

ANN RADCLIFFE

THE MORALITY OF ANN RADCLIFFE

By

Elizabeth Anne Wycherley, B.A.

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

November 1970

Master of Arts (1970)

McMaster University

Hamilton, Ontario

Title: The Morality of Ann Radcliffe

Author: Elizabeth Anne Wycherley, B.A. (McMaster University)

Supervisor: Dr. G. S. Vichert

Number of pages: xi, 150

Scope and contents: A study of Ann Radcliffe's ethical, religious and aesthetic theory and the effect of her morality in restricting her art and outlook, with some discussion of the techniques by which she achieves her successes within this limited framework.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks go to Dr. G. S. Vichert for his advice and assistance, and to Dr. E. R. Seary, Department of English, Memorial University of Newfoundland, for his interest and encouragement.

NOTE ON EDITIONS AND SOURCES

All references to Ann Radcliffe's works are to the editions cited in the original footnotes. Since the pagination of the Gaston de Blondville collection is unsatisfactory, with the prefixed "Memoir" and the first few books of Gaston itself in the same volume under separate but identical systems, I have designated page numbers relating to the "Memoir" with the suffix 'a'.

Edith Birkhead identifies Noon Talfourd as the author of the "Memoir" prefixed to Gaston, in The Tale of Terror, p. 56 (full bibliographical details of her book will be given).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	vi
CHAPTER I "THE IMAGE OF VIRTUE"	1
CHAPTER II "NATURAL RELIGION" VERSUS FORMALISM	39
CHAPTER III "THOSE THOUSAND NAMELESS TERRORS"	62
CHAPTER IV THE "ELEGANCE OF SOUL REFINED"	96
CONCLUSION	138
APPENDIX	141
BIBLIOGRAPHY	147

INTRODUCTION

Ann Radcliffe (1764-1826) is not considered a "great" writer; her novels too obviously cater to forgotten tastes, and there is no doubt that they were never more than superior romances. At first there seems little that can be said about them, except that her suspense techniques are still effective and that many of her favourite motifs are also popular among the Romantics. There is one aspect of her approach, however, that seems to demand investigation. Although Ann Radcliffe's exotic settings, improbable situations and extraordinary personalities appear to reflect the most extravagant kind of escapism, Ann Radcliffe is never as far away from the everyday world of her contemporary readers as she seems. The outstanding illustration is her approach to the supernatural. Her suspense technique depends heavily on the inference that her mysteries have supernatural explanations, but she seems determined to show her reader that he has never really been taken beyond the limits of the natural world accountable to physical laws. Her inevitable rational explanations, as Chapters I and III of this thesis will indicate, actually damage her productions, yet she persists with them. By her time of writing the use of the true supernatural was acceptable enough literary convention, if we may take the ready acceptance of Malcole's Clermont (1765), the renowned popu-

larity of Shakespeare and the wild success of "Ossian" (1770) as landmarks of popular eighteenth century taste.

Ann Radcliffe not only limits herself to the familiar natural world but also takes great care to uphold conventional moral judgements, though these are somewhat inappropriate to her settings, while she is ostensibly advocating a romantic subjectivism. Sooner or later she comes back to the idea that, though subjective values are not to be scorned, some kind of objective framework is still needed.

Religion is another matter about which she tends to limit her thinking. Although she manifests a romantic anti-formalism in the novels, her basic approach to the idea of the Deity is quite in keeping with the conventional emphases of the established church in her century, as is her view of the duties religion imposes on the individual. As we might expect of a middle-class English protestant, she has a great horror of Popish "enthusiasm" and is not interested in projecting her characters as real Roman Catholics though her settings really seem to demand that she should.

At the same time she endorses the present social structure wholeheartedly, deploring any threatened alteration in the order and insisting that only blood and refinement qualify for rule. This does not seem entirely necessary to the escape framework. Her general suspicion

of progress makes her idealize the past; by transposing a contemporary order onto sixteenth-century France or early eighteenth-century Italy, she seems to be trying to stabilize this order somehow.

The escape she offers is thus limited on all sides. It is merely an escape from the dull or unpleasant aspects of her present reality, the most unpleasant of which is the idea that it may have to change, as she herself will change. This limiting of scope must have some reason; this thesis suggests that Ann Radcliffe's outlook is limited by an essential distrust of the human mind itself; she sees it as neither unfailingly accurate nor consistent. The first chapter of this thesis examines her ethical theory and relates it to her destruction of her supernatural effects. Ann Radcliffe's ethical theory evolves from seventeenth-century English Arminianism, which gives her a dual view of man's nature and consequently of the capacities of his mind. She sees man as capable by nature either of good or of evil, and all the operations of his mind as capable of influencing him in either direction. Some of these capacities are more reliable incentives to goodness than others. We find her depending on the idea of an innate "moral sense"; this ideal is usually associated with the third earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713) and his influential "Enquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit" (1699). Shaftesbury

is brought up in the discussion from time to time as a landmark or point of reference, but it is useless to speculate as to whether or not he had any direct influence on Ann Radcliffe. We find his "moral sense" theory and other ideas in Ann Radcliffe's approach simply as the conventional assumptions of eighteenth-century morality that they and others like them had become. Ann Radcliffe does, however, seem to reflect a close acquaintance with the burden of the popular Arminian homilists who stood for the established approach to morals of the Church of England.¹ Sometimes her remarks are almost verbatim transcriptions of their exhortations. Their ideas are useful in solving one of her chief problems. The "moral sense" theory and the idea of man's capacity for goodness seem to suggest that formal codes of conduct have little relation to man's motives and behaviour. Ann Radcliffe has a romantic interest in subjectivism but she is also aware that other capacities of the mind are always threatening to overthrow the "moral sense". The chief offenders are "feeling" and "imagination", which also promote

¹I have taken Isaac Barrow (1630-1677) and John Tillotson (1630-1694) as representative. Both were important figures in their own right (Tillotson was an Archbishop of Canterbury, Barrow was a Master of Trinity at Cambridge, among other things), and both produced large bodies of sermon material which was still being reprinted and read up to the end of the eighteenth century. They may be said to represent the official moral views of the established church and the approach usually taken in sermonizing about them.

superstition. This is anathema to Ann Radcliffe, as her inevitable rational explanations of supernatural effect confirm. The practical Christian emphasis of the homilists allows her to promote subjectivism up to a point, and thus satisfy a romantic dislike of formal authority, but it is in the end a reasonably objective framework, compatible but setting safe bounds for subjectivism.

The second chapter is concerned with Ann Radcliffe's treatment of religion. We shall find further confirmation of her conservatism and see how she turns an anti-formal approach to good artistic account without compromising her moral theory.

Ann Radcliffe finds a respectable aesthetic channel for her conventional morality in Edmund Burke's provisional theory of the Sublime. She believes the contemplation of the Sublime to be ennobling to the mind, thus she feels justified in encouraging the expansion of the imagination with her terrors; she does, after all, like the idea that subjective moral judgements can be valid, and anything that improves the mind improves the morals from this point of view. The third chapter of this thesis therefore discusses her terror-aesthetic, giving some account of her rationale and her techniques. We shall see, however, that this aesthetic is limited, first by her interpretation of Burke, second by her emphasis on the weaknesses of the mind which make the aesthetic work efficiently on her readers through her heroines.

In this chapter much emphasis is placed on Ann Radcliffe's "imagination". Although she deplores its power to delude she finds much pleasure in it, and we leave her regretting its ephemeral quality. As I have suggested, Ann Radcliffe dislikes change in any event. The last chapter in this discussion shows how she resists change. One quality her conventional morality accommodates very well is a fashionably refined sensibility; all her heroines have one, and it is most commonly exercised by them in in bouts of graceful nostalgia. Ann Radcliffe herself finds in the aesthetic of the Picturesque an acceptable outlet for this kind of sensibility and an imaginative means of holding up progress. This sensibility tends also to colour her view of the everyday world and her approach to general questions; she is revealed as a quasi-romantic reactionary. As her basic moral theory would suggest, she is of the eighteenth century and satisfied to remain so.

