

**Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and the Function of Landscapes
in Gothic Fiction**



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S1146947

MA Thesis Literary Studies

English Literature and Culture

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13 June 2016

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Chapter 1: Radcliffe's Technique of Literary Landscape Painting | 7 |
| 1.1. Ann Radcliffe's Style, Landscape Paintings and Travel Journals | |
| 1.2. Picturesque versus Sublime Landscapes | |
| 1.3. Landscapes and the Supernatural | |
| 1.4. Conclusion | |
| Chapter 2: The Gothic Heroine in the Landscape | 24 |
| 2.1. The Gothic Heroine in the Picturesque and Idyllic Landscape: Start of her Journey | |
| 2.2. The Heroine Continues her Journey: Transition to Darker, Sublime Landscapes | |
| 2.3. The Heroine in the Gothic Castle | |
| 2.4. Conclusion | |
| Chapter 3: Terror versus Horror within Landscape Descriptions | 43 |
| 3.1. Radcliffean Mode of Terror | |
| 3.2. Terror and Landscapes | |
| 3.3. The Explained Supernatural | |
| 3.4. Conclusion | |
| Conclusion | 58 |
| Bibliography | 60 |

Introduction

“But, my dearest Catherine, what have you been doing with yourself all this morning?
—Have you gone on with Udolpho?”

“Yes, I have been reading it ever since I woke; and I am got to the black veil.”

“Are you, indeed? How delightful! Oh! I would not tell you what is behind the
black veil for the world! Are not you wild to know?”

“Oh! Yes, quite; what can it be? —But do not tell me—I would not be told
upon any account. I know it must be a skeleton, I am sure it is Laurentina’s skeleton.
Oh! I am delighted with the book! I should like to spend my whole life reading it. I
assure you, if it had not been to meet you, I would not have come away from it for all
the world.” (Austen 38-39)

These are the words which Catherine Morland, the protagonist of Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey* (1818), uses to describe Ann Radcliffe’s Gothic novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho* in a conversation with her friend Isabella. She is so enthusiastic about the novel that she exclaims that she would like to spend her whole life reading it. However, considering that Jane Austen wrote *Northanger Abbey* as a parody of the Gothic novel, Catherine’s enthusiasm of Gothic novels should not be understood as representing the standard response to Radcliffe’s fiction at the time. Varma states that reading Gothic novels was

a pastime, belonging to the permissive, not the obsessive, aspect of the imagination, to be enjoyed with a clear perception of their limitations and discarded, perhaps, as the taste matured, since the main business of life, they would hold, is always in the daylight. (xi)

The attitude towards Gothic novels at the turn of the nineteenth century was not always positive. Even more recent critics such as Napier adopt a negative attitude towards the Gothic. She suggests that the depth found by twentieth-century scholars within the Gothic genre is an illusion. According to Napier, the reader is “allured and then stupefied by an excess of horror, he cannot, finally, entertain the complex response of ambivalence that the form ideally demands” (149). But still, Ann Radcliffe is considered to be a popular and influential writer, and she has been referred to as “The Great Enchantress” and “one of the most celebrated women of the late eighteenth century” (Howard 1). Furthermore, John Keats “famously designated her as ‘mother Radcliffe’ in a letter to George and Georgiana Keats in February 1819” (Townshend & Wright 22). This indicates that Radcliffe also had an influence on writers such as Keats and other Romanticists. Apart from that influence, Epstein considers her to be the author who “transform[ed] the Gothic novel from a literary curiosity— hysterically charged— into a sophisticated, controlled artistic medium reflecting the literary and aesthetic tastes of her time” (4).

Radcliffe published five novels between 1789 and 1797. A sixth novel was published posthumously in 1826. Most of these novels were “tremendously popular and influential on other writers for long afterward” (Greenblatt 592). Her novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) became her most popular novel during her lifetime, because of its “unprecedented ability to maintain suspense, teasing its readers with suggestions of the spectral, and its poetic descriptions of the picturesque and sublime scenery” (Howard vii). Furthermore, *Udolpho* also “brought the Gothic romance into ascendancy and helped establish novel-writing as an acceptable and profitable occupation for women” (Howard vii). These are not the only reasons why *Udolpho* is such a relevant literary work. In this novel, Radcliffe uses long descriptive passages of landscapes to enchant her readers and to raise them to a state of suspense and terror. Descriptions of natural scenery are generally very important

characteristics of the Gothic novel. For instance, Chard writes that these descriptions often are responsible for “the heroine’s re-animation” (xviii). Furthermore, she adds that landscape descriptions serve “another important role within the Gothic narrative structure,” which is “to keep the reader in a state of suspense” (xviii). Chard then refers to the importance of landscape descriptions “within the Gothic novel’s mechanisms of self-definition” (xviii). These are all elements which occur in Gothic novels, and also in Radcliffe’s work. However, the way in which she builds up her landscape descriptions and her lengthy poetic passages is special. No other Gothic novelist uses such lengthy descriptive passages in her work as Radcliffe does, and Epstein even suggests that Radcliffe introduced landscape into Gothic fiction (1).

This thesis critically explores the function of landscape descriptions in Radcliffe’s Gothic novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. The chapters in this thesis will show that Radcliffe’s style is similar to the techniques used by landscape painters in the eighteenth century who focused on the aesthetic categories of the sublime and the picturesque. This aspect of Radcliffe’s work is what makes her descriptions of natural scenery a typical Radcliffean aspect. Furthermore, Radcliffe uses her sublime landscape descriptions in order to invoke a supernatural atmosphere in her novel. This atmosphere has a certain effect on the characters in her novel as well as the reader of her works: they are responsible for creating emotions of terror. Radcliffe also allows the protagonist in *Udolpho*, Emily St Aubert, to travel from a picturesque and idyllic landscape towards a darker and more sublime landscape. This transition also represents the mental journey for the main protagonist from innocence to experience.

The first chapter in this thesis will explore Radcliffe’s technique of landscape description in relation to eighteenth-century landscape painters, such as Claude Lorrain and Salvator Rosa. Furthermore, this chapter will focus on the aesthetic categories which feature

heavily in Radcliffe's landscapes, such as the sublime and the picturesque. Close readings of key passages in *Udolpho* will show that both Radcliffe's technique of writing and her invocation of the sublime play a major role in creating the supernatural atmosphere which made her work so successful. The second chapter will focus on the effect of the landscape descriptions on the main character in *Udolpho*, the Gothic heroine Emily St Aubert. This chapter will also show that the style of Radcliffe's literary landscapes bridges two traditions of landscape painting, namely the picturesque and the sublime, which is reflected in the journey her protagonist undergoes from innocence to experience, and which also represents her emotional state. The third chapter will examine Radcliffe's point of view regarding two important aspects of the Gothic novel, which are terror and horror. Radcliffe's essay "On the Supernatural in Poetry," in which she turns to Shakespeare's work to illustrate the difference between horror and terror, not only makes a significant distinction between these two concepts, but also establishes Radcliffe's mode of terror. This mode of terror is also a major element in her descriptions of natural scenery, and is the reason why Radcliffe often used the concept of the explained supernatural within her own work.

Chapter 1: Radcliffe's Technique of Literary Landscape Painting

Ann Radcliffe was “one of the most celebrated women of the late eighteenth century, yet the least known” (Norton 1). According to Norton “her reclusiveness was possibly a strategy for maintaining her reputation as the greatest novelist of the age” and he adds that she was commonly known as “the mysterious author of the sensational Gothic novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho*” (1). Radcliffe was born in the year 1764, which coincidentally is also the publication year of what is considered to be the very first Gothic novel: *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole (Varma 85). Varma describes this as:

a curious coincidence of literary history that the stars that reigned in the year of the nativity of *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) saw the birth of Mrs. Ann Radcliffe [...] in whose works we perceive the Gothic fiction approaching its meridian. (85)

Based on this quote, a Romanticist at that time would probably say that it was meant to be for Radcliffe to start writing Gothic fiction, which she also turned out to be very good at. Many writers of terror literature have been influenced by the novels of Radcliffe, as “the first vision of the castle of Udolpho, the veiled picture and the gaunt appearance of Schedoni all became icons for the literature of the next half-century, and beyond” (Norton 250). This chapter, which consists of three sections, will show that Radcliffe's landscape descriptions are of vital importance in her novels because these descriptions serve the purpose of enhancing the supernatural atmosphere. This supernatural atmosphere is crucial to creating the suspense in Radcliffe's novels which eventually made them so popular and influential.

Radcliffe is often praised for the “poetic qualities of [her] writing, and her appeal to the imagination” (Bray 33). She was the first “to introduce into her prose fictions a tone of fanciful description and impressive narrative, which had hitherto been exclusively applied to poetry” (Rogers 113). In *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), this use of poetic qualities can especially be applied to Radcliffe's landscape descriptions, which are very excessive and

detailed. The opening lines of *Udolpho* already suggest that landscape is a prominent feature within this novel: “On the pleasant banks of the Garonne, in the province of Gascony, stood, in the year 1584, the chateau of Monsieur St Aubert” (5). This is followed by a long and detailed description of the pastoral landscapes which surround the beautiful chateau of St Aubert, which were “gay with luxuriant woods and vines, and plantations of olives” and which are also situated close to “the majestic Pyrenées, whose summits, veiled in clouds or exhibiting awful forms, seen, and lost again, [...] gleamed through the blue tinge of air, and sometimes frowned with forests of gloomy pine, that swept downward to their base” (5). The first part of this chapter will critically explore the writing style Radcliffe uses in describing landscapes, which can be associated with landscape paintings, and which can also be connected to the writing style which was often used in travel literature. The second part of this chapter will focus on the different aesthetic categories which Radcliffe uses in the landscapes of *Udolpho*, such as the picturesque and the sublime. The third section will analyse what is presumably one of the most important functions of the landscape descriptions, which is the invocation of the supernatural. Together, these three sections show that Radcliffe studied the popular techniques of landscape painting – both pictorial and literary – and borrowed from them the specific representational techniques of the picturesque and the sublime in order to create the supernatural atmosphere that made her novels so suspenseful and ultimately successful.

1.1. Ann Radcliffe’s Style, Landscape Paintings and Travel Journals

As was mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, Radcliffe was praised by many critics for her writing style, and especially the poetic quality of it. Radcliffe’s way of writing is described by Howard as “utilizing a rich aesthetic lexicon, she presents her scenes as a series of painterly subjects [...] described in sweeping, physical detail” (xiv). Furthermore, Norton

suggests that much of Ann Radcliffe's work informs "landscapes and images drawn from the discipline of pictorial art" (76). For many of the landscape scenes in her novels, these passages are written in the same way as how someone would describe a painting of a specific landscape, and it is as if Radcliffe has been there to observe the landscape. This is actually not true, because Radcliffe did not travel very often during her lifetime. According to Howard, she "did not travel abroad until 1794, just after the publication of *Udolpho* and even then, because of the French invasion of the Austrian Netherlands and Belgium, her tour was cut short" (xxi). So the argument that many of Radcliffe's landscapes are based on her understanding of the conventions of pictorial landscape art is very plausible.

