

ANODYNE AESTHETICS IN *THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO*

ANODYNE AESTHETICS IN ANN RADCLIFFE'S

THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO

By

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ABSTRACT

This study is a sustained exploration of Ann Radcliffe's engagement with art and aesthetics in her most lengthy novel, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. While critics often address how Radcliffe draws upon the eighteenth-century aesthetic categories of the sublime and the picturesque, such considerations often cast her efforts as simply transcriptions of the pictorial works of landscape painters, or translations of theoretical concepts into narrative form. Instead, I argue that Radcliffe structures her narrative around her heroine's aesthetic encounters, and thus negotiates with the very conception and classifications of aesthetics of the past, present and imagined futures, in order to work through concerns of gender and class on the fundamental level of cognition, representation, and modes of reality. Chapter One ("The Limits of an Aesthetic Education") traces the thematization of the bequest of education and challenges the notion of St. Aubert as a benevolent patriarch. Instead, his teachings of reason and sympathy expose the internal contradiction between sentiment and scientific rationalism through which Radcliffe exposes the limits and relevance of such an education to her female subject in her confrontations with the aesthetic categories of the sublime and picturesque. Chapter Two ("The Aporias and Aesthetic Excess of St. Aubert's Philosophical Legacy") focuses on the death sequence of St. Aubert where Radcliffe foregrounds how his lack of a philosophy for mourning disables his daughter, and the consequences of the inherent melancholic disavowal which underlies St. Aubert's many philosophies become most tangible through aesthetic figures. Chapter Three ("Authorial Agency, Gendered Voice, and the Limits of Language") traces the metatextual instances where figures of reading convey Radcliffe's interrogation of the limitations of her own

medium and how imagination is a necessary interpretative dimension of cognition, but one that is vulnerable to fear created by tyranny and isolation. Chapter Four (“Italian Aesthetics and Culture”) explores Radcliffe’s allegiance to a pastoral, and decidedly anti-Baroque aesthetic where she censures the preference for simulacra and increasingly critiques how so-called renaissances of culture often revive the stylistic surfaces and luxuries of the past where Venice becomes a figure of false hospitality and culture. Chapter Five (“Domestic Discord and Anodyne Endings”) reconsiders the notion that Radcliffe defers to a so-called normalizing ending thus subduing the potential critiques of the text. Chapter Six (“Emily’s Psychic Development and Search for Feminine Legacies”) concludes with a psychoanalytic-based interpretation of the heroine’s growth and demonstrates how her struggle with aesthetics throughout constitutes a search for sublimated female presences and suggests the possibility for subjectivity through artistic reparation.

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INTRODUCTION: Interpretative Limitations and Possibilities

Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is a text marked by aesthetic excess, or more accurately, the tension between excess and restraint. Partly as a result of such instability and unwieldiness, it lends itself to many critical frameworks and yet for the most part remains an interpretative challenge. Inextricably situated thematically within the matrix of its contemporary political, religious, and, in particular aesthetic discourses, it continues to resist critical circumscription and dismissal that relegates its significance and meaning as strictly being an outdated and conservative¹ cultural production of its time, or insignificant altogether. Terry Castle comments on how Radcliffe's notorious 'conventions' in particular, such as the 'explained supernatural', give detractors the opportunity to trivialize both works and author, who is "herself...explained away"(121). Radcliffe's authorial status is perhaps ironic considering how both of her last two novels in particular dwell on concerns of inheritance, which signifies as far more than a mere plot device that drives the machinations of her characters. Equally paradoxical is how Radcliffe, who draws upon so many contemporary artistic influences and becomes herself an influence upon writers a full century onward, should choose to situate her novels in the past and even, with their many anachronisms and as Castle terms "dramatiz[at]ions of] the romantic fantasy of futurity"(132), strangely out of time. Despite the novel's supposed timeless settings, Claudia Johnson, in her study examining the concept of sentiment and

¹ See David Durant's discussion of Radcliffe's conservatism. Also see Robert Donald Spector 6-9, 28-37, 122-145 for a comprehensive critical summary of Radcliffe's contemporary and recent critical reception in addition to her relation to eighteenth-century aesthetic discourse which details Radcliffe's

changing constructions of masculinity, demonstrates how readily they yield reflections of contemporary culture. Johnson posits that far from constituting historical inaccuracy, Radcliffe's nostalgic settings relate directly to theorists such as Edmund Burke and serve to indirectly interrogate English nationalist anxieties over the Jacobin ideology of French revolutionaries who discarded traditional notions of chivalry; although in her valorization of male sentiment, Radcliffe ultimately effaces female suffering (114). However, for all of Johnson's illuminating analysis, she begins and ends her study with what has now become a habitual critical reference to the notorious, and interpretively overdetermined and overemphasized, crux of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, the equivocally gendered waxen *memento mori* concealed behind the veil and to the reader for the better part of the novel. Although some discard it as a mere plot device, and others take it to hold the key to uncovering the central meaning of the novel, critics never refer to the sculpture as an aesthetic object, and rather focus on Emily's mistaken presumption that it is a real, female corpse.

Radcliffe's most cited use of aesthetics is her use of Burke's, in addition to others', supposedly ahistorical, theoretical writings on aesthetics, particularly the categories of the sublime and picturesque, a use which becomes problematic for feminist historical recontextualizations, and materialist critical approaches in particular. As Elizabeth Bohls claims, "the very act of creating a female aesthetic subject casts doubt on fundamental premises of eighteenth-century aesthetic thought"(210). Late eighteenth-century aesthetic discourse, as Daniel Cottom identifies, marks a significant ideological

attitudes towards and use of antiquarianism, neoclassicism, landscape aesthetics, architecture, and the

upheaval led by Immanuel Kant's reconceptualization of art as an autonomous sphere set apart from decorative arts and crafts along with commodities. Art, Cottom describes, came to represent "all that was irrelevant, anachronistic, or distant in relation to the utilitarian tendencies of modern life"(1067). In one sense, this is the greatest hindrance to investigating Radcliffe's novels; infused with the emerging theories of artistic disinterestedness and portrayed through a disreputable genre that is a hybridization of romance, sentimental, travelogue, and emerging gothic conventions,² their accompanying critical paradigms occlude Radcliffe's unique invocation of the arts which is in fact what predominantly structures her narrative. Thus, her insights and observations that address, through their often self-contradictory nature, the very problematics of drawing aesthetic parameters are often reductively taken as at best psychological truths, and at worst, anachronistic fancy. Instead, Radcliffe makes use of the aesthetic, negotiating with the very conception and classifications of aesthetics of the past, present and imagined futures, in order to work through concerns of gender and class on the fundamental level of cognition, representation, and modes of reality. Viewed through such an interpretative window, Radcliffe's thematization of apprehension, in both senses of fear and understanding, and with its attendant aspects of prescience, interrogation, classification, and the act of reading itself, becomes more manifest. Moreover, such a reframing of Radcliffe's project allows for a broadened critical scope where the coexistence of both historical materialist concerns and psychoanalytic models may provide productive

visual arts.

frameworks for inquiry. Thus, although the waxwork fully occupies Emily's consciousness, the reader should instead count it merely as one of the many aesthetic figures which she disorientingly misinterprets. Rather than appraising the waxwork and the veil that conceals it as a trite, shell-game ploy, or as a more menacing disavowal of her potential critiques of patriarchal and classist social structures, we should take it instead to stand as an aesthetic figure that represents a crisis of interpretation and therefore becomes a source of horror. As the narrator tells us, its meaning was wholly apparent to Emily: "[h]ad she dared to look again, her delusion and fears would have vanished together"(662). With this comment, Radcliffe easily articulates how her text is a call for a revaluation and a sustained investigation and resistance of the potential for aesthetics to effect horror, and charts the course of both the consequences and, more importantly, the reasons for failures of cognition.

Equally relevant and perhaps the least remarked upon is the waxwork's history. Ostensibly an object of Radcliffe's anti-Catholic sentiment in tune with her comments on the "monkish superstition" of the "Romish church"(662), the waxwork corpse instead represents Radcliffe's interest, which is not so much to denounce the Catholic faith, as she seemingly does to a greater extent in *The Italian*; rather, she appears more concerned with targeting the structures of such institutions whose foundational and inherently occlusive and clandestine apparatus have a greater potential to shield the corruption and sophistry of its rulers and members. Not surprisingly, in the wake of the Reformation and

² Robert Miles argues against labeling Radcliffe as a 'Gothic novelist', and that we should instead, like her contemporaries, view her as a "writer of romances"(34), emphasizing the divide between what was 'romance' and 'novel' as two separate categories.

Counter-Reformation, and in the midst of the French Revolution whose battles were waged just as much through aesthetics and ideology as on the battlefields,³ Radcliffe's critique coalesces around aesthetic figures such as the waxwork which demonstrate the dangers of the aesthetic whose artifice has the potential to displace and distort reality while it should instead convey true expression and mark hospitable culture. Thus, the salient aspect of the *memento mori* is its original function as an object of contemplation as part of a sacrament of reconciliation, "designed to reprove the pride of the Marquis of Udolpho"(662). We are told that it remains in its niche at Udolpho because the Marquis "had 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"(662), and that while the object itself remained, his descendants had come to neglect the ritual of contemplation of mortality. Its anti-Catholic aspects aside, the waxwork becomes an aesthetic excess of a bygone patriarchal legacy of an imperative to contemplation, fittingly ending a novel beginning with a present patrilineal bequest of a prohibition to read, and both of which concern the very material inheritance of property. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and especially the later *The Italian* end in supposed celebrations of pastoral and conservative domesticity and a reaffirmation of the dominant British aesthetic. *The Italian* in particular ends with a conspicuously nationalistic description of Ellena and Vivaldi's Neapolitan villa whose garden "was that of England, and of the present day, rather than of

³ See Robert Miles's analysis of Radcliffe's intensification of political commentary in his chapter on *The Italian* 149-173. And see Toni Wein 117-124. Wein categorizes the various male characters of the text in terms of their representations of masculinity, profession, and class, and characterizes *The Mysteries of Udolpho* as "less militant about foreign relations than it is about...internal social themes"(118) and that Radcliffe "substitutes the idea that the past and the present can be amalgamated for a more progressive and materialist message"(118).

Italy”(412), excepting its “loftiness of shade, and grandeur of perspective, as characterize the Italian taste”(412). But while her endings leave some critics in frustration in that they apparently deny the social and patriarchal rebellions of the text, Radcliffe’s use of aesthetics is anything but anodyne and their lingering questions subvert readings that take such concluding domestic celebrations, or nationalist political stances, at face value. In this way, Radcliffe instead outlines her project of tracing the material and, more importantly, intellectual lineage and development available to her heroine through recurring aesthetic figures and demonstrates, arguably self-reflexively, the limitations of the possibility of attaining agency through aesthetic discourse, and the contrasting idea of traditional feminine ‘arts’. While Emily begins the novel with the privileged and intellectual humanistic education of her father, and then must learn the principles of feminine appearances and conduct of her aunt, neither avenue provides Emily with an autonomous creative subjectivity.

Cognition becomes gendered where patriarchal figures preside over the rational while the feminine is increasingly defined by absence and the intuitive, a dual structure which remains problematic. Studies which approach *Udolpho* specifically in terms of aesthetics often are discouraged at Radcliffe’s and Emily’s apparent patriarchal complicity and specifically feminine silence, usually ultimately ending in reproofs. As Elizabeth Bohls insists, while Radcliffe raises the potential of critique, “her novels’ self-conscious artifice—their elaborately aestheticized surface...insists on its own escapism, the autonomy of the aesthetic domain”(229). Psychoanalytic evaluations which focus on the search, in both novels, for the so-called absent mother tend towards more approving

conclusions. Anne Mellor argues that Radcliffe reconfigures the sublime as a specifically feminine source of “a consciousness of virtue and self-esteem, and hence of tranquility”(109). Several other studies valorize Radcliffe in particular for what they view as transgressive sexuality which becomes more pronounced in *The Italian*, although psychoanalytic studies themselves are often dismissed as historically decontextualized. Instead, if we consider the text in terms of its thematization of the bequest, Radcliffe utilizes the inherently gendered language of aesthetics, and categories such as the sublime and picturesque, and terror and horror, in order to demonstrate the outcomes of the way in which patriarchal structures sustain themselves through effacing female legacies. However, Radcliffe demonstrates that these legacies survive through the irrational and intuitive, the superstitious, and the spectral, all of which ultimately manifest themselves as aesthetic figures. Therefore, psychoanalytic models that focus on the maternal and creative development such as those of objects-relations, specifically those of Melanie Klein, do provide productive models for interpreting Radcliffe’s approach to her lost mothers and malevolent women.

Befitting a text whose concerns are of legacy and interpretation, the well-travelled artistic inheritance and critical terrain of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* help to define and outline many key concerns, although simultaneously increasingly entrench certain stumbling blocks to interpretation. Recent feminist studies demonstrate the extent to which Radcliffe allegorizes contemporary women’s oppression through gendered aesthetic, political, and even scientific discourses, valorizing those instances in which she

subverts gendered language, concepts, and gazes.⁴ But while these studies offer a window into Radcliffe's nuanced negotiation with the arts, they risk overemphasizing Radcliffe's ideological antagonism and overlook the extent to which she gains authorial agency in situating herself within these discourses. The heroine of *Udolpho* herself provides a demonstration of such a negotiation. The journey of Emily, significantly an artist, is structured around her negotiation, her complicity and resistance, with aesthetic encounters of all forms where Radcliffe's knowing narrative voice mediates her troubling naïveté. But just as the waxen sculpture of Udolpho is reductively viewed, her heroine's active and fluctuating negotiation with aesthetics encounters is ignored, both of which are arguably the critical inheritance of Jane Austen. Still the best critic of Radcliffe, Austen, in *Northanger Abbey*, intercedes her own narrative to soften her satire and comments on the still gendered disreputableness of the novel genre. Austen scorns those authors who make metatextual disavowals of their genre where "their own heroine, who, if she accidentally take[s] up a novel, is sure to turn over its insipid pages with disgust"(19). Calling for a community of female solidarity among her fellow authors with her statement that they "are an injured body"(19), Austen dismisses detractors who unquestionably laud "the abilities of the nine-hundredth abridger of the History of England" or those who publish outdated editions of *The Spectator*, or pastiches of "Milton, Pope, and Prior"(20). While she certainly pokes fun at already infamous Racliffean conventions, and clearly passes unfavourable judgement on Radcliffe's

⁴ Perhaps the most recent article which demonstrates the thriving continuance of this approach is Courtney Wennerstrom's fascinating feminist historical contextualization of the politics of scientific discourse where she too follows the trend interpreting the waxwork as a crux of meaning.

excerpting of canonical male authors, Austen's parody concentrates on the same thematic concerns. Like Radcliffe, Austen is most concerned with feminine education, the hermeneutics of artistic expression and consumption, the veracity of historical writings, and more specifically, the danger of blurring the line between fiction and fact, art and life, and the consequences of failures of observation. Moreover, Austen's metatextual intervention also belies her sense of indebtedness to Radcliffe and acknowledges the lineage of her heroines. Above all, Austen's qualification in the early pages of her novel if anything asserts the reality and relevance of her chosen genre, "in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature"(20) is "conveyed...in the best chosen language"(20). However, as much as Austen's critique is constructive, it also sets an equally detrimental precedent in taking particular aim at the waxen figure behind the veil, and thus in her critique of reductive readings, or as Claudia Johnson describes, how Catherine "retains a sense of its horrors, not its rational explanations"(116), effectually diminishes the importance, and meaning of the figure itself. And, as many take the waxwork to be the center of meaning, the text itself becomes easily dismissed. The majority of studies consistently concur to some extent with the idea of the waxen figure as a quintessential void of signification or anticipated meaning. Eve Sedgwick in her still influential, post-structuralist reading describes of the veil that conceals it as "the place of any voided expectation"(258), while the *memento mori* itself is "in no way related to the rest of the story"(258). However, to assert the veil, or the waxen *memento mori* as signifying such a lack risks negating the importance which Radcliffe invests in the figure behind the veil and of the veil itself in *Udolpho*, a trope of such importance that she

greatly expands its significance in *The Italian* where it becomes a veritable palimpsest of meaning.⁵ Another, and infinitely more productive way to view both the fact that Emily never learns the rational explanation of the waxwork figure, although she does understand that it is not Laurentini, and Emily's silence surrounding it, is to see it as a figure of horror that for Emily will always remain necessarily unarticulated.⁶

While Austen focuses on the more material and pragmatic concerns of Radcliffe's text, other writers draw upon its more metaphysical dimensions. A less conflicted heir, Edgar Allan Poe, begins his short story "The Oval Portrait" by setting his story in an abandoned castle "among the Apennines, not less in fact than in the fancy of Mrs. Radcliffe." Rather than casting aesthetic experiences as signifying a void of meaning, Poe's story explores the idea of the indescribable, and encapsulates the true force of Radcliffe's use of the supernatural which is to portray the uncanniness of aesthetic and mimetic experience where the narrator's firsthand view of the mountains attests to the fact of Radcliffe's 'fancy.' Poe's narrator is entranced with a portrait of a young girl and after contemplating the "true secret of its effect" as being rooted "in an absolute lifelikeness of expression"(737) then turns to a book to read an exposition of the work.

⁵ Still the two most influential discussions of the veil are those of Elizabeth Broadwell and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. Also see Maggie Kilgour 113-186. Her excellent discussion of the veil does justice to its significance particularly in defining it as an aesthetic figure.

⁶ In a footnote to the Oxford edition to *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Bonamy Dobrée quite rightly reminds us of Radcliffe's own definition of the concepts of terror and horror in her essay 'On the Supernatural in Poetry', published in 1826. Dobrée suggests that the waxwork is a figure of horror for Emily "through its *lack* of mystery" in that she believes its meaning is apparent. As readers, we experience something closer to terror because "we, as readers, cannot 'see' what she sees...[and] we are free here to imagine the worst"(687). I believe that to allow Emily to come to a full understanding of the figure, its effect of horror on the senses, as Radcliffe defines, "contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them," would lose its force as an object of horror, and would ultimately undermine the violence of Radcliffe's definition of horror throughout the text. However, I also think that Radcliffe's own definition of terror in her essay as

The story tells the tragic tale of the muse of the painting who is the artist's wife. He becomes so enthralled with his art that his young wife is literally consumed in the process of artistic creation. The moment that the artist completes the portrait, he proclaims of it, "This is indeed *Life* itself,"(738) and only then realizes the consequences of his pursuit when in the next moment he finds that his wife is dead. An inversion of *Pygmalion*, Poe's story captures what Terry Castle characterizes in Radcliffe's novels as the "breakdown of the limit between life and death"(129). While Castle demonstrates the full permeation of this ambiguous spectrality into every space and object of Radcliffe's work, Poe's story draws attention to the way in which Radcliffe provokes an ontological questioning of this liminality most effectively through her use of mimetic encounters and aesthetic language. And while Poe's narrator describes the story of the painting as "vague and quaint", Poe demonstrates how the inexpressible visual encounter with the portrait is successfully expressed through language however much flawed. Moreover, Poe's inset narrative captures the essence of what is potentially the key concern of Radcliffe's last two published novels, which is to dramatize the struggle of the heroine to gain the agency of becoming an aesthetic subject, rather than remaining a consumable aesthetic object.