CHAPTER I

"THE IMAGE OF VIRTUE"

The main feature and central attraction of Ann Radcliffe's style of romance is the element of suspense, and this is largely sustained by the inference, which she of course encourages, that supernatural agencies lie behind most if not all of the seemingly unaccountable circumstances that make up the basic train of events in each novel. There seems no very good reason why she should not have let these all-important supernatural effects stand, particularly in view of the damage caused by her habit of explaining them rationally. Sometimes the explanations seem less credible than the effects themselves; one gets this impression first of all because she must rely too heavily on the element of coincidence to explain them, and second because, having emphasized the supernatural inferences to be drawn from circumstances so strongly, she appears inconsistent when she takes up the long-neglected possibility that there may be rational explanations available. Once the mysteries have been solved, of course, any re-reading is superfluous; very little in each book has interest beyond its connection with suspense. Ann Radcliffe thus disappoints her reader, shows him how he has been duped, gives the impression of inconsistency and renders the interest of any gi-

ven book ephemeral. She must, obviously, have some reason for thus restricting herself to the quasi-supernatural at such a high artistic price.

To some extent her choice of formal aesthetic basis for the promotion of suspense accounts for her anxiety to avoid the use of the true supernatural, but this basis is in itself a limited one, and we must still account for her having chosen it when there were more pliable alternatives available. Ann Radcliffe confines herself chiefly to Edmund Burke's provisional theory of the Sublime. We shall consider her rationale and her techniques in detail in the third chapter of this thesis, but it is sufficient here to know what intentions this choice implies and how these are limited. Ann Radcliffe seeks to instil the special kind of terror which to Burke is the appropriate response to sublime objects; in order to do this she must supply objects conformable to his strictures. Burke will not have the term "sublime" loosely applied, but he suggests many qualities productive of this terror. Ann Radcliffe's quasi-supernatural effects, not to mention other features, fulfil three of his major requirements of sublimity: that the objects be obscure, suggest some kind of power, and fill the mind to the exclusion of all else. The right kind of terror, she believes, will expand and thus, presumably, improve the mind of the observer. She will not, therefore, provide true supernatural manifestations; their immediacy narrows the mind's focus rather than expanding it.

What is more, they would probably evoke horror or ridicule, both of which responses she links, in keeping with Burke, with clear perception of objects in question. Horror and ridicule are absolutely not mind-expanding responses. It must be said that her explanations of effect can provide much of the horrid and the ridiculous; perhaps this is an intentional effect - Ann Radcliffe bringing back the reader's mind from its exercise.

Burke did not project his theory as any rigid scheme, but it evidently suits Ann Radcliffe to take it as one; when she does occasionally take advantage of more flexible conceptions of sublimity in the interests of atmosphere, she does so with circumspection, and usually without linking the term "sublime" with the emotions aroused.

Thus Ann Radcliffe restricts herself both practically and theoretically to the quasi-supernatural, with unfortunate artistic consequences in the long run; it now remains to be seen why she felt the need to limit herself in the first place. The first clues are provided by Ann Radcliffe's characteristic lectures on the folly of superstition. Though the popular conception of the eighteenth century as an age of conscious "enlightenment" is somewhat over-generalized, Ann Radcliffe's tone in these lectures suggests a confident appeal to such a sense of enlightenment. Almost every time one of her heroines puts, or seems about to put, a superstitious construction on unusual circumstances, Ann Radcliffe de-

4

plores such readiness to let "feeling" and "imagination" override judgement. For reasons which we shall discuss in Chapter III and incidentally throughout this thesis, the reader tends to ignore these warnings and continues to expect supernatural revelations. It is necessary to consider here the difference between "sublime" emotion and "superstitious" response. Ann Radcliffe appears to expect the reader to get his "sublime" emotion from the obscurity, seeming power and consuming interest of objects incidentally given supernatural values by characters at the mercy of "feeling" and "imagination". He can of course exercise his imagination by guessing what sort of supernatural agencies the characters might conceive; he should perhaps be as terrified as if he were superstitious himself. But he is not, evidently, meant to become convinced himself that a supernatural order exists outside this framework. Ann Radcliffe's deprecations of the adverse effects of "feeling" and "imagination", it must be gathered, are presented in case the reader forgets he is only engaged in a mind-expanding exercise; her final explanations of supernatural effect confirm this emphasis.

Her concern, perhaps, seems excessive, but if we look at the exhaustive moral commentary she supplies concerning her characters which is not specifically coloured by disapproval of superstition, we find the same functions of "feeling" and "imagination" to be considered influential in the processes of ethical decision. Sometimes they influence the judgement

to good purpose, so that virtue is practised; when they influence it adversely, however, evil actions result. We can see therefore that Ann Radcliffe may feel justified in encouraging the reader to exercise "feeling" (vicariously) and "imagination" through her terrors; these capacities are presumably better allies of virtue when well-developed. She must not, all the same, encourage an undue reliance on them, thus she must deplore superstition and explain her effects.

This ambivalent conception of functions of the mind may be attributed to Ann Radcliffe's somewhat conventional eighteenth-century moral theory. We shall presently investigate its relation to her treatment of characters and situations, but a brief outline of its assumptions and origins is sufficient here. Ann Radcliffe's approach evolves from seventeenth-century English Arminianism, whose central assumption concerns the nature of man. The Arminians believe that man is by nature capable of being good rather than necessarily depraved; this is not of course the orthodox view. We find the well-known homilist John Tillotson, for example, insisting that to believe in the possibility of a totally evil nature is to call into question the providence of God.¹ This was encouraging doctrine for the moralist; the problem

¹John Tillotson, Sermon LIII: "Of the Education of Children [ii]", The Works of the Most Reverend Dr. John Tillotson, Late Lord Archbishop of Canterbury (Fourth Edition, London, 1723), I, 507.

was, however, that man was obviously not incapable by nature of being bad. Some men, in fact, seemed disposed to badness from the beginning. Such a difficulty could only be explained away as a "great secret of Nature and Providence",² since the whole theory of man's potential goodness depends on the idea that a benevolent and all-powerful God rules the universe entirely. The end-product of this kind of dual view of man's nature as we find it in Ann Radcliffe's approach is the idea that all the capacities of man's mind are ambivalent; they can turn him either directly or indirectly to good or evil, but he ultimately has control over their direction. It is not, therefore only "feeling" and "imagination" which concern her; some account must be taken of the way in which she holds up other capacities of man's mind as likely to temper the headlong and possibly dangerous tendencies of "feeling" and "imagination". There are several problems involved in such a consideration. It is difficult, to begin with, to decide whether Ann Radcliffe is considering all the functions of the mind as separate entities interacting or as parts of one another. This does not materially affect our discussion, however; when Ann Radcliffe is considering moral danger she is usually found playing off capacities of mind one another as if separate, and this approach on the whole seems to have more bearing on her explanations of supernatural effect. Then, she says nothing about

²Idem.

their origins, as a rule. Several factors suggest, however, that she considers them innate. One of the most important capacities, "conscience", is, under various names, explicitly from "Nature", as we shall see. Ann Radcliffe is, furthermore, fond of pairing characters with similar basic capacities as obverse images, showing either one turning to good or evil depending on how well he manages these capacities and resists corruptive influences. Less convincing is her habit of showing unaccountable flashes of goodness in doubledyed villains. But she certainly indicates no alternative origin but "Nature" for any of the functions discussed; she is, therefore still in step with the Arminian attitude that man is endowed with the potentiality for both good and evil by nature, and that behind "Nature" there is only God.

Ann Radcliffe's dual view of human nature makes it difficult for her to maintain a consistent attitude to all the works of the mind, but she does hold up specific capacities as less likely to promote evil conduct than others. These are "taste", "reason", "genius", "judgement" and "conscience"; their interrelationships are sometimes unclear, but they do tend to oppose the excesses of "feeling" and "imagination". This does not mean that they are not liable to be influenced by these dangerous capacities, or that they cannot be influenced salutarily by them. "Feeling" and "imagination" are, after all ambivalent. Nevertheless, dissociating "feeling" and "imagination" generally with a tendency to lose contact

with reality, Ann Radcliffe seems to hold up these other capacities as reasonably viable means of keeping in touch with it. Her idea of reality appears to be bound up with the idea of the best in human, physical and divine "nature". "Reason" "taste", "genius", "conscience" and "judgement" are the best capacities of human nature; their function is to secure the development of its potential goodness by encouraging virtue and piety, neither of which are real until practised rather than just thought about. Exercise improves these capacities, and the best supplementary exercise they can have is in the contemplation of the best in human activity and thinking, and in the admiration of the best aspects of physical nature. We thus find Ann Radcliffe's heroines reading good books, meeting good men and admiring selected scenery. This sort of experience and more (scientific studies, for instance) gives the best possible conception of the benevolent Deity who made all this goodness possible; gratitude inspires emulation. In this idealistic approach Ann Radcliffe is perhaps a good example of the conventional "optimist". But she must also take into account the worst in "nature", which is "real" in that it is demonstrable. To her, Divine nature has no worse side, of course. She can deal with the worst in human nature in one of two ways. She can take an aesthetic approach to it, with the idea of the Sublime;³ this makes the problem less pressing.

