as the substance of Ann Radcliffe's romances. At the same time, her tendency to "surface gliding" has represented one of the most frequently criticised points in this author. She has mostly been reproached for her schematic and rather simplistic attitude to the characterization. Her systematic avoiding of profound psychological portraying, nevertheless, by no means results from the author's lack of skill. Radcliffe's attitude was in fact conditioned by her traditionalist beliefs and was consistent with her prevalent adherence to the classical tradition which, as Ian Watt observes, avoided "the intimate and confessional approach to personality"¹. Her conservatism gets reflected mainly in what may be described as a-historical approach to characterization. To put it in a rather simplified way, particulars about the life of a character are neglected at the cost of the moral purpose preached in the work as a whole. As distinct individual specificities would only distract the readers from focusing on the general and exemplary, Radcliffe decided to resign on detailed character portrayals. Due to this universalizing tendency, characterization is allotted much less importance than in most of the novels written at this time. In these, characterization often actually constituted the essence of the plot.

Radcliffe's external approach to characters in fact may seem to have appeared in opposition to the trend started by the novels, particularly those by Samuel Richardson. The comparison of these two authors is actually interesting as with both the heroine represents the protagonist in their works. Richardson's explorations of his characters' intimate spheres which enable the reader to share with them every minute thought and emotion naturally resulted from the exclusively urban setting. Locking themselves in their closets

¹ Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1957) 272.

and separating themselves from the communal life, it in fact constituted the main preoccupation of the heroines to constantly observe and describe in letters all their thoughts and emotions.

Radcliffe's attitude to the composition of a literary work, as we have seen, rested on different principles. Although writing in the context of the sentimental and Gothic novels, the genres usually associated with interiority, her characters and means of description remain rather flat and focused on the visible surface only. Her conservatism was discernible in the basic focus and stress on the moral and didactic message as delivered in her texts. Her anxiety about the preservation of the ideal balance between light as clarity and darkness as ignorance was justified by Foucault's interpretation of this author's works cited in the first chapter. It is also owing to this quality that her heroines are denied any discrete identity with varied psychological profile. Without intending to be depreciative, one has to admit that her heroines are more or less reduced to one version of a female protagonist "that is recycled with minimal variation throughout different novels"².

Due to this absence of the convincing depiction of her characters' inner lives their possibilities of psychological development are logically, as a result, rather limited. Individual characters and their development are consciously overshadowed by the general idea of the essentially unchangeable human moral constitution. Once labelled, they continue to act and speak consistently throughout her romance in order to confirm this basic belief in the necessary opposition of the good versus the evil.

As I pointed out before, the crucial characteristic of novels where protagonists develop in time is not to be found in Ann Radcliffe. Characterization is here basically subsumed to the plot development which consists in the constant changing of the scene, often without any consistency in its direction. The heroine moves from place to place, only

² Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995) 38.

to continually reaffirm her taste of delicacy, virtue and moral integrity, qualities expected of a correctly behaved lady. In Radcliffe's romances, development is, it can be said, replaced by permanent testing, reaffirmation, strengthening or refining of the features innate to the characters. In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, the necessary blunting of the heroine's overdeveloped fancy therefore also constitutes one of the major purposes of her travel.

Her heroine regularly undergoes dangerous journeys where her existence is not exceptionally put at stake, only to come out in the end a basically unchanged person. Few deviations can be distinguished in her from the unfaltering moral uprightness that actually constitutes the basis of her identity. Her virtue, being almost perfect at the very beginning, is sustained throughout the novel only to be reconfirmed in the end. For "Mrs Radcliffe", this seems to suggest, "the Gothic novel was a device to send maidens on distant and exciting journeys without offending the proprieties"³.

Characteristically of the Gothic genre, the heroine destitute of friends is often for some time cut off from any social contact while she is kept prisoner in an ancient castle or a cell of a monastery. This naturally intensifies her inclinations to fancy and she depicts for herself the dangers in richer colours and as more dreadful than they actually mostly are. Nevertheless, these moments of imprisonment, as suggested before, never lead to a sophisticated detailed psychological analysis of fear in the heroines. The portrayals of her apprehension mainly serve as one of many means of enhancing suspense and elevating atmosphere of the terrific in the romance.

The heroines' 'mission' in the novel seems to be the demonstration of the ability to oppose the male dominance mostly by means of their passive resistance and unbent moral uprightness. At the same time, various ways to overcome these difficulties that the

³Ellen Moers, *Literary Women*. (London: The Women's Press, 1980) 126.

heroine can devise again show her ingeniousness, she never for a moment being unfaithful to the idea of the woman's propriety. Even if her very existence is in danger many times, the greatest peril imaginable in the world of Radcliffe's romances is finally always represented by the "terrible danger of a slippage from the respectable class of womanhood"⁴ which apprehension accompanies the main protagonists basically all throughout their journey. The immutable surface integrity therefore mainly serves here to indicate the guarantee of her unshakable hold on the necessary respectability.

Constant sustenance of the acceptable form of propriety and rationality mostly constitutes the driving principle of Radcliffe's texts. Emily from the very beginning tries to respect the advice of her father to observe the duty of self-command and keep away from excess in emotions. The advice not to give in to an exaggerated form of sensibility that verges on self-indulgence, is also importantly the last advice St. Aubert gives to his daughter on his death bed.

It must indeed be admitted that a significant part of the predominantly terrifying plots of Radcliffe's romances in fact always takes place in the heroines' minds. Their imaginations, moreover, often depict pictures much more vivid than reality finally turns out to be. The standard level of sensibility of each character is in the heroines added to in the form of their overactive imagination. Robert Miles comments on this point: "The Radcliffe heroine is adept at reading the Gothic into her experience; it is this which constitutes a realm of psychological subtext in which she has an independent being beneath her passivity."⁵ Miles hereby in fact distinguishes the heroine's extreme sensibility or prescience as a certain compensation for her otherwise neglected psychological profile.

Her extraordinary sensibility that has many times been criticized as mere whimsicality is hence, on the contrary, by this critic upheld as the most characteristic and

⁴ Moers 136.

⁵ Robert Miles, *Gothic Writing 1750-1820* (London: Routledge, 1993) 162.

laudable quality of the female Gothic protagonist. In Miles' reading, it actually constitutes the main source of her uniqueness and admirability. This so to say instinct of hers that can many times warn her against danger or enable her to read certain hints as significant for the discovery of her past, also mostly marks her off from other characters. At the same time it helps her, although mostly unwittingly, to assert her independence.

Yet, paradoxically, in Radcliffe's world, the heroine must always significantly limit these fancies and moderate her dreams in order to remain true to the ideal of the female propriety and temperance. Her romances, as already observed, are actually driven by this steady affirmation of the virtues of restraint. Thus, paradoxically, the heroine's lively spiritual life that seems to be her only distinguishing feature is constantly suppressed either by an external authority or by her own inner compulsion that results from the steady influence of a wise authority. Only in this way is she allowed to confirm her position of a fully integrated member of the society. Being indebted to Burke's idea that "the individual can only be truly free when bound to others"⁶, Radcliffe sustains the heroine's external form – that is, how she is seen by other members of society – in the shape of the acceptable social mask of propriety unchanged. The author thus simultaneously seems to be suggesting that distinct individuality is in fact denied the properly socialized female.

The word 'mask' however is not to be interpreted as a forcefully accepted or pretended adherence to a moral code. On the contrary, Radcliffe believed that "virtue, far from being the result of the suppression of instinct at the behest of public opinion, was itself a natural tendency to goodness or benevolence"⁷. The inclination to the good and morally correct, she believed, should hence be natural for an individual. Nevertheless, the necessary rationality and prudence have to be cultivated by experience which is not exceptionally unpleasant. That the process of strengthening one's self-control and moral

⁶ Kilgour 22.

⁷ Watt 282.

composure usually involves hard testing is adequately proved in Radcliffe. The perilous situations the heroine goes through adequately show that even virtuous heart is prone to show weakness and give in to fancies. Finally, with respect to the discussion on the external, i.e. social space, and internal, i.e. psychology of the character, one comes to the conclusion that the social aspect is in Radcliffe always finally asserted as dominant. The public communal space is stressed and elevated by the author as all-important. This perspective, though mostly emphasized at the cost of the interest in the private realm of an individual character, is, nevertheless, always accepted as necessary. The character her/himself even finally embraces this lifestyle attitude as natural and self-evident.

Needless to say, it is rather difficult to identify with a character of Radcliffean type. The reader cannot participate in the fullness of the heroine's experience as s/he can never develop a real attachment to her (at least to the extent that one can do with a literary character) due to the level of the character's credibility being piteously low. The heroine is thus perceived as a model, her figure being a testing ground for Radcliffe to gradually demonstrate the set of elements that represent her idea of a lady's paragon. The readers may pity Emily, Ellena or Adeline, just as they may feel pity for any other virtuous lady under similar circumstances. It is thus the situation, not the character of the protagonist that can provoke an emotional reaction on the reader's part.

This obvious lack of a psychological depth in Radcliffe is to some extent made up for in the characters' exaggerated physical reactions. This is to say, their intense experiencing and feelings are often exhibited externally so that a sufficient signal is given to the reader about the emotionally strained atmosphere of the given moment. The focus on bodily reactions, nevertheless, also reflects Radcliffe's strong indebtedness to the sentimental genre. As I recognize the sentimental tendency as dominant in Radcliffe's characterization, I consider a short outline of its principles also important.

3.2. The Influence of Sentimentalism on Ann Radcliffe's Characterization

With the full awareness of Radcliffe's frequent adherence to the sentimental tendencies in literature and especially her reliance on the examples of the sentimental characters, the significant role of the bodily as the sphere for the manifestation of the spiritual is easy to justify. The sentimental belief that body stands for the character is also an important principle underlying Radcliffe's romances. This reliance on the appearance as giving evidence about the moral qualities of an individual is in the sentimental novels based on the rather simple and radical equalization of the good and the beautiful, the vicious and the hideous.

Remembering the philosophy of Anthony Ashley-Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, one can clearly distinguish the background harmonious system where the goodness of the beautiful is guaranteed by the originator, i.e. God. As we have seen, order is for Radcliffe always implicit in the perfect creative order of God. All that is monstrous, on the contrary, must be evil since it is at war with the God's original harmony. From this perspective, the main focus on the bodily and the belief in its potential to reveal the characteristic features of the protagonists distinguishable in all of Radcliffe's romances become more understandable. Her good faith in coverings also seems to fit into the general pattern of the sentimental dimension.

The idea of the body as being the territory where various emotions are most conspicuously manifested is, indeed, heavily exploited in Radcliffe's romances and is sometimes even driven to the extremes by the author. One could say that Radcliffe's heroines are most of the time literally left at the mercy of their bodies. Any significant change in the external circumstances has shattering, although relatively temporary effect on their frame. Characters' sensual lives in Radcliffe's romances in this way tend to be signalized on the surface territory of their bodies exclusively. Nevertheless, significant as

their individual emotional experiences may seem, the essence of their bodily ‘map’ that, as has been said, basically reflects the quality of their moral profile and stability of their character, remains unchanged.