Aside from the responses of fellow writers, critics often grapple with identifying whether Radcliffe grants her heroines a voice or a form of agency in their considerations of aesthetic discourse which is often elided with the discourse of sentimentality and sensibility. E. J. Clery claims that Radcliffe is the first to "produce a total work of art"(74) in harnessing the "qualities of poetry, music and painting"(74) to develop a new

an effect which "expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life" is not always at work

form for the novel. Clery even goes so far as to deem Emily of *Udolpho* Radcliffe's "alter ego, the heroine poet"(80). However, to assign Radcliffe's voice as being fully harmonized with that of Emily in *Udolpho* does not account for the gaps in knowledge between Emily, the reader, and omniscient narrator, namely the fact that Emily apparently never learns the true nature of what she uncovers behind the notorious black veil. Instead, it can be said that Radcliffe constructs Emily's travails to involve the readers' sympathies, while her narrator mediates Emily's experiences through instructive commentary not unlike that of St. Aubert. The most apparent 'voice' of Radcliffe's own aesthetic views is expressed by Mr. Willoughton in Radcliffe's intended prologue to her last novel *Gaston de Blondville*, which stages a dialogue between two men on the topic of aesthetics. Clery posits that Radcliffe's concern is over the "fate of poetry and genius in a modern world which mitigates against them"(4). However, Clery argues, "Radcliffe chooses to make this creative agency gender-neutral"(4), but then heralds the actress Sarah Siddons as the living "representative of tragedy"(5), a popular view also held by Joshua Reynolds. Most remarkable to Clery is that in her descriptions of the combined merits of Siddons, Radcliffe evokes the gendered categories of "'masculine' sublimity and 'feminine' sensibility"(6) to describe how "women were in general better able than men to perform the act of creative androgyny"(6), or what Clery terms "sympathetic androgyny"(6). Clery believes this to be a response to "the 'colonisation of the feminine' by male poets"(6) and that Radcliffe attempts to reclaim traditionally gendered concepts of aesthetic discourses so as to be available to female artists. One of the most striking

in *Udolpho* where terror is often seemingly as detrimental as horror.

rhetorical gestures that Clery highlights is Radcliffe's declaration that Siddons is the "only living exponent of the 'undying spirit' of transformative poetry"(4). Choosing to depict a female as the 'living' embodiment of the survival of Radcliffe's view of the English language's poetic lineage relates to how she creates a tension in her own texts of life and death which defines her constructions of female aesthetic subjects.

Radcliffe's casting of Siddons as a living subject with creative agency also relates in part to another aspect of her critical essay to which Clery points. Several critics interpret Radcliffe's defining of the concepts of terror and horror to be, as Clery claims, "a veiled criticism of the work of her rival,...Lewis"(6), and it is generally concluded that Radcliffe's impetus to write *The Italian* and the marked differences between it and *Udolpho* are attributable to her great dismay upon reading *The Monk*. Syndy Conger situates the nexus of difference between Radcliffe and Lewis in their interpretations of the concept of sensibility; while Radcliffe focuses on the psychological dimension, Lewis dramatizes the physicality of sensibility (114). Conger traces the increasingly vexed concept of sensibility which began in the mid-eighteenth century as connoting relatively positive if gendered associations, although by the 1790s the word became synonymous with what was seen as the "hypocrisy" of Jacobin ideology that justified the violence of the French Revolution (118). Female writers of conduct manuals and novels alike reconsidered their positions. Previously a proponent of sensibility, Hannah More tempers her endorsement to warn of its dangers, whereas Mary Wollstonecraft in *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* is uncompromising and declares, as Conger explains, "sensibility is a materialist philosophy, and associating women with it denies them spiritual or rational

capacity”(119). Conger describes how Lewis’s style, derived from the so-called sensationalist ‘German School of Terror,’ demonstrated Wollstonecraft’s physical version of sensibility and how his “heroines...are trapped in physicality....[T]hey are repeatedly reduced to erotic surface parts”(122). Conger points to a particular passage in which Lewis describes the heroine Antonia in purely objectifying and voyeuristic terms using the trope of the veil as a purely sexual metaphor and then compounding his overt objectification by transforming her into an object of classical antiquity. Her pose is “in the attitude of the Venus de Medicis”(qtd. in Conger 271). Conger’s study convincingly charts Radcliffe’s recuperation of a psychological sensibility which, when juxtaposed against objectifying passages such as Lewis’s, demonstrates Radcliffe’s need to create complex and nuanced portraits of her own heroines which allow them to be alive and speaking subjects. Certainly Radcliffe’s creation of Vivaldi, through whom she explores and critiques a male gaze, is attributable to such a rebuttal. Ellena is described to us through his eyes as a decidedly less nude, yet still aestheticized object. Early on, Radcliffe offers a description of Ellena playing her lute and singing a requiem, a “midnight hymn to the Virgin”(11), leaving off in contemplation, her “eyes...with a rapt earnestness [and] fixed them on the heavens”(12), “lost to every surrounding object”(12). While Radcliffe first offers us this view of her female subject experiencing a moment of spiritual agency and artistic voice, to Vivaldi’s voyeuristic sight she is unveiled: “The light drapery of her dress, her whole figure, air, and attitude, were such as might have been copied for a Grecian nymph”(12). But even with this move, Radcliffe resists allowing Ellena to be objectifyingly aestheticized, reminding us of how even in Classical

times there was a human woman who was copied to make the sculpture. In other words, there was a living subject that preceded the object. Even more so, while in *Udolpho*, Emily's artistic merits are sometimes in question, when Vivaldi observes one of Ellena's drawings which are themselves copies of those in "the royal museum"(24), Radcliffe is clear that her drawing, "though a copy, was touched with the spirit of original genius"(24). Later, Ellena sings "with such sweet pathos as the composer must have felt when he was inspired with the idea"(27). While in *The Italian* the narrator often describes scenes to which "no pencil could do justice"(37), not clarifying whether she refers to both drawing and writing, Radcliffe is careful to depict Ellena as a fully fledged artist capable of the same artistic expression as her male counterparts. However, while Radcliffe may indeed be forcefully responding to Lewis in *The Italian*, her depiction of Emily in *Udolpho* is by far both the most ambitious and precarious.

As a text that negotiates with the inherently ineffable aesthetic language of the sublime, it is more fundamentally the tangled plot and literal length of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* that are both its greatest achievement and limitation. Certainly Radcliffe appears to acknowledge the problematics of her narrative form of suspense in her comedic episodes with the overlong stories of the loquacious Annette which leave Emily with more frustration than answers to her questions. But the interpretative outcome is a tendency towards reductive readings. Castle reproaches critics for their "schematic vision of the novel"(121) which largely emphasizes Montoni and the castle, treating the travels of Emily and her father along with the last third of the novel as merely intervening interludes. The very vastness of the scope of Radcliffe's narrative, along with its

protracted circumlocution, impels critics to abridge and focus in on the more sensationalistic, or paradigmatically ‘gothic’ moments of the text. However, in light of what is Radcliffe’s need to provide a response to Lewis’ supposedly *Udolpho*-inspired *The Monk*, Radcliffe aims for exactly the reverse of leaving the reader with only the impression that the important moments are the spectacles of what was behind the veil or the identity of the dead bodies. However, these aspects perpetually serve as the focus of interpretations that are often contradictory; the relative lack of shock value of *The Italian* leads critics such as Conger to define Radcliffe’s psychological version of sensibility that emphasizes “sympathy, and mind”(130) through the use of “sensory deprivation”(130), while other critics such as Nelson Smith see *Udolpho* as categorically “an attack on the cult of sensibility”(577) where Emily is the antidote to the excessively emotive heroines of sentimental novel tradition. Tellingly drawn to the uncanny moments of the text, the extreme amount of critical attention given to the supernatural elements of the novel tends to elide the aesthetic with the ghostly and therefore displaces the importance of Radcliffe’s negotiation with the discourses of the arts.

One of the most insightful responses to Castle’s command to read the entire novel is Elizabeth Bohls. Interpreting the split in the novel as signifying “a sustained thought experiment in which the author serializes her heroine’s conflicted subjectivity by splitting the narrative into sections under the aegis of incompatible aesthetic categories”(210) where Emily becomes first “the detached and controlling subject of the picturesque and then...the powerless, overwhelmed subject of the Burkean sublime”(214), Bohls insists on the authorial intent and significance of the two parts. In her feminist study, Bohls

points to the distinct difference between Radcliffe's *A Journey through Holland and Germany* and Emily's journey through the Apennines where "the logistics and dangers of travel"(215) are prominent that have no place in *A Journey* where "picturesque tourism inscribes on the countryside the notion of aesthetic disinterestedness"(215). Bohls also charts these instances of the material consciousness in order to highlight throughout the vulnerability of Emily's supposedly secure status as a bourgeois female when the structures of patriarchy turn against her. Bohls posits that at the start of the novel, Emily believes that she too enjoys an "[a]esthetic distance, the privilege of the man of taste"(218), and derives agency through picturesque aesthetic contemplation; however, Radcliffe demonstrates how gender overrides her class position and precludes her from obtaining "distance and control in the 'talismanic' function that picturesque aesthetics"(225) grants the male subject. Bohls claims Radcliffe's ingenuity is in placing Emily in the position of the disempowered and implicitly feminine Burkean subject of the sublime and therefore demonstrates the extremities of "the structure and consequences of gendered oppression"(226). However, Bohls's insistence on the bifurcation of the picturesque and sublime disregards the extent to which Radcliffe works to define the intricacies of the sublime during Emily's travels with St. Aubert, and also the potentially picturesque moments at the castle, and later on the combination of both at the largely neglected Chateau Le-Blanc which appears at both ends of the novel. Additionally, asserting Emily's status as a member of the bourgeoisie oversimplifies the complexities of Radcliffe's depiction of class where true culture, which is firmly rooted in tradition, is most often found in the most remote regions among the peasantry. Partly as a result of

her imposition of fixed categories, Bohls's assessment is ultimately negative, claiming that Radcliffe, while challenging the concepts of aesthetic disinterestedness and universality, using "the language and categories of aesthetics"(228), thus undermines her own radical project and provides "a convenient means to distance herself from her own insights"(228). Jayne Lewis rejects these shortcomings, insisting instead on the "self-reflexive"(388) and "autocritical"(388) mechanisms at work which are not simply imaginative translations of the theoretical treatises of Burke or Reynolds. Eschewing the feminist trend to valorize Radcliffe insofar as she departs from these codifications, Lewis instead situates Radcliffe's most compelling critique of the potential of a female aesthetic subject in a practical questioning of the abstraction of aesthetic language and the limited potential of transcribing the visual as Burke expresses in his discussion of colour in his *Inquiry* (388). As divergent critical outcomes attest, participating within aesthetic discourse as a female author of an experimental genre is indeed precarious, although Lewis's insistence on the self-reflexivity of Radcliffe's narration is a key. Radcliffe's narrative voice is never far away, mediating and urging a critical eye and ear, even while improbable plot twists and even more unlikely characters sometimes obscure and bewilder. However, more often than not Radcliffe successfully draws together issues of gender, religion, and politics, and especially acknowledges the interestedness of aesthetics through tying her use of the arts to issues of class, inheritances, and always, the agency of women in all strata of society.

Any consideration of Radcliffe's use of aesthetics is hindered by the impulse to define how she participates in the codification of aesthetic categories such as the sublime

and picturesque, or transcribes the visual arts of contemporary painters, printmakers, and architects. And although she certainly does, her use of the arts is characterized by a questioning of such categories even while we may more readily see the correspondences. Rather than separating out and isolating single elements of the novel such as the waxwork effigy, or the treatment of gender, class, history, culture, sensibility, or even the psychological elements of the novel, a more comprehensive interpretative approach is one that considers their active flux and how they are all predominantly addressed through aesthetic figures. Therefore, it is necessary to adopt a reading strategy which considers the entire novel as a progression, and a sustained contemplation of perception and its representation through aesthetics and their many manifestations, most apparent of which is Radcliffe's search for an appropriate aesthetic for her own medium. Moreover and equally important is that Radcliffe creates an artistic heroine who is not merely a silent or stock sentimental or romantic heroine, but is one who actively negotiates with competing discourses, and finds herself on a quest to uncover lost female lineages through aesthetic figures which haunt the narrative until they are finally granted a material existence. But most essential is to approach the text with the view that Radcliffe does more to demonstrate the uneasy, discordant tensions of aesthetics, rather than to provide us with easy resolutions.

CHAPTER ONE: The Limits of an Aesthetic Education

Above all, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is about education, and more specifically, the nature of the bequest of education. Perhaps the most overlooked part of the novel, the beginning of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* foregrounds the flaws in the aesthetic education Emily receives from St. Aubert, whereby we learn how her understanding of aesthetics is inextricably tied to and affects her ability to perceive and evaluate material, psychological, political, and ethical concerns. While Emily is the heroine of Radcliffe's novel, it is Monsieur St. Aubert whom we meet first and are then given a pastoral window view of his estate, a view whose geographic and economic bounds are carefully outlined. Disillusioned that the world was not "the flattering portrait"(1) he had first imagined, he lives out his life with his family in their idyllic surroundings. At the very start, we learn of St. Aubert's tendency towards viewing the world in terms of its ability to fulfil his need for aesthetic pleasure and immediately suggests the unreality of La Valée. A naturalist, St. Aubert's library is adjoined by a greenhouse which opens to another room which "Emily called hers"(3). Emily's is a hermetic aesthetic upbringing and her room is a microcosm of her father's, filled with "her books, her drawings, her musical instruments, with some favourite birds and plants"(3) which we later learn are all of her father's choosing. The plants "St. Aubert had taught her to nurse; the little drawings...his taste had instructed her to execute; the books he had selected for her use"(95). Seemingly insignificant, this list in which birds and plants are itemized as aesthetic objects draws attention to and puts into question St. Aubert's role as a

benevolent patriarch. Critics almost unquestionably adopt this view of St. Aubert as the opposite of the tyranny of Montoni and see the men as embodiments of the two ends of the spectrum of patriarchy, although a closer examination of St. Aubert's teachings affords another perspective.⁷ Radcliffe explains that St. Aubert's intention is to educate Emily to resist her natural sensibility, to "strengthen her mind; to enure her to habits of self-command; to teach her to reject the first impulse of her feelings, and to look, with cool examination, upon...disappointments"(5). Along with these precepts, St. Aubert further educates Emily in classical literature and tells her that "a well-informed mind...is the best security against the contagion of folly and vice....and the temptations of the world without"(6). St. Aubert's limitations on the realms of knowledge available to Emily, his denial of the validity of Emily's 'feeling', and his teachings which lead her to doubt the accuracy of her senses and to internalize her disempowerment reveal the potential source of her later inability to rationally interpret the outside world, and suggest that Radcliffe legitimizes the value of impulses of female feeling and posits it as fundamental to developing a rational capacity. Much later, when Emily is under the control of her aunt and is in doubt of Valancourt's character, we are told that it is "an uncertainty, which she would not have suffered, had her confidence in her own opinions been greater"(123). St. Aubert's education of classical philosophies and aesthetic theories

⁷ Elizabeth Bohls considers Emily's interlude during the battle at Udolpho in which she ventures to Tuscany as a "curious blurring of the novel's fundamental opposition between good and bad fathers presiding over picturesque and sublime spheres"(227). Bohls considers that Montoni's measures to protect Emily and ultimate innocence of murdering Laurentini complicates, as she terms, the "two antithetical visions of bourgeois female experience"(226), and thus reveals a flaw in the novel. However, this observation of Montoni is less problematic when reconsidering the construction of St. Aubert as equally complex.

and denial of the value of worldly material lessons fundamentally disables Emily when she is inevitably faced with the outside world.

St. Aubert's education of Emily and potential role as a muted misogynist is carefully outlined by Claudia Johnson who brilliantly contextualizes the significance of historical models of masculinity and correspondence to the French Revolution evident in Radcliffe's later novels. For Johnson, "[g]ender is the central mystery of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*...because sentimentality has disrupted the way the affective lives of the sexes are marked"(97). Governed by her father's insistence on emotional self-restraint or even annihilation, Emily's "visions of suffering womanhood remain 'unspeakable' because they cannot be articulated within the discourse of male sentimentality"(97). Johnson points to the hypocrisy of St. Aubert's own unrestrained feelings and believes that "Emily's is *not* a sentimental education"(101) in that there is no place for feminine feeling in his model of a male gendered sentimentality. Instead, Johnson argues that Emily learns similar codes of restraint from St. Aubert and Montoni who work to teach her "the imperative for...anesthetization"(102). Ultimately, Johnson deconstructs the text, which yields up a message of how "civilized practices of sentimentality conceal rather than alleviate the wrongs of women"(116) but does this without the irony of Austen at work. Thus, Radcliffe instead subtly endorses the male colonization of the discourse of sentimentality (101). For Johnson, the novel is a subversion of the *Bildungsroman*, that "[r]epetition brings no insight; rather than foster 'progress' or 'growth,' it turns from it"(113). But Johnson's critique may be too harsh, and her expectations of development overlook the extent to which Radcliffe first charts Emily's debilitation. However, while

Radcliffe arguably may not allow Emily to learn or seemingly grow from her repeated traumas, Radcliffe does not preclude the reader from gaining insight; rather, creating a heroine so exasperatingly naïve may instead foster a more productive position of critical resistance, rather than sympathetic identification, since not every reader is a hapless Catherine Morland. A resistant reader approaching the text with a sceptical pragmatism may to some extent work to disavow female suffering, although such a reading does not necessarily work to legitimate exclusively male suffering. In addition, Emily does practice self-examination and resistance throughout her journey, albeit sometimes unintentionally or reluctantly, and at the conclusion is granted a financial agency in her inheritance of both La Valée and some of Laurentini's considerable wealth. To deny both Emily and the reader lessons other than the reinforcement of oppressive patriarchal structures does not take into account how Radcliffe foregrounds, through her use of repetition of aesthetic encounters, the theme of misapprehension. Moreover, the juxtaposition of two patriarchs who represent seemingly opposite ends of the spectrum of authority, but who both repeatedly deny Emily any 'feminine sentiment,' or as in the case of Montoni, accuse her of affected affect, does teach a lesson. While Montoni's imperative is to teach Emily to be silent, St. Aubert's miseducation is based in his aesthetic teachings of disinterestedness which Radcliffe does ultimately undermine.

In a text in which the notorious double-chambered room at Udolpho is of such significance, Radcliffe's careful description of St. Aubert's adjoining library and greenhouse can hardly be insignificant and points to the inherent discontinuity in his claims to prioritizing disinterest and benevolence. St. Aubert's inadequate teachings

deny far more to Emily than her ability to be anything more than, as Johnson terms, the “paragon[] of passive feminine virtue as well as [the] exemplar[] of an older-styled masculinity”(97). In choosing to model St. Aubert as a naturalist, Radcliffe may be drawing on larger scientific discourses in addition to portraying a ‘man of feeling’, appropriating traditionally feminine gendered expressions of emotion. Mary Louise Pratt points to the divide in scientific and travel writings of the eighteenth century which “made a clear distinction between the (interested) pursuit of wealth and the (disinterested) pursuit of knowledge”(18). As Pratt explains, the “benign, decidedly literate figure of the ‘herborizer’”(27) proliferated in literature throughout the second half of the century, and combined with the discourse of sentiment “code[d] the imperial frontier in the two externally clashing and complementary languages of bourgeois subjectivity”(39). As a novel that obsessively cannibalizes both the language of canonical texts in order to gain an authorial agency, Radcliffe’s depiction of St. Aubert should not be read without irony. A man who will not even fish, “for he could never find amusement in torturing or destroying”(8), he has decidedly less qualms over using his rifle later on their journeys. And even Emily is surprised when he dismisses all of the servants except Theresa for financial reasons (25). When we are first told of his teachings, Radcliffe signals a shift in narration by using quotations to separate his words, pausing to note that “he would say”(6). Early on, Radcliffe subtly distances her narrator and opens the interpretative potential that St. Aubert is proficient at preaching platitudes, although the only supposed information that he grants to Emily are the specious pleasures of disinterested aesthetic contemplation. In the first pages, Radcliffe tells us that St. Aubert has “no philosophy”(5)

for loss, provides obstacles for Emily but in doing so “taught himself a lesson of fortitude”(5), and has Emily play him music “[t]o relieve, or perhaps to indulge, the pensive temper of his mind”(9). Such details signal a type of immaterial interestedness, an emotional avarice, that is arguably more menacing to Emily than Montoni’s later threats of physical violence. Far from a benevolent patriarch, or an innocuous man of feeling, St. Aubert is a figure as tyrannical in his rhetoric of disinterestedness as Montoni in his language of violence and greed. Self-consciously denying that his uncontrolled emotions “display the selfish ostentation of a false philosophy”(21), St. Aubert casts feeling as a source of power, telling Emily to let her “reason *therefore* restrain sorrow”(20), effacing the true material circumstances which cause her disempowerment. And it is this speech that he actually induces the tears that he admonishes. But more importantly, Radcliffe foregrounds St. Aubert’s teachings in order to expose the internal contradiction between sentiment and scientific rationalism and explores the limits and relevance of such an education to her female subject. Cast as impediments to Emily’s rational abilities, Radcliffe defines the complexity and interconnectedness of such competing discourses which further complicate Emily’s aesthetic education, as it unfolds throughout the rest of the novel. Radcliffe posits Emily as the complete product of her father’s creation, and thus does not start the novel with agency or a voice that can be said to be her own and her later emotional and cognitive breakdowns demonstrate the flaws and limits of St. Aubert’s various philosophies, and aesthetic education.