³See the discussion of Udolpho's Montoni, Chapter III, pp. 79-81, of this thesis.

As we shall see, she can also show how it can be reformed. This chapter will show how she deals with the worst in human nature, with a particular emphasis on the problems presented by "feeling" and "imagination", and what solutions she holds up. The two books in which she is most obviously concerned with these questions are The Romance of the Forest (1791) and The Mysteries of Udolpho (1792); we shall look first at some key characters and situations in the Romance, in which it is relatively easy to trace the basic rationale behind her ~~idea~~ idea of virtue at least. As I mentioned in the Introduction, her authorial comment is often close in expression and spirit to the popular Arminian homilists, of whom I have taken Isaac Barrow and John Tillotson as representative. Udolpho tends to drop this Christian emphasis, probably so as to enhance the reader's sense of escape from everyday conventions and restrictions. It is also easy to see how Ann Radcliffe's approach to the supernatural changes between sequences dominated respectively by concern with good or bad aspects of human nature.

One of the most important characters in the Romance is Pierre de la Motte, who instigates the action by fleeing the consequences of an unsavoury past in Paris. La Motte exemplifies the dangers of "feeling" and "imagination" as ethical guides. Ann Radcliffe uses such secondary characters to convey the serious moral implications of extravagant "feeling" and "imagination"; she leaves the relatively minor ex-

cesses, such as promote superstition in the heroines, to be judged against such implications while she exploits them in her suspense treatment. As Talfourd says, her heroines are only media of terror;⁴ to complicate them with serious moral ambiguities would be to impair this function. La Motte, at any rate, is not described as a bad man but one whose better nature has difficulty in dominating his actions:

"He was a man whose passions often overcame his reason, and, for a time, silenced his conscience; but though the image of virtue, which Nature had impressed upon his heart, was sometimes obscured by the passing influence of vice, it was never wholly obliterated. With strength of mind sufficient to have withstood temptation, he would have been a good man; as it was, he was always a weak and sometimes a vicious member of society; yet his mind was active, and his imagination vivid, which, co-operating with the force of passion, often dazzled his judgement and subdued principle. Thus he was a man, infirm in purpose and visionary in virtue:- in a word, his conduct was suggested by feeling rather than principle; and his virtue, such as it was, could not stand the pressure of occasion."⁵

There are several important capacities mentioned here. La Motte's conscience, "the image of virtue, which Nature had impressed upon his heart", is a variant of the idea of the "moral sense", a conventional assumption of eighteenth-century "optimistic" morality evolving from seventeenth-century Armin-

⁴ T. Moon Talfourd, "A Memoir of the Life and Writings of Mrs. Ann Radcliffe", prefixed to Ann Radcliffe, Gaston de Blondeville, or, the Court of Henry III. Keenly Festival in Ardenne and St. Albans Abbey, with some Poetical Pieces (London, 1826), I, 121_a.

⁵ Ann Radcliffe, The Romance of the Forest, ed. Mrs. Barbauld (London, 1820), I, 2.

ianism. It was thought that since man obviously was capable of being good without necessarily relying on formal moral codes, he must have some inborn incentive to develop this capacity. The "moral sense" theory is usually associated with the third earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713); it is discussed in his oft-reprinted and influential "Enquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit" (1699).⁶ Ann Radcliffe would not have had to read Shaftesbury to find the idea, of course; we find a similar conception among the popular sermonists before Shaftesbury. Ann Radcliffe's "image of virtue" especially recalls Barrow's "sacred relics of God's image originally stamped upon our minds", or, less precisely, "the best of our natural inclinations".⁷ Tillotson also suggests that men are called to the highest virtue (beneficence) by "our own Nature, and the Reasonableness and Excellency of the thing itself".⁸ The possession of a "moral sense" does not, as La Motte demonstrates, guarantee good behaviour, but in doing

⁶Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, Treatise IV: "An Enquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit" (1699) in Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, Etc., ed. John H. Robertson (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1963), I, 260.

⁷Isaac Barrow, D. D., Sermon XXXI: "The Duty and Reward of Bounty to the Poor", The Works of Isaac Barrow, D. D., (New York: John C. Miter, 1845), I, 344.

⁸Tillotson, Sermon XI: "A New Commandment - If Ye Love One Another", Works, I, 169.

wrong he is not acting unnaturally. Barrow remarks that there is "even in the best dispositions much averseness from good and proneness to evil";⁹ Shaftesbury concedes that every man must have some adverse "affection";¹⁰ and Tillotson says that "we are too naturally inclined to that which is evil".¹¹ They do, however, insist that man can learn to overcome his worse nature; as we shall see Ann Radcliffe is particularly close to the homilists in her suggested solutions.

La Motte's main interest as far as this discussion is concerned is that his "image of virtue" is often undone by the very capacities which ought to support it. All the writers just mentioned place some importance on "feeling" as an incentive to virtue. The second part of Shaftesbury's "Enquiry" enlarges on the pleasurable feelings which come from living according to better nature. Barrow notes that the pleasure involved in doing good is as natural as the pleasure of wholesome eating and drinking; doing evil is only a source of such dubious pleasure as one would get from taking

⁹Barrow, Sermon L: "Of Industry in General", Works, I, 541.

¹⁰Shaftesbury, Characteristics, I, 277.

¹¹Tillotson, Sermon LIII: "Of the Education of Children [ii]", Works, I, 508.

in noxious substances.¹² Ann Radcliffe points out later in the book that "ignorance of real pleasure, more frequently than temptation to that which is false, leads to vice" (II, 93). Shaftesbury's view of the role of the "imagination" as an incentive to virtue is useful here in suggesting some reason for La Motte's perverse interest in the "false" pleasure of vice. His "moral sense" idea is supported by the suggestion that man has a natural aesthetic capacity¹³ which is turned to account in the ethical sphere through a natural "imagination" which can admire concepts of good. It is thus natural to love "equity and right for its own sake, and on the account of its natural beauty and worth", and it takes practise not to do so and to be depraved.¹⁴ La Motte's "imagination" does not admire real ideas of goodness consistently and he lacks fortitude, thus, while "visionary" in virtue, he does bad things. Ann Radcliffe accepts the power of the aesthetic sense to encourage virtue; this capacity, which she calls, conventionally, "taste", is explicitly equated with "virtue" in The Mysteries of Udolpho,

¹²Barrow, Sermon XXX: "Of a Peaceable Temper and Carriage", Works, I, 310.

¹³Shaftesbury, Characteristics, I, 251-2.

¹⁴Ibid., 259-60.

"Virtue and taste are nearly the same, for virtue is little more than active taste . . .",¹⁵ says St. Aubert, the book's arbiter of morals. For Ann Radcliffe, however, "taste" and "imagination" are not automatically equivalent. She uses the term "imagination" far less loosely than do many eighteenth-century writers; Bate suggests that the term is commonly interchangeable with "'taste' or 'judgement' in their highest and most valid form".¹⁶ Ann Radcliffe's imagination is always ambivalent and often dangerous, and she tends to underplay its beneficial aspect. Sometimes it assists the formation of the virtuous mind, as when Clara La Luc, aided by a "warm imagination", develops her appreciation for grandeur and sublimity in natural scenes, and goes on to appreciate nature "finely imitated" in poetry and painting (*Romance*, II, 97). Though she must learn to rule her feelings first, she also develops, as we come to expect, greater virtue. Ann Radcliffe warns so insistently on the dangers of "imagination" however that we sometimes forget any relation it has to the virtue-inducing "taste". When she is not deploring the tendency of her characters to be seized by the "illusions of superstition" (as, for instance, in *Udolpho*, I, 336), she is

¹⁵ Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, intro. R. Austin Freeman (London: J. M. Dent, 1931), I, 50.