Apart from a small unimportant mention of Emily’s “countenance that was somewhat faded” when Valancourt meets her after the lengthy separation, no other significant permanent change concerning Emily’s looks are indeed commented upon in the whole romance. (*The Mysteries*: 502) It cannot be traced in her way of acting either. Yet, in accordance with the natural processes respected in Radcliffe’s romances, the heroine’s appearance must logically alter. Ellen Moers put it well, when she wrote that as time passes, the heroine “though stable in her identity, [...] changes in a woman’s way, in a word she ages”⁸. The absence of any particular change concerning heroine’s character, except for getting old, confirms the above mentioned lack of distinct particularization of temporal flux in Radcliffe’s romances. Just as the time scale is here divided into past — present — future dimensions, the life of a character is simply composed of youth — adulthood — old age periods. The importance of the character’s individuality is thus, in accordance with Radcliffe’s overall attitude, overshadowed at the cost of exemplary generalization.

The heavy heaving of breast, quickened breath, blushing, sighing, weeping or, in the very extreme, fainting represent the stock means of characterization of the sentimental and also Radcliffe’s novels. This immediacy of bodily reactions, considered the most praiseworthy feature in man by the sentimentalists, was believed to be the manifestation of the individual’s sensibility and, above all, the responsiveness to and sympathy with human misery or joy.

⁸ Moers 139.

Tears, for example even with men, proved to be an evidence of compassion or one's inability to bear the immensity of one's sudden portion of happiness. It was however, never condemned as the manifestation of weakness and cowardice. Thus, the general happiness on La Luc's return after a long absence on which occasion there was "scarcely a dry eye in the village" is definitely not considered by the old parson an unnecessary weakness and unhealthy dependence of the parishioners. (*The Romance of the Forest*: 278) On the contrary, it is welcomed and accepted, he being deeply moved by this revelation of strong emotion.

The relatively numerous instances of crying with Radcliffe's characters hence represent another "means of emphasizing the intensity of emotion generated by particular situations"⁹ that Radcliffe adopted from the sentimental novels.

Surprisingly enough, little attention is paid to the detailed description of the heroine's attire. Still, it is considered a matter of fact that, just as she is always correctly employed, correctly behaved and spoken, she is accordingly correctly dressed. It is therefore all-important that her apparel under any circumstances corresponds to the ideal of correctness and the appropriate. Emily's insistence on wearing her bonnet while the group is left with hardly any financial support in a strange land can hence only be smiled at. It evidently represents another instance of her determinacy to maintain the standard of a lady of good upbringing. As Ellen Moers observed in her analysis of the travelling heroine, being obviously "ill equipped for vicissitudes of travel climate and native meeting" she is, nevertheless, always "well equipped to preserve her identity as a proper English woman"¹⁰.

Attires, clothes or uniforms in Radcliffe mostly serve as the identification of the profession or of the allegiance to a particular group. The monk's cloaks, nun's veils, soldier's uniforms or hunter's clothes thus define the individual and, almost like in fairy

⁹ Cloe Chard, "Explanatory Notes" to *The Romance of the Forest* by Ann Radcliffe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 392.

¹⁰ Moers 138.

tales, automatically associate him/her with a particular group. At the same time, certain clichéd set of associations automatically arises with particular dress as representing the substance of the profession.

Yet, that attire and cloaks and reliance on the first impressions are often misleading is as well demonstrated on a sufficient number of instances in Radcliffe's romances. Simple and unconditional trust in people whose countenance promises good intentions and automatic associating of good aims with the dress of a religious person is warned against. Deception is present in the world and must be taken into account.

Sometimes, the revelation of the true character is pleasing as opposed to the fearful expectations. This brings back the already discussed dangerous aspect of both Valancourt and Theodore in the hunter's clothes that finally prove to cover a sentimental hero. In other instances, however, vice and cruelty may be hiding behind a mask of innocence. Ellena's shaken spirit, for instance, can immediately recognize an instance of hope at seeing Schedoni in his monk's attire on the beach, little apprehending his evil intentions. "I may address myself, without fear, to one of his order. It is probably as much his wish, as it is his duty, to succour the unfortunate. Who could have hoped to find on this sequestered shore so sacred a protector!" (*The Italian*: 220) Nevertheless, on beholding Schedoni's notorious "large eyes" and "peculiar countenance" Ellena's confidence in this man's help quickly disappears. (*The Italian*: 220)

Too much reliance on the first impressions and the surface in general is actually a frequent rebuke addressed to the heroines by the authorities in Radcliffe's romances. Madame Cheron derides Emilys' naïve confidence in other people's innocent looks. She criticizes her brother's upbringing of her niece, he being always "much influenced by people's countenances". (*The Mysteries*: 111) Yet, her complete scepticism concerning any connection between the spirit and the body rather betrays this woman's sensibility as

blunted by the city life. In towns, the tendency to automatically subscribe evil intentions to all humanity, according to many moralists, dominated human relationships. “What has a man’s face to do with his character? Can a man of good character help having a disagreeable face?” (*The Mysteries*: 111) the aunt reproaches Emily. They can, in Mrs Radcliffe’s world imbued with the sentimental spirit, one is almost tempted to object. Originating with a false authority, with a woman whose opinions stand in most ways in contradiction to the sentimental ideas, this reprehension cannot therefore be accepted by the Gothic romance heroine.

3.3. The Figure of the Villain. Sight as a Means of Asserting Dominance

Despite the potential of deception involved in the coverings, the basic equalization of the good and the regular and automatic connecting of the evil with monstrosity and deviation from the standard remain basically unshaken in Radcliffe’s romances. This becomes especially conspicuous in the descriptions of the villainous characters. Relatively little space is devoted to the descriptions of the appearance of Montoni, the villain of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Yet, the negative aura always accompanies him whenever he appears and fearful emotions are raised every time his presence is only mentioned. It is typical of the villains in Radcliffe’s romance that they can even control their countenance according to the situation and thus manipulate people more easily. Schedoni, the ‘diabolic’ priest in *The Italian*, then proves a master in this skill.

Montoni, with his “air of conscious superiority, animated by spirit” can “submit his countenance to a particular occasion”. His appearance though inspiring admiration does not lead to esteem but to feelings “mixed with degree of fear”. (*The Mysteries*: 122) This impression at seeing him for the first time evidently anticipates his later identification in Emily’s mind with the sublime of the castle of Udolpho or that of the dangerous Alps. The

overall little attention devoted to Montoni's countenance in the extensive novel, is thus more or less adequately made up for in this association of his personality with the dominant structure of his abode. This parallel proves effective especially thanks to the principle of gendering of the sublime in the eighteenth-century context which has been outlined above. Nevertheless the effect is somewhat slackened again by Montoni's final half-explained and overhasty disappearance from the romance. The lack of a sufficient climax concerning the chief villain confirms the focus on the mood at the cost of culminating resolutions that has been notoriously analysed in Radcliffe's works.

Schedoni represents a step in Radcliffe towards the more complex building of the villainous personality. His rather frequent questioning of his own motives that sometimes verges on soliloquies would seem to go against Radcliffe's professed distrust to psychological portraying. However, as the closer analysis of this character should show, even in this last and in many ways 'deviating' romance, Radcliffe tried to remain true to her beliefs and standards. It may even be said that in Schedoni, she made the necessity to adhere to these more blatant and acutely perceptible.

From the very beginning, the motivations of this monk, a confessor of Marchessa di Vivaldi, are covered in the dark just as is his unknown past. His mysteriousness is made more acute in everybody's shrinking away at the first encounter because of something unexplainably fearful, almost unearthly about the priest's countenance. The reader is only gradually to find out about "the passions that had once animated the deadened features" of this mysterious man. (*The Italian*: 35) With respect to the previous discussion on surfaces and the visible, it is, significantly the eyes that constitute the dominant part of his face. They, at the same time, represent the source of this feeling of uneasiness that he provokes in their beholders.

An habitual gloom and severity prevailed over the deep lines of his countenance; and his eyes were so piercing that they seemed to penetrate, at a single glance, into the hearts of men and to read their most secret thoughts; few persons could support their scrutiny, or even endure to meet them twice. (*The Italian*: 35)

The significance of eyes and sight in the eighteenth century was stressed by Robert Miles who talks about “a high value” of this sense which was “thought to be the noblest and the most comprehensive of our senses”¹¹. Its role has already been discussed with respect to the landscape and nature depictions. The aesthetic category of the picturesque, as we have seen, also heavily relied on visual perception. Miles in his study further talks about the immense importance of this particular sense in the context of the artistic production during the same period. His comments bring us back to the art – nature relationship and the question of imitation. In the process of imitation of nature, sight, of course, represented an over-important aspect. The potency of transforming one’s visible ideas into the picturesque descriptions “typified genius which constantly displays its various powers in allegories, in visions, or in the creation of ideal characters”. Miles here understands the role of sight as the principal “fund for invention”¹² of an artist or a writer. The indulgence in visual pleasures, however, also necessitates self-discipline and, if excessive should be restrained. As will be shown later in the thesis, it was the adherence to this principle that, along with other features, constituted the distinguishing characteristic of the female Gothic as opposed to the male Gothic aesthetic.

At this stage, yet another, more potentially dangerous aspect of the sight, that is, it being a means of domination should be analysed. It in fact proves to be highly relevant for the eighteenth-century context and is especially conspicuous in *The Italian*. The problematics of the all-seeing authority as the representation of the Enlightenment power

¹¹ Miles, *Gothic Writing* 57.

¹² Miles, *Gothic Writing* 57.

of knowledge was briefly discussed in the first chapter. The institutions or authorities with which sight was principally used as a tool for controlling and especially dominating others were treated with suspicion in the world of the female Gothic romances. The demonstration of this apprehension of power based on constant surveillance also became the central problem of Ann Radcliffe's last major romance. As Miles suggests, "the relation between looking and power is a pervasive theme in *The Italian*"¹³. Schedoni with his piercing eyes, for this critic represents in the book the metonymy of the Inquisition. This parallel will be further revealed as very fitting especially with regard to the unique position of the Holy Inquisition in the Catholic countries. Here this institution was the only authority privileged "to break the sanctity of sanctuary" while the confessional was principally associated with "inviolable privacy"¹⁴ of the confessant.