Johnson argues that Emily’s repeated misapprehensions and imaginative reconfigurings of male spectacles of death as feminine when at Udolpho work to endorse

an exclusively male sentimentality through effacements of female suffering which is exemplified by the waxen *memento mori*. Instead, Emily's extreme emotional states and failures of rationality can be a potential indictment of male sentimentality, whose nostalgia and supposed disinterestedness serve as alibis for patriarchal failures. The significance of Emily's fainting spells, which become the most extreme mode of her inability to observe, is undoubtedly caught up in Radcliffe's comment on female sentimentality and can be interpreted as a detrimental legacy of St. Aubert. Piya Pal-Lapinski outlines how "sensibility is aligned with disease and languor"(23) and demonstrates the way in which Emily is able to escape Morano's attempted abduction through "fainting illness"(24). Building on G. J. Barker Benfield's analysis of Richardson's Pamela, whose fainting fits give her the ability to escape from attempts of rape, Pal-Lapinski identifies one of the few instances in which Emily seems perfectly capable of observation and is not overwhelmed by superstitious hysteria. However, while it is fair to say in that this anomalous instance, Emily demonstrates a kind of empowerment, the reverse is true of her repeated real fainting fits. While these psychosomatic episodes are most associated with Udolpho and largely interpreted as stereotypical demonstrations of feminine hysteria induced by the servants' ghost stories, Radcliffe goes to great lengths to situate the source of Emily's fear of violation of her body and susceptibility to physical illness as being another legacy of St. Aubert's teachings.

The first words of St. Aubert which Radcliffe quotes define the insularity of St. Aubert's philosophy: "A well informed mind,' he would say, 'is the best security against

the contagion of folly and vice”(6). Continuously teaching Emily to retreat to the “pleasure of thinking...[and] the gratification of the world within”(6), St. Aubert’s fundamentally depicts the outside world as a place of evil and vice, which lures the virtuous to “dissipation”(6). M. Quesnel’s intrusive appearance at La Vallée demonstrates St. Aubert’s fears of the contagion of aristocratic extravagance and effacement of traditional values and history. His plans for the expansion of St. Aubert’s ancestral home in order to accommodate his considerable entourage, and the replacement of the chestnut tree with Italian Lombardy poplars along with his conspicuous use of French idioms, signal Radcliffe’s English nationalism. While M. Quesnel’s overt materialism and pretensions to political rank appear as a straightforward censure of Jacobin ideology and its threat to English identity, his visit also measures the limits of St. Aubert’s ideology, which is marked by a troubling reticence. At first refusing to engage with Quesnel because of the latter’s deficient “humanity to feel, or discernment to perceive”(12), St. Aubert protests against the removal of the giant chestnut (13). After his curious description of this figure of sublimity which has witnessed “centuries”(13), he goes on to describe his childhood where “among its broad branches...[he] sat embowered...while the heavy shower has pattered above, and not a rain drop reached”(13). He then argues over its aesthetic necessity to compliment the architecture of his childhood home, a “heavy gothic mansion”(14). St. Aubert’s nostalgic description of this sublime object, transcendent of history, and his arguments which defer to aesthetic concerns, reveal the way in which it is the insularity of the sublime which he values, and Aubert exploits his

capacity for aesthetic appreciation and his accompanying feelings to disengage from his responsibilities in the world.

While St. Aubert's description of his beloved childhood tree may provide an ambiguous example of the flaws of his philosophy, Radcliffe clearly critiques his fear of ideological and cultural contagion through the idea of literal physical affliction. St. Aubert not only uses his own sensibility and weak health as a means to evade being forthright with his daughter and wife, but is himself the potential source of contagion. St. Aubert avoids explaining to Emily the contents of correspondence from M. Quesnel, and "answered her only in tears"(59), as a consequence of which, Emily "passed a night of sleepless solicitude"(59). It is only when St. Aubert realizes that she is "deeply affected"(59) with "anxiety"(59), that he tells her the truth of his financial misfortunes. This scene is an echo of an early one in which Madame St. Aubert is worried over the subject of his private conference with M. Quesnel. Radcliffe describes how his "delicacy of mind, which had ever appeared in his conduct, restrained her"(14), and thus, like the anxiety that Emily feels over the author of the sonnet, Madame St. Aubert also must endure the discomfort of uncertainty. On her deathbed, Madame St. Aubert tells the doctor to tell her family the truth of her condition because "their affliction will only be the heavier when it arrives"(18). St. Aubert significantly comments of her illness that "the event of it depended upon circumstances which he could not ascertain"(18). Her religious precepts, including her emphasis on the "prospect of futurity"(19) underline the difference between Madame's emphasis on hopefulness and transparency, and St. Aubert's teachings of uncertainty and concealment, which is compounded with the irony

that his fear of contagion is instead realized through the form of a fever which eventually claims the life of his wife who is the first casualty of the novel. Later on, it is Valancourt who after being shot becomes “feverish”(41) and suffers the pain of St. Aubert’s misapprehension and fears of the contagion of banditti. And significantly, this is the first occurrence of Emily’s repeated fainting fits. Radcliffe closes the first chapter with the comment of the weight of these “lessons, which had taught [Emily] to restrain her sensibility”(19), but that “when the last was over, she sunk at once under the pressure of her sorrow, and then perceived that it was hope...which had hitherto supported her”(19). With St. Aubert conspicuously absent, Radcliffe at this early stage shows the failure of his denial of the impulses of feminine feeling which is ultimately tied to his inability to successfully mourn, and reveals flaws and situates the true ‘contagion’ of the novel in St. Aubert’s discourse of sentimentality which serves him as a pretext for his failures and disengagement as a husband and father.

Beyond the ways in which St. Aubert harnesses the discourses of sentiment and aesthetics, or more specifically the prerogative to be reticent which they grant, enabling him to ignore his responsibilities in the world, early on Radcliffe defines how Emily’s disempowerment is most clear in relation to the aesthetic. Emily’s trip to the fishing house instantly sets up the key tension of the novel which is the question of whether Emily is to remain an objectified, aesthetic object, or is to gain a voice and an agency that entails more than mere mastery of sentimental and aesthetic discourse. When Emily first encounters the sonnet which we later learn was written by Du Pont, we read something seemingly composed by a medieval troubadour and in it Emily is objectified and

aestheticized: “The portrait well the lover’s voice supplies;/ Speaks all his heart must feel, his tongue would say”(7). She initially rejects assigning the poem to herself, a mark of her modesty, although Radcliffe is careful to draw attention to the way in which the uncertainty of the author causes her pain, which she displaces with her “books, her studies, and the exercise of social charities”(8), a pattern that she will later continue with various levels of success. Radcliffe then immediately reinforces the idea of Emily’s role as a voiceless muse when on her next visit to the fishing house, in search of her lute at the command of her father to “indulge...the pensive temper of his mind”(9), not only has her name been added to the sonnet which thus denies her the ability to disregard it, but as she approaches, she hears the song of her own lute. When her mother then loses a miniature which depicts her daughter, Emily deduces that the “poet, the musician, and the thief were the same person”(10). While only her painted image is considered stolen, Emily’s identity is in fact literally appropriated threefold: linguistically, aurally, and visually. It is in this state of unstable identity that after her mother’s death, the night before St. Aubert and Emily depart, that she catches a glimpse of St. Aubert contemplating the mysterious miniature. But Radcliffe notes that the reason Emily came upon this scene was because she was in search of her “drawing instruments”(25). This detail of Emily as an artist is significant as is Radcliffe’s choosing to emphasize in particular an artistic form in which Emily must interpret visual scenes, framed “through the panes of glass”(26) of her father’s closet. Radcliffe explicitly foregrounds the way in which Emily’s inability to interpret what she sees is tied to her father, whose education leaves her with a lack of identity, rendering her an easily appropriated aesthetic object. But Radcliffe challenges

this position, repeatedly granting Emily instances in which she practices forms of resistance.

Radcliffe's meandering expedition through the Pyrenées is anything but a digressive picturesque preamble to Emily's imprisonment at Udolpho, but is instead a test of St. Aubert's teachings, which uneasily alternates between observations of scientific accuracy, and ineffability of the aesthetic sublime. As she and her father repeatedly stop to botanize, we are reminded of the way in which Emily's sight is always mediated either through her classical readings or directly by her father: "St. Aubert pointed out to her observation the course of the rivers, the situation of great towns, and the boundaries of provinces, which science, rather than the eye, enabled him to describe"(29). But the accuracy of St. Aubert's geographic discourse is continuously undermined by his repeated miscalculations of distances and directions. At the same time, Radcliffe invokes the name of the fifteenth-century painter, Salvator Rosa⁸ in order to represent how St. Aubert "almost expected to see banditti start from behind some projecting rock, and he kept his hand upon the arms with which he always travelled"(30). Among the most critically cited aspect of Radcliffe's descriptions, in this instance the reference works to emphasize the imagined nature of his fears and vision, even though, at this stage of the journey, there are only occasional glimpses of gipsies and soldiers. However, both modes of sight fail Emily in that they depend on deference to male visions of the landscape,

⁸ Critics have traditionally discussed the categories of the sublime and picturesque in terms of Radcliffe's references to landscape painters Salvator Rosa (1615-73), and Claude Lorraine (1600-1682), and to a lesser extent, Domenico Zampieri. Robert Miles briefly refers to Radcliffe's use of the chiaroscuro of Rosa, and the "soft pastoral hues of Claude"(51). I believe that even though Radcliffe explicitly cites her pictorial sources and clearly drew upon their influence, to overemphasize their importance encourages the bifurcation of the sublime and picturesque.

which Radcliffe characterizes as limited in that objective sight is inhibited and instead demonstrates either the impulse to circumscribe nature through cartography or to create imaginative scenes symptomatic of the fears that arise from the impossibility of controlling the landscape. Radcliffe complicates our view of Emily's potential ability to observe and suggests that while she does not have full access to her father's vision, she is more aware of other, more troubling aspects of the sublime. Just as her father had previously imagined at an earlier, and decidedly picturesque location, Emily sees a precipice which "seemed the very haunt of banditti"(55). Distinct from her father's imagined fears, in this far more mountainous and treacherous location, Emily does notice a "gibbet standing on a point of rock near the entrance of the pass, and immediately over one of the crosses she had before observed"(54). We are told, "[t]hese were hieroglyphics that told a plain and dreadful story. She forbore to point it out to St. Aubert, but it threw a gloom over her spirits, and made her anxious to hasten forward"(54). Instead, she must wait in order for her father to "take refreshment"(54). Counterintuitively referring to the blatant meaning of the gibbet as hieroglyph, Radcliffe draws attention to its sudden legibility, and grants Emily alone the ability to understand the real signs of violence on the landscape. Amidst scenes which to her father are picturesque or sublime, Emily is able to see the signs of horror. The same ability is evident later on when Montoni's face becomes another sign of sublime horror where when "the deep workings of his mind entirely abstracted him from surrounding objects, and threw a gloom over his visage that rendered it terrible"(192), "Emily observed these written characters of his thoughts...not without some degree of awe"(192). Emily is often admonished by critics for her silence,

but her response to such images of the sublime have their precursors in her travels with her father. Here, characteristically suffering at her father's expense in order for him to satisfy a physical need, her isolation in viewing the post, which is strikingly juxtaposed with a sign of religion, clearly just as menacing as the gibbet, and her necessity to remain in close proximity, emphasizes the physical and material reality of her journey of which St. Aubert remains unaware. Instead, both her father and Valancourt continuously aestheticize their journey, idealising and thus dematerializing sublime scenes and luxuriating in the affect they generate through their unspeakability and abstraction. In inserting this sight and then immediately shifting the tone to describe an Arcadian picnic and sight-seeing interlude, Radcliffe signals Emily's separateness and disparity in her inability to participate fully in her father's vision of their journey. Of even greater importance are the implications of Radcliffe's potentially gendered definition of the sublime, emphasizing its true force of violence made intelligible through a concrete physical and human sign, which for Emily eclipses any self-regulating control of the discourses of science, sentiment, or aesthetics.

In addition to this legible hieroglyph, Radcliffe increasingly points to the divide between Emily's sight and relation to the sublime, and that of St. Aubert and Valancourt, who far more easily respond to the sublime as a stirring affective and intellectual reflection. Emily's journey is marked by an increasing alienation and inability to appropriately engage with the sublime which is as much a gendered divide as it is a mark of her innocence and youth. At times, the visual effects of obscurity are described as pleasurable, as when picturesque landscapes are naturally framed by foliage and "partial

catches of the distant scenery...gave hints to the imagination to picture landscapes more interesting, more impressive, than any that had been presented to the eye”(50). But such intensifications of imagination are also tied to failures of articulation. Radcliffe frequently uses landscape in order to illustrate Emily’s inability to perceive. Landscapes are “beyond any thing that Emily had ever imagined”(42) and “indescribable”(43), although this reverses when Emily becomes acutely aware of Valancourt’s interest in her, and out of her “anxiety”(42), “would now talk again, and again, of the woods and the vallies and the mountains, to avoid the danger of sympathy and silence”(42). In this particular instance, Emily’s ability to articulate the landscape is only a mechanical rehearsal that is a mere pretence to avoid the anxiety of romantic overtures where silence becomes a complicated complicity. And perhaps at this moment, Radcliffe somewhat self-reflexively alludes to her own blending of passages from other authors and draws attention to the perils of imagination in that it risks overstepping the bounds of cognition. More specifically, she could be representing the failures of her literary form itself in its limitations to confront what is the true subject at hand while her text instead becomes a repository for the ventriloquy of others. This thought surfaces particularly when Radcliffe describes sounds as “sweet and *picturesque*”(73), likely alluding to Gilpin with the careful aside, “if such an expression may be allowed”(73), breaking with narration to question her semantic jurisdiction, ever reminding us of her own circumspection and the risks of using the contemporary theoretical language of others, or in fact playfully mocking such aesthetic codifications.⁹ In Emily’s case, the true danger to her state of

⁹ Charles Kostelnick charts the correspondences between Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho*

mind are the sympathetic silences of her father which disempower her ability to observe objectively, where instead, every sublime landscape becomes a lacuna of signification upon which melancholic scenes of the past are projected. Even more fundamentally, Emily's lack of identity separate from her father's is never more clear than when we are told "[s]he watched his looks with anxious affection, and their expression was always faithfully reflected in her own"(56). When both Valancourt and St. Aubert praise the "clearness, and precision"(46) of a sentimental melancholic reflection afforded by the moonlight hours, St. Aubert tells Emily, in response to her question of the insensibility of the world that she "may smile at the recollection of that question—if you do not weep to it"(46). This brief exchange encapsulates how St. Aubert acknowledges the role of affect as the basis for clear rational thought, even while he denies Emily that privilege, and also the way in which St. Aubert frames Emily's present thoughts as a scene of past naiveté. Beyond their apparent benign nostalgia, St. Aubert's comments reinforce her lack of perspective and access to knowledge which the sublime puts into high relief. Emily's observation of atmospheric perspective in that "thinness of the atmosphere...surprised and

and Gilpin's treatises on the Picturesque, particularly his *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty: On Picturesque Travel; and On Sketching Landscape*. Kostelnick identifies the difference between Gilpin's theoretical works and travelogues, and Radcliffe's novels where "judgements are rendered intuitively, and an ineffable and enduring bond develops between character and scene"(34). Kostelnick also details the considerable differences between Gilpin and Radcliffe's own travelogue, *A Journey Made in the Summer of 1784*, and *Udolpho* in that through her narrative form, she uses characters in order to "animate these tableaux with the collective picturesque vision of the characters so that the series of views, the "tour" itself, becomes an integral part of the kinetic energy of the novel and thoroughly interwoven into its moral texture"(32). Also see George G. Dekker 71-125. Dekker discusses Radcliffe's 1794 travelogues in depth, but also briefly addresses an instance in which Emily sketches a landscape when at *Udolpho* in which she also includes a group of Montoni's cohorts. She is surprised to see her characterization of them as akin to Rosa's banditti, but, we are told, "she had copied from nature". Dekker links Emily's drawing from nature to be a reference to William Gilpin's "rules of selection" who "championed [Salvator] Rosa's works as 'the model' to scenes of 'magnificence, wildness, or horror'"(73). While Dekker sees an almost direct correspondance between Radcliffe's descriptions and sections of Gilpin's aesthetic essays, he also believes

deluded her; who could scarcely believe that objects, which appeared so near, were, in reality, so distant”(43), reinforce her resulting disorientation, both temporal and spacial, when confronted with the sublime. Like her observance of the land “continually assuming new forms of sublimity”(43) under the rolling clouds, Emily’s education of the sublime instils a deep sense of an unstable and intangible rational reality even before she reaches Udolpho.

that “her window scene reveals a degree of ironic artistic self-awareness on Radcliffe’s part....For it is obvious that Radcliffe herself quite consciously violates the prescription to copy from nature”(74).

CHAPTER TWO: The Aporias and Aesthetic Excess of St. Aubert's Philosophical Legacy

The conflation of life and death, art and truth, and the rational and the limits of imagination culminate in St. Aubert's death scene at the home of La Voisin, if in fact their entire journey is not a single protracted death scene. If in the preceding pages, the flaws in St. Aubert's teachings are unclear, the sequence of St. Aubert's death draws together his various philosophies of sensibility, scientific rationalism, philanthropy, and especially mourning, which serve to bring about the very dangers of oversensitivity and affect which he censures. While Radcliffe does not detail Emily's aesthetic education as such, she shows through the aesthetic, and more precisely Emily's inability to interpret aesthetic figures, the limits of her understandings of these other discourses. And most significant, as we become more aware of the limitations and disjuncts in St. Aubert's teachings, Radcliffe introduces the traces of alternate female legacies through mysterious aesthetic forms of music and a portrait miniature for which St. Aubert has not given a provision. Throughout her journey, Emily alternates in her ability to contemplate and observe the landscape, participating in her father's botanizing, and reading Valancourt's classical and humanist authors, although by the time she reaches Chateau Le-Blanc, Emily's state of mind has begun to show the consequences of her father's teachings. The significance of the chateau itself, which will only unfold itself at the conclusion of the novel, serves to question his affected lack of awareness of his direction and ostensible motives of the pursuit of picturesque pleasures of St. Aubert in his circuitous journey. As

she and her father approach the yet unidentified chateau despite warnings from a peasant, Emily's rational capacity begins to break down. When the peasant tells Emily and her father simply that he "would not advise [them] to go there"(62), she gives a "mysterious meaning to his words, such as she had not suspected when he had uttered them"(63). Here, she is aware of the causes of her anxiety and imaginative interpretation, believing that it is "probably the effect of a melancholy imagination, which her father's situation, and a consideration of her own circumstances, had made sensible to every impression"(63). It is perhaps the last point at which Emily is capable of delineating when her interpretative voice is affected, a moment that Radcliffe marks with the introduction of the "scarcely human"(64) voice of whom we later find is Laurentini, or as La Voisin tells, of a type he "cannot describe....like the music of angels"(71). However, these sounds are immediately replaced with what is "to Emily the voice of Hope"(64), the song of peasant girls in their festivities of the vintage, and she simultaneously finds St. Aubert had collapsed. Now, out of her terror for her father's condition, she "could not feel the contrast, which this gay scene offered to her own distress"(65). Significantly, it is when St. Aubert literally loses consciousness due to his advancing symptoms, of an illness which is in part caused by his inability to seek justice or properly mourn his sister's murder, that Emily is unable to control her own emotions and is left wandering in the dark. It is especially in her sympathetic accord with her father's illness, which is if nothing else an illness of affect, that Emily momentarily loses her ability to properly distinguish between the contrasts of emotion where joy and sorrow are both merged.