¹⁶ Walter Jackson Bate, *From Classic to Romantic: Fractions of Taste in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Harper, 1961), p. 113.

holding up examples like La Motte.

After Ann Radcliffe's description of La Motte the interest shifts to the heroine; though other capacities are emphasized, Ann Radcliffe's wary attitude to "feeling" and "imagination" is still apparent. Before looking at this we shall consider Adeline's good points. She has the kind of "taste" which is nearly equivalent to virtue itself; her mind is "habitually impregnated with the love of virtue, in thought, word, and action" (I, 199). She has a heart "that might be shrined in crystal/And have all its movements scann'd" (I, 36).¹⁷ She is rational enough to know by the "sullen misery" of the nuns that convent life is neither rational nor conducive to virtue (Shaftesbury insists that true virtue only exists where reason has secured a "right application of the affections"¹⁸). Adeline also has the capacity vaguely described as "genius" (I, 36). This seems to be an intuitive power of original perception; in Udolpho Ann Radcliffe presents "genius" as a capacity for "illuminations" (I, 2). Adeline tends to stand in many a symbolic as well as actual dawn "as if heaven was opening to the view" (I, 26), or com-

¹⁷Cp. Barrow: "He the pious and good men could even wish that his breast had windows, that his heart were transparent, that all the world might see through him, and descry the clearness of his intentions." Sermon V: "Upright Walking Sure Walking", Works, I, 49.

¹⁸Shaftesbury, Characteristics, I, 255.

paring the new life of the flowers with her own pristine condition (I, 94). In this she recalls Coleridge's description of (Wordsworth's) "genius":

The original gift of spreading the tone, the atmosphere, and with it the depth and height of the ideal world around forms, incidents, and situations, of which, for the common view, custom had bedimmed all the lustre, had dried up the sparkle and the dewdrops.¹⁹

Though she has "taste", reason and "genius", however, Adeline is not free from the dangers of "feeling" and "imagination". Her feelings are strong, and this makes her reluctant to admit the depravity of those she loves: "The benevolence of her heart taught her . . . to sophisticate . . ." (I, 188). In Udolpho Ann Radcliffe no longer countenances even this generous weakness; Emily spurns the erring Velancourt. Adeline, however, lacks Emily's advantages; at this point her conduct is, like La Motte's, "suggested by feeling rather than principle". At the same time, she has the "imagination" to be unreasonably terrified by the other-worldly atmosphere of the Abbey; her lurid prophetic dream may perhaps be seen as the coincidence of an over-active imagination with fact. Her "imagination" is not the same as her "genius", which for Ann Radcliffe works by "illuminations" rather than association,²⁰

¹⁹ S. L. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, intro. Arthur Symonds (London: Dent, 1906), p. 45.

²⁰ See Chapter III of this thesis.

but both are part of a visionary bias which, in finding new views of things, may from Ann Radcliffe's view represent a potential moral danger. Essentially it is only Adeline's well-developed "taste" which stands between her and the dangers exemplified by La Motte. Ann Radcliffe is thus justified in introducing Arnaud La Luc as Adeline's guide, with his wholesome and steadying concern with reality, or the best in "nature".

Adeline's company in the Forest, furthermore, increases such a need. La Motte, his wife and Montalt, bringing civilized follies and vices with them, constitute a miniature urban society; conventionally enough Ann Radcliffe believes that the wicked city can corrupt good nature. When La Motte is eventually rehabilitated she remarks that his character recovers "the hue which it would probably always have worn had he never been exposed to the tempting dissipations of Paris" (II, 229). Though it seems unlikely that Adeline could go the way of her foil La Motte, Ann Radcliffe's treatment of "feeling" and "imagination" leaves the possibility open.

Against the shadowy world of "visionary" virtue, imaginary terrors and Adeline's ethereal responsiveness, Ann Radcliffe plays off her conception of reality, giving her suggestions weight simply by aligning their position with that of authority. La Motte must painfully give up self-deception and learn by experience, which is to La Luc the best and surest teacher (II, 98); as Tillotson says, " . . . men may easily

mistake Rules, but frequent Practise and Experience are seldom deceived".²¹ Elsewhere in the book the lesson is spelled out in the convenient form of a critique of monastic virtue:

"Peace be to his soul! but did he think a life of mere negative virtue deserved an eternal reward? Mistaken men! Reason, had you trusted to its dictates, would have informed you, that the active virtues, the adherence to the golden rule 'Do as you would be done unto', could alone deserve the favour of a Deity whose glory is benevolence" (I, 91).

This "golden rule" is prominent in Tillotson's list of the duties which, being inspired by "natural light" rather than revelation, constitute "natural religion". The rule of beneficence involves these requirements:

That we should be just and upright in our dealings with one another, true to our word, and faithful to our trust; and in all our words and actions observe that equity toward others, which we desire they should with us; that we should be kind, and charitable, merciful, and compassionate one towards another; ready to do good to all, and apt not only to pity but to relieve them in their misery and necessity.²²

Barrow similarly emphasizes the need for action and the relationship of these good works to religion:

So near to the heart of piety doth the holy Scripture lay the practise of these duties: and no wonder, for it often expressly declareth charity to be the fulfilling of God's law, as the best expression of our duty towards God, of faith in him, love and reverence of him, and as either formally containing or naturally producing all our duty

²¹ Tillotson, Sermon LII: "Of the Education of Children", Works, I, 502.

²² Sermon XLVIII: "Instituted religion not intended to Undermine Natural", Works, II, 307.

towards our neighbour. And of charity, works of bounty and mercy are both the chief instances and the plainest signs; for whereas all charity both consist either in mental desire or in verbal signification, as in effectual performance of good to our neighbour, this last is the end, the completion, the assurance of th rest, and as faith without works is dead, so love without beneficence is useless.²³

The monk's "negative virtue" is then as illusory as La Motte's "visionary" virtue.

Almost in spite of himself, however, La Motte is saved by his own actions, with the help of Providence, the "Fower, whose designs are great and just" (Romance, II, 219). An unaccustomed act of charity on his part begins the long chain of seeming coincidence which sees Adeline restored to her rights. Originally Adeline is thrust upon him, but to help her further he voluntarily risks his life, influenced by charity, and an appreciation of her beauty, which he associates with innocence (I, 15). "Feeling" and "imagination" in this instance do support practical morality. La Motte for once is in touch with reality, fulfilling the best in his nature according to "the image of virtue, which nature had impressed upon his heart". As Barrow says, "by observing these duties we observe our own nature, we improve it, we advance it to the highest perfection it is capable of".²⁴

²³Barrow, Sermon XXX: "The Duty and Reward of Bounty to the Poor", Works, I, 323.

²⁴Ibid., 344.

La Motte does later allow self-interest to lead him astray when he attempts to procure Adeline for the blackmailing Marquis, but risks his life a second time to help her when Montalt attempts to enlist his aid in her murder. His final reward is the chance to lead a reformed life in England. What he has considered an affliction, his enforced exile from Paris, turns out to be the beginning of redemption and happiness. He appears therefore to have undergone a providential plan of correction by affliction; Barrow compares the discipline of Providence to the activities of the physician and surgeon taking drastic but necessary measures for the patient's health.²⁵

Montalt himself raises interesting questions about the nature of man. His own idea of "nature" is pretty well interchangeable with "survival instinct" (see II, 64 and II, 65) thus quite opposed to Ann Radcliffe's concern with holding up the best in human "nature". He is notably proud of his capacity for feeling; Ann Radcliffe in fact attributes his villainy to the master passions "ambition and the love of pleasure" (II, 214). Lack of space prevents a closer examination of Montalt in this chapter, but it is worth seeing how her approach to the "master passion" idea measures up to the views of other writers. I have therefore brought up

²⁵Barrow, Sermon XXXVIII: "Of Contentment", Works, I, 439.

Montalt again in an appendix on page 141 of this thesis.