The piercing quality of Schedoni's eyes expresses his overall tendency to enter the hearts of others and his ambition to detect their weaknesses. His skilfulness which he proves more than perfectly on his manipulation of Vivaldi, obviously stood for one of the utmost forms of daringness in Radcliffe's romances. Owing to her evident distrust to the universal visibility as promoted by the Enlightenment institutions, Radcliffe insisted on certain degree of limitation. This should come in the form of adequate sense of discretion that would prevent the infringement of one's privacy. The ambition to look through the darkest recesses of the human souls that Schedoni obviously indulges in has no place for existence in Radcliffe's world. Here certain enlightenment and clear-sightedness must always be balanced by a sufficient dose of decent obscurity and ignorance. Due to her respect for limited knowledge of individual specificities, her techniques of characterization, as has been suggested before, followed the classical tradition.

¹³ Miles, *Gothic Writing* 176.

¹⁴ Miles, *Gothic Writing* 176.

Radcliffe casts doubt on the allegedly positive contribution of the Enlightenment consisting in its effort to open and illuminate all the dark and hidden recesses of human existence. That such an ambitious project could never be successfully accomplished is, after all, obvious. Absolute defeat and eradication of either utter darkness or utter light seemed to be a utopian endeavour. It therefore constituted the main focus of Radcliffe's romances to ensure the predominately balanced presence of both.

Therefore, she always tried to demonstrate and justify the existence of good and evil in the world where both constitute everyday realities. Regular transitions from the obscure and Gothic into the beautiful and transparent in her novels were not only motivated by her attempt to achieve the best aesthetic effect. They also stemmed from her ambition to symbolically demonstrate both sides of the worldly life. Why the gloominess and darkness tended to predominate in her last novel was already partially explained above. Whether this happened at the significant expense of the sentimental and if this 'deviation' signified Radcliffe's abandonment of her former principles of focusing on the external remains to be discussed.

In Schedoni, the rule of the character as being reflected in his/her expression is brought almost to its perfection. The changeability – usually to the worse – of his countenance in relation to the circumstances manifests itself in minute details many times in *The Italian*. Whenever his rage or hate is roused, his countenance darkens and his eyes, directed at the object of his hate, gain on power almost capable of striking his enemy to dust. His expression, indeed, though most of the time willingly controlled, sometimes resembles the mirror reflecting his inner perturbations.

The torments of his mind and sever penance he had observed, had produced a surprising change in his appearance, so that he resembled a spectre rather than a human being. His visage was wan and wasted, his eyes were sunk and

become nearly motionless, and his whole air and attitudes exhibited the wild energy of something – not of this earth. (*The Italian*: 110)

Schedoni's inner struggles at the attempt to suppress his stained past are provided surprisingly enough space for expression in the context of Radcliffe's work. They become especially noticeable in the moments of his attempted murder of Ellena. Hesitating before committing the mortal sin, the villain blames himself for hypocrisy and cowardice worthy of an infant. This unprecedented insight into the mental struggles of a character may seem to signify a break from, or certain reevaluation of, the beliefs that constituted the background to Radcliffe's former romances. Nevertheless, as the further fate of Schedoni, he ending up a prey of his own schemes testifies, the ambition to get control of others by claiming the knowledge of an omniscient authority must finally be turned against the plotter himself.

Importantly, Schedoni, as it is usual with men in power, is very sensitive about the exclusiveness of his control over other people's life mysteries. As his argument with a peasant guide bears out, he in fact cannot stand anybody challenging his authority. This villager whom Schedoni hires as a guide to lead him and Ellena through an unknown country gradually proves to be familiar with some information relating to the confessor's past and about his connection to the criminal Spalatro. Nevertheless, as Schedoni cannot be absolutely sure how far this simple man's knowledge reaches, he hesitates to provoke him to proceed in his narrative despite the urge of his curiosity. Instead, Schedoni's continual interrupting of the young man's story whenever important but possibly dangerous information relating to him may be disclosed, never allows the latter to finish his narrative. The reader's hope for approaching the revelation of the confessor's past is therefore frustrated again.

However, this duel representing in fact a struggle for the dominance in the narrative line brings us back to the controlling power of knowledge vehemently undermined in Radcliffe's texts. Schedoni's assurance about his perfect ability to keep under control the lives and histories of others is revealed here in fact as based on a very tenuous and shaky basis of his own self-doubt and insincerities concerning his own past. No matter how easily he finally rejects the peasant's story as "a delirious dream" he frequently lets slip a question or an exclamation. (*The Italian*: 284) This immense uneasiness of Schedoni gives evidence of his stained conscience and, above all, of his fear of losing control. Absurdly enough, the confessor himself many times shows distinct uncertainty about what is still true and what is a mere fabrication of the young man's mind by which fact his insecure dominance is further shaken.

Schedoni's conscience gets further pangs in Ellena's continual expressions of thanks for saving her life. Remembering the fatal night she unwittingly all the time brings back to his mind the contemptible idea of his intended murder. As Robert Miles points out, she is in this way "subconsciously wreaking her revenge on her alleged father, turning his inquisitional weapons upon him, subjecting him to the confessional rigours of his own conscience"¹⁵. The parallel with the Inquisition, already mentioned before, is very pertinent in this context. Schedoni's role in the romance of the human incorporation of this institution's practices that are aimed at subjugation, "reading into its subjects self-manufactured 'sin'"¹⁶ are here, that is to say, first fully revealed. Ascribing to people crimes they have not committed and seemingly reading their secret motivations while trying to camouflage the terrible 'story' of his own past life, Schedoni proves a worthy representative of this feared institution.

¹⁵ Miles, *Gothic Writing* 178.

¹⁶ Miles, *Gothic Writing* 177.

With Ellena, after the mysterious discovery of their kinship, the roles of the examiner and the examined are exchanged. Schedoni experiences the tortures of conscience for the crimes, in his case too real and enormous though buried in time. Being on the alert most of the time and trying to cover his criminal past by further plotting, he is finally paradoxically trapped in his own fabrications. The monstrous ambition of a villain is thus eventually deservedly punished by the author's poetic justice. Having demonstrated with unprecedented frankness the aggression of Schedoni's ambitious endeavours, Radcliffe finally reasserts her authorial control. On the formal level, the assertive and dominating authority of the character is taken over by its benevolent and understanding version of Radcliffe as a narrator. Revealing here the evil and destructiveness of the false authorities, she finally proves the necessity of some control in the text when she leads the plot to another exemplary happy ending.

3.4. Female Gothic vs. *The Monk*: Undermining the Female Gothic Sensibility

Schedoni's strict adherence to surfaces is also striking. The stress he puts on his 'image', that is, the way in which he presents himself to other people, becomes evident in his unremitting self-denial and utter discipline. These, nevertheless, as is soon revealed, serve him as mere covers for his own spoilt and stained character. The theme of the ascetic and seemingly respectable surface often hiding terrible crimes is developed enough in Radcliffe's last major romance in the figure of the villain.

Similar feature is brought to its extreme in the character of Ambrosio, the protagonist of Matthew Lewis' *The Monk*. The management of this hypocrisy in their characters, nevertheless, is treated with a diametrically different attitude with Lewis and Radcliffe. Their different approaches to the idea of the decent, actually demonstrate the basic distinction between the female Gothic romance and the male version of the same.

The last part of this chapter will therefore be devoted to the short comparison of the two varieties. The key motives and symbols – that, importantly, again relate to sight – will be analysed both in *The Monk* and *The Italian* in order to further specify what the suggested difference consisted in.

In *The Monk*, the perfect binding and suppression of the sensual in the chief protagonist, Ambrosio and the insistence on the cultivation of the social mask of perfection finally give in to the excess of his passions, lust and inclination to corruption. All the time, the author retains the attitude of recklessness about the detailed descriptions of Ambrosio's inner struggles with his own lasciviousness. He even remains pitiless with the main character in his final horrific death. This manifest distanced approach makes it possible for the tendency of male Gothic to portray the excessive and transgressing appear unrestrained as opposed to the female moderation and insistence on balance as presented in Radcliffe. It, at the same time, testifies Lewis' endeavour to subject female Gothic sensibility to critical, in some moments even disparaging scrutiny.

In connection with the sense of sight and the faculty to pierce through and penetrate the secret parts of other people's hearts, a significant symbol that is usually considered the most conspicuous 'link' between Lewis' *The Monk* and Radcliffe's *The Italian* should be looked into. The veil is usually discussed in connection with Radcliffe's techniques of creating suspense. The use of the veil as a covering of an unknown and mysterious object, however, represents only one of its numerous ways of application in her texts. The veil, in general, constitutes an ambiguous object in the woman's life. It can first signify protection of her personal territory and chastity. Yet, at the same time, if not accepted freely, it can become a symbol of oppression and dominance suggesting limitation of the woman's freedom.

The veil is often associated with religious institutions in Radcliffe's romances where the heroine takes it willingly as an expression of accepting the asylum the convent provides her with. However, as Ellena's story clearly shows, the veil can also sometimes be forced on the main protagonist. She is in this way usually made accept the future convent life marked by celibacy that signifies the sacrifice of her secular life. The heroine, nevertheless, never faces the fate of the nun as in Radcliffe false authorities cannot succeed in enforcing their will to usurp the liberty of the female protagonist. The veil also signifies the allegiance to a specific religious order. It may prove positive for the heroine when it helps her to cover her true identity so as not to appear as a misfit. This profitable aspect of the veil is exemplified on Ellena's unobserved escape from the monastery of San Stefano thanks to her being shrouded by Olivia's nun's veil characteristic of her order.

The best demonstration of the use of the veil by the heroine in the secular context where it serves as a protection of her personal sphere can be derived from the opening pages of *The Italian*. This instance, at the same time, provides a good opportunity to compare the basic different principles underlying Radcliffe's and Lewis' texts. Vivaldi first spots the female protagonist, Ellena di Rosalba in the church. The young woman's face is covered by the veil as a protection against the lurking sight of the strangers. The veil here provides her with the necessary guard of virtue as a mark of social decency. Vivaldi is first attracted to Ellena by her sweet voice. Its agreeable tone even makes him follow the mysterious stranger to her house. Vivaldi, being true to the delicacy of the sentimental hero, would never violate the woman's territory without having her assent. Hence, no matter how much he may desire to behold the countenance of Ellena, he has to wait for the "breeze from the water" which "wafting the veil partially aside, disclosed to him a countenance more touchingly beautiful than he had dared to imagine". (*The Italian*: 6)

Fittingly enough for Radcliffe's female Gothic, it is a natural element, the wind, that comes with the necessary assistance to Vivaldi in the recognition of his future partner. That he will be the ideal man for Ellena and she the best match for him is proved by the plot of the romance, which fact actually seems to be suggested already in its very opening. The initial scenes, however, also clearly indicate Ellena's morally strong and independent position in the romance. As Maggie Kilgour summed it up: "Ellena is no passive and disembodied Antonia; she is too busy at first to see that she is exposed to masculine attention, but when she becomes conscious of Vivaldi's invasive gaze, she comes to her own defence, using the veil."¹⁷ The woman's strong position is indeed confirmed many times in the romance when Ellena acts even firmer and more decisively than her partner.