The lexicon which Radcliffe uses to describe landscapes contains a great deal of words which can be linked to painting techniques. For instance, in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, phrases such as "exhibiting awful forms," "precipines," which "where contrasted by the soft greens," or "portrait of mankind" (5) are just some of the terms she uses. All of these terms can be associated with paintings as these are aesthetic concepts which are related to vision, such as colour or shape. To add to that, specific painters have been linked to the works of Ann Radcliffe. Moreover, she refers to specific works of art in her novels. Especially the works of Claude Gellée (Claude Lorrain¹), Salvator Rosa and Nicholas Poussin are mentioned. It is not a surprise that Radcliffe was inspired by works of these artists, because their works "represented respectively the Beautiful, the Sublime and the Grand [...]" (Norton 76). These aesthetic terms are of great importance within the genre of the Gothic novel, because they are responsible for creating suspense, terror and ultimately a supernatural atmosphere. These terms also have a certain effect on the characters in the novel, which often puts them in an emotional state of terror.

¹ His real name is Claude Gellée, Claude Lorrain is a byname, in English it is common to refer to him as Claude.

Not only does Radcliffe use a lexicon which can be related to landscape paintings, she also includes techniques of composition which are important for any landscape painting. As Norton suggests:

Her own scenes are ‘framed’ by windows, arches or overhanging trees, and their ‘perspective’ is called to our attention; each of her sketches conscientiously includes the five elements of a proper ‘landskip’: foreground, middle ground, background, flanking sides and the obscure distant view. (76)

This seems to be the case for a great deal of the landscape descriptions which can be found in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. For instance, the following passage from the novel is framed by a window of trees and branches: “The carriage now moved towards the avenue, which was guarded by a gate, and Michael having dismounted to open it, they entered between rows of antient oak and chesnut, whose intermingled branches formed a lofty arch above” (62). Furthermore, passages about landscape can also be analysed with the five elements of a proper landscape mentioned by Norton. For example, when Emily, the protagonist of *Udolpho*, is travelling together with Ludovico, one of her servants, all of these five elements can be found in Radcliffe’s landscape description. Firstly, Radcliffe describes the foreground: “Emily beheld all the charms of sylvan and pastoral landscape united, adorned with the elegant villas of the Florentine nobles, and diversified with the various riches of cultivation” (428). Then, Radcliffe describes what would be the middle ground: “How vivid the shrubs, that embowered the slopes, with the woods, that stretched amphitheatrically along the mountains!” And then Radcliffe describes the background and the sides: “how elegant the outlines of these waving Apennines, now softening from the wildness, which their interior regions exhibited!” She continues describing the scene until the appearance of an “obscure distant view,” as the following part in the novel shows:

At a distance, in the east, Emily discovered Florence, with its towers rising on the brilliant horizon, and its luxuriant plain, spreading to the feet of the Apennines, speckled with gardens and magnificent villas, or coloured with groves of orange and lemon, with vines, corn, and plantations of olives and mulberry; while, to the west, the vale opened to the waters of the Mediterranean, so distant, that they were known only by a blueish line, that appeared upon the horizon, and by the light marine vapour, which just stained the aether above. (428-429)

This is just one example of how Radcliffe uses techniques of composition in her descriptions which she borrowed from landscape painting. Almost every landscape description in *Udolpho* contains the five elements which Norton used to refer to a proper landscape.

Ware refers to the landscape descriptions which Radcliffe provides during Emily's journey to Italy as "scenes better suited to canvas than to paper" (44). In other words, Ware suggests that Radcliffe's literary landscapes are less successful than real landscape paintings. Indeed, some critics have argued that Radcliffe's descriptions by no means equal the real landscape paintings, and readers often complained of the numerous and excessiveness of Radcliffe's descriptions: "Her descriptions of scenery, indeed are vague and wordy to the last degree; they are neither like Salvator nor Claude, nor nature nor art; and she dwells on the effect of moonlight till we are sometimes weary of them" (Hazlitt 148). Of course reading a landscape description in a literary work is not the same as observing a landscape painting by Lorrain or Salvator. However, Radcliffe has created her own piece of art with her scenic descriptions. Her scenes are not "better suited to canvas than to paper" because her scenic descriptions work on a different level. She uses the art of language to create images in the mind of her readers that have a similar effect as Lorrain or Salvator would achieve by using paint. This does not make her landscape scenes less effective. Miles argues that: "Her descriptions are not scenic windows but peculiar acts of artifice, acts conjuring an emotional

terrain for which her readership had a special affinity” (15). The emotional terrain Miles refers to is the effect the landscapes have on the reader, which for instance can be feelings of the sublime. Much of Radcliffe’s talent is based in her ability to transform the visual into words. She writes as if “the reader is an observer before whose gaze the world unfolds” (Miles 51). The effect of observing a landscape painting is mainly aesthetic, but reading a landscape description by Radcliffe not only involves aesthetical elements, it also has a cinematic effect:

Radcliffe’s art was ‘cinematic’ before the fact, for her art is geared to producing in the reader a visual train of association, a series of images on the picture screen of the reader’s mind. Her narrative art, to an extent, lies in producing a chain of tableaux. (Miles 51)

While reading *Udolpho*, the reader is presented by a sequence of pictures. For every landscape description, the reader first has to discern every aspect of the landscape, which would be the foreground, the middle ground, and the obscure distant view. Once the reader has the full image, Radcliffe continues by creating the next image. In that way, reading *Udolpho* can become a sequential exercise for the reader. Furthermore, by creating these images in the reader’s mind, Radcliffe takes the reader into the specific world of her novel. By doing so, she has the ability to invoke aesthetic elements such as the sublime or the picturesque. The effect of invoking these aesthetic categories is that Radcliffe provides the reader with a specific aesthetic experience, one that involves emotions of terror and suspense. Moreover, without these elements, she would not be able to create a supernatural atmosphere in *Udolpho*. *The Critical Review*, a British newspaper which was published between 1756 to 1817, explicitly links Radcliffe’s popularity with her ability to create painterly effects, “her talent for verbal expressions for essentially visual material, for creating spaces in which the reader can effortlessly project herself” (Miles 54). Radcliffe has a talent for creating a

supernatural atmosphere just by describing the landscape. Normally, a Gothic novel such as *Dracula* (1897) by Bram Stoker, would achieve this by introducing some sort of supernatural beings, which would “frequently assume the features of ghosts, spectres, or monsters (mixing features from different realms of being, often life and death) that rise from within the antiquated space [...]” (Hogle 2). However, Radcliffe does not need to conjure up any ghosts or demons in order to achieve the supernatural atmosphere, and this is what makes her work original. Thus, without her landscape descriptions, much of Radcliffe’s originality and talent, and even her popularity would be lost.

Using literary landscape painting techniques in order to provide the reader with an aesthetic experience is typical for Ann Radcliffe, as it also occurs in her other novels. For instance, in *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) similar landscape passages occur. The main characters in this novel also travel through the mountains in “the rich country of Nice,” and Radcliffe provides the reader with a landscape description which is very similar to the previous passage from *Udolpho*:

The gay and luxuriant views which now opened upon the travellers as they wound among the hills, appeared like scenes of fairy enchantment, or those produced by the lonely visions of the Poets. While the spiral summits of the mountains exhibited the snowy severity of winter, the pine, the cypress, the olive, and the myrtle shaded their sides with the green tins of spring, and groves of orange, lemon, and citron, spread over their feet the full glow of autumn. As they advanced, the scenery became still more diversified; and at length, between the receding heights, Adeline caught a glimpse of the distant waters of the Mediterranean, fading into the blue and cloudless horizon. (280)

Here, Radcliffe once again describes the landscape, starting with the closest objects and ending with the distant and obscure view of the ocean, which is very similar to the scene in

Udolpho. The reader takes the perspective of an observer, as Radcliffe uses her lexicon to create detailed images of the landscape in the reader's mind. She uses the reader's ability to imagine the landscape to invoke aesthetic elements, which in this case would be the picturesque, which is often defined as "unevenness and irregularity" (Miles 52). Because such scenic descriptions can also be found in other novels by Radcliffe, this can be considered as a typical Radcliffean characteristic.

Radcliffe also wrote some travel journals in which she uses an excessive amount of scenic descriptions to invoke the aesthetic categories of the sublime and the picturesque. *A Journey Through Holland Made in the Summer of 1794* is an example of such a travel journal. Once more, Bachrach mentions that in her own travel writing "she concentrated too much on the rendering of natural scenery" (Bachrach 10). In this journal, Radcliffe's technique of literary landscape painting can be instantly recognized as she also employs her technique of literary landscape painting here. For instance, Radcliffe wrote the following passage once she enters Holland:

Goree, rendered an island by these encroachments of the sea, is always the first land expected by the seamen; or rather they look out for the lofty tower of its church, which, though several miles more distant than the shore is visible when that cannot be discerned. The entrance of the water between the land in a channel probably three leagues wide soon after commences; and Helvoetsluys is then presently seen, with the masts of vessels rising above its low houses, amidst green embankments and pastures, that there begin the reward the care of excluding the sea. (25)

Although this landscape varies a great deal from the landscape descriptions found in *Udolpho*, Radcliffe again describes the foreground, middle ground and the obscure distant view of the setting as if she is observing a painting.

The fact that Radcliffe wrote travel journals suggests that she did not solely rely on paintings for inspiration for her landscape descriptions. Two travel journals are often mentioned as a possible influence for the landscape descriptions in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. The first one is Hester Lynch Piozzi's *Observations and Reflections Made in the Course of a Journey through France, Italy and Germany* (1798). The second is Ramond de Carbonnières' *Observations faites dans les Pyrénées* (1789). Norton writes that "Travel books, particularly descriptions of Italy, made an important contribution to Ann Radcliffe's evocation of the exotic past" (73). The "evocation of the exotic past" is a typical characteristic of the Gothic novel. For instance, in *The Castle of Otranto* Walpole claims that the plot is based on a manuscript. In the preface to the first edition, he writes: "The following work was found in the library of an ancient catholic family in the north of England. It was printed at Naples, in the black letter, in the year 1579" (5). In this way Walpole is able to place his Gothic novel in the exotic past. Furthermore, according to Chard,

Gothic fiction derives from travel writing not only a range of general descriptive strategies (such as the strategy of constructing dramatic oppositions between wild and cultivated scenes of nature) but also a large number of precise descriptions of particular spots and of particular varieties of natural scenery. (xix)

The idea that Gothic fiction is based on travel writing can indeed be applied to *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, especially since the main characters often travel from one country to the other. Chard adds that the use of travel writing in Gothic novels could suggest that "each Gothic novel is itself a product of a personal experience of travel" (xiv). For *Udolpho*, the reader actually gets a description of Emily's experience of the journeys she makes. Radcliffe makes her protagonist Emily travel from one landscape to another, and constantly reflects her ideas of the scenes around her. Almost every time when the reader encounters a landscape description in *Udolpho*, it is written from the perspective of Emily. Emily contemplates the

wonders of nature, and thus invokes the aesthetic categories such as the picturesque or the sublime. The connection between the landscapes in Gothic novels and travel journals suggests that Gothic novels are a form of armchair tourism; by reading Radcliffe's scenic descriptions, which are both influenced by landscape paintings and travel journals, the reader does not have to leave his or her chair in order to travel through beautiful landscapes. The reader is once more put into the position of the observer. Although he is not looking at a real landscape painting, Radcliffe has the ability to paint a detailed picture of the landscape in the reader's mind by using words, and thus creates a sort of travel journal within her Gothic novel.