Judging by La Luc's educational principles it seems that neither Montalt nor La Motte have been carefully enough watched in youth so that adverse tendencies of "feeling" and "imagination" could be counteracted. La Luc, a true Christian pastor of the Primrose-Adams type, treats his children very much as part of the flock. His own morality is "the benevolence of the Christian", his philosophy that of "nature directed by common sense" (II, 92), and he finds "the best of our natural inclinations" both incentive and reward for the charitable exertions we have seen Barrow describing as the real way to perfection of "nature". La Luc maintains that "could the voluptuary once be sensible [of the real pleasure of charity], he would never after forego the luxury of doing good" (II, 93). "Ignorance of real pleasure", he says, "'more frequently than temptation to that which is false, leads to vice'" (II, 94). With his daughter he has a pupil who has both ready feeling, a "warm imagination" (II, 97), and a well-developed "taste", but she is occasionally persuaded by all three to neglect her duties in favour of pleasure. One day a poor family goes hungry because she is playing her lute rather than bringing them their dole. La Luc merely makes her aware of the distress her neglect has caused. Presumably "imagination" enables her to picture the family's misery, and her feelings are aroused. The fin's pity and remorse spoiling the pleasure

she has had from her playing. She is only happy when she keeps to her duties on their proper occasions. Experience, which La Luc calls the best and surest teacher (II, 98), thus brings self-knowledge and a sense of priorities which helps to counteract adverse tendencies of "feeling" and "imagination"; Clara finds that giving up temptation can be more practical than undue reliance on her own inclinations. Yet "feeling" and "imagination" can, as this example shows, help to support virtue rather than undermine it.

La Luc's example, of course, adds to the realm of his children's experience, in the spirit of Tillotson's "There is contagion in example, and nothing doth more slyly insinuate itself and gain upon us than a living and familiar pattern; therefore, . . . let your children always have good examples before them".²⁶ La Motte, of course, does not appear to have had any such "pattern" to help him resist the temptations of Paris; Adeline meets La Luc in time to escape the risk of being led in La Motte's footsteps by her own "feeling" and "imagination", no doubt. La Luc is particularly dubious about the value of precept, which he says seldom influences young minds (II, 98). Barrow observes that precepts do not have a "vehement operation on the fancy".²⁷

²⁶

Tillotson, Sermon LIII: "Of the Education of Children", Works, I, 496.

²⁷

Barrow, Sermon XXXIV: "Of being Imitators of Christ", Works, I, 320.

Ann Radcliffe's "imagination", as another chapter will show, is more often than not equivalent to "fancy"; since she considers "imagination" in general unreliable as a consistent guide, though sometimes valuable, it is not likely that she would approve of an incentive which does not even fully impress this faculty.

By working with rather than against the capacities of the child, "striking in with nature",²²⁸ La Luc only applies the principles by which he lives. Exerting himself in the widest possible charity, helping as much as he can in the material, moral and spiritual welfare of his flock, La Luc lives to develop the best in his own nature and to serve as an edifying example to others. Under his benevolent charge all are united as a happy family; living in Beloncourt is living with the best in nature, as a natural unit held together by the natural bond of active goodwill. Ann Radcliffe does not mention his particular church or show him in his particular duties, thus the practical and natural emphasis of his morality shows to best advantage. All in all he stands in the book for the highest conception of reality, the best in "nature". Other "good" aspects of "nature" have their place in supporting this conception. He allows his children to roam the countryside and improve their taste, as Clara

²²⁸ Elliotson, Ibid., 500.

does; he gives his children access to the "genius" of the best English poets, or the best achievements of human nature; and points out the constellations and planets, explaining that man's capacity to penetrate the laws of nature, which gives him a sublime idea of the Deity, demonstrates the spirituality of man's own nature (I, 130).²⁹

As the centre of reality in the book, La Luc stands for a significant change of artistic emphasis. The action of the book begins to revolve more and more around the physical, with flights, encounters, pursuits, duels, captures, legal processes and astonishing disclosures replacing superstitious terrors and the unfolding of a half-world of "feeling" and "imagination" in which few things are as they seem. Ann Radcliffe has shown through La Motte and others that only the best in "nature", and experience, can provide a conception of reality worth taking seriously. Neither of these standards will accommodate the supernatural world projected by unreliable "feeling" and "imagination" as real; the evidence of such dubious faculties cannot be accepted, and there is, as far as she is concerned, no other evidence. It is only the unenlightened mind that loves the marvellous (I, 125). She thus gives no supernatural explanations.

La Luc adumbrates St. Aubert, whose attitudes are the

²⁹Co. Tillotson, Sermon LXXXII: "The Wisdom of God in the Creation of the World", Works, II, 552.

the points of reference for Udolpho's idea of reality. As La Luc's appearance signifies the end of the unreal world of the Abbey, St. Aubert's impending disappearance from the book is the cue for Emily's nightmare to begin. The reader knows, (or should know), however, that it is only a nightmare, because Ann Radcliffe scrupulously provides a framework of reality through St. Aubert against which to measure the discoveries of "feeling" and "imagination". The dangers of "feeling" in particular are explicitly established at the beginning this time instead of being largely left for inference. The hero's lapses are taken seriously, furthermore; they serve to link the early warnings about "feeling" with the awful object lesson presented at the end, the lost mistress of Udolpho testifying on her deathbed, after a life of crime, that "the passions are the seeds of vices as well as virtues, from which either may spring accordingly as they are nurtured" (II, 319). This figure, Laurentini, is Emily's obverse image morally, having a similar natural brilliance and a capacity for strong feeling (II, 327-328). Meanwhile St. Aubert's good offices foster in Emily enough self-control to preserve her from serious moral error; the potentially dangerous sensibility she displays is turned to artistic account. As long as she keeps deploring the excesses of "feeling" and "imagination" promoting Emily's superstition, Ann Radcliffe can increase and intensify her terrific suggestion. After the Reverend her explanation of affect

is more relentless. At least Adeline's tendency to make excuses for her friends is countenanced, and no specific explanation of her mysterious dream is given, unless one relates it to Providence. Udolpho's heroine, however, spares neither friend nor foe in her propriety, while Ann Radcliffe lays her ghosts with disappointing thoroughness. She acquires much more artistic freedom in this way, however, than she enjoys in the Romance; she can suggest anything, because she is not only going to refute it but also actually doing so as she suggests it. Coleridge complains that the book lacks unity of design³⁰, and it is true that probability is stretched to the utmost, that she picks up and discards major figures, like Montoni, somewhat arbitrarily, and that too much is crammed into the dénouement. The moral scheme does reflect unity of design, however; it is an essential element in the master plan of deception.

After the Romance, the moral basis of Udolpho does not need an equally detailed investigation; the basic assumptions are the same. It is useful, nevertheless, to have on hand a more complete version of her idea of reality and to see what relation it has to her artistic effects, since this chapter is intended to suggest a basis in her

³⁰ S. T. Coleridge, from The Critical Review (August, 1794), in Stephen Potter, ed., Coleridge: Select Poetry and Prose (London: Nonesuch Press 1950), p. 204.

morality for her artistic limitations. At the same time, by seeing how she modifies and intensifies the emphasis of the Romance at the ultimate expense of her artistic effects, we may be able to see why her next book, The Italian, must depend so heavily on a new and more exotic basis for sustaining terror. Having almost reasoned herself out of the mystery field with Udolpho, she falls back heavily in The Italian on the awful fascination the Catholic Church in Italy has for the average English protestant. After this, she publishes no more romances, and Gaston de Blondville, her last novel, may be seen as a form of imaginative slumming, the invention of quasi-mediaeval wonders for their own quaint sakes, to ends which the third chapter of this thesis will explain.

The early chapters of Udolpho are dominated by St. Aubert, who, having voluntarily retired from the great world, is a more convincing mentor than La Luc, who is not said to have ever been exposed to its vanity before he adopts Adeline. The experience which makes him wise, in keeping with La Luc's familiar promise, is not, however, as convincing as that of say, Fielding's Wilson; he has kept his integrity by remaining an observer rather than a participant. Ann Radcliffe tends to keep her idea of "experience" as refined as possible. She seems to have given up the idea that precept seldom influenced young

minds, for, retiring with principles intact and "benevolence unchilled" (I,I), St. Aubert confers the benefits of his experience upon Emily in a homiletic spate to which only death can put a stop. In fairness, it must be added that his example is also edifying, and that both example and precept are varieties of experience for Emily to interpret. Unlike La Luc, St. Aubert is not specifically presented as a Christian, and his charity to outsiders can only be given token expression because so much space is devoted to his assiduous cultivation of Emily's character, in contrast to the Romance's lengthy account of La Luc's good works. It seems likely that Ann Radcliffe is trying to suggest a foolproof individual morality based on the application of "good nature" in a romantic rejection of authority, doing away with the Christian emphasis of the homilists but retaining their emphasis on good works and education. Her scheme is still, of course, based on accepted ideas, and St. Aubert is an authority structure in himself, though a natural one.