To further the importance of voice as a trope of Emily's disempowerment of both her own voice and sense of self, and her loss of her ability to interpret, Radcliffe intensifies the importance of sound and music, and with it, the trace of a lost female inheritance. While Emily awakes one morning later on to hear "*picturesque* sounds"(73),¹⁰ it is also at the home of La Voisin that Radcliffe introduces what come to signify sublime sounds or effects, even though they are uneasily in close proximity to both a detrimental melancholy and to the superstitious supernatural, concerns that will symptomatically grow in importance throughout the text, and eventually become tied to class and religious bias. Often, class is used somewhat to demonstrate a prejudiced lack of self-reflection, as when Emily scoffs at Annette's superstitious tales, but is herself just as much caught up in their terrors, and imagines far worse than her servant. But this too is first displayed by St. Aubert. When approaching Le-Blanc, St. Aubert similarly "could not forbear smiling at the simplicity [Michael's] phrase"(63) when his guide wishes to turn back fearing a shadowy figure in the distance is "a robber"(63). Strangely unconcerned at this moment, St. Aubert appears to negate the fact that banditti have caused him to shoot indiscriminately at his own fears, and his dismissal simply because Michael lacks the elegance of expression to sanction his fears seems to reveal a hypocritical attitude which privileges such anxieties provided they are tied to an appreciation of the sublime. However, while their speech may not be adequate, the peasants are capable of creating fine expressions through their music. Soon after her

¹⁰ Radcliffe lists *picturesque* sounds as those of the pastoral and, particularly, in the distance: "the matin-bell of a distant convent, the faint murmur of the sea-waves, the song of birds, and the far-off low of cattle, which [Emily] saw coming slowly on between the trunks of the trees"(73).

father has regained consciousness, Emily is able to enjoy the music of the peasants because the “immediate terror for her father had now subsided into a gentle melancholy, which every note of joy, by awakening comparison, served to heighten”(66). Although seemingly recovered, Emily crosses a threshold and this pleasurable effect of sympathetic terror is potentially an excess of sentiment. Additionally, her response to the music is different from St. Aubert’s, who “listened, with no painful emotion”(66), but it is the “*debonnaire* dance”(66) that causes “not merely tears of mournful regret”(66). Enigmatically evocative of some unknown memory, St. Aubert’s emotive response is suggestive to the reader of more debilitating emotions that hasten his decline. But in addition to the fundamental purpose of Radcliffe’s use of music throughout the text which is to ultimately carry the traces of female legacy, here music is used to show the key divide between Emily and her father’s aesthetic responses.

When she enters the home of La Voisin, who becomes a strange double of St. Aubert, the effects of Emily’s unrestrained sympathy are evident, but even more significant is the way in which St. Aubert is described in his grief. In a conversation between La Voisin and St. Aubert that begins an inquiry into the source of the mysterious guitar music that focuses on death and leads to superstition, Emily begins weeping uncontrollably, along with her father, in “affectionate sympathy”(67) with La Voisin at the mention the death of his wife. As the two turn to matters of futurity, St. Aubert’s remarks evoke the dying words of his wife as he claims, seemingly more for Emily’s sake than his own conviction, in his belief in a spiritual afterlife, repeating the word several times. While St. Aubert had previously worried over the contagion of the worldliness of

the city, La Voisin's superstitious beliefs of afterlife hauntings told through narrative accounts of the meaning of the guitar music are at first discounted by Emily, who despite this response is able to "wholly resist its contagion"(68). Even as anti-Catholic sentiment slowly becomes entangled in the plot, the reference to contagion cannot help but bring to mind what causes Emily's susceptibility to such narratives. And while Emily sympathizes with the sufferings of both men, their conversation with each other demonstrates the two men's self-enclosed responses where both La Voisin and St. Aubert alternately speak "without attending to the question"(69) of the other. When St. Aubert hears of the death of the Marquis, who we later learn is St. Aubert's sister's husband and potential murderer, he sinks "again into a reverie"(69) and refuses to answer Emily's "timid curiosity"(69) over why the Marquis's death is of such significance. This is yet another example of how he uses affect to evade his responsibility to inform Emily of both historical and financial information. However, most striking is St. Aubert's momentary transformation at name of the convent of St. Clair, which is perhaps more significant than any of the spectacles of death, or even the notorious waxen *memento mori*. At first, Emily sees "the clouds of grief, mingled with a faint expression of horror, gathering on his brow"(71), as though St. Aubert's face becomes a kind of sublime landscape. But this extends such that "his countenance became fixed, and...he resembled one of these marble statues of a monument, which seem to bend, in hopeless sorrow"(71), which Radcliffe emphasizes with a line from Charlotte Smith. The passing metamorphosis of St. Aubert in Emily's mind into a living sepulchral sculpture potentially reverses such objectifications reserved for female subjects, and strangely aestheticizes and objectifies

his grief which is described as hopeless despite his protestations otherwise. More importantly, it furthers the associations and consequences of his inscrutability, which is what later leaves Emily vulnerable to her own misinterpretations incited by superstitious narratives and self-apprehension. In a sense, St. Aubert as this enigmatic monument prefigures the waxen *memento mori* behind the veil, commemorative of meaning long since forgot. Emily, in her inability to discover the mystery of these connected signs, is again “anxious to dissipate his thoughts”(71). In what becomes a characteristic scene, Emily is then ushered into a chamber to sleep, but she instead turns to view the sky through her windows, while her “thoughts rose...towards the sublimity of the Deity, and the contemplation of futurity”(72). Partly influenced by the preceding conversation between her father and La Voisin, and her own mother’s beliefs, Emily appears to engage in a restorative and markedly religious dimension of the sublime. However, we are told she also waits at the window to hear a repetition of the mysterious music, and that her “surprise and curiosity were indeed the greater”(73) to learn the source of her father’s emotion because she has never “heard him mention the name of Villeroy”(73). Juxtaposing two versions of sublime effects—the religious futurity of which Emily’s mother initially speaks, and the obscurity of forlorn melancholic concealment—Radcliffe demonstrates how St. Aubert’s miseducation based on pleasurable, disinterested aesthetic contemplation and the denial of emotion is ultimately what leads Emily to her repeated interpretative crises.

Monsieur St. Aubert’s long-drawn-out death scene is unlike the abridged, second-hand account of his wife’s death that reveals little of her character. Instead, we directly

witness his final hours, but this disparity does not work to valorize or condone St. Aubert's excessive emotion, or even to present his words as ethical truths. With Radcliffe's subtle qualifications and observations, we are offered the possibility of questioning the justness of his bequest to his daughter of both his flawed philosophy and limited finances. In part a limitation of the structure of narrative which sacrifices clarity for the sake of suspense which withholds our knowledge of the importance of the information which St. Aubert keeps secret, Radcliffe's emphasis on misapprehension should provoke us to remain cognizant when Emily faints. Even though St. Aubert is first described giving a "look...dignified by the pious solemnity of the saint"(75), Radcliffe clearly situates Emily's emotional and mental collapse as being the result of his teachings. Referring to his own state of health, St. Aubert tells his daughter of his impending death partly because he is "unequal to the art"(75), significantly using the word art in the sense of deception, and partly because "it would be most cruel to deceive [her]"(75). However, the thought that withholding the story of her aunt's death is not an equal or even greater cruelty is left to us to deduce at the end of the novel. Particularly in this scene, as they are throughout the text, Emily's fainting fits and convulsive sobbing are nothing if not problematic. Appearing as evidence of her predisposition towards sensibility and her inability to maintain a self-restrained, rational state, they are instead cast as markers of her father's inheritance of, at best, a concealment of the past and, at worst, a debilitating command to misapprehend. At the moment her father dies, Emily is effectively at the mercy of both mercenary men and women, and thus Radcliffe reconfigures St. Aubert's discourse of sensibility into an interrogation of female

susceptibility and the tyranny of ignorance. Emily complies with his key imperative that she should “rest in ignorance”(77), which he explains is for the sake of her “peace” (although right after her consent, he admits it is also for his), in a moment in which she is overwhelmed by sobs “in spite of her efforts to suppress them; and...bound herself to do whatever he should require by a vow, at which she shuddered, yet knew not why”(77). Her response is significant for two reasons. Emily’s shudder of horror seems to suggest that she preternaturally understands the fate that awaits her, and her acceptance in part appears to be tied up with her efforts at emotional self-command. Additionally, the fact that “the more she endeavoured to restrain her emotion, [she] found it the less possible to do so”(77), suggests that rather than being incapable of containing her affect, Emily is unable to restrain her emotion precisely because she is denied the ability to properly grieve, and more importantly, that ignorance is the very condition that intensifies her excessive affect. And Radcliffe carefully repeats how St. Aubert designates Emily’s “convulsive grief”(77) as an assault on his peace, telling her not to “afflict me with this excess of grief; rather teach me by your example”(77), as though there are empirical, calculable parameters to grief which he then ties to his discourse of sensibility.

Radcliffe’s narrative voice tells us that in his last speech to his daughter instructing her in the dangers of sensibility, St. Aubert had “never thought more justly, or expressed himself more clearly, than he did now”(79). However, in this seemingly uncomplicated endorsement of his sermon that several critics have tied to Radcliffe’s own Latitudinarianism and nationalistic beliefs,¹¹ she also conversely implores us to

¹¹ See Robert J. Mayhew for the most recent study.

evaluate his words and also to question the justice of his past words, including his bequest. And even if his words are just, we are always aware of the disjunct between what St. Aubert says and what he practices in his own affairs. To St. Aubert, sensibility is ultimately exclusionary (not everyone can “really possess sensibility”[79]). As Claudia Johnson argues, “sentimentality enforces and mystifies certain social priorities by a converse operation of desensitization”(107). While Johnson concentrates on the repudiation of several maligned female characters such as Madame Montoni, the implications of St. Aubert’s exclusionary explanation of sensibility work in a more interconnected and insidious way. Just as the expression of grief must be measured, sensibility “is a dangerous quality, which is continually extracting the excess of misery or delight”(80). Such delights are but a spectrality, a “phantom of happiness”(80), which should instead be exchanged for the “substance”(80) of “peace...of a temperate and uniform nature”(80) which exists somewhere between being “alive to minute circumstances, [and] one that is dead to feeling”(80). Moreover, St. Aubert goes further to juxtapose sentiment with susceptibility which is “a disgrace instead of an ornament, unless it lead us to good actions”(80), and that “one act of beneficence...is worth all the abstract sentiment in the world”(80). The defining feature of St. Aubert’s teachings are a deep mistrust in what he terms as an excess and, in his speech, the aesthetic, sentimental, ethical, moral, and material collapse into one, quantifiable, and limitative category, and the excess sensations of all become merely phantasms. Dematerializing such excesses, and defining them as congruent with the excess of mourning for which he has no philosophy, St. Aubert in effect leaves Emily bereft of a philosophy for any of these

discourses. The importance of St. Aubert's inability to properly mourn becomes most manifest in light of Radcliffe's last line of the novel in which she claims her project's purpose is to have "beguiled the mourner of one hour of sorrow...or...taught him to sustain it"(672). But here, along with her humble address to the reader in which she understates the enormity of her creative vision as merely demonstrating or teaching a philosophy of mourning, she is instead able to indirectly address the failures, and especially the inherent melancholic disavowal that underlies St. Aubert's many philosophies, the consequences of which become most tangible through aesthetic figures. For all of his sage words of advice, St. Aubert's philosophy of sentiment is incongruous with his own practice of self-indulgent melancholic contemplation to which Emily's glimpse of his closet testifies. Most importantly, despite St. Aubert's denunciation of the folly of abstraction, it is what has characterized Emily's aesthetic education. It is only when Emily travels to both her Aunt's home, Italy, and Udolpho, that she learns the material realities of the world, and where she comes to a greater understanding of a more pragmatic definition of susceptibility.

Most studies only briefly consider the first condition on which St. Aubert grants Emily her inheritance, which is arguable the most significant to the ostensible mystery of the novel, and is the culmination of the cloistered education he gives Emily. However, just as important and interconnected with the first is his second requested promise. His first "command"(78), to destroy the papers entombed underneath the floorboards of his closet, "*without examining them*"(78), is complicated in that they are accompanied by the "two hundred louis d'ors, wrapped in a silk purse"(78). The irony of how St. Aubert tells

Emily the hiding place itself “was contrived, at a time when the province was over-run by troops of men, who took advantage of the tumults”(78), suggests somehow that such civil unrest is anachronistic and that as Emily travels to Italy, and meets with such troops, she has in effect traversed not only a geographical divide, but becomes a time traveller to a medieval, or even an allegorized Revolutionary France. And as such Emily has entered a time in which she is unable to fulfil the St. Aubert’s second command to retain possession of La Valée. It is only when she returns to France, and therefore, to the present, that she again is able to fulfil her promise. But even as he acknowledges the historical, pragmatic purpose of the hiding place, he effectually denies the relevance of the historic to the present, and moreover he commands Emily to efface her own personal history by burning the papers. However, the dual use of this secret compartment defines the key disjunction of St. Aubert’s philosophy. While St. Aubert advocates for the distribution of wealth through his philanthropy, this store of money also functions as a repository for his private memorialization of his sister which he refuses to circulate, and additionally in a sense, St. Aubert forces Emily to complete his work of mourning for him. Instead, since she is denied the knowledge of what has been lost, it is impossible for Emily to complete this task.¹² The existence of the miniature portrait which she has already witnessed as signifying an object of mourning itself becomes a figure of the excess of his legacy. Emily keeps the miniature because “St. Aubert had given no

¹² I am referring here to Freud’s differentiation of melancholia from mourning where in melancholia the “patient is aware of the loss which has given rise to his melancholia, but only in the sense that he knows *whom* he has lost but not *what* he has lost in him. This would suggest that melancholia is in some way related to an object-loss which is withdrawn from consciousness, in contradistinction to mourning, in which there is nothing about the loss that is unconscious”(245). However, this is not to say

directions concerning this picture, or had even named it”(104). No longer in St. Aubert’s possession, and without him, the memory its true signification, it transforms from a *memento mori* into an aesthetic object void of meaning with no provision, and it therefore takes on a fetishistic function for Emily in which she imbues her own “starts of imagination, which deceive the senses”(102). Unlike the miniature’s function of an object of a melancholic contemplation of the past which St. Aubert allows for in his own definition of sensibility, in refusing Emily the right to read the papers, he denies his daughter this ability, just as she is denied the full ability to contemplate the sublime in nature.

St. Aubert’s culpability is heightened when, in death, his body itself becomes a spectral figure of excess. On his deathbed, Emily is stunned to observe his “beloved countenance” not sensible, but “still susceptible”(83). Later on, his spectre appears to Emily when she first returns to La Valée, and also in the moment of intense sorrow when she must carry out his wishes (103). However, his inadequate teachings themselves are what ultimately frustrate his wishes to preserve his daughter in a state of “innocence”(103). Immediately after his death, Emily dreams of her father speaking, but “instead of words, she heard sweet music borne on the distant air”(83). At La Valée, when she is in the process of burning the papers, it is when Emily slowly awakes from the loss of consciousness she suffers when she imagines the specter of her father that she involuntarily reads “a sentence of dreadful import”(103). In both instances, she awakes to find that, in the former instance, the sounds she dreams are in fact real sounds, and in the

that St. Aubert or Emily’s melancholia correspond entirely to Freud’s definitions, or even that Radcliffe

second instance, the sentence “awakened her attention and her memory together”(103). Both the song (sung, we later discover, by Laurentini), and the miniature portrait of her aunt (the victim of Laurentini) serve as aesthetic forms of excess which eclipse St. Aubert’s own words, and resist erasure, threatening in their potential for inscrutability. Only the written sentence that Emily glimpses is distinguished as preserving and conveying authentic meaning, or having the quality to awaken memory, in a potentially self-referential move that validates the efficacy of Radcliffe’s own narrative medium. Despite Radcliffe’s description of Emily’s questioning of “whether [her father’s command] could justly be obeyed”(103) as being a mere “delusion”(103), the glimpse of a sentence, a portrait miniature, and the haunting music serve as reminders of the limits of his aesthetic and emotional philosophy, ultimately displacing St. Aubert’s teachings. These excesses of aesthetic forms increasingly appear as she travels to Italy where they are then juxtaposed with the material manifestations of the excesses and the greater omissions of St. Aubert’s philosophy as Emily witnesses the violence of medieval Italy which stands as a spectral revolutionary France, and moreover the greater delusion of the futility of attempts to efface the past. Thus, Radcliffe’s text serves as an exercise in interrogating the complexities of faithfully remembering history and the sacrifices of memory made in the name of preserving ideals such as innocence and peace, or even a questioning of such ideals, and the underlying motives of those who demand their preservation. Moreover, Emily’s inability to deal with such excesses attests to how St. Aubert is wrong in his belief that he can keep the contagions of the city, the foreign, and

consistently presents melancholia as an entirely negative psychic state.

the past at bay through constructing an artificial aestheticized and timeless refuge of isolation at La Vallée.

CHAPTER THREE: Authorial Agency, Gendered Voice, and the Limits of Language

Radcliffe's depiction of the written word as the only effectual aesthetic means of conveying the truths of the past also has its precursor in an earlier scene of reading where she draws attention to Emily's voice. While Emily lacks voice and thus agency, which is tied to an inequality of gender, Radcliffe also grapples with the dilemma of her own authorial voice which is ultimately impeded by the limitations of a reader's cognition. Just as Radcliffe demonstrates the way in which Emily is vulnerable to the ventriloquy of others, Emily equally exhibits failures of reading. Upon his death, careful integrations of aesthetic forms demonstrate the way in which Radcliffe explores the excesses and central disjunct of St. Aubert's philosophy between aesthetic disinterestedness and material realities of the world, couched in the language of sensibility. But even before his death, Radcliffe makes this disjunct more explicit. When Valancourt leaves St. Aubert and Emily, she seeks out one of her books, "which Valancourt had been reading...and hoped for the pleasure of re-tracing a page...and of permitting them to speak to her in the language of his own mind, and to bring himself to her presence"(58). Emily attempts to conjure the memory of Valancourt, an instance of how, as Castle deems, "the lover is always a *revenant*"(124) and how "lovers...mourn...for the living"(123). While Radcliffe's language is indeed suffused with such spectralizations later on in the novel after St. Aubert's death where Radcliffe explores the idea of presence and absence, in this instance she uses this effect to foreground the act of reading. Emily finds that Valancourt

has substituted her book for his own “volume of Petrarch’s poems”(58). The book itself fails to signify meaning and Emily only comes to the realization of its personal, romantic meaning, which again brings her to tears, after “having opened it with impatient pleasure, and observed the lines of his pencil drawn along the various passages he had read aloud, and under others more descriptive...than he had dared to trust his voice with”(58). In another instance of Emily’s uncommon propriety, which raises the question of whether excessive virtue inhibits cognition, Radcliffe reminds us of how Valancourt’s intention in exchanging the book “would have been sufficiently apparent to almost any other person”(58). Here, we can safely assume that Radcliffe counts the reader as one of these capable people. Again, on one level, Radcliffe distances Emily from the reader’s perspective in her fundamental inability to read the meaning of the book until she literally reads the underlined passages. But the central question is the cause of Emily’s anomalous inability to interpret which connects with the idea of voice. Throughout the novel, voice is increasingly gendered as being easily available to men. Even though he is a prisoner, Du Pont escapes his cell through a secret compartment through the wall, which provides him the means of dissimulation, and casting his voice as an omniscient specter is able to confuse and unsettle Montoni and his companions, taking advantage of their superstitions. And even on his deathbed, St. Aubert’s “voice never failed him”(79). Radcliffe explores the idea of voice and poetry in that Valancourt effectively displaces his own voice through a poetic medium, and especially in how he uses it in order to convey more taboo emotions. Additionally, the potential for this book exchange to be an

allusion to the anonymous sonnet at the La Valée fishing house also evokes how Emily's own voice is again marginalized or even nonexistent.