1.2. Picturesque versus Sublime Landscapes

Radcliffe's landscapes are heavily influenced by eighteenth-century landscape aesthetics. This section will focus on the aesthetic categories of the picturesque and the sublime. In *Udolpho* there seems to be a clear contrast between the landscape descriptions which occur in the first half of the novel and the landscape descriptions which occur later on in the novel. The two landscape painters, Claude Lorrain and Salvator Rosa who are often mentioned with regard to Radcliffe's work, form a major part in this contrast, which is the contrast between the picturesque and the sublime. Miles argues about Radcliffe:

If through the sublime she elevates 'the soul to its highest pitch', she will bring it down again through the tranquillity of the picturesque. If she darkens her picture by drawing upon the wild landscapes of Salvator Rosa, she will lighten them again through the soft pastoral hues of Claude. (51)

Thus, in *Udolpho*, Radcliffe's characters constantly wonder through landscape descriptions influenced by the aesthetic categories of the picturesque and the sublime.

The picturesque, as Price defines it in his influential thesis *An Essay on the Picturesque, as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1794) "appears to hold a

station between beauty and sublimity” (82). To a certain extent each of these aesthetic categories is defined against the other. For instance, the beautiful is often understood in terms of smoothness, while the picturesque “was defined as unevenness and irregularity” and the sublime “involved nature on a grand scale, and was, in contrast with the other two the epitome of the rugged and untamed” (Miles 52). The following passage in *Udolpho* clearly belongs in the category of the picturesque:

A flask of wine stood beside the old man, and, before him, a small table with fruit and bread, round which stood several of his grandsons, fine rosy children who were taking their supper, as their mother distributed it. On the edge of the little green, that spread before the cottage, were cattle and a few sheep reposing under the trees. The landscape was touched with the mellow light of the evening sun whose long slanting beams played through a vista of the woods, and lighted up the distant turrets of the chateau. (87)

This description is pastoral and light, it contains woods and turrets of a nearby chateau, which

causes the scene to contain

unevenness and irregularity. A

picturesque painting titled *Noon*

(1682) by Claude Lorrain closely

matches Radcliffe’s description.

Whenever characters find

themselves in picturesque

landscapes in one of Radcliffe’s



landscape descriptions, this usually has a calming or soothing effect on the them. This will be thoroughly analysed in chapter two of this thesis.

The picturesque is opposed to the sublime in Radcliffe's Gothic novel. The most influential theory on the sublime, with respect to British Romanticism, was Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). Many of Radcliffe's ideas relating to the concept of the sublime can be traced back to Burke's aesthetic theories. Ware argues that: "the terror generated by Mrs. Ann Radcliffe in her Gothic romances, still almost two hundred years after Gothic romance was the rage considered the best of the school, is firmly rooted in the concept of sublimity as it was defined by Edmund Burke" (5). Burke "found sublimity resident in nature" and he came up with different ideas "visually perceived from external nature which are most productive of the sublime experience" (Ware 6). Burke defines the sublime as follows:

Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime, that is it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling. (86)

The Gothic settings, which are so abundantly found in *Udolpho*, are constructed according to Burke's definition of the sublime, and therefore the landscape descriptions serve as a source for the sublime.

According to Ware, Ann Radcliffe's scenic descriptions "are the products of her own sensitivity to the beauties of external nature and her knowledge of Burke's *Enquiry*" (31). He continues by saying that "the scenery in her five romances is identical, draws heavily upon [...] the sublime, and is often functional in elevating the mind of the observer" (31). A good example of sublimity in *Udolpho* can be found in the following passage taken from the subplot in which Radcliffe focuses on the story of Blanche de Villeforte who is also a Gothic heroine and who becomes a friend of Emily later on in the novel:

[...] Blanche withdrew to a window, the lower panes of which, being without painting, allowed her to observe the progress of the storm over the Mediterranean, whose dark waves, that had so lately slept, now came boldly swelling, in long succession, to the shore, where they burst in white foam, and threw up a high spray over the rocks. [...] The rest of the scene was in deep gloom, except where a sun-beam, darting between the clouds, glanced on the white wings of the sea-fowl, that circled high among them, or touched the swelling sail of a vessel, which was seen labouring in the storm. Blanche, for some time, anxiously watched the progress of the bark, as it threw the waves of foam around it, and, as the lightnings flashed, looked to the opening heavens, with many a sigh for the fate of the poor mariners. (456)

Blanche observes a storm above the sea. Again, the typical style of Radcliffe can be found in this passage, which in this case can be linked to one of Salvator Rosa's paintings. For instance, his painting *Rocky Landscape with Huntsman and Warriors* (1670) features darkness, obscurity and grandeur.

Thus, this passage about the landscape in *Udolpho* functions as a means of invoking the sublime.

Blanche "anxiously" watched, and "looked to the opening heavens," she is intrigued by the storm, as she



stands at the window for quite some time. She is overawed by this scene of wild nature and she feels strong emotions connected to the sublime. Her thoughts wander and leave her in a melancholy mood. This shows how the sublime works through landscape descriptions in *Udolpho* to achieve a supernatural atmosphere and to put the reader and the characters in the novel in a state of suspense and terror.

1.3. Landscapes and the Supernatural

Thus far, the more stylistic aspects of Radcliffe's landscape descriptions have been analysed, but apart from creating the setting of the story, these descriptions play another important role in the Gothic novel, which has to do with the often apparent presence of the supernatural. In Radcliffe's novels this link is mainly established through the use of landscape descriptions in connection to the aesthetic category of the sublime, which was discussed in the previous part. Varma suggests that within the genre of the Gothic novel a supernatural presence or effect is generally built up "by the accumulation of successive details: desolate scenery, tempests, screeching owls, hovering bats, exciting events in burial vaults or on dark, windswept moors; melancholy birds circle portentously over dilapidated battlements" (21). Varma's arguments support the idea that supernatural effects rely much on landscape descriptions, which is also why they play such an important role within the Gothic novel. Varma suggests that a landscape description in a Gothic novel should ultimately lead to what he refers to as "a sensation of sublimity rising into terror, a suspension of mingled astonishment and awe" (20). This idea can indeed be applied to *Udolpho*. For instance, the passage in which Emily visits her father's grave during the night is a good example of this. Emily is staying at the convent where her father is buried, and wants to visit her father's grave, "and that she might not be interrupted, or observed in the indulgence of her melancholy tenderness, she deferred her visit, till every inhabitant of the convent, except the nun who promised to bring her the key of the church, should be retired to rest" (88). This scene supports Varma's definition of the Gothic novel. It contains desolate scenery and the fact that Emily is visiting her father's grave at night suggests that an apparent supernatural event could occur here in the novel. The nun, who is supposed to give Emily the key to the church, says to her that "it is melancholy to go alone at this hour" and right after that, she reminds Emily about a "newly opened grave." As soon as the nun departs, "a sudden fear came over [Emily]," which is highlighted by the

landscape around her, as “the cold air of the aisles chilled her, and their deep silence and extent, feebly shone upon by the moon-light, that streamed through a distant Gothic window, would at any other time have awed her into superstition; now, grief occupied all her attention” (88). Although Emily is mourning her father’s death, the fact that “any other time” this would have brought her into a sense of superstition, shows the way in which landscape functions as a means of invoking the apparent supernatural, and “serve to keep the reader in a state of suspense” (Chard xviii).

Another scene in *Udolpho* that illustrates how the supernatural connects to the landscape descriptions is a scene in which Emily and her father are walking towards the mountains, and observing the gloomy setting around them. St Aubert says to Emily:

I remember that in my youth this gloom used to call forth to my fancy a thousand fairy visions, and romantic images; and, I own, I am not yet wholly insensible of that high enthusiasm, which wakes the poet’s dream. I can linger, with solemn steps, under deep shades, send forward a transforming eye into the distant obscurity, and listen with thrilling delight to the mystic murmuring of the woods. (18)

Again, the setting is associated with the seeming supernatural; Emily’s father says that it could call forth “a thousand fairy visions.” Furthermore, he speaks of the “distant obscurity” which is a term often used in relation to the supernatural, as well as the sublime. Obscurity plays a major part in the Burkean sublime: “to make any thing very terrible, obscurity seems in general to be necessary” (Burke 102). The sublime is also present in this passage, for instance where St Aubert talks about “a thrilling delight.”

After St Aubert’s remark about the gloomy landscape, Emily replies:

O my dear father, [...] how exactly you describe what I have felt so often, and which I thought nobody had ever felt but myself! But hark! Here comes the sweeping sound over the wood-tops; —now it dies away; —how solemn the stillness that succeeds!

Now the breeze swells again. It is like the voice of some supernatural being—the voice of the spirit of the woods, that watches over them by night. Ah! What light is yonder? But it is gone. And now it gleams again, near the foot of that large chestnut: look sir!

(18)

In this passage, aspects of the landscape are once more interwoven with the supernatural, as Emily refers to the wind as “the voice of some supernatural being,” but also the reference to the light could also suggest the presence of something supernatural. According to Sandner, this passage can be explained as “an encounter of the invisible world with the visible world” (97). In other words, this passage could be read as an encounter between the natural and the supernatural world, and in the eyes of Sandner “Emily mistakes the mysterious light for fairies gathering before a twilight dance” (97). Both St Aubert and Emily show signs of superstitious belief in the supernatural, but this is very closely linked to the landscapes they observe. Thus one important function of the landscapes in Radcliffe’s *Udolpho* is the invocation of the apparent supernatural, or as Howard phrases it: “What may strike readers as overly frequent scenic descriptions can be seen on closer inspection to be cumulatively essential of a past reality—France and Italy in the year 1594—but also to the smooth incorporation of uncanny and seemingly supernatural or unnatural elements in the narrative” (xv).

1.4. Conclusion

Radcliffe was and remains a popular Gothic novelist because of her style and the poetic qualities of her writing. Her style is mainly recognizable through her use of detailed and excessive landscape descriptions. In these landscape descriptions, Radcliffe uses a specific technique which can be associated with landscape paintings of the eighteenth century, especially in connection with artists such as Claude Lorrain and Salvator Rosa. This technique

of literary landscape painting is typical for Radcliffe as it occurs in all of her novels.

Furthermore, travel writing also had a major influence on Radcliffe's Gothic novels, as she often describes how her protagonists travel from one country to another. This suggests that Radcliffean style Gothic novels are a form of armchair tourism. The reader is put in the perspective of the observer and is able to travel through beautiful landscapes which are "painted" by Radcliffe in the reader's mind. Furthermore, Radcliffe's scenic descriptions serve the purpose of enhancing the supernatural atmosphere within her novels. By creating a specific landscape, Radcliffe is able to invoke the aesthetic categories of the sublime and the picturesque. By doing so, Radcliffe is able to invoke a supernatural atmosphere, which then leads to suspense within her novel. This is what ultimately made Radcliffe's novels so popular and influential.