Whatever its objective limitations the plan works well enough in the book. The whole sequence concerning Emily's upbringing revolves around the different shades of meaning implicit in the word "nature", with the emphasis, needless to say, on the best aspects, and a discreet handling of the worst. If there never seems to be anything

ugly or disproportionate in the surroundings of Emily's home, the same applies to the natural influences with which she is surrounded, and to her own natural endowments; her one fault in proportion, an exquisite sensibility, appears as a charm. Emily has to go from home to encounter bad "nature"; La Vallée and St. Aubert's influence establish a high standard of ideas about reality to which the rest of the book in one way or another refers. St. Aubert's watchword is: "Virtue and taste are nearly the same, for virtue is little more than active taste..." (I, 50), and he cultivates Emily's excellent natural taste accordingly. In comparison to his system, La Luc's methods seem almost haphazard; he appears simply to improve on various occasions, as when Clara neglects her charities. Were it not for his system of training by example, however, she would have none to neglect; the random appearance of La Luc's approach is simply the result of the incidental treatment Ann Radcliffe gives it. St. Aubert's training is systematically unfolded, on the other hand, and thus seems more comprehensive and potentially more effectual.

St. Aubert's first principle is the idea that a well-stocked and active mind is the best safeguard against vice, whether one lives secluded in the country or among the temptations of the city (I, 6). This is a "natural" premise from Barrow's point of view; man, he says, is naturally

fitted physically, mentally, and spiritually for industry, that "fence to innocence and virtue" which any serious exercise of mind and body to a truly good purpose constitutes.³¹ Emily is grounded in reality by being encouraged to apply the best in her own nature to a study of the best in "nature" in general. She is given a general knowledge of the sciences, and an "exact acquaintance with every part of elegant literature"; she learns Latin and English so that she may appreciate "the sublimity of their best poets" (I, 6). Her own natural taste makes her a receptive student of these. Such advantages are enhanced by exposure to the "simplicity and nature" (I, 4) of affectionate family life. Emily has also "genius" of her own, demonstrated by an early proficiency in "elegant arts" (I, 3); natural taste teaches her to love scenery, and her "genius" appears to inspire her with a more than everyday appreciation; she tends to think of God as she contemplated grand scenes (I, 6). It is unnecessary to assess the quality of her "genius" otherwise than by pointing out this tendency; this capacity for "illuminations" (I, 2), original perceptions, probably has much to do with the almost infallible power of her imagination to associate circumstances inaccurately, with

³¹ Barrow, Sermon L: "Of Industry in General",
Works, I, 535-544.

terrifying results. "Genius", however ambivalent, is nevertheless the property of the virtuous in Ann Radcliffe's novels; she tends to characterize villainy by talent. Montoni's air of conscious superiority is the product of quickness of perception and talents (I, 125). It is worth noting that Coleridge describes "talent" as the capacity to make judicious use of what is available rather than to originate,³² and he notes that true "genius" rises above the evils to which "talent" may descend³³. Ann Radcliffe appears to be working by a similar principle in showing Montoni as a base opportunist.

His conception of reality is impaired; he recognizes only his own will, and, in people and circumstances, things which either may or may not be used for his ends. When Emily asks him by what right he detains her, he replies "By what right! By the right of my will; if you can elude that, I will not enquire by what right you do so.... You may know I am not to be trifled with" (I, 220). Even gaming became as real to Montoni as any of his evil projects if his self-interest has no other outlet (I, 185). Unlike Montalt, he does not make any excuse for his actions, nor

³²S. T. Coleridge, "On the Grounds of Morals and Religion", The Friend Vol. III, Section ii, Essay 1, Barbara E. Rooke, ed., The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (London: Routledge, 1969), I, 419.

³³Ibid., 415.

does he show any redeeming taste for the beauty of virtue as Montalt once does. Not even interested in an attempt on Emily's virtue, Montoni does seem somewhat more than human as compared to Montalt. The wicked Laurentini is similarly distinguished by talent, particularly in the "arts of fascination" (II, 328) which have nothing to do with the real virtue reflected in Emily's natural grace of modesty; Laurentini, like Montoni, uses people. Evidently the merely talented individual easily learns how to live by the worst in his nature, while the person of "genius" ideally has access to a higher framework of reality.

Having been under the best natural influences, Emily would appear to be a likely candidate for moral excellence. La Vallée, the safe territory of "nature", represents reality for Emily; in the nightmare world of Udolpho, she often thinks of La Vallée as if her present circumstances were "the visions of a distempered imagination" (I, 335). Ann Radcliffe points out, however, that her "uncommon delicacy of mind, warm affections, and ready benevolence" (I, 5) reflect a susceptibility which is ambivalent; it could be dangerous. St. Aubert therefore expends a good deal of his dying breath exhorting her to beware the evils of sensibility, not so much afraid that it will lead her into positive vice as that it should render her ineffectual for the purposes of positive virtue. Even sincere grief, he says, can lead

to evil: "'All excess is vicious; even that sorrow which is amiable in its origin, becomes a selfish and unjust passion if indulged at the expense of our duties; by our duties I mean what we owe to ourselves as well as to others...recollect and practise the precepts I have so often given you, and which your own experience has shown you to be wise'" (I,2): He is not advocating the "'false philosophy'" of indifference, that which Montalt refutes with his own equally false one in the Romance. Like Tillotson, he wants "nature" to have its due,³⁴ but no more. Some of his most vigorous efforts have been devoted to teaching Emily to "reject the first impulse of her feelings... and to acquire that steady dignity of mind [fortitude] that can alone counterbalance the passions" (I, 5) at the expense of his own feelings. It is not surprising to find him condemning the indulgence of emotion for its own sake as if it were a virtue; although Ann Radcliffe's morality depends greatly on feeling as an incentive to virtue, its exponents do not, as we have seen, allow feeling much value unless it promotes good actions. Shaftsbury especially emphasizes that as any excess is bad, excessive good feeling may prove a source of evil, sometimes preventing necessary good action, sometimes leading to positively vicious

³⁴Tillotson, Sermon XV ["Good Men Strangers and Sojourners upon Earth", (ii)], Works, II, 98.

action ³⁵.

St. Aubert's death-bed exhortation reflects his own usual concern; he also enlarges on the practical disadvantages of extreme sensibility:

'Above all, my dear Emily... do not indulge in the pride of fine feeling, the romantic error of amiable minds. Those who really possess sensibility, ought early to be taught that it is a dangerous quality, which is continually extracting the excess of misery, or delight from every surrounding circumstance... happiness arises in a state of peace, not tumult... Remember, too, that one act of beneficence, one act of real usefulness, is worth all the abstract sentiment in the world. Sentiment is a disgrace instead of an ornament unless it lead us to good actions...' (I, 81-3).

In the early part of the book, therefore, Ann Radcliffe explicitly defines reality; "nature" in all its aspects, and good works, are its foundations. Significantly, it is only in St. Aubert's last days that Emily becomes subject to superstitious terror. The effect of the legend of Château-le- Blanc on a mind enervated by grief and apprehension suggest that the advice is timely; after St. Aubert's death, excessive feeling again conspires with imagination to make Emily lose touch with reality for a moment even at La Vallée. She fancies she sees her father's ghost. The error is soon realized, however, and her sensibility never does distract her from the path of virtue,

³⁵Shaftesbury, Characteristics, I, 249.

though, as her feelings are assailed more brutally by almost every new circumstance and her judgement is seldom enlightened, she becomes increasingly prone to superstition. Without this tendency, of course, Ann Radcliffe would be unable to introduce her terrors so persuasively; she would have to resort to a mechanical approach. Emily's sensibility is Ann Radcliffe's chief artistic advantage.