In *The Italian*, "the relations between the women themselves and the onlooker is telling in its revision of Lewis's scene"¹⁸, Kilgour observes. Comparing the more or less sentimental spirit and romance disposition introducing the main protagonists of Radcliffe's romance to the first pages of *The Monk*, one indeed cannot miss noticing significant thematic similarities. Radcliffe obviously attempted to 'correct' this particular scene of unveiling and mitigate in her romance what she considered an unacceptable presentation of Matthew Lewis. Antonia, who appears covered by the veil in the Church of the Capuchins accompanied by her aunt, quickly attracts attention of two noblemen who show obvious curiosity in beholding the young woman's countenance. As she is too timid to uncover herself, her aunt gives the necessary assent. Don Lorenzo removes the gauze to catch sight of the appearance almost angelic in character.

The veil is thus forcefully torn from Antonia's face by a man's hand. According to the traditional interpretation of the bridal veil's symbolism¹⁹, its taking off from the

¹⁷ Kilgour 171.

¹⁸ Kilgour 171.

¹⁹ Tricia Ellis-Christensen, "What is the Symbolism of a Bride's Veil?" Wise Geek. May 2008. 21 March 2008 <<http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-the-symbolism-of-a-brides-veil.html>>

bride's face should be strictly reserved for the bridegroom. Even he, nevertheless, can take the liberty no sooner than at the wedding ceremony. Thus, on the symbolical level, Lorenzo assumes the role of Antonia's prospective husband and he indeed insists on putting his intention into practice, until Antonia's premature terrible death.

Yet, the character of his first gaze, he having time enough to scrutinize the individual parts of Antonia's frame, stands in a clear opposition to Vivaldi's short affectionate glance at Ellena's face. Lorenzo's admiring fascination with Antonia's countenance which is described in Lewis' typically abundant language rich in adjectives that stimulates the senses clearly suggests the indulgence of the observer in the physical beauty beheld. Robert Miles fittingly distinguished the diverse character of the man's look in Radcliffe's and Lewis' romances: "*The Monk* dwells with her admirers on the physical attributes of Antonia's figure, whereas Vivaldi wants to see Ellena's face for the sensibility of character indicated in the modulation of her tones."²⁰ Agreeable sound and tone of the voice thus, similarly to the agreeable countenance, also stands for the guarantee of a positive character in Radcliffe's romance imbued with sentimental spirit.

The scopophilic gaze that Antonia is subjected to in the introductory passage of the romance indicates the role of the visual objects women are mostly going to play in Lewis' work. Scopophilia, a term applied in the cinematic context by Laura Mulvey is actually Sigmund Freud's coinage for "taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze"²¹. Scopophilia proves useful for the present discussion as it frequently manifests itself in the Gothic novels in general. Mulvey's further analysis of the theory of scopophilia becomes even more fitting if we want to demonstrate the workings of this category in Radcliffe's and Lewis' works. Mulvey here significantly reveals the clearly determining gendered principle of scopophilia.

²⁰ Miles, *Gothic Writing* 171.

²¹ Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" Originally Published - *Screen* 16. 3 Autumn 1975, pp. 6-18. 15 March 2008 <<http://imlportfolio.usc.edu/ctcs505/mulveyVisualPleasureNarrativeCinema.pdf>>

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female form which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness.²²

Being thus almost naturally encoded in women, it is comprehensible that this objectification of the female body with the distinctly erotic subtext must sometimes be recognizable even in the notoriously moderate and reticent romances by Radcliffe. It is most conspicuous in her tableaux depicting the damsel-in-distress scenes. Here the heroines regularly appear in the situations endangering their lives, their innocent and virtuous appearance being the only thing they can rely on.

Adeline, in an exemplary manner, is first introduced to the reader through the eyes of a man, La Motte. He finds the young woman by accident in an ancient house where he looks for a shelter from the storm. “Her features were bathed in tears, and she seemed to suffer the utmost distress.” (*The Romance of the Forest*: 5) In spite of the miserable condition La Motte himself appears in, escaping from Paris from the legal punishment, and of the distress Adeline’s countenance is subjected to, he “found it impossible to contemplate the beauty and distress of the object before him with indifference. Her youth, her apparent innocence – the artless energy of her manner forcibly assailed his heart.” (*The Romance of the Forest*: 5-6)

It is more than clear that the object position of the woman is in Radcliffe shifted so that it can finally appear as potential power in the hands of the woman who was originally the intended object subjected to the male gaze. Her artlessness and innocence, due to the circumstances, turn into the female ‘weapons’ that “assail” the man’s sense of

²² “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”

compassion. Adeline, whose countenance expressive of despair manages to touch the small part of La Motte's nature that remained unspoilt in him, in this way saves her life.

Similarly, Schedoni on beholding the sleeping Ellena and distinguishing a slight smile on her mouth hesitates for a moment to perpetrate his terrible deed of murder. Her innocent look but, at the same time, her smile as if indicating the derision of her murderer stop him for a time sufficient enough to thwart the execution of his ill-fated act.

With respect to what has been said, even the woman hidden behind the veil, can in fact change the pre-set constellation of the observer — observed positions. Her face being covered behind the veil, the heroine can glide with her eyes around and rest or even feast them on any object unobserved. The possibility the woman thus gains to behold a man without his noticing that he is being observed, in fact, indicates her obvious predominance. In this way, the veil can turn into another female 'weapon' to challenge the dominance of men.

In general, the depiction of the female body in Radcliffe mostly functions as a demonstration of the heroine's means of protection and potential power that she herself many times even seems not to fully realize. The scenes portraying the heroine in distress also often work against the development of the plot in a perilous direction. They represent the sudden inertias, the dramatic tableaux, with the help of which the author can slow down the pace of the narrative if suitable. The excitement, thrill and mainly fear, are always intensified in the notorious virtue-in-distress scenes. The picture of a beautiful woman exposed to the mortal danger is aimed at disturbing the readers' peace and provoking in them an adequate emotional response.

Naturally, the titillating potential involved in the observation of the woman's body cannot be completely missing even from Radcliffe's texts. Its erotic undertow possibly stimulating the lascivious imaginations in the reader, nevertheless, is never openly

encouraged by the author. Thus no matter what was made of her fiction by her followers, “the erotic burned very feebly in Mrs Radcliffe”²³. Her descriptions of the potentially erotic, usually rather short and succinct, are moderate enough and their focus has a tendency to rather shift towards the depiction of the features of virtue and goodness as engraved in the heroine’s appearance. The general frame of Radcliffe’s romances, i.e. the didactic and moral precepts respected in her texts, should help to direct the reader’s imagination in a proper way. The strongly perceptible authorial control does not provide much space for the sentiments offering a pretext for erotic pleasure either.

The heroine’s innocent almost angelic appearance suggestive of her chastity and moral uprightness once again confirms the basic sentimental belief in the importance of people’s countenance discussed at the beginning of this chapter. The virtuous look automatically guarantees the heroines’ positive and praiseworthy characteristic features amongst which sensibility is naturally most significant. Robert Miles, in order to specify the sensibility in Gothic romances and its role in individual works, further distinguishes two possible directions in which this can be pulled: the sensory and the sensual.

It is the former which Miles describes as the feature traditionally associated with sentimental novels and which represents the ideal in Radcliffe’s characterization. “Intuitive openness to others, the ability to read faces, gestures, the soul within, as well as the power to read the face of God beyond the veil of nature”²⁴ are the characteristically distinguishable qualities in her protagonists. Matthew Lewis’ *The Monk* makes it clear enough that this perfect disposition, no matter how laudable it may be, is never sufficient on itself and without necessary restraint may even become corrupted. As Miles observes, Lewis’ distrust to female Gothic sensibility found its reflection in a text depicting the sensory that led to the self-fulfilment of an individual’s egocentricity. The main

²³ Moers 137.

²⁴ Miles, *Gothic Writing* 172.

protagonist who becomes devoured by his indulgence in observing a woman's body gradually succumbs to his own passions and loses all self-control. In Miles' words, in *The Monk*, the sensory powers in Ambrosio "quickly degenerate and sensually breed"²⁵ while in other characters they are completely missing.

The intentional eroticization of the female body conspicuous in *The Monk* and analysed by many critics confirms Lewis' obvious challenge posed to the 'female aesthetic' that found its most prominent representative in Ann Radcliffe. In *The Monk*, Lewis carries out an insistent scrutiny of the potential prurience that, he insisted, was distinguishable in the texts of Ann Radcliffe and other Gothic romance writers. The suggestiveness of Radcliffe's more or less moderate descriptions is here subjected to the graphically described realization. The barely glimpsed flesh always appears in Radcliffe with its titillating potential being weakened by the framework of decency and limits of the bearable. The poetic character of her depictions never turns into crude reality. In Lewis, on the contrary, the same image is often flagrantly portrayed with the author's intention to better stimulate the reader's erotic phantasies.

As opposed to Radcliffe's world of pleasing terror and more or less safe sublime, in Lewis, clear and harmless 'accommodation' of nature never takes place. Nature, in the form of revealing one's natural instincts and spontaneous emotions, is in *The Monk* interpreted as coarse and improper and it is therefore shrunk from. In Lewis' handling, nature, that is, the human nature is mostly systematically suppressed from the birth as improper, as exemplified in Ambrosio's continual denial of passions. With women characters, it simply never exists or, as Antonia's tragic murder shows, the unstained nature is in them drastically ravished in its full bloom.

²⁵ Miles, *Gothic Writing* 172.

Conclusion

Ann Radcliffe's literary career falls into unsettled time period of the late eighteenth-century, a transitory era as goes for the political, social and also literary spheres. Andrew Sanders confirms that throughout "this particular period [1780-1830] the varieties [of writing, thinking about, criticizing and defining literature] are especially diverse and the distinctions notably sharp"¹. As was pointed out several times throughout my work, the society in the second half of the eighteenth century was also distinguished by its transitory character and ambiguity in its attitude to the preceding era. Importantly, this is the epoch moulded by the impact of the revolutionary upheaval in France and the consequent spread of the atmosphere of instability all over the other European countries that finally culminates in the late 1790s. Especially the last two decades of the eighteenth century have to be seen as a relatively unstable period in which England was disturbed by heated debates and an anxiety concerning both political and social questions.

Ann Radcliffe therefore necessarily faced a considerably complex and in many ways complicated task if she aimed at reflecting the social, political and cultural changes of her time in her works. Moreover, as my thesis was aimed to show, she does not rest with imitation only. This author's treatment of the material is, on the contrary, very creative. It was proved on several instances that in her romances Radcliffe also tried to adjust the model of the society so that it would offer an alternative to the lifestyle of her contemporaries. Added to this, thanks to her ability to draw on the contemporary aesthetic tendencies with an almost matchless skilfulness, she could, at the same time, better meet the expectations of her reading audience.