Immediately following Valancourt's departure when Emily discovers the book, Radcliffe recontextualizes the same concerns of voice when Emily learns of St. Aubert's financial ruin, where we are aware of the greater material dangers than those of romance. Significantly, in consoling her father, Emily seeks reassurance in her father's aesthetic teachings. She tries to "urge to her father the truths, which himself had impressed upon her mind"(60) while St. Aubert is himself "unable to speak"(60). Her solution is to "retain only one servant"(59), and she claims that monetary misfortune has no effect on "intellectual delights....It cannot deaden [their] taste for the grand, the beautiful, or deny [them] the means of indulging it"(60). She then declares how they will retain the "sublimes spectacles" and "luxuries of nature, and lose only the frivolous ones of art"(60). Emily not only believes that her aesthetic appreciation of nature will allow her to transcend material circumstances, but she believes such luxuries of appreciation are fundamentally egalitarian, and that accessible both "for the enjoyment of the poor, as well as of the rich"(60). (Of course later, we will learn that they are in fact not fully available to either extreme of society.) While St. Aubert responds to Emily and "conversed as before"(60), we are told that St. Aubert is not consoled by these exasperatingly naïve words with which he has in fact provided his daughter and rather only "assumed the appearance of it"(60). While Radcliffe's texts are almost unquestionably taken to be such unqualified celebrations of the contemplation of sublime and picturesque landscapes in concurrence with contemporary aesthetic theorists, here

she clearly undermines such a reading. Reminding us that Emily is unable to literally read significance unless the passages are underlined, Radcliffe underlines for us that Emily's voice for the most part speaks the displaced words of others. In this light, her repetition of St. Aubert's supposed truths about artistic taste and pleasure, and St. Aubert's reaction which reveals his hypocrisy, are clearly cast as examples of her naiveté. Another curious use of a book appears when Emily first returns to La Valée after her father's death when she finds a book of his which "lay...open"(95). The book takes on a fetishistic function where "[t]o her the book appeared sacred and invaluable, and she would not have moved it, or closed the page, which he had left open, for the treasures of the Indies"(95). Emily's grief causes her to imbue the book with an inestimable worth and meaning which renders the actual printed words of the pages as secondary. It is only after her "affliction began to soften into melancholy"(99) that she was again able to read her father's books, "watch the flowers his hand had planted [and] to awaken the tones of that instrument his fingers had pressed"(99). Again, Radcliffe foregrounds the act of reading above all other aesthetic practices, especially in how St. Aubert's lack of a philosophy for mourning interferes with Emily's ability to interpret. In the course of her travels, we learn not only of the fallacy of the universal accessibility of such appreciations of aestheticized nature which are above all exclusive to class and gender, but also of her repudiation of the pleasures and greater effects of art and the aesthetic of all forms. Emily's lack of voice and inability to interpret make her vulnerable to appropriation not only by the discourses of others, but also her body and her inheritance.

In a text which increasingly provokes the critical question, as Terry Castle asks, of what parts we should read, Radcliffe foregrounds the more fundamental question of *how* to read with her intermittent yet important use of letters. While Emily is unable to rationally interpret later aesthetic objects such as the waxen *memento mori*, and music from indeterminable sources, Radcliffe repeatedly situates Emily's failures to negotiate with aesthetic forms as resulting from her father's prohibition to read, drawing repeated attention to this idea through the use of various letters that begin with those from M. Quesnel which St. Aubert attempts to conceal from Emily, and the pivotal papers he commands her to burn. Considering how the epistolary tradition often depicts women's relationship to letters as a means of gaining power, as Richardson does in *Pamela*, Radcliffe's inversion bears notice. The importance of letters reemerges after St. Aubert's death when Madame Cheron admonishes Emily for failing to recognize the handwriting of Valancourt (124). Both the letter's appearance in relation to the romance plot line and Madame Cheron, whose capriciousness epitomizes Radcliffe's censure of the power-loving nouveau riche (significantly not the aristocracy) who view the world strictly in terms of how concepts of class and taste provide them with the means to effect exclusion, tempt us to disregard the passages in which she appears in what Emily later describes as "burlesque"(281) episodes. However, Madame Cheron's outburst over the inherent legibility of Emily's "countenance"(124) reinforces the significance of Radcliffe's use of reading as a trope for all forms of aesthetic education.

In a letter that precedes Madame Cheron's unannounced appearance at La Valée, she reminds Emily that "as her later brother had entrusted Emily's *education* to her, she

should consider herself bound to overlook her conduct”(98). Madame Cheron, with her knowledge of “the arts of dissimulation”(123) and self-declared “common sense”(205), serves to broaden the scope of Radcliffe’s critique of female education, clearly taking aim at the strictures of conduct manuals and the aesthetic dimension of artifice and surface. Significantly italicizing education, Radcliffe tells us how Emily then considers, in her grief, that she “understood the full value of the education she had received from St. Aubert”(99) primarily his lesson in benevolence. But in the next moment, she “indulge[s]...affectionate melancholy”(99) by taking her lute to the fishing house only to find at the “mournful sighing of the breeze...was a kind of music more in unison with her feelings”(100), lapsing in her vow to avoid the excesses of affect. As part of Radcliffe’s ongoing concern with art versus nature and her questioning of verisimilitude, in this instance Emily apparently allows herself melancholic luxuries as long as nature replaces her own lute as the means to invoke memory, although even here, there is something troubling about Emily’s willingness to allow nature to replace the voice of her lute. Thus, when Madame Cheron appears as a seemingly impossible sibling to St. Aubert, her teachings of interestedness and vacuous materialistic pursuits are the equally detrimental inverse of her brother’s philosophies of aesthetic disinterest and emotional suppression. Moreover, similar to St. Aubert, Madame Cheron fails to allow Emily to mourn, accusing that Emily’s “looks tell me you have already recovered your loss”(109). While Madame Cheron’s character goes from being the target of a dinner party joke when she is not equal to the wit of Montoni’s companions, to the literal victim of Montoni’s schemes, what Radcliffe takes most issue with is Madame’s belief in determinability and self-

evident truths. As Radcliffe tells us after one of Madame's statements, she spoke with the "decisive air of a person who congratulates herself on having made a grand discovery, and believes the question to be unanswerably settled"(112). Radcliffe's narrative use of repetition itself structurally protests against the belief in the axiomatic. When a letter arrives from Valancourt, Emily hands it "unread to her aunt...and...endeavored to read on her countenance its contents"(137), and is only allowed to read it afterwards because Madame has now discovered Valancourt's wealthy family connections, of which Emily is yet again unaware. The legibility of the face with all of its connotations itself becomes another trope that intensifies Radcliffe's investigation of aesthetics. Because of her sense of disempowerment, Emily is able to read Montoni's face in terms of its sublimity but not its intent, while her aunt "discerned nothing"(192), because Emily is able to recognize characteristics of a violent, patriarchal sublime, while her aunt cannot. The disparity in Emily and her aunt's abilities to discern based on their aesthetic sensitivities appears to validate Emily's understandings to some extent. But instead choosing to cast Montoni as the archetype of the sublime in Emily's mind where he becomes a figure of inscrutability that provokes her wild imagination, Radcliffe reveals the opposite danger of aesthetic knowledge. Whereas Madame's superficial understanding leads her to believe that surface reveals all, Emily's ability to recognize the sublime heightens her sense of the unknown which Radcliffe demonstrates leads to an equivalent imprisonment.

The most blatant example of the consequences of Emily's failures of reading occurs after she learns in another letter from Valancourt that La Valée has been rented out by her uncle. Immediately after reading Valancourt's letter, Emily is summoned to

speak with Montoni who informs her of a letter that he is writing to M. Quesnel. Assuming the subject of the letter to be the renting out of La Valée, she refers to the supposed topic of the letter as “this topic”(195) without specifying the exact meaning of the referent. Moreover, she is unsuspecting of Montoni’s speech about “sentiment, as they call it”(196) which he says are the “romantic illusions of childhood”(196), although here Montoni’s speech is strangely similar to St. Aubert’s in his reference to the illusory excesses of sentiment which Montoni instead appears to define as any impulse that contradicts his material interests. But Emily’s pivotal mistake is that she does not actually read the letter and then adds to the problem by writing an acceptance to what she later finds out is a marriage with Count Morano, and thus the letter becomes a legal contract. However, as much as Emily’s behaviour is infuriating to a reader who has guessed the topic of the letter, her response is perfectly understandable in light of her father’s prohibition to read and thus the letters become yet another interpretative crisis. While Montoni accuses Emily of feminine caprice and being proficient at the “art of misunderstanding”(200), his refusal to acknowledge her misreading is not so much an example of his tyranny as it is to remind us again of Emily’s extraordinary naïveté, but additionally that for all of her aesthetic appreciation and sensitivity, she too believes in apparent meanings. Later on, however, Montoni does use a letter for “diabolical means”(423) when seeking revenge on Count Morano after their alliance has dissolved. Montoni has an incriminating letter deposited into the “*Denunzie secrete*, or lions’ mouths, which are fixed in a gallery of the Doge’s palace as receptacles of anonymous information”(423) considered to be pertinent to state security. Here, Radcliffe forcefully

condemns the practice particularly because of how the voice of the accuser remains anonymous and often the arrest is made in secret upon specious evidence where “suspicion was...almost equal to proof”(423). Of course, Radcliffe’s concern about the deficiencies of Italian Renaissance justice, clearly a pointed critique of Jacobin policies, is most fully realized in *The Italian*. Here it is brief and at first appears little to do with aesthetics. But in drawing attention to the ceremony of the anonymous letter and the lions’ mouths, themselves sculptures, Radcliffe demonstrates the dangers of aesthetic forms where their indeterminate meanings and anonymous authors lead to, on an individual level, the disempowerment and appropriation of her heroine, and in terms of society, the means for men such as Montoni to have the state execute his personal revenge.

Unlike the many letters which remain concealed to Emily, we are offered excerpts of Valancourt’s letter which leads Emily to her mistaken assumptions of the subject of Montoni’s letter to her uncle. In part, the letter advances the plot and abounds with accounts of his romantic hauntings of La Valée, although characteristically interwoven amidst them is a brief yet multifaceted meditation that borders on the philosophical on the nature of writing itself as an aesthetic exercise. It is not surprising that Radcliffe would include this metatextual intervention, choosing to potentially displace her voice through Valancourt just as he displaces his voice through his book exchange with Emily. Described by St. Aubert as having the “ardour and ingenuousness of youth”(57), Valancourt is a “spring”(57) or younger double to St. Aubert, but it is also just as easy to view him as Emily’s masculine double. Certainly Radcliffe waits to offer his history until

after Emily has lost her father which renders their life stories perfect parallels. While clearly the paragon of a chivalric hero who ultimately attains St. Aubert's prayer for "benevolence and reason united"(53), Valancourt is also seemingly more vulnerable to the contagions of the world because of his natural disposition and education. An orphan and a younger son, his significantly older brother oversaw his education "in all the accomplishments of his age", and his "ardour of spirit, and...grandeur of mind" inclined him towards "exercises then thought heroic"(116), just as Radcliffe refers to the military as a profession "in those times...the only one in which a gentleman could engage without incurring a stain on his name"(117). But, like Emily, he is without an inheritance because his brother elected to finance Valancourt's education, believing his "genius and accomplishments would amply supply the deficiency of his inheritance"(117). Thus, Radcliffe clearly situates his aesthetic education as fundamentally anachronistic, but her matter of fact tone is not necessarily one of uncomplicated nostalgia. Her critique, when thought of as a parallel of the supposed accomplishments of Emily, cuts both ways. In one sense, Radcliffe expresses her disapproval of the present of both the novel and her readers' time in that the value of such sensibility, or appreciation of such educations, is lost. But in another way, Radcliffe also demonstrates the relative futility and insularity of such inheritances of aesthetic education and, moreover, their underlying ideologies and exclusivity to a specific class, and questions whether such inheritances are indeed truly valuable or instead work to efface the inequitable distribution of money and property where they become, in essence, false legacies. Her doubling of Valancourt and Emily's histories and inheritances suggests that Radcliffe is not necessarily offering a clear

critique of patriarchal structures. While Valancourt appears far more advanced in his aesthetic education than does Emily, and his vulnerability to the contagions of the city are hardly equivalent to the enforced imprisonment of Emily at the hands of Montoni, Radcliffe is more blatant in defining the deficiencies of his legacy of education.

Similar to how Radcliffe offers a more transparent comment on aesthetic learning through Valancourt, she also finds him a more suitable voice for her own moments of self-reflexivity. Valancourt describes his letter as “a kind of picture”(193) of his life over the time he and Emily have been apart. He describes the therapeutic nature of writing in that it “withdrew [him] from [his] own melancholy”(193), which becomes the opposite of Emily’s melancholic meditations of nature. Not only does Valancourt describe the act of writing as “render[ing] [Emily’s] absence supportable...rather, it seemed to destroy absence”(193), but also his letter becomes a kind of conversation where in “telling [her] every sentiment and affection of [his] heart, [she] almost appeared to be present”(193). Thus Radcliffe articulates, through Valancourt, the animating quality of language. Whereas other aesthetic mediums such as music, paintings, and sculptures are increasingly portrayed as potential harbingers or signifiers of death, or more specifically the materialization of sublimated female presence, here Radcliffe asserts the capacity of language, as Valancourt writes, to “destroy absence”, and more fundamentally language is the most effective means of conveying sentiment or the “sincerity of the writer”(193), not necessarily inherent truths. However, even language is limited not because its flaws, but because of the “indifferent observer”(193) who would read as mere “frivolities”(193) Valancourt’s attempts to “describe the finer movements of the heart, for they are too fine

to be discerned, they can only be experienced”(193). Even while Radcliffe states the efficacy of her medium as imparting the true sentiment of their author, she also concedes its potential for conveying superficial emotive excess. She posits the power of language not in the words themselves, but in the reader who must be emotionally invested in order to receive its intended meanings, which is another instance of Radcliffe’s revaluation of emotion, or more specifically emotional interestedness, as being fundamental to cognition. However, in a text that many take to be a celebration of the powers of the imagination, Radcliffe additionally defines experience as fundamental to emotional understanding. While Valancourt’s consideration of the therapeutic nature of writing is brief and seemingly insubstantial, in choosing to momentarily verge on the philosophical, Radcliffe suggests how her narrative text is always aware of the confines of its own medium, and addresses the role of the active reader in generating meanings. Moreover, her valuation of experience suggests why Radcliffe chooses to negotiate with contemporary philosophies of sentiment, language, mourning, and aesthetics through the form of narrative that most closely approaches the realities of, at least, emotional experience. In addition, Valancourt’s conclusions provide insight into another aspect of Emily’s naïve understanding of the world. While Valancourt appears to understand, at least on the level of language, the disjunct between self-awareness and the relative powerlessness of others’ interpretations, Emily tells her aunt that her “father taught [her]...that...if [Emily] deserved her own esteem, that...the world would follow”(126), a concept with which her aunt disagrees. While Radcliffe equally censures Madame’s worldliness, Emily’s belief in her worth as being coextensive and self-evident with the

world's understanding is continuously undermined, and increasingly Emily struggles with attaining agency through self-representation, often achieving the reverse of her desired result. Never more so is this apparent than at Udolpho, when Emily is faced with the reality that her self-esteem based in propriety and modesty only serves to render her "more captivatingly"(311) than ever before. As we are told, Emily's attempts to dress "herself with even more simplicity than usual, that she might escape observation" was "a policy, which did not avail her"(311). While Emily appears at the start of the novel to possess an exemplary privileged education of morality and aesthetics, Radcliffe also posits how the same precepts and beliefs serve as sources of disempowerment, which provokes the question of whether there is an appropriate mode of self-expression which provides agency, or if, as Valancourt believes, intent is inevitably vulnerable to dismissal and appropriative interpretations.

Valancourt's words which grasp at the primacy of experience also remind us of Emily's earlier decision to "return to the world"(89) because of his "image"(89), rather than remain at the convent with the "selfishness of its security"(89). Throughout, we are always aware of boundaries, not only of gender, but barriers that are physical, geographic, spiritual, political, and more fundamentally, barriers to expression and understanding. However, rather than interpreting our awareness of such borders as an element of so-called gothic transgression, Radcliffe instead censures various forms of isolationism in that it hinders emotional and intellectual understanding. Whether or not Emily gave much attention to Valancourt's meditation on the reciprocal nature of language, or if the excerpt is purely for our benefit, Radcliffe repeats a similar concept

hundreds of pages later. Curiously, Valancourt expresses the idea just before he departs for the city and thus experience, while the same idea occurs to Emily only after her journey to Venice, during her imprisonment at Udolpho and at the height of Montoni's attempts to rob her of her inheritance of La Valée. Throughout her journey and with increasing emotional and psychological distress, Emily engages to varying degrees of success with aesthetic expression in order to ease her apprehensions, predominantly her writing and drawing which reflect her contemplations of nature. Significantly, Emily does not sing except briefly when compelled at Venice which is arguably tied to Radcliffe's emphasis on Emily's appropriated voice. In one instance however, Emily expresses frustration at her inability to re-read poetry and derive the same effects she had previously. While Valancourt addresses the breach of expression as a writer, Radcliffe aligns Emily with the reader. She "sought to lose the sense of her own cares, in the visionary scenes of the poet; but she had again to lament the irresistible force of circumstances over the taste and powers of the mind"(383). While St. Aubert's teachings posit aesthetic appreciation as being governed purely by the individual, a precept that she once readily repeated, Emily now understands the true power of circumstance and outside forces, or that "thought cannot always be controlled by will"(383). Believing herself entirely unable to leave the castle, she realizes how "it requires a spirit at ease to be sensible even to the abstract pleasures of pure intellect. The enthusiasm of genius...now appeared cold, and dim"(383). Just as Emily experiences a breakdown of her understanding of reality and fantasy, she questions what happened to the "charm"(383) of her book. She arrives at the same conclusion as Valancourt and questions, "Was it in my

mind, or in the imagination of the poet? It lived in each...But the fire of the poet is vain if the mind of his reader is not tempered like his own”(383). While Valancourt is able to theorize, Emily is only able to arrive at her conclusions after her experiences have led to her temporarily loss of her appreciative abilities. According to her thoughts, imagination is a necessary interpretative dimension of cognition, but one that is vulnerable to fear created by tyranny and isolation. Allowing Emily the ability to acknowledge how her aesthetic appreciation is debilitated by her situation, Radcliffe paradoxically, yet clearly, grants Emily an intellectual growth.

CHAPTER FOUR: Italian Aesthetics and Culture

While Emily's imprisonment at Udolpho results in her temporary inability to derive intellectual enjoyment or even therapeutic relief from aesthetic experience where fear confuses the real and illusory, Italy is first introduced with the promise of providing legitimate examples of female agency and egalitarian aesthetic expression and appreciation. Just as Radcliffe demonstrates the dangers of crossing the limits of the imagination at Udolpho, in Italy she also ultimately casts Emily's original aesthetic visions of agency and freedom as equally illusory. More fundamentally, Radcliffe puts into question Emily's previous notions of aesthetic categories such as the sublime and picturesque, engages in a critique of baroque and pastoral aesthetics, and searches for an aesthetic mode for her text that portrays true culture rather than stylistic surface or simulacra. Elizabeth Bohls argues that Radcliffe portrays two forms of bourgeois female subjectivity, one of picturesque patriarchal complicity and one of the sublime which "explores the structure and consequences of gendered oppression"(226) in that while women are "privileged by their class, they are paradoxically disempowered by their gender"(214). According to Bohls, Radcliffe "asserts the reality of the picturesque vision, but gives the sublime castle far more vividness and charisma"(226). Instead, Radcliffe depicts Italy as a dynamic nexus of both categories, and all forms of culture, where the picturesque and the sublime are not inherent or monolithic, but are rather imaginative impositions. In Italy, Emily's experiences broaden the parameters of her circumscribed understandings of aesthetic categories, where Radcliffe simultaneously concedes the

necessity of upholding such conceptions while she acknowledges the inherent dangers. Even before Emily reaches Italy, the Alps afford both sublime sights that trigger fears mixed with “various emotions of delight...admiration, astonishment, and awe, as she had never experienced”(166), along with picturesque and pastoral scenery “she had never seen excelled”(167). Radcliffe first allows Emily to aestheticize the new scenes while reminding us of the underlying violence of Italian history. Before she reaches Italy, Emily is able to aestheticize violence itself, imagining the visual spectacle of armies as she listens to Montoni and Cavigni dispute the historical details of Hannibal's tactics (166). But a glimpse of the sublime mountainous landscape soon “yielded”(166) the “terrors of fancy” to those of reality. Similarly, the walls that originally provided fortifications for the town of Susa become merely framing devices that “exhibited an interesting picture to Emily”(168) where we are told of the violent past of the picturesque vistas. Such landscapes provoke Emily to “wish[] to become a peasant of Piedmont”(167), just as her aunt imagines that in Italy she will be “little less than a princess”(166), which are but “splendid illusions” that “charmed her”(167). Rather than finding security in their bourgeois identities as Bohls insists, both women instead aestheticize themselves and imaginatively dream of the supposed freedoms of their aestheticized notions of the aristocracy or peasantry. When they enter Udolpho, seemingly a place of the unreal, the women get their wishes, but their realizations are far from their idealized fantasies. Madame becomes the languishing and ultimately murdered princess in the turret where Emily finds Madame’s “skeleton hand”(364) to be “substance...but it is cold—cold as marble”(364), her body serving as a reminder of the

potential danger of the aesthetic to lead to an objectified death. Afterwards, Montoni sends Emily to a peasant cottage when Udolpho is besieged in a sequence in which she meets the peasant girl Maddelina, one of her doubles. However, Emily's idealization of peasant life is equally fraught. After a frightful ordeal where she is accompanied through a violent lightning storm by Ugo and Bertrand, whom she suspects to be her assassins, Emily awakes to find herself with a view of forests, the Apennines, and the Tuscan vineyards "whose charms communicated imperceptibly to her mind somewhat of their own serenity"(414). But rather than exemplifying the fulfilment of Emily's idealized and simplified impression of peasantry as the distant and tiny figures out of a picturesque Claude Lorraine painting, Radcliffe places us in close proximity. While Maddelina "seemed animated with the pure affections of nature,...the others...that surrounded her...expressed, more or less, the worst qualities—cruelty, ferocity, cunning and duplicity"(414). What Emily hears from Maddelina is the reality that her parent's cottage was purchased by Montoni in recompense for some unspecified favour and thus some kind of violence or illicit action (418). Radcliffe reminds us of how Emily's views of the freedoms of peasantry are merely fantasies and her disorientation and sensations of unreality are often caused by her confrontation with the realities of violence. However, Emily seeks to restore her aestheticized view of her surroundings and "recovered...sufficiently to permit her the enjoyment of her books, among which she found some unfinished sketches of landscapes...and she was thus enabled to amuse herself"(418) in drawing the landscape and placing "interesting groups characteristic of the scenery they animated, and often contrived to tell, with perspicuity some simple and

affecting story”(418) where “she would forget...her real sufferings”(418). Radcliffe explains that Emily’s renewed ability to aestheticize her surroundings and derive a therapeutic agency is because of Maddelina, who is herself able to forget her mother’s punishments if she can “steal out into the woods, and play upon [her] sticcado”(418). Throughout the novel, aesthetic expression takes on many forms and serves several purposes, and although Radcliffe demonstrates the danger of aestheticizing, she also legitimizes and situates it as way for Emily to sustain herself through effacing the violence underlying her own precarious bourgeois reality.