Her virtue is neatly played off against varying degrees of nightmare; since her feeling and imagination never cause her to put a foot wrong ethically, her interpretations of strange and unaccountable circumstances appear equally valid. As her virtue is theoretically "'active taste'", we disregard Ann Radcliffe's warnings and assume that Emily's wild imaginings are also functions of "taste", therefore accurate, especially as Emily's "genius" persuade us that she may be "illuminating" the natural world with new truths about the supernatural one. A few examples will show the effect. Venice, where Montoni begins to seem "terrible to her imagination" (I, 206), is thus on the border of Udolpho's nightmare world, but in this half-unreal territory Valancourt proposes a clandestine marriage. Emily, however, detects the "fallacies of passion" in his argument, noting the extravagance of his emotion as his imagination magnifies her possible danger, and her own fancied terrors give way to reason (I, 162). Here she seems

well aware of what is real and probable, proving it with an act of virtue at the expense of her own feelings by rejecting the offer. Again, as she arrives at Udolpho with a sense of unreality doing its best to overcome rationality, she meets a fascinating Venetian acquaintance, Signora Livona, whose charm and seeming kindness have delighted Emily and led her to hope for a friendship. This lady, whom Montoni has introduced to his wife with his usual sardonic wit as "a lady of distinguished merit" (I, 186), is of course his mistress. Aghast to learn that her own taste and feeling have outrun her judgement, Emily drops the acquaintance, though she desperately needs a friend. After such difficult emotional contests, her defiance of Montoni seems a relatively simple matter. When she has escaped him, she still has the terrors of Le Blanc with which to contend; as at Venice, she seems halfway between dream and reality, with the moralistic de Villefort as father-surrogate counterpointing the illusions attached to the haunted chamber. Valancourt's return completes the similarity, and Emily again sacrifices feeling to virtue when she hears of his excesses in Paris. After all this, one expects great things of her supposed encounters with the supernatural. Such episodes also make the reader associate mystery and moralizing, with the additional help of Ann Radcliffe's depreciations of superstition. It is

still disappointing to find out at the end, however, that moralizing largely explains mystery, though Ann Radcliffe is merely being consistent to her general moral emphasis. The dying Laurentini conveniently comes out of her delirium to enlarge upon the dangers of passion, and the dénouement is under way. She describes the awakening of remorse in terms appropriate to Ann Radcliffe's usual association of rash feeling and delusion: "'Then, we awaken as if from a dream and perceive a new world around us - we gaze in astonishment and horror - but the deed is committed; not all the powers of heaven and earth united can undo it - and the spectres of conscience will not fly!'" (II,). The dreamlike state induced by evil passions recalls the "visionary" virtue of La Motte and Valancourt's unfortunate tendency to be led by the "fallacies of passion". Laurentini is an object lesson justifying St. Aubert's exhortations on the dangers of extravagant emotion. Since the unreal world of moral evil is opened up by feeling and, if La Motte and Valancourt are representative, imagination, it follows that the interpretation of circumstance by feeling and imagination is likely to open up an equally unreal world, hence Ann Radcliffe's destruction of her effects by rational explanation. Her endless remonstrances about superstition are not, as the gullible reader supposes, condescendingly superimposed on a fantasy world with its own accepted

supernatural framework; her fictitious world may be romanticized, but it is still subject to the natural laws of physics and "natural religion". Her homilies on superstition reflect the essential limitations of her moral theory; with "nature" at its best as the norm of her morality, it is not surprising that she will not admit that which is not in physical "nature". The triumph of virtue asserted in her customary perorations designates the triumph of rationality, but as far as Ann Radcliffe's artistic effects are concerned, it is a Pyrrhic victory.

CHAPTER II

"NATURAL RELIGION" VERSUS FORMALISM

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the relationship of Ann Radcliffe's specific treatment of religion to her art, showing how her attitude helps to confirm the grounds of her chosen limitations and to account for her position in the middle ground between eighteenth-century Enlightenment and Romanticism. To some extent, such a discussion must be a recapitulation of her theory of morals. Although these first two chapter heads may imply that, for Ann Radcliffe, morals and religion are distinct entities, the division has been made solely for convenience in discussion; her idea of morality and her idea of religion are essentially one and the same. As such, they ~~are~~ subject to the same limitation, a conservative estimate of the mind's capacity to interpret experience. Before the artistic applications of her theory are discussed, therefore, some account must be given of its basic assumptions by reference to points raised in the first chapter of this thesis.

It will be remembered that Ann Radcliffe's explicit emphasis on good works as the fulfillment and perfection of

man's nature is most clearly reflected in Louis La Motte's reaction to the old tomb in Fontanville Forest which represents the lifelessness of "faith without works". Louis points out that "reason" should have told the occupant that "the active virtues, the adherence to the golden rule 'Do as you would be done unto' could alone deserve the favour of a Deity whose glory is benevolence" (I, 91). This "golden rule" is of course the homilists' ideal of true charity, the fundamental working principle of their moral theory; at the same time, it is the basis of religion. Such "natural" duties, says Tillotson, are the foundations of "natural religion";

By natural religion, I mean obedience to the natural law and the performance of such duties as natural light without any express and supernatural revelation, doth dictate to men. These lie at the bottom of all religion, and are the great and fundamental duties which God requires of all mankind; as, that we should love God, and behave ourselves reverently towards him; that we should believe his revelations; and testifie our dependence upon him, by imploring his aid and direction in all our necessities and distresses; and acknowledging our obligations to him for all the blessings and benefits which we receive; that we should moderate our appetites, in reference to the pleasures and enjoyments of this world, and use them temperately and chastely; that we should be just and upright in our dealings with one another; true to our word and faithful to our trust; and in all our words and actions observe that equity towards others, which we desire they should use towards us; that we should be kind, and charitable, merciful, and compassionate one towards another; ready to do good to all, and apt not only to pity but to relieve them in their misery and necessity. These, and such like, are what we call moral duties; and they are of eternal and perpetual obligation because they

do naturally oblige, without any particular and express revelation from God. And these are the foundations of revealed and instituted religion, and all revealed religion does suppose them, and build upon them; for all revelation from God, supposeth us to be men, and alters nothing of those duties to which we were naturally obliged before.¹

In the same way, Barrow also tends to define religion by its informal or natural expression in keeping with the "golden rule" principle:

[Religion] consisteth not in fair professions and glorious pretences, but in real practice; not in a pertinacious adherence to any sect or party, but in a sincere love of goodness and dislike of naughtiness, wherever discovering itself; not in vain ostentations and flourishes of outward performance, but in an inward good complexion of mind, exerting itself in works of true devotion and charity; not in a nice orthodoxy, or politic subjection of our judgements to the peremptory dictates of men, but in a sincere love of truth, in a hearty approbation of, and compliance with, the doctrines fundamentally good and necessary to be believed...in a word...religion consists in nothing else but doing what becomes our relation to God, in a conformity or similitude to his holy will....²

Although, as we shall see, Ann Radcliffe promotes a highly informal idea of revelation, her treatment of morality goes hand in hand with her attitude to formal religion in a very similar conception of "natural religion". As has been shown,

¹Tillotson, Sermon XLVIII: "Instituted Religion not Intended to Undermine Natural", Works, II, 307.

²Barrow, Sermon I: "The Pleasantness of Religion", Works, I, 8.

the deportment of her heroines is virtually impeccable. Emily in particular dislikes "naughtiness, wherever discovering itself"; in putting duty to her guardian and deference to her father's precepts before her love of Valancourt, she is "faithful to [her] trust". Ann Radcliffe's treatment of the depredations of passion is in keeping with Tillotson's emphasis on temperance; she shows that excessive selfish feeling prevents good works, and it must therefore be considered irreligious, in view of Louis La Motte's emphasis on "the active virtues". At the same time, Ann Radcliffe's virtuous figures steadily acknowledge the Deity in the manner called for by Tillotson. They seem, in fact, to be constantly upon their knees, imploring assistance, asserting resignation or expressing gratitude, and their gratitude for certain specialized blessings is particularly relevant to this discussion. Ann Radcliffe's version of "natural light" finds a natural and valid form of worship which reinforces the equally acceptable system of "good works", as part of the "inward good complexion of mind" described by Barrow. This approach helps Ann Radcliffe to make a more explicit attack on formalism than she can make by simply stating truisms about beneficence and providing examples; it is also a means to purely artistic ends.

As has been shown, the active virtues explicitly constitute the application of "reason", and virtue itself

is "'little more than active taste'" (Udolpho, I, 50).