Chapter 2: The Gothic Heroine in the Landscape

‘You may find, perhaps, Signor’ said Emily, with mild dignity, ‘that the strength of my mind is equal to the justice of my cause; and that I can endure with fortitude, when it is in resistance of oppression.’ ‘You speak like a heroine,’ said Montoni, contemptuously; ‘we shall see whether you can suffer like one.’ (360)

The plot of many Gothic novels frequently revolves around a typical Gothic heroine, a damsel in distress, often found in the role of the victim in the story. In Gothic fiction “women are the figures most fearfully trapped between contradictory pressures and impulses” and “the oppression and “othering” of the female seen from her point of view has been a principal Gothic subject” (Hogle 9-10). In *Mysteries of Udolpho*, Emily St Aubert is the Gothic heroine, she is the one who is oppressed in the story by the antagonist Montoni. Even Montoni refers to her as the heroine, as the epigraph to this chapter illustrates. Emily is a beautiful and virtuous girl, with a “delicacy of mind, warm affections, and ready benevolence” (8) who resembled her mother, as she had “the same elegant symmetry of form, the same delicacy of features, and the same blue eyes, full of tender sweetness” (9). She is represented in the text as a typical eighteenth-century woman. Howard puts her in the category of “those who embody the new order of liberty and enlightenment, anachronistically having the fashionable sensibility, manners and tastes of the eighteenth-century England” (xi). However, her character also displays a certain degree of sensibility, and “as she advanced in youth, this sensibility gave a pensive tone to her spirits, and a softness to her manner, which added grace to beauty, and rendered her a very interesting object to persons of congenial disposition” (8-9). Emily’s father, St Aubert, tries to teach her “to resist first impressions and to acquire that steady dignity of mind” (9). Emily’s sensibility and enthusiasm cause her to be easily influenced by the world around her. She responds in various ways towards the landscape in *Udolpho*. Emily’s romantic passion and enthusiasm “are vindicated in the

continual allusions to the richness of her sublime responses to nature and her enlightened unmediated apprehension of God” (Howard xxii). This chapter will critically explore the relation between the landscape and the Gothic heroine in *Udolpho*. Throughout the novel, Emily can be found wondering through different landscapes which affect her feelings and character in different ways. At the beginning of the novel, Emily finds herself in more picturesque landscapes, as at that point in the novel, her life is content, and she is part of a happy family together with her parents. However, when both her parents die, and her life changes drastically, the landscapes change as well, becoming darker and more sublime. The journey which Emily makes from picturesque to sublime landscapes is a good example of how Radcliffe’s novel creates a significant bridge between two traditions of landscape painting. Furthermore, Emily’s aesthetic journey from the picturesque to the sublime can also be linked to her mental journey, as Emily undergoes a development from innocence to experience, which is illustrated in her sensibility.

2.1. The Gothic Heroine in the Picturesque and Idyllic Landscape: Start of her Journey

At the beginning of the novel, Radcliffe introduces the reader to the family of St Aubert. Their lives are undisturbed and quiet; they live in the countryside which Radcliffe describes in terms of a beautiful pastoral landscape. Although St Aubert and his wife have lost two sons during their lifetime, everything seems fine now, and they still have their lovely daughter Emily who brightens their lives. One of Emily’s favourite pastimes is to wander around in wild nature, which is a characteristic of the picturesque. The following passage from *Udolpho* is an example of this:

Her favourite walk was to a little fishing-house, belonging to St Aubert, in a woody glen, on the margin of a rivulet that descended from the Pyrenées, and after foaming among their rocks, wound its silent way beneath the shades it reflected. Above the

woods, that screened this glen, rose the lofty summits of the Pyrenées, which often burst boldly on the eye through the glades below. Sometimes the shattered face of a rock only was seen, crowned with wild shrubs; or a shepherd's cabin seated on a cliff, overshadowed by dark cypress, opened to the distant landscape, where the rich pastures and vine-covered slopes of Gascony gradually declined to the plains; and there, on the winding shores of the Garonne, groves, and hamlets, and villas, —their outlines softened by distance, melted from the eye into one rich harmonious tint. (10)

Emily's favourite walk, as described by Radcliffe, situates her in a picturesque and pastoral setting. According to Price in his essay on the picturesque, in a typical picturesque landscape painting:

the turns are sudden and unprepared; the banks sometimes broken and abrupt; sometimes smooth, and gently but not uniformly sloping; now wildly overhung with thickets of trees and bushes; now loosely skirted with wood; no regular verge of grass, no cut edges. (20-21)

Price refers to the picturesque with terms such as roughness and irregularity, therefore his description of the picturesque perfectly fits with the way Radcliffe describes the earlier scenes in *Udolpho*. Phrases such as “the shattered face of a rock [...] crowned with wild shrubs” imply roughness and irregularity, as well as unexpectedness, which are all characteristics of the picturesque (Price 60). Furthermore, Radcliffe describes the scene with eye for every detail, once again using terms related to landscape painting. She starts by describing the foreground, of what easily could be a painting, by mentioning the little fishing-house. Then she continues by depicting the middle ground, which in this case would be the woods and the mountains behind it, and beyond that, the obscure distant view, in which small houses can still be discerned, only to melt “into one rich harmonious tint.” Emily clearly finds herself in an idealized landscape, which could easily be discerned by the reader as an eighteenth-century

landscape painting, as was established in the previous chapter. More importantly, the landscape has a certain purpose for Emily. Ware suggests that “in *the Mysteries of Udolpho*, far more than in her other novels, Mrs. Radcliffe links scenery to the mental and emotional problems of her characters” (42). The perfect and idealized description of the landscape in the passage about Emily’s favourite walk reflects her situation and that of her parents, as at that point in the novel, they form a happy family.

Emily also finds comfort in the landscape, as nature often has a therapeutic effect on her. For instance, in situations where she is in distress about something, the landscape has the ability to lift her spirits, it distracts her mind of certain problems or situations. Chard also suggests this, as she states that “descriptions of natural scenery play a role in the re-animation of the heroine” (xviii). It is as if Emily is comforted by looking at landscape paintings, discerning every detail, and completely taking in everything she perceives in order to restore her mind. For example, during their travels, Emily and her father find a travelling companion named Valancourt, a young man who also finds pleasure in contemplating landscape, with whom Emily falls in love later on in the novel. At one point, Valancourt has to leave St Aubert and Emily, which leaves them both in a melancholy mood after the farewell. The landscape restores both Emily’s and St Aubert’s minds into a happier one, as the following passage, in which they pursue their journey without Valancourt, illustrates:

They travelled on, among vineyards, woods, and pastures, delighted with the romantic beauty of the landscape, which was bounded, on one side, by the grandeur of the Pyrenées, and on the other, by the ocean, and, soon afternoon, they reached the town of Colioure, situated on the Mediterranean. Here they dined, and rested till towards the cool of day, when they pursued their way along the shores—those enchanting shores! which extend to Languedoc. Emily gazed with enthusiasm on the vastness of the sea,

its surface varying, as the lights and shadows fell, and on its woody banks, mellowed with autumnal tints. (57-58)

The passage above reveals that the melancholy mood which Emily and her father suffer from after their dear Valancourt left them is easily exchanged for a happier one, as they contemplate on the beauties of the landscape through which they travel. Furthermore, Radcliffe once more depicts the landscape in this passage as if the reader is standing in front of a landscape painting, as she describes the flanking sides, “the grandeur of the Pyrenées” at one side, and the ocean on the other. Once more, the varying surface of the sea suggests irregularity, so Emily and her father are literary travelling through a picturesque landscape painting, which clearly reflects the state of mind they are in.

According to Price, Claude Lorrain is a painter whose work is closely associated with the picturesque (22). Indeed, when looking at his paintings, one can clearly see the connection to Radcliffe’s descriptions. The passage in the previous paragraph, for instance, can easily be compared with a painting by Lorrain. For instance, *The Veduta of Delphi, with a sacrificial procession*, which Lorrain completed around 1645, is a striking landscape painting that Price would instantly link to the



picturesque, as becomes clear from the following quote:

Picturesque and beauty are founded on very opposite qualities; one on smoothness, the other on roughness; the one on gradual, the other on sudden variation—the one on ideas of youth and freshness, the other on that of age, and even of decay. (Price 82)

So Lorrain's painting is picturesque because it shows irregularity and roughness, for instance the trees on this painting show variation and a degree of age. The effect of such a picturesque setting on the viewer is to enjoy the "landscape as pure spectacle, a lively surface animated by a melange of ornamental details and decorative effects" (Bermingham 85). In the background of the painting, the ocean can be discerned. Emily could easily have been placed in this landscape painting, as the links between Radcliffe's description and Lorrain's painting are inevitable, for Emily "gazed with enthusiasm on the vastness of the sea," which could be the sea in the background of Lorrain's landscape. Also, the light colours and the sun in the background of this painting reflect the positive mood of Emily and her father, to which Radcliffe refers in her description.

Apart from affecting the emotions of the characters in a positive way, the idyllic and picturesque landscapes also form a source of inspiration for Radcliffe's characters. The characters feel a sense of unity with the landscape, which is an element of the religious sublime. Norton describes this quality as a "distinguishing feature of Ann Radcliffe's characters" which he refers to as:

[T]heir uniquely aesthetic sensibility. They read books, compose poetry, play music, draw pictures and contemplate the landscape—pausing long enough in their flight from banditti to analyse the affecting contrasts of a picturesque cliff, employing the precise terminology derived from contemporary critical analysis of the Sublime, the Beautiful and the Picturesque. (11)

At the end of the eighteenth century, aesthetic sensibility became immensely popular, especially in the sense of nature poetry. In this poetry, nature was a source for inspiration and comfort as the following quote illustrates:

Mankind has always taken an interest in nature; but not until the eighteenth century did the interest in nature become an elaborate cult, a self-conscious worship. Mankind

has always loved nature; but not until the eighteenth century did the love of nature blossom out into a dependence on a great personified Nature for wisdom, spiritual comfort, and holiness, into an ability to derive from Nature and objects of the natural world religious enthusiasm, moral goodness, and mystical understanding of both man and God. (Williams 583)

Romantic poets such as Wordsworth and Coleridge would “capture the sensuous nuances of the natural scene” in their poetry. Romantic nature poems are “usually meditative, using the presented scene to suggest a personal crisis [...] Romantic poems habitually endow the landscape with human life, passion and expressiveness” (Greenblatt 11). Wordsworth’s “Descriptive Sketches” for instance, shows how a man can be inspired and calmed by nature, as becomes apparent in the first lines:

Were there, below, a spot of holy ground
 Where from distress a refuge might be found,
 And solitude prepare the soul for heaven;
 Sure, nature’s God that spot to man had given
 Where falls the purple morning far and wide
 In flakes of light upon the mountain side;
 Where with loud voice the power of water shakes
 The leafy wood, or sleeps in quiet lakes. (ll. 1-8)

Here, Wordsworth clearly invokes nature as “a refuge from distress.” He continually refers to nature as a source for relief and comfort, such as “Kind Nature’s charities his steps attend / In every babbling brook he finds a friend;” (ll. 25-26) but also as a source for inspiration “While chastening thoughts of sweetest use, bestowed / By wisdom, moralise his pensive road” (ll. 27-28).