Emily’s encounter with Maddelina during her stay in Tuscany concludes with another lesson of culture. Hearing a “female voice...sing in a kind of chant”(420), Emily witnesses a local festival ceremony that includes an invocation to a sea-nymph which takes her by surprise. We are told that “Emily had been early taught to venerate Florence as the seat of literature and of the fine arts; but, that its taste for classic story should descend to the peasants of the country, occasioned her both surprise and admiration”(412). When questioned about the origin of the song, Maddelina, “mistaking the reason of Emily’s surprise”(421), tells Emily that “nobody *believes* in such things, but our old songs tell of them”(421), quick to counter the stereotype of rustic superstition, instead explaining the ritual as a mere observance of tradition. In one sense, Emily’s Tuscan encounter appears to demonstrate the validity of her previous egalitarian vision of aesthetic pleasures, even though her melancholy prevents her from fully participating in the scene herself. While Radcliffe orients the peasants’ culture as having been handed down to them from the upper classes, Emily also observes that “the gentleness and grace

of their manners...appeared to be perfectly natural to them”(421), along with the girls’ hospitable, “Arcadian air”(412), which firmly situates Radcliffe’s allegiance to an anti-Baroque, classical Greek as opposed to a Roman aesthetic. The idea of Italian artistic expression as being natural reiterates a moment during which Emily first hears Italian music where the violin music played by a peasant has the “delicacy of expression, as harmonized exactly with the tender emotions [Emily] was indulging”(168), so that she believes it is played by “scarcely less than a professor of music”(169). Emily’s surprise at these displays of culture by the Italian peasantry reveals her class-biased views. And despite her previous belief in the egalitarian appreciation of artistic expression and longing to become a peasant, when she is with Maddelina, Emily experiences “benevolent pleasure”(421) yet ultimately returns to her “pensive melancholy...as she sat rather apart from the company”(421). Even when Emily is seemingly later transformed during her escape from Udolpho into a picturesque peasant figure, wearing “a little straw hat, such as was worn by the peasant girls of Tuscany”(455), Radcliffe reminds us of how even the hat is purchased, and with nothing less than the chanced upon “booty of one of the *condottieri*”(455) found underneath their stray horse’s saddle. An almost playful and overly convenient explanation, Radcliffe is always ready to remind us of the materiality of Emily’s aesthetic experience. But even more fundamentally, Emily’s transformation into a pastoral aesthetic figure, however temporarily, articulates Radcliffe’s search throughout the text for an appropriate aesthetic of self-representation. In other words, Radcliffe does not altogether deny Emily’s aesthetic visions, but instead seeks to define for them a positive mode. When Emily dons her Tuscan straw hat in her escape from

Udolpho, and travels along the Arno, she is able to “beh[old] all the charms of sylvan and pastoral landscape united”(455), and when she arrives at Pisa, there are “no *Palladian* palaces, to throw enchantment over the fancy and lead it into the wilds of fairy story”(461). Instead, Pisa is filled with “the busy voices of sailors on board vessels”(461), a place where elegance was “to be looked for only in the waving hills”(462), and “persons in the dresses of all nations; a scene, which reminded her of a Venetian masquerade, such as she had witnesses at the time of the Carnival”(462). In other words, it is a true scene of mercantile cosmopolitanism, not the aestheticized fantasy of Venice. And here Radcliffe breaks with narration to remind of how the sounds Pisa, once a port city, “since that period, have there sunk almost into silence”(461). After the horrors of Udolpho, Radcliffe’s description of Pisa may merely be read as an apparently disenchanting, and now spectral, Venice. But Radcliffe’s allusion to Venice is not one of sentimental nostalgia. Rather, she juxtaposes the two cities, just as she creates doubles of characters, in order to investigate the intricacies of memory and its variables of time and perspective.¹³ Most important is that Radcliffe does not unqualifiedly invoke aesthetics in her text. Rather, she harbours a sincere ambivalence towards how we remember and define culture, in its both aesthetic and historic dimensions, which Radcliffe depicts as often antithetical. Both Emily’s recognition of the Tuscan girls’ sea-nymph chant and and

¹³ Terry Castle comments on Radcliffe’s doubles, the indeterminacy between people and between people and objects suggest how “[a]bsence is preferable to presence”(136). Castle argues that Radcliffe addresses the “preference for the phantasmatic” and “shows...the denatured state of our own awareness...our rejection of the present, our fixation on the past (or yearnings for an idealized future), our longing for simulacra and nostalgic fantasy”(137). I agree that Radcliffe depicts this phenomenon. However, I believe that Radcliffe heavily censures the preference for simulacra and increasingly critiques how so-called renaissances of culture often revive the stylistic surfaces and luxuries of the past instead of the true spirit or virtues of past cultures.

her comparison of Pisa to Venice intentionally draw us back to Emily's first encounters with Italy, and the country of origin of much of her father's classical education.

Venice becomes a paradigm of culture and the quintessence of an aesthetic figure. Even before Emily arrives, Venice's cultural excess cannot be contained and the sounds and sights of Carnival herald the city's presence as she views how the "Carnival did...appear to extend from Venice along the whole line of these enchanting shores...exhibiting the fantastic diversity of a masquerade"(174), and the city itself evokes the summit of Emily's "admiration"(174). But Radcliffe's first lines of description of Venice's "islets, palaces, and towers rising out of the sea, whose clear surface reflected the tremulous picture in all its colours"(174) signals the superficial unreality of the city that "appeared as if...called up from the ocean by the wand of an enchanter, rather than reared by mortal hands"(175), significantly alluding to how the aesthetic effaces the historical. It is also a scene of transience, a fleeting spectacle whose "tremulous" image is lit by the "sinking sun"(174) whose light, which selectively reveals the basilica of St. Mark and the "grander features of the city"(175), is replaced by the "melancholy purple of the evening...like a thin veil"(175). Radcliffe's narrative tone, which suddenly appears to celebrate Venice's aesthetic excesses, where the "finest emotions of the soul were alone awake"(175), instead portrays its powerful lulling effects, its "charm"(175), which in Radcliffe's aesthetic lexicon is used as a derisive epithet. Unlike Pisa's daylight and realism, Venice is a distillation of luxury, reduced to an insubstantial reflected surface, a mere effect of light which dissolves into the spectral. The barge in which Emily approaches, "glide[s] along, [so] that its motion was not

perceivable, and the fairy city appeared approaching to welcome the strangers”(175). But the cosmopolitan promise of Venice is one of false hospitality and culture, just as the outward wealth and magnificence of Montoni’s Venetian mansion is undermined by the “faded remains of tapestry...[and]...*fresco*, [of which] the damps had almost withdrawn both colours and design”(179) on the walls of its more secluded chambers. But even here, Emily is first “charmed”(177) and reassured by the apparent Renaissance splendor of the front hall whose “walls and ceilings were adorned with historical and allegorical paintings, in *fresco*....silver tripods...[and] the floor...covered with Indian mats painted in a variety of colours and devices”(176). Emily’s visual impression, accompanied by the songs of the Carnival revellers who sing the verses of Petrarch and “Aristo....of the wars of the Moors against Charlemagne, and then of the woes of Orlando”(177), serve to further conceal the material realities and means of the city’s splendor, where aesthetic forms create a narrative that firmly situates the wars which make such luxuries possible in the historical past, and bind Emily in a “spell of melancholy”(177). In this light, Radcliffe’s supposedly gothic elements which dramatize tyranny and warfare are nothing if not attempts to historicize their unwritten stories, and are nowhere more apparent than when she interjects with a brief explanation of the origins of the Condottieri, “an order of men...not known in our age, and but faintly described in the history of their own’(358) which may itself be read as an ironic gesture towards Revolutionary anarchy, or of the story of Montoni himself whose eventual arrest failed in “obtaining a place in any of the published records of that time”(522). Despite Emily’s own lamentations that the Italian musician whom she first hears as she crosses the Alps is travelling to play at Carnival and

“be drawn from the innocence and beauty of [pastoral] scenes, to the corrupt ones of that voluptuous city”(169), Emily too is seduced by scenes “such as her imagination had never painted”(176). But the aesthetic effects of Venice verge too closely to St. Aubert’s warnings about art provoking dangerous sentiment, and rather than producing a sense of aesthetic presence of which Valancourt speaks, they create a sense of loss where, even after listening to the fading music of the Carnival, the “deep stillness...was as expressive as the strain that had just ceased”(176). Venice’s spectrality repeatedly reminds Emily of Valancourt and her father, whose words on the spiritual voices heard “Upon the silence of the midnight air”(175), she repeats to herself, which emphasizes how Emily’s apparent susceptibility to Venice’s charms is a legacy of her father’s aesthetic teachings.

Perhaps the most menacing outcome of Emily’s delight upon her arrival at Venice is not merely that its appearance momentarily reconciles her to Montoni, believing him to be the man of wealth that he represents himself to be, but that she mistakes the ethereal insubstantiality of Venice for a representation of a spiritual and sublime encounter. While “[a]ll nature seemed to repose”(175), Emily experiences “admiration and sublime devotion, as she raised [her eyes] over the sleeping world to the vast heavens, and heard the notes of solemn music”(175), although Venice proves to be a false altar. Before she leaves La Valée, Emily believes the sounds of nature to be more in unison with her emotions and leaves off playing her lute, but in Venice she hears “a female voice, accompanied by a few instruments, singing a soft and mournful air”(175). Alternating between love and “languishing into the cadence of hopeless grief...it flowed from no feigned sensibility”(175). The voice appears to renew Emily’s belief in emotively veristic

female artistic expression. Later that evening, she views a Carnival procession of Neptune where the “fantastic splendour of this spectacle...appeared like the vision of a poet suddenly embodied”(178). The “fanciful images” of the scene provoke Emily to “indulge[] herself in imagining what might be the manners and delights of a sea-nymph, till she almost wished to throw off the habit of mortality”(178) and later composes a poem that allows her to “escape from serious reflections”(179). But the way in which Emily chooses to aestheticize herself may allow her escapism, but not any tangible agency. The night after, during a midnight gondola ride, Radcliffe narrates a tableau where Emily is transformed in the moonlight, “partly shaded by a thin black veil”(184), and in her sadness, she becomes a figure from a Renaissance painting, as “[h]ers was the *contour* of a Madona, with the sensibility of a Magdalen”(184). But while once again it appears difficult to reconcile Radcliffe’s extolling tone of such neoclassical and Renaissance inspired scenes, she demonstrates how Emily’s exemplary combination of virtue and sensibility is also what apparently renders her more interesting and thus vulnerable to the male gaze, or what, at Udolpho, Emily thinks of as being “exposed to the crude gaze of Montoni’s associates”(383). We are told that the night of the gondola ride Count Morano “had been observing her for some time in silence”(184) and compels Emily to sing, reminding us that her previous visions of escape are truly fancies. However, Venice, with its proliferation of female voices, appears to hold out the promise of female agency. Emily first meets Signora Livona who sings with “true Italian taste”(185), and later several more Venetian “ladies, with whose sweet manners Emily was particularly charmed”(187) and who exude gracious hospitality and “excessive

refinement”(188), especially Signora Herminia. Her unaffected song performed “as if she had been alone”(188), with her “veil half thrown back”, and in a voice “uncommonly right in tone, and various in expression....[she] appeared to be entirely unconscious of its powers”(188), moves Emily to sketch her as a picturesque figure integrated in a backdrop of verdure. Seemingly in response to Signora Herminia’s display of self-contained artistic agency, Emily offers her drawing “to the beautiful original”(188) in a gesture that counters what we may remember to be her own previous aesthetic appropriation at the fishing house. Emily’s last views of Venice are consonant with her first, the “palaces seemed to sink in the distant waves”(206). She thinks of Greece and “a thousand classical remembrances stealing to her mind, she experienced that pensive luxury which is felt on viewing the scenes of ancient story”(206) and composes another set of verses as though to “reanimate[] the landscape”(206). Still able to engage in nostalgia, and perhaps bolstered by her stay at Venice, she is later disillusioned when at Udolpho, after her aunt’s death, she sees Signora Livona and her companions join Montoni. Emily “dismissed...almost instantly”(382) the possibility that Livona arrived at the castle willingly and momentarily chooses to explain away her presence believing Livona is held prisoner. However later, Emily “distinguished female voices mingling with the laughter”(383) and the realization of Livonia's true character creates a moment of crisis in which for Emily “the scenes of the present and the future opened to her imagination, that the image of Valancourt failed in its influence, and her resolution shook with dread”(384). It is in this state that one of Montoni’s conspirators discovers her and attempts to persuade her to return to the party with him, where she “will be the fairest

ornament of the party”(385). Coming to the realization that the Signoras, whose charm Emily had so much admired, are perhaps no more than courtesans, Emily is then herself reduced to an aesthetic object by one of Montoni’s men, who reminds her of how she is always by their gaze a mere commodity and all of her physical beauty, accomplishments, and virtue which manifests itself outwardly, serve only to heighten her value and her peril. Thus, when Emily is later aestheticized as a Tuscan peasant, recognizing the sea nymph chant and travelling through Venice’s double, Pisa, a true transcultural port city, her appreciation of Arcadian neoclassical culture is renewed. But it is a neoclassicism based in the realism of agrarian naturalism and tradition, not the luxurious and transient spectacles of Venice and the false freedoms of the Carnival. And even more conspicuous, as Emily escapes with Annette, Du Pont, and Ludovico and they continue on through Pisa, we are told that they travel through the cool orchards “without pausing to view the celebrated antiquities of the place, or the wonders of its hanging tower”(461-2), a curious renunciation of the value of such monuments. Instead, Radcliffe situates culture and inspiration in the scenic tableaux of human sentiment as Emily watches the “arrival and departure of vessels, participating in the joy of meeting friends, and, sometimes, shedding a sympathetic tear to the sorrow of those, that were separating”(462), scenes which renew Emily’s compositions of poetry, further evidence of Radcliffe’s continuing rejection of the cultural significance of antiquarian definitions of neoclassicism.¹⁴

¹⁴ For a psychoanalytic account of the ruin see Steven Gores who comments on Freud’s concepts of history in his essay “Mourning and Melancholia”: Freud states that mourning is the “process of working through in detail the memory of the lost objects as a precondition to finally accepting the death of the preceding, generative culture as an unalterable fact”. Gores continues to explain how “there is a dual process of withdrawal and mourning, rejection of the object and dwelling upon it. In terms of this investigation, the object is history itself. Eighteenth-century efforts to recover history are characterized by

CHAPTER FIVE: Domestic Discord and Anodyne Endings

Throughout her narrative, Radcliffe sustains a fluctuation of clashing aesthetic categories and confusions of past and present, and she closes her novel with an ending which appears to reconcile these ongoing tensions. Instead, while Radcliffe seemingly ends in an endorsement of St. Aubert's teachings, the final sequence of the novel at Chateau Le Blanc dramatizes and draws together clashes of cultures, tastes, sensibilities, philosophies, and educations. In this last sequence which reenacts versions of previous episodes of the novel, Radcliffe increasingly becomes more self-reflexive as she continues to search for an appropriate aesthetic mode for her medium and addresses the lost female legacies of the novel. Just as the narrative appears to have achieved an albeit unsatisfactory closure for Emily as she escapes from Udolpho, Radcliffe reintroduces the mysterious Chateau-le-Blanc, and another set of doubles, the Count de Villefort, the Countess, and of course Blanche, Emily's double. Once again, we meet the benevolent patriarch, the conceited woman of high society, and the beautiful ingénue; although they are slightly reconfigured, we almost suspect that the story will begin anew. But as though to counter our suspicions and expectations of conventions, Radcliffe intensifies her metatextual interventions, describing how, as Blanche arrives at the gothic Chateau, she "almost fancied herself approaching a castle, such as is often celebrated in early story"(468), recalling stories with "knights...who...come...to rescue the fair lady of his

the ambivalence that Freud describes, a tension between the desire to reconstitute the past...and the desire to withdraw from the past"(97). Gores investigates how such principles relate to the figure of the ruin in the aesthetic writings of Gilpin, and in the paintings of landscape artists of the early nineteenth-century. He

love from the oppression of his rival,” legends that Blanche “had...obtained access to in the library of her convent, that...was stored with these reliques of romantic fiction”(468). In the great hall of the Chateau itself is a “sumptuous tapestry, which...was now too dark to distinguish...[and] depicted scenes from some of the antient Provençal romance”(469), a visual sign of such fading narratives.¹⁵ While previously, the expectations propagated by fairy stories are a target of censure, the explicit slight at the plots of romance and legend as outmoded reliques serve to chasten those of us who like Emily expect Valancourt to appear at Udolpho, despite repeated bathetic events and characters at every turn. But Radcliffe’s relationship to past romance narratives is ambivalent and opposite to how she takes overt aim at the sentimental genre which the Countess reads “on some fashionable system of philosophy”(476). If before Radcliffe’s narrative seemed to fluctuate between the aesthetic categories of the picturesque and sublime, the discourses of sentimentality and rationality, of class, culture, and nationalism, all of these debates converge at the Chateau whose architecture and decorations are of both old and modern, the modern “either suffered to fall into decay, or had never been properly finished”(471), and whose views unite the southern view of the “dark woods”(469), the “north-

concludes that “the figure of the ruin is ambivalent, conveying simultaneously the threat of disruption and discontinuity in the past and potential liberation from the status quo”(123).