It was one of the important purposes of this work to demonstrate the features of Ann Radcliffe's romances which make up what Jane Spencer describes as a laudable

¹ Andrew Sanders, *The Short Oxford History of English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) 335.

quality of the novelists writing in the second half of the eighteenth century. Spencer quotes Jerry Beasley in her essay on the eighteenth-century women writers. According to Beasley, these novelists, managed to “respond with urgency to anxieties over broad social issues as they were touched by political circumstances”. In this way, Beasley believes, Ann Radcliffe, along with other late-eighteenth-century novelists, “did much to form and then sustain ideals of public virtue”².

Importantly, as was discussed in the first chapter and stressed throughout the individual analyses, Radcliffe also opted for the romance genre with the belief in its didactic potential and its capacity to encompass the sentimental spirit which she considered crucial for the moral enhancement of an individual. Robert Miles writes about this principle when he describes the female Gothic romance as a form that “turns to the past, presents an ideal, virtuous picture” that impresses itself “on the heart of the spectator, reader [...] and teaches a moral sense”³. Thus, Ann Radcliffe’s romance also, underlain with “the chivalric ideals” finally “turns the Gothic aesthetic into a scene of instruction”⁴.

In my work, I tried to confirm this good faith of Ann Radcliffe in the traditional romance values as preached in her texts, like “romantic love; the ‘companionate couple’; reverence for feminine modesty and chastity; filial respect; patriotism and the love of liberty; heroism”⁵. The author, I intended to prove, obviously relied on and recommended

² Jerry Beasley, “Politics and Moral Idealism: the Achievement of Some Early Women Novelists” in Schofield and Macheski, eds., *Fetter’d or Free?* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1986) 234. qtd. in Jane Spencer, “Women Writers and the eighteenth-century novel” *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth Century Novel*. Ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 216.

³ Robert Miles, *Gothic Writing 1750-1820* (London: Routledge, 1993) 40.

⁴ Miles, *Gothic Writing* 40.

⁵ Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance, Through Times, Countries, and Manners, ..in a Course of Evening Conversations* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, Literary Theory Full-Text database, 1999) 23 March 2008. <http://lion.chadwyck.co.uk/searchFulltext.do?id=Z000729294&divLevel=0&queryId=../session/1216113297_22484&trailId=11A8B81AF1C&area=Prose&forward=textsFT&print=Yes>

these qualities as the ideal and best means for the improvement of the deteriorating condition of her contemporary society.

Nevertheless, as it should be clear from my analysis, Radcliffe did not turn back to the past in order to indiscriminately adopt its social and political systems. In her attitude to the past she actually follows the ideas of Edmund Burke who, as Sanders maintains, did not “recourse to the spirit of the Middle Ages but to the eighteenth-century concept of an equable political balance, a balance which he finds evident in the existing order of things in Britain”⁶.

Edmund Burke who, as mentioned at several points in my thesis, in many ways represented an important model for Ann Radcliffe, looked back to the Medieval society based on the institutions of monarchy and patriarchy as the firm and praiseworthy constitutive principles of the society. The romance genre, needless to say, proved an ideal carrier of all these values highlighted by Burke. It was stressed before that especially in the era following the French Revolution, the questions of social hierarchy and political systems became acute even on the other side of the Channel. In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France and on the Proceedings in Certain Societies in London Relative to that Event* (1790), Burke presents a “defense of constitutional monarchy, aristocracy, landed property and the Church as the bases for an ordered society”⁷. He depicts the revolutionary cruelty as a “chaotic assemblage of vice, depravity, self-interest and commercial opportunism”. Consequently, the author presents a picture of revolutionary France representing the dark “sublime threat in contrast to the gently enlightened tones of English social and political stability”⁸.

This obvious polarization of good versus evil, as has been demonstrated, finds its reflection in the Gothic romances. Here, the chaos ushered in as a consequence of the

⁶ Sanders 335.

⁷ Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 1996) 87.

⁸ Botting 86.

assertion of individual concerns is opposed by the stability and continuity as ensured in Burke's vision by institutions such as monarchy, government, community and family. His English ideal then takes "the form of a nostalgic romance imbued with chivalric values" which survives in the "manly, moral, regulated liberty" of the English society grounded in the legal compromises of the Glorious Revolution of 1688"⁹. The preference for gradualism and especially the importance of the awareness of historical continuity highlighted by Burke were to awake in the readers "a series of associations that wrest words like freedom, nation and order from the grasp of radical texts"¹⁰. Burke's reliance on the Gothic romance as a fit expression of his beliefs confirms the political resonance Gothic was at his time capable of. Hence the usefulness of analyzing Ann Radcliffe's texts from a broader perspective that involves not only literary but also both social and political aspects is again confirmed.

The incidents in France indeed made the fact evident that "more than twenty years after Gothic aesthetic takes recognizable shape, what was once unthinkable was now, in France at least, practice"¹¹. Enthusiastic support of the sentimental norms such as love to one's neighbor and community spirit were all the time harder to defend. Moderation and reasonability were stressed with greater intensity by the moralists while excessive sentimentality became abominable as liable to turn into self-indulgence and self-centredness. The open violence of the revolutionists was a clear signal that the Radcliffean ideal of the balance between good and evil can hardly be sustained for the future. The more or less safe passage through the Gothic world as experienced by Radcliffe's heroines in her early romances would gradually become to be seen as mere utopianism on the author's part.

⁹ Sanders 336.

¹⁰ Borting 86.

¹¹ Miles, *Gothic Writing* 47.

Nevertheless, staying faithful to her attempts to respond to the state of the society she was writing for, Ann Radcliffe felt the need to express the anxiety and perhaps certain doubt about the relevance of her ideals in the last romance, *The Italian*. Burke's idea of producing a literary representation that goes in opposition to the real events was soon challenged by apologists of the revolutionary ideas. They criticized Burke for the conservative smugness of his confident "acceptance of the British constitutional status quo"¹².

Exasperated at Burke's opinions, Mary Wollstonecraft wrote her *Vindication of the Rights of Man* (1790) in which she attacks most of his ideas, especially then his idealization of chivalry. Mary Wollstonecraft¹³, Radcliffe's contemporary, a writer, philosopher and, importantly, a feminist, appeared to be an avid defender of the rights of an individual and of equality of women and men on the basis of their comparability as human beings liable to education. As such she naturally stood in strong opposition to both Burke's and Radcliffe's works. Wollstonecraft writes about the aristocracy displaced in France as "decadent" and defends the ideals of what she considers "God-given rights of civil and religious liberty"¹⁴. According to this critic, values preached by romance like patriarchy, benevolence, chivalry, sensibility and filial obedience all implicate authority and power, in fact principles that represented the main points of attack of the revolutionists. Robert Miles outlines Wollstonecraft's skepticism concerning Burke's insistence on maintaining the political and social status quo without introducing radical changes. As the critic claims in Burke's ideal

¹² Sanders 335.

¹³ Mary Wollstonecraft ([27 April 1759](#) – [10 September 1797](#)) During her brief career, she wrote novels, treatises, a [travel narrative](#), a history of the [French Revolution](#), a conduct book, and a children's book. Wollstonecraft is best known for [A Vindication of the Rights of Woman](#) (1792), in which she argues that women are not naturally inferior to men, but appear to be only because they lack education. She suggests that both men and women should be treated as rational beings and imagines a social order founded on reason. "Mary Wollstonecraft" *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*. 2 July, 2008 <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Wollstonecraft>

¹⁴ Jone Johnson Lewis, "Mary Wollstonecraft. Rights in the Air: the Context of the A Vindication of the Rights of Women" 2 July, 2008. <<http://www.womenshistory.about.com/library/weekly/aa083099.htm>>

hierarchical values are inscribed, a hegemony, supported by monarchy and patriarchy that gives rise to disparity of wealth, false benevolence, licentious sensibility, exaggerated filial obedience, late marriages producing libertine men and coquettish women, craven attitudes toward power- indeed, a range of evils affecting [...] the moral and mental well-being of all classes of society.¹⁵

Although England remained rather split concerning the question of the Revolution and the “anti-revolutionary sentiment” was still “quite volatile”¹⁶ within English society, the preceding era of stability was irrecoverably gone as the feelings of anxiety and uncertainty started to show even here. Distinguishing the true values and drawing a clear-cut line between good and evil was revealed as more and more problematic. As Botting observed about the character of the late-eighteenth century: “In the 1790s, [...] the locus of evil vacillates between outcast individuals and the social conventions that produced or constricted them.”¹⁷

Foucault’s interpretation quoted in the first chapter was to confirm that evil first has to be mapped and familiarized with if it is to be controlled and opposed successfully. Radcliffe’s major romances more or less adequately demonstrate the process of such handling of the area of perniciousness and its final denial. Nevertheless, evil appears to be hard to oppose once its provenance cannot be firmly located and hence either its territory be delimited or its embodiment identified. Although being far from the nineteenth-century Gothic fictions’ attempts at delving into human psyche, Radcliffe’s last major romance can be seen as a transitory form from the more or less naïve early Gothic romances to the more individual- and psychology-focused works of her followers. *The Italian*, that is to say, partially tries to portray the above-described atmosphere of general confusion that ends up

¹⁵ Miles, *Gothic Writing* 46.

¹⁶ “Mary Wollstonecraft. Rights in the Air: the Context of the A Vindication of the Rights of Women”

¹⁷ Botting 90.

in the difficulty to identify the originator of or the motivation for vice and evil. Under such conditions, needless to say, straightforward condemnation of evil can quickly become rather problematic.

Especially the second part of the romance where the male protagonist can only move within the territory of the edifice that houses the Holy Inquisition clearly delivers the feelings of the all-pervading uncertainty and loss of orientation. In this context, Fred Botting points out that “In Gothic romances, the metaphor of labyrinth came to be associated with fear, confusion and alienation: it was a site of darkness, horror and desire”¹⁸. As opposed to the heroine who is provided occasional glimpses of nature or can even undertake expeditions without the confines of the Gothic castle, Vivaldi is kept in a hermetically sealed space with hardly any hope of acquittal or revelation of the identity of his accuser. The unreliability of senses as indicators of one’s whereabouts further enhances the feelings of anxiety and uncertainty.

In a word, the distinction between “confusion” and “obscurity” which Fred Botting considers crucial for Radcliffe’s terrific narratives frequently tends to be blurred in her last romance. Botting writes about obscurity as an ideal means for elevating suspense as it “leaves something for the imagination to exaggerate”. Confusion, as opposed to this, “by blurring one image into another, leaves only chaos in which the mind can find nothing to nourish its fears and doubts, or to act upon in any way”¹⁹. Botting’s ‘confusion’ seems to be closely related to the horrific that is notoriously associated with the male version of Gothic as represented by Matthew Lewis. Horror, as defined by Radcliffe, freezes and annihilates one’s capacity to experience the sublime. Importantly, the appreciation of sublimity, as Botting emphasized, “suggests the power of divine order [...] that as Providence, is repeatedly invoked at the end of most Radcliffean novels as the way out of

¹⁸ Botting 81.