The appreciation for nature can also be found in Emily's character, as her aesthetic sensibility is one of her major characteristics. Her aesthetic sensibility is closely linked to the landscape in *Udolpho*. Emily reads a lot, but also composes poetry herself. Most of the time when she is creating poetry, she finds her inspiration in her surroundings. Only after she has investigated all the details in the landscape around her, she gets herself into a specific mind set which allows her to create the most beautiful sonnets. The following quote illustrates this: "the gloom of the woods; the trembling of their leaves, [...] the bat, flitting on the twilight; the cottage-lights, now seen, and now lost—were circumstances that awakened her mind into effort, and led to enthusiasm and poetry" (10). Emily is, much like the speaker in Wordsworth's "Descriptive Sketches" inspired by nature.

At the beginning of the novel, when Emily's life is still harmonious and peaceful, her aesthetic sensibility allows her to invoke the religious sublime through contemplating the landscape. The sublime which she invokes at the beginning of her journey through the landscape has a positive religious aspect to it. The idyllic and pastoral scenes remind her of her religion and Emily admires the landscapes in an almost devotional way. This is an example of the positive religious sublime, in which "the wildest and apparently most irregular aspects of nature, which earlier ages had shunned, could be explained as part of the divine economy and appreciated as revelations of God's power and wisdom" (Morris 2). The following passage from *Udolpho* can be considered as an example of the religious sublime:

It was one of Emily's earliest pleasures to ramble among the scenes of nature; nor was it in the soft and glowing landscape that she most delighted; she loved more the wild wood-walks, that skirted the mountain; and still more the mountain's stupendous recesses, where the silence and grandeur of solitude impressed a sacred awe upon her heart, and lifted her thoughts to the GOD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH. (10)

This passage also shows Emily's aesthetic sensibility, as it was one of her "earliest pleasures to ramble among the scenes of nature." Additionally, this passage clearly indicates that Emily's emotions and thoughts are related to the landscape, because the landscape has the ability to place "a sacred awe upon her heart." Furthermore, this passage shows what Norton means by saying that Radcliffe's characters employ "the precise terminology derived from contemporary critical analysis of the Sublime, the Beautiful and the Picturesque." In this passage, the sublime is clearly present and evokes specific emotions, in this case related to religion. Emily loves "the soft and glowing landscape" but she prefers "wild wood-walks" in the mountains, which will lead her along "stupendous recesses" where she is inspired by the "grandeur of solitude." The most important phrase in this passage is the last phrase, in which Radcliffe alludes to the power of God, as she describes how Emily "lifted her thoughts to the GOD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH." This is probably the most extreme feeling a person can experience with regard to the sublime, which is also a positive feeling as opposed to the darker Gothic sublime Burke describes in his *Enquiry*. Emily acknowledges God to be responsible for all the grandeur and beautiful nature she encounters during her walk. She considers herself to be just a small part of God's creation. Radcliffe even uses capitalization to emphasize this point. This invokes the religious sublime, Emily feels in harmony with everything around her, so this is a positive version of the sublime.

A similar instance of the positive religious sublime can be found in another novel by Radcliffe. In *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), Madame de Menon clearly experiences the religious sublime in a positive sense. She is walking along a stream "to where the deep shades retired, and the scene again opening to day, yielded to her a view so various and sublime, that she paused in thrilling and delightful wonder" (104). Here, she is evidently experiencing the sublime, but not in the dark and obscure sense as Burke describes in his *Enquiry*.

Fancy caught the thrilling sensation, and at her touch the towering steeps became shaded with unreal glooms; the caves more darkly frowned—the projecting cliffs assumed a more terrific aspect, and the wild overhanging shrubs waved to the gale in deeper murmurs. The scene inspired madame with reverential awe, and her thoughts involuntary rose, ‘from Nature up to Nature’s God’. (104)

This passage is similar to the one where Emily “lifted her thoughts to the GOD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH”. Madame de Menon is inspired by the landscape around her, which lead her into emotions of the religious sublime as her “thoughts involuntary rose, ‘from Nature up to Nature’s God’”. This positive experience of the sublime is different as opposed to the Burkean sublime, since it does not involve darkness and obscurity. Furthermore, this passage once again highlights how the landscape invokes and influences emotive responses within Radcliffe’s characters.

2.2. The Heroine Continues her Journey: Transition to Darker, Sublime Landscapes

The idyllic picturesque landscape descriptions, which contain moments of the religious sublime, soon start to change. Once Emily’s mother dies due to illness, she and her father start a journey and leave La Vallée. This journey forms part of the process of overcoming their grief. Emily’s aunt, Madame Cheron, also emphasizes this. She presses Emily to visit her, and tells her and St Aubert that: “change of place will amuse you [...] and it is wrong to give way to grief” (24). The idyllic and picturesque landscapes of La Vallée have changed, as they now hold memories from the past days when Emily’s mother was still alive. This is the point in the novel when Emily and her father start a journey through the mountains, and Radcliffe’s landscape descriptions start to change as they continue their journey. The way in which Radcliffe modifies her landscape descriptions becomes more evident when St Aubert suffers from a serious illness which prevents him to pursue their journey to the Mediterranean coast.

Suddenly, the landscape is far from picturesque and idyllic. First of all because they are not in their domestic surroundings anymore, and second of all because the unlucky events which have taken place have affected Emily's situation. The following passage appears directly after St Aubert is unable to continue the journey, because he has fainted in the carriage:

She stepped from the carriage in search of the chateau she had seen at a distance. It was a still moon-light night, and the music, which yet sounded on the air, directed her steps from the high road, up a shadowy lane, that led to the woods. Her mind was for some time so entirely occupied by anxiety and terror for her father, that she felt none for herself, till the deepening gloom of the overhanging foliage, which now wholly excluded the moon-light, and the wildness of the place, recalled her to a sense of her adventurous situation. (64)

Although the landscape in this passage still features picturesque elements, such as roughness and unexpectedness, it has become much darker and obscure. The passage clearly invokes the Burkean sublime because Emily is in extreme distress. Emily is "occupied by anxiety and terror for her father", she is in unfamiliar surroundings, and darkness heavily features in this description. She realizes she is in great danger as Radcliffe points out her "adventurous situation." This description of the natural scenery reflects Emily's position in life and her state of mind. At this point, she realizes that if her father dies, she will not know what to do. She will be completely alone in the wide world. Such thoughts coincide with the Burkean sublime, as Emily realizes she is just a small being, surrounded by a nature that is still the creation of God, but with which she now finds it difficult to unify her spirit. Instead, the power of nature now highlights her smallness and fragility.

All of a sudden, the religious sublime which was invoked by the idyllic landscape descriptions in the first part of the novel is infused with a darker supernatural undertone, as the landscape is now often responsible for creating feelings of terror within Emily's mind. In

the Burkean sublime, “the passion caused by the great and the sublime in nature, when those causes operate most powerfully, is Astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror” (101); or, as Price suggests, is “founded on principles of awe and terror, [and] never descends to anything light or playful” (100). In the previous passage this can be detected from phrases associated with darkness and obscurity, such as “still moon-light night,” “shadowy lane” and the “deepening gloom of overhanging foliage.” This aspect of the landscape increases after St Aubert dies due to his illness. The passage in which Emily visits her father’s grave for the last time, during her stay at the convent, shows how the landscape has become darker, due to Emily’s state of mind, and also how it invokes the supernatural:

[...] gloomy and affecting visions had arisen upon her mind. Now she remembered them, and, turning aside to avoid the broken ground, these recollections made her pass on with a quicker step to the grave of St Aubert, when the moonlight, that fell athwart a remote part of the aisle, she thought she saw a shadow gliding between the pillars.
(88)

Emily is completely alone and passes through a church to the grave of her father. Nothing is left of the idealized landscape of her home now, and her state of mind has completely changed. Everything around her has become darker, due to the fact that Emily feels desolated and melancholy because of her father’s death. In other words, there is a two-way influence. On the one hand, the mood of the characters influences the landscape, but the landscape also influences the mind set of characters. Ellis points out that Radcliffe’s heroines in these sort of settings “display their rationality and independence within a context in which the thrill of observing ‘wild’ nature—steep precipices, vast forests, sudden thunderstorms and such—can in a moment become terror in the face of the apparently supernatural” (100). Due to the fact that unfortunate changes have taken place in Emily’s life, the landscape has changed as well,

and rather than the comforting and alleviating effect it had when Emily was still with her parents, now the landscape has become more of a threat to her.

Emily's situation only gets worse. Since Emily lacks a guardian now her father is gone, she is forced to live with her aunt Madame Cheron. Madame Cheron does not share any of Emily's interests; she is selfish, cruel, and cold towards Emily. This becomes evident once Emily arrives in her aunt's estate near Toulouse, as the following passage illustrates:

Emily suppressed a starting tear, and tried to smile away the expression of an oppressed heart; she was thinking of her home, and felt too sensibly the arrogance and ostentatious vanity of Madame Cheron's conversation. 'Can this be my father's sister!' said she to herself. (113)

Emily's situation and state of mind become more negative in the presence of her aunt. Her aunt prevents her from seeing Valancourt, who is about the only person left who could make Emily happy. Though, Emily still finds comfort in the landscape:

Emily's pleasantest hours were passed in the pavilion of the terrace, to which she retired, when she could steal from observation, with a book to overcome, or a lute to indulge, her melancholy. There, as she sat with her eyes fixed on the far-distant Pyrenées, and her thoughts on Valancourt and the beloved scenes of Gascony, she would play the sweet and melancholy songs of her native province—the popular songs she had listened to from her childhood. (118)

This passage shows that Emily is still in touch with her aesthetic sensibility. It also illustrates that the emotions of Radcliffe's characters are interwoven with the landscape. The changes in Emily's life are emphasized by Radcliffe in the landscape. However, Emily also uses the landscape to comfort herself from her melancholy. This shows the reader how Emily longs back to her former life, because her thoughts are on "her native province" and her childhood.

Emily's situation worsens during her stay at her aunt's estate. Madame Cheron marries an Italian nobleman named Montoni. The grounds upon which the marriage between Montoni and Madame Cheron is based are highly questionable, as Radcliffe points out "that Madame Cheron at her years should elect a second husband was ridiculous, though her vanity made it not impossible; but that Montoni, with his discernment, his figure, and pretensions, should made a choice of Madame Cheron—appeared most wonderful" (127). Also, Emily was to be married to Valancourt, as her aunt had finally consented to their union. However, once Madame Cheron is married to Montoni, he immediately decides to go back to Italy, thus preventing the marriage between Emily and Valancourt. Here, Emily's journey through the landscape continues. She now has to travel to Italy. Upon leaving Toulouse, Emily watches the familiar landscape disappear. With that her last hope of seeing Valancourt again also disappears, as becomes apparent in the following passage:

'Dear pleasant mountains!' said she to herself, 'how long may it be ere I see ye again, and how much may happen to make me miserable in the interval! Oh, could I now be certain, that I should ever return to ye, and find that Valancourt still lived for me, I should go in peace! [...] The trees, that impended over the high banks of the road and formed a line of perspective with the distant country, now threatened to exclude the view of them; but the blueish mountains still appeared beyond the dark foliage, and Emily continued to lean from the coach window, till at length the closing branches shut them from her sight. (155-156)

In this passage, Radcliffe once again provides her readers with a picturesque landscape, in which Emily sees her former happiness and hope which she almost reached with Valancourt. Emily literally travels into a darker landscape, as "trees [...] now threatened to exclude the view" and the "dark foliage" which shut the picturesque landscape out of her sight. In other words, this passage can be considered as the real transition to darker and more Burkean

sublime landscapes, which runs parallel to Emily's state of mind, which at that point is very melancholy. Also, she is now in the hands of Montoni, of whom it soon becomes clear that he is not a nobleman. Montoni reveals himself to be the typical "English Gothic villain" (Ellis xiv). A Gothic villain either wants to marry the Gothic heroine against her will or tries to get her property or "usurp the castle" (Ellis xiv). Montoni has already married Emily's aunt, but it turns out he only did this in order to get possession of her wealth and estates. Furthermore, Montoni locks up Emily and her aunt in his desolate castle Udolpho, in order to get their estates.