¹⁵ See Adela Pinch’s study of emotion and their relation to objects. Pinch makes reference to the series of tapestries in that they are part of Radcliffe’s use of “anticipatory nostalgia”(122), and that “Radcliffe’s aesthetic depends on the invention of a temporal gap between artifacts and their origins”(123). Pinch considers that Radcliffe demonstrates the idea that “art becomes ‘distressed’ by time”(123) and that her novels “are supremely concerned with their belatedness”(123). Pinch’s study is also useful for its explanation of “aesthetic theory’s views of it objects”(114) detailing the ideas of Burke, Hume and Kames in their theories of how aesthetic or natural objects elicit emotions. Theorists usually defined image or effigy as evoking “in excess of real emotions or...real emotions’ paler “phantoms”(115). She suggests Radcliffe’s use of the waxen effigy works in a way described by Kames’s *Elements of Style* in which “the emotion caused by an image is the same as the emotion caused by real objects, but the image does its work by creating a reverie, a delusion of presence”(115) that “aesthetic emotions are always delusional”(115).

east...shores of Languedoc and Provence...and, to the south-west...the majestic Pyrenées”(469). The views cause an argument between the Count and his wife who sees them as “savage nature”(471) and the chateau itself “though not a world of rude nature, is, to [her] taste...one of savage art”(471), which the Count takes as a slight on his ancestry. Clearly the multifocal view is of significance as Blanche finds herself in a turret which offers the three view of Languedoc, the Pyrenees, and Roussillon, while later the family venture to an octagonal pavilion in the woods where the windows provide the same multiplicity of perspectives. More than anything, Radcliffe articulates the instability of culture, and representation of the present which, like the modern architecture of the chateau, is indiscernible in its state of decay or incompleteness, or a state of becoming with many possible future prospects. With her use of neoclassicism, Radcliffe appears to search for a universal aesthetic of naturalism, but finds it difficult to wholly reconcile the operation of the category of class and is ambivalent to neoclassicism’s potential to be valued and interpreted as condoning aristocratic opulence, or melancholic nostalgia. Reintroducing the idea of the faded tapestry, Radcliffe’s text fluctuates in its comment on narratives of the past and their value and relevance to the present, and appears to address the tension between content and form. Blanche investigates a faded tapestry that “represented scenes from the wars of Troy, though the almost colourless worsted now mocked the glowing actions they once had painted”(474). Her response becomes paradigmatic of the novel, in that she first “laughed at the ludicrous absurdity” but then she remembers the “hands, which had wove it, were, like the poet, whose thoughts of fire they had attempted to express, long since mouldered into dust, a train of melancholy

ideas passed over her mind, and she almost wept”(474). Blanche’s response to the tapestry upon her second inspection enacts an exemplary mode of reading. First dismissing the disparity of content and form, she then realizes the innate value of the tapestry in its signification of a reminder of death, a *memento mori* of its artists, or differently, a reminder of its creation. And significant, although clearly implicit, is Radcliffe’s feminist and self-referential comment on the equivalent attempts of women at artistic expression, asserting their right to aspire to the poetic, as Blanche checks herself in her conditioned response to the tapestry, undoubtedly woven by women, just as Radcliffe refers to her own form of the novel as being written by her own “weak hand”(672). Later on, Emily too inquires about a tapestry and is informed by Dorothee that they are from a “some famous book”(532), now forgotten but was once “greatly admired”(532). Emily investigates herself and “discovered, by verses in the Provençal tongue, wrought underneath each scene, that it exhibited stories from some of the most celebrated ancient romances”(532), an instance in which her father’s education, true to the traditional culture of her region, but now since eradicated by the influence of northern culture and language, enables her to read the meaning of the visual representations in a dialect since lost.

But even as there are poignant moments of self-referentiality and reverence towards her artistic ancestors, Radcliffe’s narrative voice searches for an appropriate aesthetic of self-representation not only for Emily, but for her narrative form. As the story draws to a close with the realization that St. Aubert is wrong in his belief that the civil upheavals of France are of the past when smugglers appear, their presence serves to jar us

both with a reminder of mercenary materialism and with the fact that their hiding place is facilitated by the effacement of the true circumstances of the Lady Marchioness de Villeroi's death by both the Count and St. Aubert. When Ludovico spends the night in the Marchioness's chamber, Radcliffe weaves the abridged text of an aforementioned Provençal tale into her plot. Her introduction is ambiguous, first explaining how this tale is unusual, having a different origin from the "Arabian legends brought by the Saracens into Spain...recounting the chivalric exploits performed by the crusaders"(551). The tale of the English knight she includes, however, "exhibited nothing of the magnificent machinery and heroic manners, which usually characterize the fables of the twelfth century"(552), and though it is "in its original style...of great length"(552), her abridged version will suffice. Moreover, she censors and partly dismisses its content in that we will notice "it is strongly tinctured with the superstition of the times"(552). But the story itself of the spectral knight, seeking justice for his death, ironically bears significance to the murder of the Marchioness. While her murder is unjust, even more unjust is its suppression from the family history. Accused by Claudia Johnson for attempting to "erase all of [the] stories of suffering women, and to refigure them instead as stories about men"(133), Radcliffe's negotiation with the function of narrative is far more self-conscious, addressing the nature of narrative and aesthetic effacement itself. The Count refuses to explain the Marchioness's death when Henri notices that a chair is of the style of those in the Louvre, responding, "there is a history belonging to that chair, but I have not time to tell it"(546). Instead, when further pressed, the Count reminds us of St. Aubert as he "made no reply, but stood for a few moments engaged in thought, and

evidently much affected”(548). But later, the presence of the smugglers reveal the consequences of such denials when the Count, Blanche and St. Foix are taken prisoner when their picturesque ramble through the mountains is interrupted by a violent lightning storm. Here too, Radcliffe makes us aware of the way in which narratives of the past are used to assuage present fears as the Count attempts to “divert”(602) his daughter with accounts of natural history and the “civil story of the Pyrenées...and gave a brief account of some celebrated sieges and encounters in early times”(602). At first the scene appears to be an echo of Emily and St. Aubert’s tour, but this time it is not long before Blanche is interrupted from her “reverie”(602) of the landscape which the “narrative...rendered...doubly interesting”(602) and is confronted with the present reality of the smugglers. While before aesthetic objects have the potential to dangerously evade the historic in their inscrutability, here, the Count’s botanizing and historic tales, which situate civil upheavals and wrongs in the past, renders them aesthetic. But just as the smugglers are found out, Radcliffe does address the false and dangerous applications of such stories. While her own narrative is structured itself in, to a certain extent, aestheticizing the historic, Radcliffe maintains a consistent and often ambiguous ambivalence towards aesthetics throughout the text. For instance, when Ludovico fails to appear the next morning of his watch in the late marchioness’s chamber and the Count attempts to enter the locked room, in his haste, he hesitates at breaking down the door because he “observed [its] singular beauty” and “delicate carvings”(560). First believing it to be “of ebony, so dark and close its grain and so high its polish; but it proved to be only the larch wood, of the growth of Provence”(560). Another instance of Radcliffe’s

growing endorsements of valuing the natural worth and beauty of the indigenous, albeit at the risk of lapsing into xenophobic or Orientalizing overtones, her insertion of the carved door strangely suspends the narrative action of the scene. And as the Count is momentarily distracted from finding Ludovico by the beauty of the door, we too risk becoming occluded by the aesthetic. Ultimately, the novel asserts the need for aesthetic transparency. At the end, Radcliffe includes one last tapestry, newly created in honour of Emily and Blanche's double wedding, "representing the exploits of Charlemagne and his twelve peers"(670). The subject of the tapestry, the Frankish king who initiated the Carolingian Renaissance settles on a gothic aesthetic, but one of revivification and importantly, not the grotesque, violent patriarchy of Udolpho, which itself is ultimately restored to Madame Bonnac, a female descendant of the line. But the ending which many take to be conservative validations of patriarchy is hardly as uncomplicated as the views of Annette and Dorothée who view the scenes of the double wedding with enchantment and nostalgia. Annette's thoughts that it is "almost...an enchanted palace" and she is as "charmed" and reminded of "fairy tales"(671) seems to suggest Radcliffe's own ambivalence towards her artificial conclusion. Terry Castle comments on the "ostensibly normalizing ending," and detects that all is not what it seems as "Radcliffe's language here...remains oddly preternatural"(122). As Castle's incisive response reveals, the ending provokes a second reading. And if one traces Radcliffe's use of aesthetics themselves, the final pages are filled with overtly anodyne touches which can hardly be read at face value. Perhaps such picturesque scenes are meant to be bittersweet in that our reading is informed by the present; thus we know that France's contemporary aesthetic

does not ultimately aspire towards the productive potential of the gothic renaissance of Charlemagne, but rather descends into the mercenary chaos of Udolpho. Seen in this light, Radcliffe's final scene which rewrites a past, and therapeutically if artificially reinstates female succession, expresses the loss of suppressed futures. Therefore, Radcliffe could be not only challenging the idea of the progressive trajectory of history, but could also be suggesting that the degeneration of civil society into war could be a result of suppressed matrilineal social and inheritance structures. Differently, Maggie Kilgour refers to the final tapestry as "another version of [Radcliffe's] veil"(139) and that the image "offers an idealised myth about the origins of the middle class...as well as antagonism against an older aristocratic order which is repaired and restored, rather than eradicated"(139). But of the gothic genre in general, Kilgour explains that it is a "world in which there are...no individuated 'characters', in which plots and effects are themselves conventional, formulaic, and predictable. The "gothic thus originates in a sense of historical difference, and the desire to transcend it by recovering a lost past"(30). And Kilgour too is vexed with the happy ending, claiming the "resolution produces more problems than it solves as the explanations seem inadequate; attempting to...bring...aesthetics and moral, together"(129).¹⁶ As for Emily's aesthetic education, she seemingly ends the novel as she begins.¹⁷ Reunited with Valancourt, one of the final

¹⁶ See Coral Ann Howells who utilizes Roland Barthes's concepts of pleasure and focuses on the "odd moments" of the text, the "moments when the narrative conventions split, showing up the false limits which the sentimental narrative imposes"(152). According to Howells, "this leads to the most striking moments of transgression in a Radcliffian novel, the transgression of a woman writing and asserting the freedom of the creative imagination as an artist's right"(153).

¹⁷ Emily's apparent lack of development is most often taken for granted. See D. L. Macdonald who draws upon the characteristics of the fantastic defined by Tzvetan Todorov, and discusses Radcliffe's demystification of superstitious occurrences and traces her use of the veil linking it to a denial of a version

lasting images depicts her as she “touched the chords of her lute in solemn symphony, and then accompanied it with her voice, in one of the simple and affecting airs”(665). Unassuming as this image appears, it is, after all, a potential scene of agency and voice, and may be the true image of the sketch she draws of the Signora in Italy. However, the question of whether this image grants her subjectivity or agency is best answered through an investigation of spectral aesthetic figures which trace the female legacy of the novel, and additionally provide a way to access Emily’s psychological development.

The conclusion may indeed leave us with an endorsement of patriarchy and domesticity, or be permeated by a strange otherworldly aura, and to insist that Radcliffe grants Emily an unrestricted agency is ultimately specious. However, in a novel which thematizes education and, more specifically, the inheritances of education, most conspicuous is the brief and matter-of-fact detailing of Valancourt and Emily’s inheritances, which grant them both financial agency. Valancourt suddenly receives a “part of the rich domain”(672) from his older brother who sees his marriage as a “prospect of rational happiness”(672), while Emily inherits her aunt’s lavish estate which she promptly sells to purchase her father’s childhood home. But in addition, she passes on the “legacy”(672) of Laurentini to Mons. Bonnac whose wife has just inherited Udolpho. Overly convenient coincidences of relations aside, Laurentini’s “legacy” and

of the Freudian primal scene (again choosing as his main focus the waxen *memento mori*) which he argues is a “more radical conservatism”(203) than previously thought. He concludes that Radcliffe “write[s] a novel of education in which her heroine starts out with nothing to learn, a novel of maturation in which her heroine ends up as innocent, and as infantile, as she began”(203). However, Macdonald’s study tends towards evaluative statements that undermine his own conclusions, such as the idea that Radcliffe makes “a whole series of mistakes”(202) insofar as she departs from so-called Gothic conventions or Freudian paradigms of psychic progression. Also for a related discussion of the ‘primal scene’ in *Udolpho* see Mary Laughlin Fawcett.

that of her aunt allow Emily to fulfil the most important precept of St. Aubert, his “benevolence...by remembering, that superior attainments of every sort bring with them duties of superior exertion”(671). The foregrounding of women’s legacies of matrilineal inheritances of property seem to eclipse the words of St. Aubert’s philosophical bequest as the effaced women provide the material means of fulfilling his theories. In addition, the question remains if Radcliffe strictly grants Emily a material competence, or allows her to continue, as the narrator claims, “labouring for intellectual improvement”(672), and ultimately, a subjectivity. Kilgour views the plot as circular, “as suggesting a pattern for female development and experience...[as] an alternative to the traditional male teleological narrative. The discovery of female identity emerges in continuity with the mother rather than the father”(139). Outlining psychoanalytic definitions of Gothic fiction which make distinctions between the so-called ‘male’ and ‘female’ patterns of development,¹⁸ Kilgour explains how “[w]hile the male moves through the standard *Bildungsroman* towards personhood and individuation, the female is never independent, and achieves her goal by entering into a new relation through marriage”(37). Scholarship has never regarded Emily particularly well. As Kilgour explains, Emily’s fixation on the various mysteries of the veils, the notorious *memento mori*, musical motifs, and portraits, and her employment of an “interpretative method [that] is associative and analogic rather than rational”(121) are problematic. Emily’s associative thought, Kilgour tells, is the “faculty denounced by Locke as subversive of rational order, and by Wollstonecraft as

¹⁸ See Kate Ferguson Ellis for her commentary on the unusual nature of matrilineal inheritance in the novel 121-4.

particularly insidious for women”(121).¹⁹ But even more disruptive for Kilgour is the way in which narrative action is interrupted by such things as “Emily’s poetic effusions and moments of intense lyric feeling”(123), or the portraits “of women...which further emphasize the stasis of female identity”(123), or the “fragmentation of the stories told by other characters”(123) which Kilgour teasingly says are resolved “preferably after midnight in a cell equipped with the requisite ‘human skull and bones, lying beside an hour-glass’”(123). What Kilgour indicates as disruptive, or even kitschy, however, are exclusively Emily’s confrontations with aesthetic figures and her own attempts at artistic expression. Despite Kilgour’s mildly disparaging assessment, their uncanny nature and temporal disjunctions are not necessarily narrative flaws. Instead they show how Radcliffe articulates that female identity itself exists within the confines of historical lacunae. Moreover, Emily’s repetitious aesthetic encounters chart the intricacies of her negotiation with female identity, her resistances and embracings. If Emily’s cognition descends into pure intuition and she is only sometimes correct in her presentments, it is her father’s prohibition to read due to his lack of a philosophy of mourning that puts into question her ability to access the rational. And most importantly, if the picturesque patriarchal world of the conclusion is unsettlingly anodyne, the aesthetic figures

¹⁹ See Kenneth W. Graham whose brief analysis ostensibly concerns the father figures of Montoni and St. Aubert, Graham, but also addresses Radcliffe’s depictions of psychic development. Graham contends that Radcliffe “was addressing her narratives to a human psychology more complex than those of the reductionist theories current in eighteenth-century Britain from Locke’s *tabula rasa* to Hartley’s materialist associationism”(164) and that she “direct[s]...a significant overtone of her narratives at pre-rational levels of human consciousness [which] is...a revolutionary act”(164). Most interesting is his final argument that Radcliffe creates a “tension between conventional sanctities and the desire to transgress limits” and that “women’s existence is never acknowledged yet her presence is felt as Emily is haunted by apprehensions both supernatural and sexual”(170). While Graham’s closing remarks question his methodology of focusing on the male figures of the novel, his study sets out to reconcile the two opposing

associated with the feminine are what haunt the novel's final pages. Only through the aesthetic in its own unstable relation to history, are lost female lineages able to survive and be recovered by Emily in her unconscious search where they are allowed to reemerge into the material. Radcliffe's final authorial move casts her project as a lesson of mourning, or an attempt to "beguile" or rather teach the reader "to sustain it"(672). Her choice to write the omission of St. Aubert's philosophical teachings, that for which he cannot account, offers a way to interpret not only Emily's creative journey, and her descents into supposedly imaginative abysses, and is a final censure of any historical and thus memorial disavowal.

critical attitudes of Radcliffe's engagement with the psychological development of her heroines. This is a

CHAPTER SIX: Emily's Psychic Development and Search for Feminine Legacies

The idea that Radcliffe shapes her narrative as a search for lost mothers is now a familiar and generally accepted conception of feminist psychoanalytic interpretations.²⁰ Some analyses which take this stance find it more affirmative than others. Anne Mellor introduces the concept of the female sublime, in which Emily's meditations on landscapes "arouse[] a sense of personal exaltation, a consciousness of virtue and self-esteem, and hence of tranquility"(96), although this may be too ambitious a claim and also overlooks the predominant role of the feminine in generating terror and horror. Claire Kahane's influential psychoanalytic study first defined the structure in early gothic novels of the search for the lost mother as opposed to what she viewed as male generated interpretations which "attribute the terror that the Gothic by definition arouses to the motif of incest within an oedipal plot"(335).²¹ Her study builds on the conclusions of Norman Holland and Leona Sherman who explore the "early mother-child relationship"(337) and consider the castle of Udolpho to stand in for an omnipotent and threatening maternal body. Kahane's study is particularly useful in its identification of the "tenuous and fundamentally ambivalent struggle for a separate identity," in the central "ongoing battle with a mirror image who is both self and other" where there is a "confusion between mother and daughter"(337). Kahane's description of the dynamic

highly valuable and constructive approach.

²⁰ See Michelle A. Massé for a summary of Gothic criticism in general. Massé identifies how, due to studies that follow Freud's lead in defining "character types," gothic heroines are often dismissed as the prototypical "hysteric" and therefore "[h]er presumed passivity and lack of self-knowledge make her into an easily diagnosed case presentation, a *tabula rasa* for interpretation". Additionally, the "marriage plot, seen as a self-explanatory formula, moots issues of character development over time"(234).

fluctuation and tension of the psychic development of the gothic heroine is key. Especially productive is her attention to the instance in *Udolpho* at the Chateau in the final stages of the novel when Emily “is literally told to look into a mirror to see the marchioness...and, draped in the veil of the dead marchioness”(339), Emily “struggles to throw off the veil, refusing that identification”(339).²² However, even Kahane’s study posits that the “waxen figure of a decaying corpse...becomes...a primary trope for understanding the horror of the text”(339), which again risks overemphasizing the importance of the figure, or even prioritizing the effect of horror. Thus, Kahane does not fulfil the full potential of her concepts of resistance and psychic development through tracing the many other aesthetic figures. While not all psychoanalytic studies suggest such approving interpretive avenues for the character of Emily, for the most part, they are inclined towards favourable readings of Radcliffe as opposed to historical contextualizations where, when juxtaposed against her contemporary writers and theorists, Radcliffe often does not fare well in terms of the force of her social critique since Emily’s silence is often taken for patriarchal complicity. In addition, psychoanalytic studies themselves pose problems. Beyond Kilgour’s synopsis of the differences in the ‘male’ and ‘female’ gothic and their respective definitions of male oedipal, teleological character development versus female “relational”(37) and repetitious, circular plots that are marked by irresolution and stasis, she also addresses how the gothic genre itself

²¹Also see Juliann Fleenor.

²² Kahane’s study does not delve into considerable detail into *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. For psychoanalytic studies which focus on the erotics and transgressive dimension of the mother-daughter dynamic in Radcliffe’s novels, in both cases *The Italian*, see the studies of Susan C. Greenfield and George E. Haggerty.

“[l]ike its ancestor the romance...has been associated with the pre-oedipal, oral phase, and thus with the failure of normal maturation”(37). While psychoanalytic readings have made significant inroads into demonstrating the nuances of Radcliffe’s construction of her heroines, the predominance of Freudian and post-structuralist Lacanian models tends to lead critics towards interpretive cul-de-sacs simply due to the fact that her plots do not fit such frameworks. Instead, Radcliffe’s thematization of the search for the mother, imagination, emotion, psychosis, loss, and most importantly, aesthetic objects lends itself to the theories of Melanie Klein and her post-Freudian, object-relations approach. One of the few who endorse the special relevance of a Kleinian reading to the gothic genre is David Punter. He succinctly defines Klein’s positing of how “the wish to possess or attack the mother’s body is the fundamental epistemophilic relation to the world, and is thus imbued with all the primary processes of guilt, transgression and reparation”(14). As Punter explains, Klein shows how “works of art frequently contain representations of damaged internal objects; and symbolism is based in a wish to effect some connection between the damage which exists within the inner world and the objects in the world outside”(14). He further suggests how Klein’s formulation of the transition of the “paranoid/schizoid position to the manic-depressive position” offers insight into how “Gothic fictions...deal in interruptions of this maturing process”(22). However, Punter does not address Radcliffe’s heroines’ development, but instead focuses on male characters of several other authors, and only briefly mentions Schedoni of *The Italian*. He then concludes his study by suggesting that such psychic tools are “capable of generating accounts of history”(24) when existing social and family structures are threatened by

radical political change. While Punter does not consider *Udolpho* as a text which is suited for such interpretations, it is true that Klein's theories provide avenues which Freudian or Lacanian concepts preclude.