¹⁹ Botting 74.

vice and guarantee of conventional boundaries”²⁰. The final scene of *The Italian* confirms its ‘irregularity’ within Radcliffe’s works that has been commented upon many times before. At the same time, it seems to reflect her own awareness of the untenability of her belief in an ideal balance between individual and community respectful of the benevolent authority.

The nuptial fete which left “the grounds [...] extensive enough to accommodate each rank [...] relinquished to a general gaiety” is strongly reminiscent of the carnival merriment. (*The Italian*: 412) The carnivalesque scene that Radcliffe depicts on the final pages of the romance leaves traces of doubt and ambiguity in the reader. This form of celebration represents certain tendency to disrupt the existing order and to replace it with a fantastic alternative where authorities are turned upside down. Such pattern obviously does not fit in Radcliffe’s ideal of restoration of order characteristically depicted in the final scenes of her other texts. The temporary confusion in the stratification as symbolized in the carnivalesque topsy-turvy madness is conspicuously reminiscent of the real insanity of the mob of the Revolution. All the humanist and sentimental beliefs in the potential for goodness and, importantly, the ideal of moderation as the best way to cultivate an individual received a hard blow in this historically and above all socially significant event.

The depiction of the carnivalesque revelry at the end of *The Italian* instead of the usual appearance of the didactic moral, clear expulsion of evil and reassertion of order may be suggestive of the impracticability of such an enterprise even in reality. Added to this, the opening frame of the novel that confirms the romance’s origin as a piece of a manuscript given to the English travellers in Italy is not alluded to in the end any more. This lack of a traditionally neat conclusion leaves the reader with the impression of certain asymmetry in the text which seems incongruous with respect to Radcliffe’s usual heavy

²⁰ Botting 75.

reliance on repetition and circular patterns in her works. Neither final reaffirmation nor the clear conclusion appear at the end of *The Italian*, the loose end as if confirming Radcliffe's uncertainty about clear-cut distinctions between good and evil, chaos and order, light and darkness.

In spite of the final confirmation of authorial control which also serves here as a disclaimer of Lewis' professed recklessness about his characters in his romance, Radcliffe's own text seems to be 'contaminated' by *The Monk*'s horror evoking feelings of anxiety and imminence of death. The author herself was probably aware of the fact that these qualities which actually constitute the overall atmosphere cannot simply be overhauled by a positive ending. The carnivalesque also appears to be going against Radcliffe's insistence on the necessary control of one's fancies. The subversion which the carnivalesque merriment principally originates from, at the same time, encourages loosening of one's imagination that, as we have seen with Radcliffe, may easily lead one astray. Surprisingly enough, the author herself allows the final suggestion of a potential destabilization of the status quo to subvert the didactic message characteristic of her texts.

On the other hand, the temporality of the carnival may be indicative in Radcliffe of the impossibility for chaos to absolutely predominate over order. Also, as Radcliffe and her contemporaries knew, in the carnival, the madness is after all, always regulated and there always exists an authority to put an end to the general chaos. Nevertheless, the touch of evil with regularity reappearing in *The Italian* makes it clear that its origins cannot be eradicated completely. Even the English picturesque and moderate as typically asserted in the endings of Radcliffe's romances remains tainted by the Gothic Schedonian spirit in the end of her last romance.

The style of gardens, where lawns and groves, and woods varied the undulating surface, was that of England, and of the present day, rather than of Italy; except 'Where a long alley peeping on the main,' exhibited such gigantic loftiness of shade, and grandeur of perspective, as characterize the Italian taste. (*The Italian*: 412)

Grandeur and the overwhelming cannot be weeded from the English symmetrical garden, just as the experience of despair and fear of proximity of death cannot be eradicated from the protagonists' minds and memories. Both the external and internal spaces as discussed in the thesis are here left contaminated with something of the strange and unsettling atmosphere of the Gothic world. This is finally reflected in certain changes perceived as permanent in the main protagonists. The domestic happiness as outlined in the final scenes of *The Italian* is not the version of the blissful forgetfulness as offered in Radcliffe's previous works. In this romance, the reader witnesses the wilful acceptance of order by a couple of mature individuals who remain fully aware of the potential threat as lurking behind the hedges of their English garden.

The last romance of Ann Radcliffe thus paradoxically confirms the beliefs the author herself holds at the cost of the occasional putting her most basic principles (of balance, clear distinction between good and evil, restraint and the avoidance of psychological portraits) into contradiction. The circumstances of the period forced her to necessarily adjust or completely resign on these essential standards she meticulously observed in her former romances. Staying true to all of her principles that may have been possible in the early works thus, as *The Italian* testifies, turns to be a mere utopian vision. However, in this way, Radcliffe, at the same time, in fact proves her invincible belief in the necessity to respond to the basic spirit of her contemporary society in her romances while polishing it by the chivalric ideals. In her last romance she actually gives us a report about her own weakening hope in the feasibility of her ideal. Sadly enough, what I set out to prove as representing the constitutive elements of the Radcliffean female Gothic romances, in the end appears to be lacking in general applicability. The paradox lying at the heart of the author's last work will that is to say, always undermine all attempts at a clear-cut definition of this variety of the Gothic genre.

Summary

Termín „ženský gotický román“ se poprvé objevil v knize *Literary Women* britské literární kritičky Ellen Moersové. Autorka sama poněkud lakonicky definuje ženskou gotiku jako pojem zahrnující díla, která spadají do tradice od osmnáctého století nazývané gotická a která jsou napsaná ženskými autorkami. V osmdesátých letech minulého století se termínem začaly zabývat zejména feministické kritičky, v jejichž analýzách se jeho definice proměňovala a těsněji spojovala s otázkami feministické kritiky, která momentálně zažívá rozkvět. Obzvláště v pojetí gynokritiky se pojem „ženská gotika“ vyhraňuje vůči tzv. mužské gotice podílejíc se tak významně na stavbě ženské literární tradice. V pojetí gynokritiček je důraz kladen na ženský aspekt psaní a na specifčnost ženské hrdinky, zatímco historicko-kulturní hlediska jsou pomíjena. Dochází tak nejednou k „dehistorizaci“ literárního díla. V případě Ann Radcliffové, která je mnohdy považována za první autorku ženské gotické tradice a jejíž dílo s jeho specifickými rysy jsem se rozhodla zkoumat ve své diplomové práci, se gynokritický přístup jeví jako značně omezující. Pro romány této spisovatelky konce osmnáctého století mají z mého pohledu společenský, kulturní i historický aspekt zásadní význam, a proto jejich kvalita, jak se domnívám, nemůže být plně doceněna bez přihlédnutí k charakteru doby, ve které byly napsány.

Ve své práci ovšem ženský aspekt rozhodně nezanedbávám. Naopak, kritický esej samotné Radcliffové *On the Supernatural in Poetry*, opublikovaný posmrtně v roce 1826 v *New Monthly Magazine*, naznačuje, že autorka vnímala odlišnost postupů a technik v literárních dílech v závislosti na genderu. Radcliffová dělí techniky gotických románů na „hororovou“ představující mužské tendence a „terorovou“, která bývá obvykle spojována s ženskými gotickými romány. Už koncem osmnáctého století tak zjevně existovalo povědomí o jistých specifikách v literární tvorbě jak mužských tak ženských autorů, a

určitě by tak toto hledisko nemělo být opomenuto při rozboru díla žádné spisovatelky daného období. Základním východiskem mé práce zabývající se romanci Ann Radcliffové se však nestalo.

Za stěžejní naopak považuji žánrové hledisko, jelikož především výběrem romance jako formy svých děl se Radcliffová jasně vymezila vůči svým současníkům. Romance se zároveň ukázala být vhodným žánrem pro vyjádření hlavních autorčiných myšlenek. V době, kdy vycházela zásadní díla jejich současníků romanopisců, pro které představovalo co nejvěrnější vyobrazení reality hlavní kritérium, se zjev Radcliffovských romancí může zdát téměř nepatřičný. Ovšem romance této autorky nekopírovaly vzorce francouzských variant sedmnáctého století charakteristických svými komplexními ději, milostnou zápletkou, vyhrocenými emocemi a květnatým jazykem. Tento typ romancí, spojovaný hlavně se jmény Honoré D'Urfé a Madame de Scudéry, byl častým terčem kritiky mnohých současníků Radcliffové. Označovali ji za úpadkovou literaturu, která svádí mladé lidi na scestí, neboť kazí mravy a má obzvláště špatný vliv na cudnost dívek.

Tyto romance zároveň představovaly druh literatury, vůči které se snažili vymezit romanopisci ve svých „realistických“ dílech. Ačkoli Ian Watt ve své v mnoha ohledech přínosné studii *The Rise of the Novel* (1957) rozvíjí teorii o vzniku románu založenou výlučně na opozici románu a romance, ve skutečnosti nebyla situace na literárním poli ani zdaleka tak jasná. Proto se ve své práci pokouším vyjmenovat alespoň několik spisovatelů a kritiků, kteří se účastnili diskuse o romanci a románu, a v krátkosti načrtnout hlavní názorová hlediska dotýkající se žánru romance. Mezi jinými tak zmiňuji názory Jamese Beattieho, Samuela Johnsona, Anthonyho Aeshlyho Coopera, hraběte ze Shaftesbury a dalších. Jak tento krátký přehled naznačuje, kriteria pro rozlišení žánru romance a románu nebyla až do konce osmnáctého století jasně vymezena a termín román jako takový se v podstatě neobjevuje. Ani romanopisci samotní jej nepoužívali, při označení svých děl

dávali přednost slovu „historie“. Z diskuzí navíc jasně vyplývá, že didaktické hledisko a aspekt morálky představovaly zásadní kritéria pro hodnocení literárních děl. Jak naznačují některé výroky moralistů v druhé polovině osmnáctého století jak romance, tak realistické prózy z tohoto pohledu často neodpovídaly přísným nárokům kritiků.

Clara Reevovalá, pokračovatelka Walpolovské Gotické tradice, se rovněž aktivně účastnila debaty o kvalitě a hodnotě žánru romance. Ve své knize *The Progress of Romance* (1785), která je psaná formou diskuze mezi dvěma ženami a mužem, obhajuje autorka ústy Euphrasie hodnotu romancí, zejména pak překvapivě jejich didaktický a mravnostní potenciál. Jak sama tvrdí, jakékoli dílo může být zneužito čtenářem, je-li mylně vykládáno. V romanci vidí Reevovalá možnost propojení sentimentálních tendencí v literatuře s prvky reality, to vše zasazeno do minulosti pro zvýšení atraktivity díla pro současného čtenáře. Sentimentální tendence autorka spojuje hlavně se jménem Samuela Richardsona (1689-1761), často považovaného za vzor pro mnohé pozdější autory sentimentálních románů. Především důraz, který Richardson kladl na morální zásady svých hrdinek, považovala Reevovalá za stěžejní rys romancí osmnáctého století, jejíž hlavní představitelkou je právě Ann Radcliffová.