2.3. The Heroine in the Gothic Castle

A typical Gothic novel "feature[s] accounts of terrifying experiences in ancient castles — experiences connected with subterranean dungeons, secret passageways, flickering lamps, screams, moans, bloody hands, ghosts, graveyards, and the rest" (Hudson & Adams). So it is no surprise that Emily finds herself in such an ancient castle. The Gothic castle is an inevitable element of the landscape of a Gothic novel, as this is usually the place where the heroine becomes superstitious and experiences feelings of terror. Once the Gothic castle is present in *Udolpho*, the landscape descriptions provided by Radcliffe are dark, sublime and invoke emotions of terror and a supernatural atmosphere. Emily's reaction upon seeing the Montoni's castle Udolpho for the first time, shows that at that point in the novel, the transition from the more idyllic and picturesque landscape paintings to the darker, grotesque and Burkean sublime tradition of landscape painting is complete:

Emily gazed with melancholy awe upon the castle, which she understood to be Montoni's, for, though it was now lighted up by the setting sun, the Gothic greatness of its features, and its mouldering walls of dark grey stone, rendered it a gloomy and sublime object. As she gazed, the light died away on its walls, leaving a melancholy

purple tint, which spread deeper and deeper, as the thin vapour crept up the mountain, while the battlements above were still tipped with splendour. (216)

This description could easily be linked to a painting by John Martin titled *Moonlight-Chepstow Castle*, completed in 1815.

This painting features a ruinous castle situated in the mountains.

Much like Montoni's Udolpho, this castle also seems to have "mouldering walls of dark grey stone."



Furthermore, Martin's painting also invokes the Burkean sublime as it highlights the grandeur of the castle, especially in comparison with the person standing on the rock who is just a small being in comparison to the greatness of the castle. Price suggests that this grandeur is one of the principles which discerns the picturesque from the sublime, as he says "[...] greatness of dimension is a powerful cause of the sublime; the Picturesque has no connection with dimension of any kind" (99). Thus, by emphasizing the grandeur of the castle both Radcliffe and Martin are able to invoke the sublime. Besides grandeur, darkness and obscurity are other principles connected to the sublime, as Burke writes: "to make anything very terrible, obscurity seems in general to be necessary" (102). Obscurity is very much present in Martin's painting. The landscape around the castle, which consists of a valley and forest, is completely cloaked in darkness, which is emphasised by the light background of the painting. This creates a certain amount of obscurity, for instance, the bridge at the right side of the castle is

difficult to discern among the darkness. Radcliffe's description of Montoni's castle also features obscurity:

[Emily] walked away to one of the high windows, that opened upon the ramparts, below which, spread the woods she had passed in her approach to the castle. But the night-shade sat deeply on the mountains beyond, and their indented outline could be faintly traced on the horizon, where a red streak yet glimmered in the west. The valley between was sunk in darkness. (218)

These sublime and dark landscapes are once again tightly linked to Emily's situation. As she enters the castle, and sees everything become darker, she says goodbye to her freedom. Also, Radcliffe uses these sublime landscape descriptions to incorporate "uncanny and seemingly supernatural or unnatural elements in the narrative" (Howard xv). For Emily, supernatural occurrences and feelings of terror really start to overpower her once she is in the castle.

The whole atmosphere in and around Montoni's castle, with all its desolated rooms and secret passages, has a negative effect on Emily, and once more reflects her situation. She starts to imagine things, and terrific images of ghosts start to rise in her mind, all due to her surroundings. After Emily's aunt discovers that Montoni has betrayed her, she disappears. Emily thinks her aunt is murdered by Montoni, and she is desperate to hear anything about her aunt. She realizes that without her aunt, she is left in the hands of Montoni:

Two following days, passed in the same manner, unmarked by any occurrence, during which she obtained no information of Madame Montoni. On the evening of the second, having dismissed Annette, and retiring to bed, her mind became haunted by the most dismal images, such as her long anxiety, concerning her aunt, suggested; and unable to forget herself, for a moment, or to vanquish the phantoms, that tormented her, she rose from her bed, and went to one of the casements of her chamber, to breathe a freer air. (309)

Emily is in a state of extreme anxiety, as this passage suggests. She does not know what is going on, and nobody really talks to her, except for her servant Annette. Emily is desolated and melancholy, and as the last phrase suggests, she tries to find relief. This is the passage which follows:

All without was silent and dark, unless that could be called light, which was only the faint glimmer of the stars, shewing imperfectly the outline of the mountains, the western towers of the castle and the ramparts below, where a solitary sentinel was pacing. What an image of repose did this scene present! (309)

The darkness of the landscape reflects Emily's emotion. However, this sublime landscape does not help her to restore her mind, and it is almost as if Emily has lost her aesthetic sensibility. The scene, which at the beginning of the novel could still have a therapeutic function for Emily, now only "awakened her grief and astonishment" and "brought a retrospect of all the strange and mournful events, which had occurred since she lived in peace with her parents" (310). This passage perfectly indicates how the landscape has changed for Emily, and it even refers back to her former life, in which everything was peaceful. The contrast which Radcliffe creates in the landscape descriptions of the first chapters of *Udolpho* versus the descriptions of the landscape when the heroine is locked up in the desolate castle indicates how Emily's state of mind has changed.

2.4. Conclusion

At the beginning of *Udolpho*, Emily's character wanders through a perfect and idyllic world. Her home in La Vallée represents every aspect of picturesque landscapes in relation to the religious sublime. Radcliffe's landscape descriptions are in perfect harmony with Emily's emotions and feelings. The landscape shows that Emily's character has a specific aesthetic sensibility, the landscapes have the ability to re-animate her, or they inspire her to write

poetry. Furthermore, Emily also experiences the sublime through contemplating the landscapes which she travels through. This sublimity initially has a positive religious aspect, and sometimes Emily becomes devotional in her landscape appreciation. However, once things in Emily's life take on a negative turn, she travels through different landscapes, which suddenly become darker and more Burkean sublime. These landscapes start to invoke feelings of terror, and even become related to the supernatural. Once Emily is locked up in a desolated castle by Montoni, the transition from the picturesque and idyllic landscape paintings to darker, more sublime and supernatural paintings is complete. Thus, the way in which the Gothic heroine wanders from harmonious picturesque to darker, more obscure sublime landscapes, illustrate that Radcliffe's novels form a bridge between two traditions of landscape painting in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, and also emphasizes the emotional journey which Emily has to undergo from innocence to experience.

Chapter 3: Terror versus Horror within Landscape Descriptions

As was established in earlier chapters, Radcliffe's writing style is remarkable because of her allusions towards painting techniques and her poetic way of describing things. However, she was not solely inspired by landscape artists, travel journals, or her own imagination, but also by other writers such as William Shakespeare. His works feature quite often in Radcliffe's novels. For instance, she used quotations from Shakespeare as epigraphs to chapters, and she modelled certain passages in her novels after scenes from Shakespeare's plays (Norton 1). This is also the case in *Udolpho*. For example, the epigraph of chapter five, volume one, reads: "Can such things be, and overcome us like a summer's cloud, without our special wonder" (98), which is a quote from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (3.4.109-111). Norton points out that some critics in the eighteenth century even "judged Radcliffe to be the equal of Shakespeare, or even his superior," and referred to her as "the Shakespeare of Romance writers" (Norton 1).

Radcliffe was an admirer of Shakespeare and wrote a critical essay titled "On the Supernatural in Poetry" (1826), in which she describes her own understanding of Shakespeare's writing technique with regard to the supernatural. In this essay, Radcliffe constructs a fictional dialogue between two critics who discuss the value and function of the supernatural in Shakespeare's work. In the dialogue between those two critics, Radcliffe creates an important distinction between two concepts which are essential to the Gothic novel and thus her own work, namely the distinction between the concepts of horror and terror. According to Chard, "the Gothic novel introduces a range of different concepts of horror and terror" (xxi). Horror and terror are emotions which the Gothic heroine often has to endure, either because of mysterious events or because of the way the Gothic villain treats her. The essay became influential for the way in which Radcliffe describes these two different emotional states. By doing so, she also clearly established herself as an author of terror

fiction, rather than horror. The first part of this chapter will focus on Radcliffe's essay and her famous distinction between terror and horror. The second part will analyse how this essay positioned her as an author of terror rather than horror. Furthermore, the last part of this chapter will link Radcliffe's distinction between terror and horror to her landscape descriptions in *Udolpho*, and explains why this particular distinction could be the reason why Radcliffe focused so much on landscape in her novel, and also why Radcliffe was so fond of using the explained supernatural in many of her novels.

3.1. The Radcliffean Mode of Terror

Radcliffe's posthumously published essay "On the Supernatural in Poetry" was first meant to be part of the prologue to Radcliffe's last novel *Gaston de Blondville*, which unlike her other novels does feature "an actual ghost whose presence cannot be justified by reason" (Delphi Classics 2882). Instead, it was published as a separate piece in *New Monthly Magazine* in 1826. Radcliffe wrote this essay as a dialogue between two travellers, Mr. S and Mr. W. According to Norton "the essay gives us important glimpses into Radcliffe's own technique for creating a sense of the supernatural in her novels, and underlines how important Shakespeare was for her" (2). The two travellers in the essay discuss several scenes, which are mainly scenes from Shakespeare's work such as *Macbeth* (1623), *Hamlet* (1603) and *Julius Caesar* (1623). For instance, the two travellers discuss the scene in which the ghost of Hamlet appears. They have a discussion about how all of the circumstances in that scene work together, and "excite some feelings of dreariness, or melancholy, or solemnity, or expectation, in unison with, and leading on towards that high curiosity and thrilling awe with which we witness the conclusion of the scene" (4). Mr. W, who represents Radcliffe's own opinion in this essay, explains what he considers to be the main difference between the concepts of horror and terror in relation to the appearance of the ghost in Hamlet. He says: "terror and

horror are so far opposite, that the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a higher degree of life, the other contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them” (7). Here, Radcliffe follows Edmund Burke, who in his theory on the sublime “assigns to [horror] an effect so strong that all pleasurable emotion is precluded” (Ware 16). Moreover, “ideas producing terror contribute extremely to the sublime” as “ideas which produce terror are necessarily accompanied with admiration [...] and with astonishment, and as terror is perhaps one of the [most] violent[...] of all passions, it consequently makes an impression which we cannot resist” (Dennis 102). Thus, terror is associated with experiences of the sublime, as it “awakens faculties to a higher degree of life” and has the ability to alleviate the soul to a higher level. Horror, on the other hand, has the ability to nearly paralyze a person, as it “freezes, and nearly annihilates.” So although the effect of experiencing horror is stronger than that of terror, horror has a more negative effect on the mind of characters, while terror is clearly the preferred emotion. Radcliffe refers to it as an effect which can raise a person’s mind to a higher level.