While many studies easily deny that Emily experiences growth, or even take for granted her stasis as a stock character, especially in how she does not achieve a fully autonomous identity but instead enters into marriage at the end of the novel, according to Kleinian theory, this is the definition of development. Nancy Chodorow describes how Klein's object-relations concept, which diverge from Freud's in her de-emphasis of drive theory, "develops...the relational construction of the self" and "requires...an image of psychological *development* as a necessary concomitant of living in the world"(149). Thus Radcliffe's continuous reference to the problems of the isolation of convent life (whose chief voice is Blanche, banished to a convent education by her father's second wife), and also Radcliffe's potential ambivalence towards La Valée itself, suggest how she too believes in the hindrances of such a cloistered female existence. Even Valancourt begins the story in such a sheltered state that he almost has a sense of omnipotence in relation to the outside world. St. Aubert observes that "of the world [Valancourt] seemed to know nothing; for he believed well of all mankind, and this opinion gave him the reflected image of his own heart"(49), just as Emily first tells her aunt that the world will reciprocate her own estimations of self-worth (126). Thus, both Emily and Valancourt must go through the process of disillusionment in their experiences. More specifically, Radcliffe's use of objects such as miniatures, the waxen figure, and even the paintings

which punctuate the narrative also relate to object-relations theories and ultimately lead to evidence of Emily's development.

Considered the founder of object-relations theory, D. W. Winnicott describes early childhood development in the separation-individuation stage in terms of objects where the child learns to accept loss and separation from the mother through the cathexis of an object (Spitz 145). Still considered an authoritative interpreter of Klein's theories, Hanah Segal explains how the initial stage of the "paranoid-schizoid position is characterized by the infant's unawareness of 'persons,' his relationships being to part objects," while the second stage, the "beginning of the depressive position is marked by the recognition of the mother as a whole person and is characterized by a relationship to whole objects and by a prevalence of integration, ambivalence, depressive anxiety and guilt"(ix). While both stages are normal in infant development, stress can induce regression and the return of the paranoid-schizoid position (ix). In this first stage, Klein formulates that "the first object [is] the mother's breast which to the child becomes split into a good (gratifying) and bad (frustrating) breast; this splitting results in...introjection and projection, between internal and external objects and situations"(Klein, *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works* 27). The child first believes the mother to be omnipotent, experiences envy and wishes to rob the maternal body of its good contents, giving rise to persecutory fears of retribution from the mother, in what is termed "projective identification"(10). The so-called 'good' and 'bad' mothers have to be internalized, but in adulthood stress will cause the subject to split the two, where the individual will protect the internal "ideal 'good' mother, while projecting the 'bad' mother onto external

persecutors”(Segal 27). Differently, in the depressive position, the subject believes it has injured the mother, experiences guilt, and seeks to make “reparation.” As Klein argues, “[i]n short—persecution (by ‘bad’ objects) and the characteristic defences against it, on the one hand, and pining for the loved (‘good’) object, on the other, constitute the depressive position”(Klein, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 348).²³ In the depressive position, the need to make reparation, or to retrieve the love object, is the central impetus of creativity (348). Even more relevant is how Klein sees a strong connection between reparation and mourning. She builds on Freud’s ideas of mourning, especially in his concept of how there is a period of “reality testing” where “each single one of the memories and situations of expectancy which demonstrate the libido’s attachment to the lost object is met by the verdict of reality that the object no longer exists”(344). Klein believes that there is a “close connection between the testing of reality in normal mourning and early processes of the mind”(344) and that “the testing of reality is part of the work of mourning”(344). This early period of mourning is part of natural development but is “revived whenever grief is experienced in later life”(344), and if the person lapses into the paranoid-schizoid position, persecutory fears are also revived (353). While Klein’s theories may not be perfectly mappable onto Radcliffe’s depiction of Emily’s journey, they reveal an uncanny correspondence. Approaching the text with a

²³ Klein makes the distinction between “normal mourning” and “abnormal mourning and manic-depressive states”(345), and her concepts of an ‘external’ and ‘internal’ mother “of whom she is a ‘double’, though one which at once undergoes alterations in his mind through the very process of internalization; that is to say, her image is influenced by his phantasies”(346). Also see Klein’s study, “Infantile Anxiety-Situations Reflected in a Work of Art and in the Creative Impulse” in *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works*: 210-218. Here, Klein postulates how when one in the schizoid-paranoid position “cannot see her mother, this intensifies the anxiety. The presence of the real, loving mother diminishes the dread of the terrifying mother, whose introjected image is in the child’s mind”(217).

Kleinian framework casts Radcliffe's main concerns into relief as they address the nature of the creative process, good and bad mothers, of real or imagined persecutors, and of the fundamentality of negotiating with the pain of mourning as a basis for development.

Klein's precepts are particularly suited for interpretations of Radcliffe's psychological development of Emily where Radcliffe's use of aesthetic figures and even landscape which, as Anne Mellor suggests, becomes a representation of the feminine itself, is the predominant structure of the novel which both generates and palliates fear.

Through the application of a Kleinian interpretive mode, Radcliffe's nuanced attention to Emily's shifting psychological states becomes more conspicuous. At the very start, Emily prefers La Valée's sublime views of nature which elevate her to a religious meditation, whose "melancholy charm....awakened her mind into effort, and led to enthusiasm and poetry"(6), seemingly starting the novel in a Kleinian depressive position. As the first major traumas of the narrative occur, Emily's father's illness and, significant, her mother's death, which is almost never explicitly mentioned afterwards, Radcliffe foregrounds the way in which Emily's "anxiety was awakened"(8) by these events. Her doubling of the word awakened in itself is suggestive of a latency of early developmental states. The early sequences are not repetitious, but instead demonstrate the precarious fluctuation in Emily's mental state of melancholic despair and alternating hope, and are filled with the bywords of Klein's theories. The words envy, gratitude, guilt, love, and grief, among others, proliferate throughout the story as Radcliffe pauses to describe the transient mental states of the characters, just as she does the changing light upon the landscape. Radcliffe's handling of the psychological is not merely an outright

censure of the passions of Laurentini, or a denial of female suffering that rather sanctions male sentiment, but is a more complex negotiation of the psychic processes of her characters. Just as the novel focuses on the rational and aesthetic education of Emily, Radcliffe traces the concomitant emotional education she receives from her exposure to the world. Radcliffe even captures the mental states of the frivolous character of Madame Cheron, such as when she is censured by Valancourt. We are told she “became susceptible to shame, but not remorse: she hated Valancourt, who awakened her to this painful sensation”(147), particularly in how his manner “compelled her to accuse herself, and neither left her a hope, that the odious portrait was the caricature of his prejudice”(147). Describing the inner psychic processes of the materialistic Madame Cheron’s breakdown of defence mechanisms serves to demonstrate how even the most seemingly shallow of Radcliffe’s characters have a valid emotional life. Additionally, just as Madame is shattered by the “odious portrait” of herself which Valancourt presents to her, Radcliffe returns repeatedly to the importance of maintaining an idealized self-image or portrait.

Similar to how Klein identifies the connection between creative ability and the depressive position and its relation to mourning, Radcliffe continuously links Emily’s ability to negotiate with grief to her bursts of poetry and drawing. While St. Aubert teaches that “[a]ll excess is vicious”(20), and that the “indulgence of excessive grief enervates the mind”(20), Emily finds it difficult to negotiate a mean between his two extremes of the excess and annihilation of emotion. Speaking with her father, Emily is overcome with “gratitude, affection, and grief”(21). But while he acknowledges that

“there is a period when all reasoning must yield to nature”(21), Emily is not able to properly mourn the death of her mother and must immediately travel to her uncle’s estate. Upon returning home to La Valée, Emily thinks of her mother and “she felt more depressed than ever, for she more than ever missed the presence of that dear parent, who, whenever she had been from home, used to welcome her return”(24). Later on, when St. Aubert appears affected by grief, Emily “knew the object of his thoughts; hers too had...been occupied by the remembrance of her mother”(46), and while her mother is almost never again mentioned, she increasingly associates images of her mother with landscapes. St. Aubert not only connects landscapes but music to the image of her mother, but imparts to Emily that “the memory of those we love—of times for ever past! in such an hour as this steals upon the mind, like a strain of music in the stillness of the night...all tender and harmonious as this landscape”(46). After her father’s death, Emily’s contemplations of nature elevates her thoughts to the “sublimity of the Deity, and to the contemplation of futurity”(72), echoing her mother’s dying words. Thus these instances gain greater significance as each time Emily is able to contemplate landscape, she is able to compose poetry. But Emily’s difficult progression through dealing with the grief of both her mother’s and father’s deaths is complicated by her own appropriated identity and material disinheritance, which Radcliffe explores through the use of the three portrait miniatures.

In an essay on creative development, which she links to the mourning process of the depressive position, Klein describes the importance of creating idealized images of the mother (Klein, *Love, Guilt, and Reparation* 210-8). In it, a girl paints portraits of her

female relatives, and finally one of her mother. Klein posits that the girl's creative impulse was the result of "the desire to make reparation, to make good the injury psychologically done to the mother and also to restore herself"(218). Also, the way in which the girl chose to idealize her mother's image, her "need to represent her in full possession of her strength and beauty", is a fundamental aspect of the "ego-development of women"(218). Throughout, Radcliffe makes reference to Emily's idealization of images, from those of Valancourt, to her framing of picturesque vistas. However, even the "image"(89) of Valancourt is secondary to the feminine sublime, which the "grandeur and sublimity of the scenes...had imperceptibly contributed to render Valancourt more interesting"(89) of which Emily is "scarcely conscious"(89). Also elevated to a greater psychological significance is the moment in Venice when Emily makes a picturesque sketch of Signora Herminia playing a lute (188). Later on, Radcliffe emphasizes the predominance of this idealized image when Emily realizes that Herminia is simply a Venetian courtesan and is deeply affected to the extent that "the scenes of the present and the future opened to her imagination, that the image of Valancourt failed in its influence, and her resolution shook with dread"(384). Emily, in a moment at Udolpho when she has arguably lapsed into the paranoid-schizoid position of Klein's model of consciousness, experiences a breakdown because outside reality destroys her ability to maintain her internal idealized image of femininity. The importance of Radcliffe's images is identified by Castle who considers it historically situated and refers to the effect as the "spectralization of the other: this new obsession with the internalized images of other people"(125), and breaks down the nature of such images, one category being the many

resemblances which make people indistinguishable from others (126). While Castle handles Radcliffe's depiction of images and objects as becoming interchangeable with the physicality of people, or their actual presence, as a "phenomenology of reading"(127), they also provide a way to chart Radcliffe's development of her heroine. And it is specifically the interchangeability of images which Radcliffe exploits in order to capture the sense of Emily's confusion of identity in which she demonstrates the phenomenon of transference. Emily's own appropriated image, her mother's lost miniature, related to the romance plot and the false lover Du Pont, becomes the trope of Emily's lost identity which she can only recapture through discovering the effaced feminine presences which survive through the aesthetic figures of the narrative. Repeating St. Aubert's earlier concept of how music and landscape evokes the presence of lost loved ones, Radcliffe again articulates how the "pensive tranquility music leaves on the mind...a state like that produced by the view of a beautiful landscape...or by the recollection of scenes marked with the tenderness of friends lost....are...to the mind, like 'those faint traces which the memory bears'"(178).

While Udolpho, which becomes Emily's prison, is itself alternately thought of as a figure of the oppressive patriarchal sublime, or an abstraction of a grotesque maternal body, Emily arguably arrives at the castle already in a version of a Kleinian paranoid-schizoid position. Even before St. Aubert's death, Emily begins to show signs of splitting her views of women especially, but also of men as either entirely 'good' or 'bad'. While at the convent, she is still in a Kleinian depressive stage, as the "abbess...received her with an air of maternal tenderness; an air of such gentle solicitude

and consideration, as touched [Emily] with an instantaneous gratitude”(84). But this state does not last, and it is not long before Emily sees the world in terms of the two extremes of good and bad. Most explicitly, St. Aubert refers to his sister as “a good kind of woman”(81), although she instead angers Emily with her barrage of accusations and “malevolent allusion[s] to her father”(204) which is additionally threatening to Emily’s idealized internal image of her father. Her very first encounter with her aunt causes Emily “anxiety”(111), later, “fear”(125), and she eventually mistakes Valancourt for a “spy of Madame Montoni”(151). When Valancourt wishes to elope, Emily’s mind is “weakened by terrors”(125) and fears most the “terror of her aunt’s displeasure”(127). Here, we are told when Emily refuses, that it “was not to be expected, that a vague terror would be more powerful, than the united influence of love and grief”(157). Later on, Count Morano takes on the role of the predominant tormentor. His threatening presence is magnified in Emily’s mind where we are told she may have admired him, “had her heart been disengaged from Valancourt, and had the Count forborne to persecute her with officious attentions”(189) and his bad traits, “prejudiced her against, whatever might otherwise be good in it”(189). Even the Quesnels become thought of by Emily as equivalent “oppressors”(203). Conversely, Emily increasingly idealizes her internal images of Valancourt and her childhood at La Valée which is “always blessed with the memory of her parents”(191). The “ideal scenes were...a kind of talisman that expelled the poison of temporary evils, and supported her hopes of happier days...like a beautiful landscape”(191). And when her image of Valancourt, which is also a “mirror, in which she saw her own emotions reflected”(127), is in question, we are told there are “few

conditions...more painful than that of uncertainty, as to the merit of a beloved object”(123). The splitting of good internal images and bad external objects builds before Udolpho. We are reminded of Emily’s mind, “weakened by terrors”(125), or “already enervated by sorrow...her reason had suffered a transient suspension”(155), and finally before her journey, her “mind, long harassed by distress, now yielded to imaginary terrors”(221). However, perhaps the most affirmative move of Radcliffe is to allow Emily only a “momentary madness”(102), and consistently charts the course of her ability to regain her creative abilities, which is where Radcliffe situates agency. While Udolpho is remembered for its grotesque horrors, it is also ironically the place which Emily retrieves her stolen image from Du Pont, the false chivalric hero, and also where she engages in the reality testing of mourning, continuously questioning what seems as the inversion of realities of her present and previous existences. Repeatedly, we are told of how “[s]o romantic and improbable...did her present situation appear to Emily...particularly when she compared it with the repose and beauty of her early days, that there were moments, when she could almost have believed herself the victim of frightful visions, glaring upon a disordered fancy”(407). In an instance when she first arrives at Udolpho, Emily thinks she has been “released from the addresses of Count Morano, her spirits were suddenly relieved from a part of the terrible anxiety, that had long oppressed them”(276). First believing herself to have a “respite from actual misfortune”(276), she engages in sketching a landscape. Amidst the wilderness, she sketches a group of Montoni’s companions, and “sketched them for banditti”(276) and is “surprised to observe the spirit of her group”(276), despite how she had “copied from nature”(276). Although at first it

appears that Emily feels confident in her ability to distinguish between real and imagined fears, her own unconscious observations that surface in her artwork provoke her to reexamine her judgement. But again, these fluctuating psychological states begin to occur long before Emily reaches Udolpho. When mourning for her mother, Emily's sight of her father contemplating the miniature of his sister is what first truly causes her to question her reality. At the sight of her father's unexplained emotion, she "could scarcely believe what she saw to be real"(26). Later, after her father's death, when she dreams of his image, her "vision was gone, but music yet came to her ear"(83), but "it was music, and not an illusion of her imagination"(83), and again later "checked the illusions of a distempered imagination"(95). The increasing indistinction of reality and the imaginary is present long before Udolpho, and is tied to the traces she finds of these phantom women like the music she first hears that seemingly forebodes her father's death.

While Klein stresses the importance of guilt as the fundamental psychic state in attaining the depressive position, Emily at first wishes to absolve herself of such feelings. She only consciously understands the guilt of "transgressing her father's strict injunction"(103) to burn his papers, so she carries out his wishes, not wanting to "embitter...life with the consciousness of irremediable guilt"(103). Similarly, when she later renounces Valancourt's offer of elopement, Emily "mourned in vain regret, but reason soon came with a consolation which...acquired vigour from reflection"(240). She believes herself "free from self-reproach"(240) for not being responsible for "involving him in misfortune"(240) as a result of what she perceives would be a public repudiation of their marriage. However, in attempting to fulfil her father's command, the more

fundamental act of transgression which Emily commits is the destruction of the story of her murdered aunt, the Marchioness, whom we later learn Emily has perhaps thought was Laurentini, or even her real mother, a suspicion which “reason could neither vanquish, or confirm”(663) despite her resistance to believe such an idea. Therefore, when she inadvertently reads the sentence which we are not made privy to, it is her confusion over the identity of her mother which makes her vulnerable to regressing to a paranoid-schizoid state in which she divides good and bad mothers as she attempts to maintain her idealized yet still repressed image of Madame St. Aubert. Only when she returns to the female community of the convent and meets Agnes, the disguised Laurentini who is the source of the mysterious music, and who returns to Emily the miniature of the Marchioness and also one of herself, that Emily finally is able to gain a sense of closure and reclaim her own identity when she becomes conscious of these repressed female legacies. Thus Udolpho, with its waxen *memento mori* behind the veil, becomes a place of her confrontations with an object of what she believes is a decomposing maternal body, just as she mistakes the bodies of dead male soldiers to be her aunt’s mutilated body. Emily’s increasing anxiety when her aunt is missing heightens Emily’s psychosis, and the spectacle of the waxwork and dead soldiers, which in Kleinian terms is the materialization of the robbed maternal body, becomes so horrific to Emily because it is no longer in the realm of imagination. Her fears are just as much fears of her own persecution as she considers how “her aunt might have been one of these victims, and that she herself might be the next”(348). At Udolpho, Emily’s psychosis verges on that of Laurentini’s, who upon first meeting Emily believes her to be an avenging avatar of the

Marchioness seeking “[r]etribution”(644) for her murder. While Laurentini’s message is a warning against uncontrolled passions, she also stands as a figure forever trapped in madness and paranoia because of her inability to properly negotiate with the images of the other. We are told of the story of her youth when she indulged herself “to sigh and weep over a miniature of the Marquis” and that, as a result, her “fancy...occupied incessantly by one idea, [she] became disordered...and...her whole heart being devoted to one object, life became hateful to her, when she believed that object lost”(657). Rather than giving rise to a creative impulse, Laurentini becomes a murderer. Later, Emily too verges on such a fate as she considers how she “had no longer the melancholy satisfaction of contemplating [Valancourt’s] image in her heart” now that he has changed. No longer an “image of goodness,” Valancourt “seemed to be annihilated, and her soul sickened at the blank”(581). While at first denying guilt, Emily must confront her own internal idealized and imagined external images in order to gain creative agency.

Even at Udolpho, Emily is repeatedly able to recover from her states of horror, but not from the “volume of her favourite Aristo”, but “the magic sweet sounds”(284) of her lute. After the vicious fight that breaks out when someone attempts to poison Montoni, while Emily is again unable to “read, or draw, and the tones of her lute were so utterly discordant the present state of her feelings”(319), that she could not play, these states are transient. The spectacle of the black veil repeatedly cause “her thoughts [to] recur[] to the strange history of Signora Laurentini and then to her own strange situation”(240), and “now added those thousand nameless terrors, which exist only in active imaginations, and which set reason and examination equally at defiance”(240), but

Emily is able to negotiate with these states. When her aunt dies and she keeps vigil over her corpse, Emily is not brought to a state of paranoid horror, and instead is “deeply impressed with the unhappy fate of this object [and] she forgot all her faults, her unjust and imperious conduct...and...remembering only her sufferings” had only “tender compassion”(376). No more evident is Emily’s reemergence into a creative depressive position than when Dorothée at the Chateau throws the late Marchioness’s veil over Emily. She is no longer consumed by self-apprehension and as Kahane argues, her act is one of “refusing that identification”(339). Instead, she picks up the Marchioness’s lute and “with a hesitating hand...passed her fingers over the chords.” And although they are “out of tune, [they still] uttered a deep and full sound”(534). In a sense, through them Emily revives both her own and her aunt’s creative voice. Not able to entirely deny the affective excesses of which her father censures, Emily is instead able to forge for herself a creative voice of which proper mourning, or even a positive melancholia is a constituent dimension. In her scene of reunion and reparation with Valancourt, Emily composes poetry, while her views of nature “conspired with the tender melody of her lute to lull her mind into a state of gentle sadness”(666). Though her voice “trembled, and was unable to proceed”(666) in one moment, in the next she is able to “again [strike] her lute, and [sing] her favourite air”(667). Emily does not end the novel with a renewed capacity to enjoy aesthetic pleasures and maintain her father’s disconnected, rational, and objective perspective. Rather, she obtains the agency of an ability to creatively cope with her emotions, and with lost objects, and develops a therapeutic form of contemplation

and expression, which are the legacy of the material and moral inheritances of her rediscovered female lineage.

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