Radcliffová si rovněž vybrala romanci v první řadě proto, že věřila v její možnost pozvednout celkovou úroveň mravů soudobé společnosti. Zároveň ji však tato forma posloužila při zobrazení takového typu společnosti, který považovala za vhodnou alternativu realitě, ve které žila. Vědoma si celkově upadajícího smyslu pro pospolitost a nárůstu individualismu a materialismu mezi svými současníky, Radcliffová se obrací k minulosti jako zdroji kvalitních a následováníhodných hodnot. Slovo „dynamický“ z mého pohledu nejlépe vystihuje autorčin přístup k minulosti a tradici. Oproti svým současníkům Radcliffová nesrovnává minulost pouze se zastaralým společenským uspořádáním založeným na výsadním postavení aristokracie a na principech patriarchy.

Tradice v jejím pojetí představuje dynamickou soustavu prvků, jejíž základní a trvalé kvality se přenášejí z generace na generaci, přičemž každé další období může přinést kvality nové. Ze stejného důvodu tak nezavrhuje celou svou dobu s její v mnoha ohledech zkaženou morálkou a narůstajícím egoismem. Naopak, autorka dokáže náležitě ocenit zejména duch pokroku, který razilo osvícenecké hnutí, jež podporovalo rozvoj člověka jako racionální bytosti. Ve svých romancích se pak snaží skloubit právě onoho ducha pokrokovosti své doby a hodnoty jako je dvornost k ženě, respekt k autoritě, pospolitost, mravnost a cudnost. To vše je navíc prochnuto sentimentální vírou v dobro jako vrozenou vlastnost člověka a základní princip lidskosti.

V tomto ohledu propojováním dvou zdánlivě protichůdných principů Radcliffová s odkazem na neoklasicistní principy nepřestává zdůrazňovat význam vyváženosti, který tak představuje dominantní rys jejích romancí. Pocitovost je proto vždy nutně vyvážen racionálností a uvážeností postav, gotické prvky zobrazující temná zákoutí a vznešené vrcholky hor se střídají s vyobrazením souměrných malebných krajín prozářených sluncem, zlo je vykompenzováno notnou dávkou dobra.

Radcliffová bývá také často oceňována pro svou neobyčejnou zručnost při využívání literárních a hlavně pak estetických kategorií, které byly popsány nebo znovuobjeveny právě v její době. Kategorie „vznešeného“ popsaná již v prvním století před Kristem a znovu rozpracovaná anglo-irským filozofem a literátem Edmundem Burkem, se ukázala být obzvláště důležitou a čtenářsky atraktivní při vhodném aplikování v literárním díle. Burke ve své eseji založil analýzu vznešeného na principu protikladu vznešenosti a krásy. Tento kontrast byl zejména v osmnáctém století silně genderově determinován. Vznešenost, již lze dosáhnout vyobrazením nejasného a skrytého, je často spojována s mužským principem, zatímco krásné je vše, co je malé, pravidelné, hladké, a

tudíž evidentně ženské. Toto genderové hledisko, jak ukazuje moje analýza popisů přírody, hraje významnou roli v Radcliffovských romancích.

Malebné nebo pitoreskní představuje další velice oblíbenou kategorii v literatuře osmnáctého století. Jejím základem je princip pravidelnosti ve střídání krásného a vznešeného a, jak už sám název naznačuje, je úzce spjatá s výtvarným uměním. Při popisu přírody spisovatelé často vycházeli z krajinomaleb francouzských malířů, jako byli Salvator Rossa a Nicolas Poussin, kteří mistrně dokázali vystihnout líbivost divoké přírody. Strmé skály v pozadí, vyobrazení zřícenin, středověkých hradů nebo krajiny s bandity jsou typické pro malíře pitoreskního stylu. Propojení výtvarného umění s poesíí a hudbou v pitoreskních popisech fascinovalo také Ann Radcliffovou, která hojně využívala této techniky k navození adekvátní atmosféry ve svých dílech.

V kapitole o kontextu vzniku Radcliffovských romancí se dále zabývám zdánlivě paradoxním znovuoživením tohoto žánru a současně gotického románu v době osvícenství. Gotický román se často zjednodušeně vykládá jako snaha o popření osvícenecké jasnosti a důrazu na viditelnost. Temná zákoutí, ať už budov či lidské duše, byla tradičně popírána osvíceneckou filosofií a vědou. Gotika, jak se zdá, znovuobjevuje a popisuje obskurní a neprobádaná místa, zkoumá zlo a jeho formy v lidské společnosti. Jak ale ukazují hlavně raná gotická díla, k jejichž autorům se řadí i Ann Radcliffová, toto hledisko je značně omezující a nebere v úvahu podstatu těchto žánrů. Na několika citátech francouzského filozofa a historika Michaela Foucaulta (1926-1984) se snažím vysvětlit, že ačkoliv ženský gotický román skutečně popisuje vznešenou a často nebezpečnou krajinu (např. tajné chodby, labyrinty nebo zamčené pokoje uvnitř gotických budov) dělá tak za účelem potvrzení pravého opaku, tj. světla a rozumovosti či logičnosti.

Hrdinka prochází temnými neznámými kraji, je držena v zajetí na gotickém hradě právě proto, aby „zmapovala“ krajinu zla a tmy, se kterými se tímto způsobem snadněji

seznamuje a může je následně lépe kontrolovat. Jak Foucault sám potvrzuje, zlo lze ovládnout a později pokořit jen za předpokladu, že je nejprve řádně vymezeno pole jeho působnosti. Oproti všeobecně přijímanému názoru se tak nakonec cíle osvícenců i ty vytčené autory raně gotických románů v mnoha ohledech překvapivě shodují. Obě tendence kladou důraz na jedince, jeho morální zásady a rozumnost jako nutné předpoklady pro přispění k celkovému standardu společnosti, které je součástí. Dále je spojuje důraz na vztah umění a přírody jako ideálního prostředku ke zmiňovanému zkulturování jedince a tudíž zlepšení kvality celého společenství. Snaha o popření jakékoli formy despotie a barbarské krutovlády na úkor blaha společnosti představuje další společný rys.

Jak již načrtnuté základní principy s ohledem na Foucaultovu teorii naznačují, prostředí, přesněji pak prostory, místa a pohyb hrdinky mezi nimi, hrají důležitou úlohu při zobrazení a potvrzení hlavních hodnot, které se Ann Radcliffová snaží ve svých romancích předat čtenáři. Má práce se tudíž v další kapitole věnuje právě popisu prostorů a míst, a to jak vnitřních, tak i vnějších.

V jejích romancích je však také citelné propojení mezi způsobem zobrazení, charakterizací postav a dějem v závislosti na prostorové a časové dimenzi jak ve vztahu ke čtenáři tak vzhledem k autorce. Vyobrazení prostorů se proto nutně neobejde bez analýzy charakterizace, třetí kapitola je proto věnována právě této problematice. Kategorie času, jak už bylo naznačeno, se pak v mé analýze prolíná oběma kapitolami, neboť je ve smyslu tradice stěžejní pro dílo této autorky.

Při popisu míst a prostorů vycházím hlavně z pojetí české spisovatelky Daniely Hodrové a její představy o prostorové dimenzi, jak ji načrtla ve svých studiích *Poetika Míst a Místa s tajemstvím*. Důraz, který Hodrová klade na propojení všech složek literárního díla a jejich vzájemnou závislost, považuji za ideální přístup k analýze

komplexních romancí Ann Radcliffové. Popis míst tu totiž nikdy není jen popis místa sám o sobě, ale je úzce spjat s jinou složkou díla, kterou tak zároveň pomáhá spoluvytvářet. Prostory v mé práci chápu jako dimenze, v rámci kterých se hrdinka může pohybovat, a tak si je zároveň „osahávat“ a mapovat. Místa pak u Radcliffové spíše vnímám jako body, jsou totiž povětšinou spojena se vzpomínkou na šťastné období v hrdinčině minulosti nebo s myšlenkami na milovanou osobu, často již zesnulou nebo někoho, od koho je hrdinka odloučena. Místa v jejích dílech tudíž nejsou plasticky zobrazena, vždy jen evokují představy a pocity spojené s nimi.

Prostory ve své práci dále dělím na vnější a vnitřní. V rámci vnějších prostorů se věnuji popisům přírody jako významnému aspektu pro charakterizaci postav v dílech Ann Radcliffové. Úzký vztah mezi uměním a přírodou patrný z Radcliffové popisů jasně odkazuje na neoklasicistní principy, jak je ve svých pracích vykládá Alexander Pope, čelní představitel neoklasicistních tendencí v poesii. Pope věří, že básník by při své tvorbě vždy měl vycházet předně z přírody jako dokonalého systému, který vnímá jako dílo boží. Pravidla pro psaní poezie je tak nutno hledat v přírodě a hlavním úkolem básníka je přiblížit se co nejlépe božskému ideálu. Imitace dokonalé symetrie a vyváženosti, jež mohou být nalezeny jen a pouze v přírodě, se tak stala cílem mnoha neoklasicistních umělců. V tomto pojetí je patrný důraz na význam vlivu přírody při zkulturnování člověka. V procesu přibližování se ideálu ve svých dílech se umělec zároveň snaží přiblížit morálnímu ideálu ctnosti a rozumnosti.

Hrdinky se v romancích Radcliffové díky kvalitní výchově svých osvícených otců a obeznámenosti s výtvarným uměním a literaturou logicky jeví jako nejvnímavější k estetickým hodnotám přírody. Ta jim proto může nabídnout potřebnou energii a zároveň opakovaně utvrzuje jejich ctnosti a rozumnosti. Stejně tak jejich partneři, zpravidla prototypy hrdinů sentimentálních románů, dokážou náležitě ocenit vznešenost a krásu

okolní krajiny. Záporní hrdinové naopak postrádají veškerý cit pro přírodu, a tak nedokážou využít její potenciál. Ostatní postavy se dále liší ve vnímavosti ke krajině v závislosti na míře jejich „nakaženosti“ městským životem. Opozice město-venkov tak představuje další ze sentimentálních principů, který Radcliffová využívá pro charakterizaci postav.