According to Radcliffe, creating a mode of terror has everything to do with creating the right associations or circumstances within a scene. For instance, she discusses the banquet scene in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, in which an object of terror is “introduced into scenes of gaiety and splendour” (6). During the banquet scene, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth enter as King and Queen to enjoy a meal with their guests. When Macbeth wants to sit down he says “The table’s full” (3.4.43) but the others have reserved a place for him, as one of them says “Here, my good lord. What is’t that moves your highness?” (3.4.46). Macbeth’s place is occupied by the ghost of Banquo, who he murdered in order to become king, and Macbeth exclaims: “Which of you have done this? [...] Thou canst not say I did it; never shake/ Thy gory locks at me” (3.4.47-50). Macbeth is clearly horrified by the ghosts, but the others are not able to see it, and they think Macbeth is not well. Macbeth speaks to the ghost upon which

the ghost disappears, and the scene immediately turns back to that of a happy banquet, as the following lines spoken by Macbeth illustrate:

I do not forget.

Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends:

I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing

To those that know me. Come, love and health to all!

Then I'll sit down. Give me some wine; fill full! [...]

I drink to the general joy o' the whole table,

And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss.

Would he were here! To all –and him –we thirst,

And to all.” (3.4.85-90).

The first time Macbeth sees the ghost he is shocked, but as becomes apparent from this quote, he soon recovers from this horrific experience and he gives a toast to “the general joy o’ the whole table” and to Banquo. The atmosphere has again turned back to a scene of gaiety.

However, the ghost appears for a second time, and Macbeth reacts once more as if horror-struck:

Avant, and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee!

Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold.

Thou hast no speculation in those eyes

Which thou dost glare with. (3.4.92-95)

When the ghost disappears for the second time, Macbeth says “Why, so; being gone, I am a man again. –Pray you sit still.” (3.4.107-108). Macbeth is clearly affected by the sight of the ghost of the man he murdered, but this effect does not last. Radcliffe explains that such a scene does not lead up to the right atmosphere of terror, because the atmosphere in this scene is happy. In her essay she states that “the effect, though sudden and strong, is also transient; it is the thrill of horror and surprise, which they then communicate, rather than the deep and solemn feelings excited under more accordant circumstances, and left long upon the mind” (6). This quote also emphasizes the difference between horror and terror. As can be concluded from this quote, Radcliffe emphasizes the “accordant circumstances.” These circumstances mainly involve a sense of uncertainty and obscurity, concepts closely connected to the sublime, as one of the sections in Burke’s *Enquiry* is entirely devoted to obscurity. Creating the right circumstances in a scene is also part of Radcliffe’s technique which she applies in her own works. By creating the right circumstances, for instance in the landscape, Radcliffe creates her mode of what is often referred to as Radcliffean terror. Radcliffean terror thus involves creating obscurity and uncertainty within the landscape or setting in order to create an uncanny feeling or emotions of terror which ultimately builds up to what could be a supernatural effect in combination with a sublime experience.

Norton also remarks about Radcliffe’s essay that “the distinct feature that Radcliffe added to this theory of correspondence was the practice of devising associations that would serve to stir up feelings of fear and dreadful anticipation” (7). Furthermore, by explaining her techniques of invoking the supernatural by means of obscurity and uncertainty, Radcliffe establishes herself as an author of terror rather than horror. According to Miles,

Radcliffe’s discrimination between ‘terror and horror’ virtually encodes the difference between her style of Gothic, and, say Matthew Lewis’s. His is full ‘positive horror’.

Nothing is left to the imagination; all is shown. In Radcliffe very little is ‘shown’; hers, rather, is an art of suggestion. Terror occurs in the mind of her characters. (47).

Once more, Miles’s point illustrates the difference between the two concepts. Furthermore, this is once more a good example of the Radcliffean mode of terror; creating obscurity and uncertainty in the setting in order to create terror in the mind of Radcliffe’s characters and readers.

Radcliffe’s distinction between horror and terror has become so influential that it has influenced scholars to develop a distinction within the genre between “terror Gothic” and “horror Gothic,” as Hogle explains:

The first of these holds characters and readers mostly in anxious suspense about threats of life, safety, and sanity kept largely out of sight or in shadows or suggestions from a hidden past, while the latter confronts the principal characters with the gross violence of physical or psychological dissolution, explicitly shattering the assumed norms (including the repressions) of everyday life with wildly shocking, and even revolting, consequences. (3)

This is just one of the many definitions of the Gothic derived from Radcliffe’s distinction between horror and terror. So her essay still is of great importance to the Gothic genre. In this essay, Radcliffe not only acknowledges the importance of Shakespeare’s work to her own. She also makes a clear distinction between horror and terror, and she establishes her own technique of creating terror within Gothic fiction. In the next section, I will analyse how Radcliffe’s concept of terror features in her landscape descriptions.

3.2 Terror and Landscapes

As was discussed in previous chapters, Radcliffe's landscapes are a great source for the supernatural and the sublime. By now, it is also apparent that these two concepts are closely linked with another factor in the Gothic novel, which is the concept of terror. In the previous section it became apparent that Ann Radcliffe makes a clear distinction between what she calls horror and what she calls terror. Her landscape descriptions illustrate this as well.

According to Sandner, Radcliffe's landscapes are often the cause of conflicts in *Udolpho*.

Sandner explains that Radcliffe's novel:

puts into play a number of paired opposites related to the supernatural and the natural—superstition and science, the sublime and the beautiful, horror and terror, passion and sense—but never to just banish one term and uncompromisingly embrace the other; rather Radcliffe seeks to hold opposites in tension [...] never letting go of either. (91)

According to Sandner, Radcliffe balances both terror and horror in her novels. She mainly does this by describing landscapes or architecture within her novels. For instance, as soon as a scene starts to become too horrific, Radcliffe describes softer or more peaceful features of the landscape in order to put her characters and readers into a more peaceful mood. Jacobs states: "In Radcliffe's novels [...] the topic of architecture conventionally occasions the Radcliffean mode of terror" (54). Indeed, as was established in earlier chapters, the castle of Udolpho is one of the main sources of the supernatural and sublime experiences. In this way, Radcliffe applies the sublime in a different way than Burke does in his *Enquiry*. Burke mainly applies the sublime to nature, in the first section of his *Enquiry* "Of the passion caused by the sublime", Burke states "The passion caused by the great and sublime in *nature* [...]" (102) he evidently puts the emphasis on the sublime in nature. Radcliffe, by contrast, also evokes the

sublime through her description of architectural features. For instance, in a great deal of the passages where Emily undergoes a sublime experience, she is inside the castle. In other words, Radcliffe uses elements from the Burkean sublime, but instead of applying it solely to nature as Burke does in his *Enquiry*, Radcliffe is also able to use the sublime in an enclosed space, such as a castle. That is because the key categories of the Burkean sublime, which are darkness and obscurity, can be applied to the castle of Udolpho.

Howard also suggests that Radcliffe occasionally balances horror and terror in her Gothic novels. He argues that:

Beautiful and wild garden scenes as La Vallée or Chateau-le-Blanc, heightened by obscurity and chiaroscuro, produce melancholy or a ‘thrilling awe’; while charming valleys and plains offset by the savage texture of the surrounding mountains, are seen as ‘beauty sleeping in the lap of horror.’ (xv)

However, Radcliffe generally tries to avoid the mode of horror which she so clearly specified in her essay about the supernatural in poetry. She is more concerned with creating the right feeling of terror in her scenes, and uses terrific images to invoke the sublime. As Howard puts it:

Sometimes ‘purely sublime’ barren rocky outcrops or the darkness of tall woods seem ‘the very haunt of banditti’ and awaken ‘terrific images in [Emily’s] mind. At others, ‘sublime’ views of the Pyrenees, ‘exhibiting awful forms’ and ‘tremendous precipices’ but softened by the variety of woods, pastures or rustic dwellings at the margins, or the hazy luminosity of early morning or late afternoon, are inspirational [...]. (xiv)

In the scenes in which Emily sees a figure wandering around the castle grounds during midnight once she is in Montoni’s castle, Radcliffe clearly wants to emphasise terror rather than horror. In one of the passages in which the figure appears again, Radcliffe’s way of writing starts to evoke feelings of horror, as this presumably supernatural figure could easily

shock the audience by appearing out of nowhere. However, as becomes apparent in the following passage, the wandering figure, or in this case a mysterious light, creates the suggestion of something supernatural, and the tension in this scene is built up in a gradual manner. Radcliffe merely evokes the suggestion of a supernatural presence, which she does by creating obscurity and using darkness within the landscape:

The moon gave a faint and uncertain light, for heavy vapours surrounded it, and, often rolling over the disk, left the scene below in total darkness. It was in one of these moments of obscurity that she observed a small and lambent flame, moving at some distance of the terrace. While she gazed, it disappeared, and, the moon again emerging from the lurid and heavy thunder clouds, she turned her attention to the heavens, where the vivid lightnings darted from cloud to cloud, and flashed silently on the woods below. She loved to catch, in the momentary gleam, the gloomy landscape. Sometimes, a cloud opened its light upon a distant mountain, and, while the sudden splendour illumined all its recesses of rock and wood, the rest of the scene remained in deep shadow. (352)

This scene clearly invokes emotions of terror within the reader's mind. Radcliffe leaves a great deal up to the reader's imagination about what exactly is going on in and around the landscape, for the moonlight is constantly obscured by "heavy vapours" which cause the light to be "uncertain." She does not reveal anything specific in her scenes and she creates suggestions by obscuring elements in her landscape descriptions. Radcliffe raises suspicion in the reader's mind, as well as in Emily's mind, by making the landscape obscure and dark, as the scene above "remained in deep shadow." This suspicion causes the reader to be alert, but also the characters in her novel. This alertness and the possibility that something dreadful could happen is what leads characters and readers into sublime emotions. Or as Hume suggests: "Terror-Gothic works on the supposition that a reader who is repelled will close his

mind (if not the book) the sublime feelings which may be realized by the mixture of pleasure and pain induced by fear” (282). This is then what Radcliffe meant by saying that terror “raises the faculties to a higher degree of life.” By a higher degree of life, Radcliffe also refers to experience. For instance, in *Udolpho*, after Emily experienced terror, Radcliffe writes:

But a terror of this nature, as it occupies and expands the mind, and elevates it to high expectation, is purely sublime, and leads us, by a kind of fascination, to seek even the object, from which we appear to shrink. (236)

In other words, Emily has to face her fears in order to become more experienced in life. Furthermore, the invocation of terror within the landscape results in the sublime. The lengthy landscape descriptions in *Udolpho* are the main element in Radcliffe’s technique in what could be referred to as the Radcliffean mode of terror. Also, since these descriptions are such a major part in Radcliffe’s novel, this emphasizes the fact that Radcliffe prefers terror over horror.

3.3 The Explained Supernatural

Another element in Radcliffe’s Gothic novels which categorizes her as an author of terror is the fact that she uses the explained supernatural. In all except one (*Gaston de Blondville*) of her Gothic novels, Radcliffe provides the reader with a rational explanation for all the presumed supernatural occasions which happen in the course of the story. This explanation for supernatural events mostly occurs at the end of the novel, when the heroine has finally defeated the villain. Sandner also suggests that Radcliffe used the explained supernatural to establish the Radcliffean mode of terror, for he states that the mere possibility of a supernatural presence is what causes “the productive and uplifting felt experience that Radcliffe calls ‘terror’” (91). If she would not use the explained supernatural, some incidents in her novel could easily be categorized as horror, which then would not lead to terror. For

instance, the following famous passage in which Emily lifts the veil in one of the apartments of Udolpho can be seen as invoking feelings of horror:

here again she looked round for a seat to sustain her, and perceived by only a dark curtain, which, descending from the ceiling to the floor, was drawn along the whole side of the chamber. Ill as she was, the appearance of this curtain struck her, and she paused to gaze upon it, in wonder and apprehension. It seemed to conceal a recess of the chamber; she wished, yet dreaded, to lift it, and to discover what it veiled: twice she was withheld by a recollection of the terrible spectacle her daring hand had formerly unveiled in an apartment of the castle till suddenly conjecturing, that it concealed the body of her murdered aunt she seized it, in a fit of desperation, and drew it aside. Beyond, appeared a corpse, stretched on a kind of low couch, which was crimsoned with human blood, as was the floor beneath. The features, deformed by death, were ghastly and horrible, and more than one livid wound appeared in the face. Emily, bending over the body, gazed for a moment, with an eager, frenzied eye; but in the next, the lamp dropped from her hand, and she fell senseless at the foot of the couch. (329-30)

This scene clearly ends in the main character suffering a horrific experience. Emily seems to have discovered a body covered in blood, which was hidden behind a veil. This scene corresponds to Radcliffe's notion of horror, as the discovery of the "body" clearly "freezes the soul." Horror is "an emotion so strong that is usually destructive in its effect" (Ware 15), which is unmistakably the case here. Emily, still looking with a "frenzied" eye at the body for a moment, faints and falls "senseless at the foot of the couch." Her emotions upon finding the body are so bound to horror, that her mind is unable to continue working. In Burke's words, Emily is completely astonished, in which case "the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it"

(101). When Emily becomes conscious again, she does not fully remember what happened and “the extreme languor of her spirits did not permit her to speak, or move, or even to feel any distinct fear” (330). Emily’s reaction fits perfectly with Radcliffe’s description of what she considers to be horror. So Radcliffe also makes her characters undergo experiences of horror. However, she does this in order to let her characters overcome this emotion and to learn from these experiences. As the plot continues, Radcliffe gradually reduces the effect of this scene to that of terror, as the following passage will illustrate:

As she passed the door of the apartment, where she had once dared to lift the veil, which discovered to her a spectacle so horrible, that she had never after remembered it, but with emotions of indescribable awe, this remembrance suddenly recurred. It now brought with it reflections more terrible, than it had yet done, which the late conduct of Montoni occasioned; and, hastening to quit the gallery, while she had the power to do so, she heard a sudden step behind her. (363)

In this passage, Emily remembers what happened as she passed the apartment where she had found the body. However, it becomes clear that this horrific experience has faded from her memory, so the effect of the horrific event is transient. Radcliffe makes Emily remember the scene because she passes the door. In this case, Radcliffe does this to invoke emotions of terror. Emily is afraid, she is walking through the castle, desperately waiting for her servant Annette to appear. And then suddenly she hears a footstep, of which Radcliffe invokes the suggestion that it could be something supernatural. However, it turns out to be one of the officers who attended Montoni in his castle. As soon as officer leaves, Emily hears mysterious music. This music could also be something supernatural, given the specific circumstances provided by Radcliffe. Chard suggests that “the Gothic genre’s preoccupation with horror and terror is endorsed particularly strongly by the strategy of appealing to aesthetic theory” (xxi). Emily considers the music both as something beautiful and yet

dreadful, because she does not know its source. Emily's feelings in this scene are definitely part of the Radcliffean mode of terror. Her senses are heightened, and she hears the strange but beautiful music which both soothes and terrifies her. Radcliffe leads her into a sublime experience. This sublime experience, apart from leading Emily in a specific emotion, ultimately leads Emily into a moment of enlightenment. Radcliffe makes Emily overcome her fears in order to make her more experienced in life. For instance, in the same scene where Emily hears footsteps she is approached by one of Montoni's soldiers. After this encounter, in which Emily experiences more sublime terror, this ultimately leads her into a moment of enlightenment, as becomes apparent from the following passage:

Surprise soon yielded to other emotions; a thought darted, like lightning, upon her mind, which discovered a train of hopes, that revived all her spirits. Yet these hopes were so new, so unexpected, so astonishing, that she did not dare to trust, though she could not resolve to discourage them. (365)

So Radcliffe not only invokes terror in order to let her characters and readers experience the sublime, but also she uses this experience as a moment of enlightenment for the characters in her novel in order to make them more experienced in life.

Emily's experience of lifting the veil and seeing the body has given Radcliffe a great tool of invoking feelings of terror within Emily's mind. While the scene in which she lifts the veil is ultimately a horrific scene, Emily only remembers it when she passes the door of the apartment where she found the body. However, at the end of the novel, Radcliffe gives an explanation of what exactly it was what Emily found behind the veil:

It may be remembered, that, in a chamber of Udolpho, hung a black veil, whose singular situation had excited Emily's curiosity, and which afterwards disclosed an object, that had overwhelmed her with horror; for, on lifting it, there appeared, instead of the picture she had expected, within a recess of the wall, a human figure of ghastly

paleness, stretched at its length, and dressed in the habiliments of the grave. [...] on such an object, it will be readily believed, that no person could endure to look twice. [...] had she [Emily] dared to look again, her delusion and her fears would have vanished together, and she would have perceived, that the figure before her was not human, but formed of wax. (622)

Emily's encounter with what she thought to be a corpse of someone murdered by Montoni turns out to be a figure of wax, which was given to a member of the house of Udolpho because he committed an offence against the church. This Marquis "made it a condition in his will, that his descendants should preserve the image, on pain of forfeiting to the church a certain part of his domain [...]" (622). Thus, Emily's fear was all in her head. She was so afraid and constantly thinking of her aunt who was missing, that upon seeing the figure, Emily assumed Montoni was a murderer and this was the corpse which was left behind. This is exactly what Miles refers to when he says that Radcliffe uses the art of suggestion and that "terror occurs in the mind of her characters" (47). Radcliffe has provided a rational explanation for the scene with the veil, which she also does for most of the other presumably supernatural or horrific occasions in her novel. The effect of this is that the horrific scenes seem less convincing after the reader has finished the novel. In many ways, the reader undergoes a similar experience of enlightenment as Emily does throughout the novel. When Radcliffe explains such a situation as Emily finding a body which turns out to be a waxen figure at the end, this reduces the emotions of horror to that of terror instead for both Emily and the reader. Therefore, the explained supernatural is part of Radcliffe's mode of terror, which is a sort of didactic mode aimed at enlightening the reader along with the protagonist, and once again mark her out as an author who prefers the experience of terror over that of horror.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter explored Radcliffe's essay "On the Supernatural in Poetry" in which she draws upon the works of William Shakespeare in order to establish what she considers to be the difference between the concepts of horror and terror. Radcliffe suggests that terror is the preferred emotion, as this emotion is able to lift the mind to a higher level, which is the cause of a sublime experience which ultimately leads to enlightenment. Furthermore, Radcliffe's distinction between horror and terror shows that she established herself as an author of terror fiction. Unlike Lewis who uses explicit scenes of horror to shock his readers in *The Monk*, Radcliffe uses obscurity and uncertainty to draw upon the reader's imagination. She leaves things out, which contributes to the supernatural atmosphere which make her novels so popular and influential. The distinction between terror and horror can be considered the reason why Radcliffe wrote such extensive and detailed landscape descriptions in *Udolpho*. In the scenic descriptions, Radcliffe is able to balance horror and terror and she builds up the suspense by using obscurity and uncertainty which leads to the Radcliffean mode of terror. Moreover, the distinction between horror and terror explains why Radcliffe was so fond of using the explained supernatural in her works, because by explaining the presumably supernatural occurrences which occurred throughout the course of the story, Radcliffe is able to keep these within the limits of terror and to enlighten her protagonists and the reader.

Conclusion

In this thesis, Radcliffe's landscape descriptions and their function in her novel *the Mysteries of Udolpho* have been analysed and discussed. Each chapter critically explored the ways in which Radcliffe used and wrote scenic descriptions in order to create a certain atmosphere in her novel, which heavily relies on the supernatural, the sublime, and the use of terror instead of horror.

Radcliffe's remarkable scenic descriptions heavily rely on techniques used by eighteenth-century landscape painters such as Salvator Rosa and Claude Lorrain. Each of the landscapes written by Radcliffe contain elements such as foreground, middle ground and an obscure distant view which can be found in landscape paintings. Besides the literary landscape painting technique Radcliffe used in her novel, she also relied on travel journals. The influence of these travel journals is evident in *Udolpho* as Radcliffe makes her protagonist travel in order to make a journey from innocence to experience, or even enlightenment. The reader is often put in the perspective of the observer by Radcliffe, as she "paints" beautiful landscapes in the reader's mind by using language. By doing so Radcliffe is able to invoke the aesthetic categories of the sublime and the picturesque, which ultimately leads to a supernatural atmosphere in the novel.

The landscapes in *Udolpho* not only function as a means of invoking the supernatural. They also have an emotional effect on the characters in the novel, which is closely connected to the sublime. Emily's emotional state is constantly reflected in the landscape. First, when her life is content, Emily finds herself in a picturesque and idyllic landscape, but slowly, as her life changes due to certain events such as her parent's death, Emily travels through a darker and more sublime landscape. The transition from a picturesque landscape, as described by Price in his essay, to a dark and sublime landscape, as described by Burke in his *Enquiry*,

is complete when Emily is locked up by Montoni in his castle. This shows that Radcliffe has created a bridge between two significant traditions of landscape painting in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, which also reflects the emotional journey of her main character from innocence to experience.

Radcliffe's scenic descriptions are also at the basis of her famous distinction between the concepts of terror and horror, which she famously described in her essay "On the Supernatural in Poetry." In this essay, Radcliffe draws upon the works of William Shakespeare in order to describe what she considers to be the difference between those two concepts. Radcliffe used landscape descriptions in her novels in order to establish herself as an author of terror Gothic. By using obscurity and uncertainty, Radcliffe raises suspense and creates emotions of terror amongst her characters and her readers, which then became known as the Radcliffean mode of terror. This mode of terror also explains why Radcliffe used the explained supernatural in her novels. By explaining seemingly supernatural occurrences, such as the body Emily found behind the veil, Radcliffe reduces the horrific effect of such scenes to that of terror. This once more illustrates that Radcliffe established herself as an author of terror Gothic. In short, Radcliffe would not be the influential and popular Gothic novelist without the excessive and detailed landscape descriptions which occur in her Gothic novels.

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