Na rozdíl od realistických románů a jejich důrazu na vývoj v závislosti pohybu postavy v čase se v romancích Radcliffové hrdinka na svých cestách v zásadě nemění. Její „výpravy“ neslouží jako cesty za poznáním a nabráním nutné zkušenosti, jak tomu často bývá u bildungsrománů. Hrdinčin přesun z místa na místo má v zásadě úlohu opětovného potvrzení a dalšího utužení hrdinčiných morálních hodnot a jejích ctností. Charakterizace se tak v Radcliffové nutně jeví plochou, její hrdinky, ctnostné již na samém začátku, v závěru jen potvrdí svou morální čistotu. Ačkoli popisy krajin a cizích zemí působí u Radcliffové poměrně věrohodně, neboť autentičnost vychází z autorčiny detailní studie cestopisů, které byly v té době hojně publikovány, popis společenských poměrů či historicky významných událostí rozhodně není cílem popisů hrdinčiných expedicí. V Radcliffové je vždy akcentován obraz vnějších prostorů v hrdinčině mysli a obzvláště její reakce na estetické podněty.

Otázka vnějších prostorů je také v pojetí Radcliffové úzce spjata s náboženstvím. Její hrdinky netíhnou k žádné formě institucionálního náboženství. Namísto něj Radcliffová nabízí určitou formu přírodního náboženství spjatou s Rousseauovskými ideály. S ohledem na neoklasicistní principy, jež byly nastíněny, je zřejmé, že pro tuto autorku příroda představuje ztělesnění božského na zemi. Její hrdinky, které jsou s přírodou tak těsně spjaty, proto nutně působí jako zbožné. Náboženské instituce se pak v romancích Radcliffové dělí na místa poskytující azyl a pochopení a na ty ostatní, která se mění ve vězení v důsledku krutovlády jejich nadřízených.

V této souvislosti je třeba zmínit důraz, jenž Radcliffová klade na autoritu jako na model vhodný následování. V jejích romancích je možné vysledovat jak příklady zneužití moci, tak postavy, které zosobňují shovívavost a pochopení jako výraz dobrého aplikování autority. Otcové, kteří zpravidla zastupují druhý popsaný typ, pak představují v romancích nositele již zmiňované kvalitní hodnoty tradice, která je hodna následování a osvědčuje se jako potřebná pro další generace. Přijetím těchto tradic a jejich přizpůsobením svým současným poměrům se tak v romancích Radcliffové buduje nová střední vrstva, která představuje zlatou střední cestu mezi překonanou vládou aristokracie a moderní často pragmaticky založenou společností spějící k individualismu.

Vnitřní prostory jsou v Radcliffovských romancích zastoupeny hlavně typickým topem gotických románů-gotickým hradem. Svou analýzu zakládám hlavně na romanci *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), ve které zámek hraje téměř hlavní úlohu. Důležitá je rovněž jistá antropomorfizace tohoto prostoru, zámek se v mnoha ohledech zdá být ztělesněním jeho majitele, Montoniho, který zde drží hlavní hrdinku v zajetí. Zámek, který jeho majitel po dobu jejího pobytu zde dále opevňuje, představuje pro Emily od začátku vězení, ve kterém je odříznuta od blízkých a kde je jí zabráněno v jakékoli komunikaci s okolím. Důležitý v rámci prostoru zámku je pro ni její pokoj, který ovšem, jak záhy zjistí, má závoru zvenčí. Pro Emily, jež si pokoj vybaví svými oblíbenými věcmi a vytvoří si tak „vlastní pokoj“, je tato skutečnost značně znepokojující, jelikož je tak zanechána na pospas mužské kontrole. I tak ale často uniká do „svého prostoru“, aby zde načerpala nutnou energii pro prozkoumávání dalších částí zámku. Občasné „vynořování“ se z hlubin na zámecké hradby, kde hrdinka může sledovat okolní pitoreskní krajinu, představuje další zdroj posílení zejména hrdinčiny morálky. Hrdinka tak může dále pokračovat v prozkoumávání „prostoru zla“, čím hlouběji do něj proniká, tím více si prostor osvojuje a ten se tak pro ni zároveň stává méně děsivým. Vztah hrdinky k prostoru jejího věznění je

proto často vnímán jako ambivalentní. V Radcliffové, v souladu s Foucaultovým výkladem, se tak známé hrozby a zla zmírňují a zdají se být snesitelnějším než všechno, co zůstává neznámé a neprozkoumané.

Dichotomii vnějšího a vnitřního uplatňuji i při analýze charakterizace postav. V této části se snažím vysvětlit a částečně obhájit často kritizovanou povrchovost v románech Radcliffové, která bývá považována za povrchnost. Autorčin důraz na povrch ovšem úzce souvisí s její vírou v principy sentimentalismu. Pro tuto tendenci v literatuře je zájem o vzhled a tělo postav typický. Ten je zde opřen o filozofii Lorda Shaftesburyho zmíněného výše, v jehož pojetí je krása vždy spojena s dobrem, zatímco ošklivost a monstrózní implikují zlo a zkaženost. Tento protipól sentimentalisté uplatňovali ve svých románech, ve kterých ctnostné hrdinky jsou zpravidla andělsky krásné, zatímco padouši jsou vyobrazení jako oškliví nebo jinak deformovaní. Plně v duchu sentimentalismu klade Radcliffová důraz na tělesno. Její hrdinky se často zdají být ponechány na pospas fyzickým reakcím, hrdinka omdlévá při každé příležitosti, kdy může potvrdit svou citlivost ve smyslu prožívání, tj. sdílení cizího neštěstí či přemíry vlastní či cizí radosti. Hrdinčino tělesno, nikdy výrazně akcentované ve smyslu erotického, se tak stává mapou, na které se projevují její silné emoce. Tento způsob zaznamenávání prožitků tak nahrazuje v Radcliffové charakterový vývoj zdůrazněný v románech jejich současníků.

Oděvy v románech Radcliffové signalizují příslušnost postavy k určité společenské či profesní skupině. Mnišské roucho, vojenská uniforma nebo lovecké oblečení automaticky asociují určité rysy a vlastnosti charakteristicky spojované s danými profesemi. Nicméně spoléhání na první dojem se zpravidla ukáže nespolehlivým, někdy dokonce nebezpečným. Stejně jako se hrdinčin partner poprvé objeví v lovecké uniformě evokující agresi, aby se nakonec ukázal být ideálním partnerem pro ctnostnou dívku, může se Schedoni, záporný protagonista v romanci *The Italian* oblečený v kněžském hábitu zdát

na první pohled osobou poskytující porozumění a pomoc v nouzi, zatímco ve skutečnosti usiluje o život hrdinky.

Postava záporného hrdiny je rozebírána v samostatné části kapitoly o charakterizaci postav. Tato analýza je zaměřena obzvláště na Schedoniho a jeho pronikavé oči jako charakteristický znak snahy o kontrolu nad ostatními postavami. V této části se také věnují významu zraku jako důležitému smyslu a jeho symboliku zasazují do kontextu osmnáctého století. Ten totiž např. představoval základní kámen filozofie Johna Locka (1632-1704), pro něhož byl dokonce zrak nejdůležitější prostředek poznávání. V souvislosti s osvícenskou snahou o naprostou viditelnost a jasnost však zrak představoval také kontrolu rozumu, která mohla být velice snadno zneužita. V osobě Schedoniho s jeho pronikavými očima Radcliffová znázorňuje tuto druhou nebezpečnou formu zraku, jež proniká do vnitřních světů druhých a nárokuje si právo na naprosté ovládnutí jejich životů. Tato agresivní tendence musí být nutně popřena ve světě Radcliffových románcí, a tak i Schedoniho intriky se nakonec obrací proti němu samotnému.

Téma zraku je také spojeno s termínem skopofilie, Freudovského pojmu pro potěšení z pozorování jiné osoby a následovné ovládnutí daného objektu procesem pozorování. Tento aspekt se pak obzvláště zřetelně projevuje v tzv. obrazech znázorňujících ctnostnou dívku v nesnázích typických pro sentimentální romány. Ne náhodou se tyto scény objevují i v ženských gotických románech, kde slouží primárně k pozastavení děje a k zintenzivnění čtenářových prožitků. Použití skopofilického pohledu se však výrazně liší v jeho míře erotizace v mužské variantě gotického románu. Jak Matthew Lewis ve své romanci *The Monk* (1796) ukazuje, ženy se zde často stávají objektem chůtice a jsou zobrazovány jako svůdné objekty se záměrem erotizace ženského těla. Další důkaz Lewisova podrývání senzitivity v ženské gotice je demonstrováno na

symbolu závoje a jeho použití v díle *The Monk* a jeho srovnání s Radcliffové zpracováním v romanci *The Italian*. Zatímco v Lewisově romanci může muž kdykoli odhalit tvář ženy skrytou za závojem, v podání Radcliffové je to žena, která má možné využití závoje plně ve své kompetenci. Může jí tak posloužit jako předmět halící její identitu, představuje ochranu intimního prostoru jako výrazu cudnosti nebo značí příslušnost k určitému náboženskému řádu.

Ve své práci se zabývám Radcliffovskou romancí v kontextu osmnáctého století, dále jejím vyobrazením prostoru a charakterizací postav v závislosti na čase a s přihlédnutím k genderovým specifikům za účelem potvrzení autorčiny snahy o postižení ducha její doby, kde se však současně pokouší o načrtnutí určité alternativy budoucího vývoje společnosti. Snažím se prokázat zručnost Radcliffové v aplikaci soudobých estetických trendů a vnímavosti autorky pro potřeby svých čtenářů.

V závěru se také zabývám kritikami, které byly Radcliffové romány často podrobovány. Na názorech Emily Wollstonecraft, feministické spisovatelky a Radcliffovské současnice, pak poukazují na fakt, že sama Radcliffová si postupem času nutně začala uvědomovat neudržitelnost svých ideálních „vizí“ a jejich utopičnost. V neklidné době konce osmnáctého století, které zrcadlilo rozporuplné dojmy z fiaska Velké francouzské revoluce, bylo jasné rozdělení světa na bílé a černé dále neobhajitelné. Jisté „prozření“ je proto citelné i v poslední romanci Radcliffové, *The Italian*, která se liší od předchozích děl větší mírou chaotičnosti, psychologických studií charakterů a temnou atmosférou prostupující celé dílo. Ačkoli se tak Radcliffová nutně odchýlila od svých původních představ a zásad, zůstala věrna své snaze o reflexi doby a pokusu o to, co nejlépe reagovat na změny, které se odehrávaly v tehdejší společnosti. Její poslední dílo proto ale zároveň nutně problematizuje přesné vymezení termínu ženský gotický román v podání Ann Radcliffové. Definice se jeví jako nemožná v důsledku autorčina podryvání

toho, co se zdálo být stavebním prvkem, její snahou o respektování zásady jiné, stejně důležité. Doba sama a další historický vývoj tak Radcliffové neumožňovaly pokračovat v dalším znovupotvrzování platnosti jejích prvotních představ a zásad.

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