"Taste", in Ann Radcliffe's approach, helps "genius" to discern the benevolent Deity, who is pleased by man's active virtues, through the visible created world. The love of physical nature is therefore related to the love of man and the wise self-love of the virtuous; reason and taste, virtue and religion, are inseparable causes and effects, "natural light" promoting "natural religion". Ann Radcliffe does not, of course, originate the idea of looking for God in physical nature; it is virtually impossible to say who does, but the idea is typical of the homilists. Tillotson, for example, bases his argument on an appeal to the simplest physical sense:

In this visible frame of the world, which we behold with our eyes, which way soever we look, we are encountered with ocular demonstrations of the wisdom of God. What the Apostle saith of the power of God is true likewise of his wisdom. Rom. 1.20. The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead: so the eternal wisdom of God is understood by the things which are made. As any curious work or rare engine doth argue the wit of the artificer; so the variety, and order, and regularity, and fitness of the works of God, argue the infinite wisdom of him who made them; a work so beautiful and magnificent, such a stately pile as heaven and earth is, so curious in the several parts of it, so harmonious in all its parts, every part so fitted for the service of the whole, and each part for the service of another; is not this a plain argument that there was infinite wisdom in the contrivance of this frame?³

Barrow explains from a similar viewpoint that the Deity Himself

³Tillotson, Sermon LXXXII: "The Wisdom of God in The Creation of the World", Works, II, 551.

provides the incentives to

doing what becomes our relation to God, in a conformity or similitude to his holy will... by representing to us his transcendently glorious attributes, conspicuously displayed in the frame, order, and government of this world: that wonderful Power, which erected this great and goodly fabric; that incomprehensible Wisdom, which preserves it in a constant harmony; that immense Goodness, which hath so carefully provided for the various necessities, delights, and comforts of its inhabitants... his tender care and loving providence continually supporting and protecting us...⁴

Leaving aside Ann Radcliffe's attitude to this "great and goodly fabric" for the moment, it is useful to recall that she acknowledges the existence of Providence as more than just a righter of wrongs and physician to morals. St. Aubert speaks of "those various innocent enjoyments which a benevolent God has designed to be the sunshine of our lives" (Udolpho, I, 20); his daughter later remarks accordingly that poverty cannot remove the natural blessings of existence, which, obviously, are provided by the benevolent Deity:

'[Poverty] cannot deaden our taste for the grand and the beautiful, nor deny us the means of indulging it; for the scenes of nature - those sublime spectacles so infinitely superior to all artificial luxuries are open to the enjoyment of the poor as well as of the rich... We retain, then, the sublime luxuries of nature, and lose only the frivolous ones of art. (I, 61).

Barrow elsewhere remarks that "all the riches and ornaments of nature, the glorious splendours of heaven, and the sweet beauties of the field, are exposed to the common view...and

⁴ Barrow, Ibid.

by imagination any man can as well take all that he sees for his own, as the tenacious miser doth fancy his dear pelf to be his".⁵

In all the above statements on God and the natural world, the emphasis, explicit and implicit, is on the simple power of the eye. No complicated dogma must be absorbed before one can believe in the benevolent Deity; the individual teaches himself. As we might expect, the large and beautiful eyes of the Radcliffe heroine tell her all she needs to know about the nature of the Divinity, whatever previous influences have surrounded her. Adeline, for instance, has been locked in a convent all her life and subjected to innumerable persecutions, but she retains "that elastic energy [of the mind] which resists calamity "perhaps because her "original taste" (Romance, I, 11), reflected in her love of virtue, is unimpaired. She is still, therefore, susceptible to the beauties of natural scenes. Somewhat disillusioned by the "brave new world" of human activity outside the convent walls, she is consoled by a forest sunrise; her heart swells in "gratitude and adoration" at the thought of the benevolent Deity who made it:

⁵ Barrow, Sermon XXXI: "The Duty and Reward of Bounty to the Poor", Works, I, 348.

The scene before her soothed her mind, and exalted her thoughts to the great Author of Nature; she uttered an involuntary prayer: Father of good, who made this glorious scene! I resign myself to thy hands: thou wilt support me under my present sorrows, and protect me from future evil.⁶ (I, 28)

The term, "Author of Nature" is common among the Deists, but Adeline's idea of the Deity is antipodal to their mechanistic conception. To appreciate the Divine handiwork is to confide oneself to the "tender care and loving providence of him who made it",⁶ in Barrow's words. Adeline's prayer is involuntary, or natural; no rationalization is needed. A few pages later, Ann Radcliffe describes her "genius" and the purity of her heart, confirming the supposition that "original taste", "genius", virtue, and piety are inseparable.

"Taste" therefore becomes the medium of what may be called "revelation". It will be remembered that in this book, Ann Radcliffe does make her ideal of "good works" official by attaching the "benevolence of the Christian" (II, 96) to La Luc, but ignores the particulars of his office; one cannot even tell whether he is a Catholic or a Protestant pastor. She is also, earlier in the book, at pains to present the moral evil and unhappiness of the cloistered life (I, 45). This anti-formalistic trend, enthroning "natural light" over officially acceptable revelation and dogma, is even more

6

Barrow, Sermon I: "The Pleasantness of Religion", Works, I, 8.

pronounced in The Mysteries of Udolpho, in which, as we have seen, morals are given, as far as possible, a subjective basis. In her specific treatment of religious matters, Ann Radcliffe attacks formalism explicitly and implicitly; the direct attack is given in general to the sub-heroine, Blanche de Villefort. Like Adeline, Blanche has just been freed from the convent, and retains her natural goodness. She is all "kindness and simplicity" to Emily, the unhappy stranger; her "good works" reflect a taste to which the truth about religion is soon revealed by nature. She is not distinguished by the "more brilliant qualities" (Udolpho, II, 193) of her new friend, requiring the stimulus of art before she can respond appropriately to nature, but her perceptions are accurate. A tapestried Fall of Troy fills her with melancholy thoughts of mortality; she goes to her window; and is

cheered by the face of living nature. The shadowy earth, the air, the ocean - all was still. Along the deep serene of the heavens a few light clouds floated slowly, through whose skirts the stars now seemed to tremble and now to emerge with purer splendour. Blanche's thoughts arose involuntarily to the Great Author of the sublime objects she contemplated and she breathed a prayer of finer devotion than any she had ever uttered beneath the vaulted roof of a cloister.

Very soon the same page, in fact, Blanche is encouraged to reassess the only values she can remember by a similarly spontaneous access of religiosity, and the convent's assumptions come off badly:

'Who could first invent convents ... who could first persuade people to go into them? and to make religion a pretense, too, where all that should inspire it is so carefully shut out? God is best pleased with the homage of a grateful heart, and when we view His glories, we feel most grateful. I never felt so much devotion, during the many dull years I was in the convent, as I have done in the few hours that I have seen here, where I need only look on all around me - to adore God in my inmost heart.' (II, 146).

True worship, is, therefore, appreciation, and is in all ways natural, depending on response of the innate taste to natural evidence, just as true piety is adherence to the "golden rule" of beneficence demanded by natural reason. The evidence or "revelation" of the benevolent Deity provided by taste can only encourage real piety. If the formal basis of religion excludes "natural light" it is in error.

It is in The Italian that Ann Radcliffe most violently attacks formalism; her conception of monasticism, coloured by such objections and not particularly biased by factual knowledge, is also of central artistic importance to the book. Before discussing The Italian, however, it is necessary to know how fully Ann Radcliffe justified her rejection of authority, and what artistic ends her justification promotes.

As we have seen, Emily is close to the perfection of "nature", and her excellence has been developed by reference to the best in "nature" generally. Her responses are accordingly more sophisticated than those of Blanche and Adeline, in keeping with Tillotson's sentiments: "Now the wisdom of God

in the Creation will appear by considering the works of God. Those who have studied nature, can discourse these things more exactly and particularly ".⁷ Emily has studied physical nature through the sciences, the "great miracle of this world ...the mind of man"⁸ in her acquaintance with works of "genius" and the natural beauty of virtue through example and practise. Her dismissal of the "frivolous" luxuries of art for the "sublime" ones of nature reflects the view that "The wise works of God are the proper objects of our praise..." and that only stupid and heedless men therefore prefer the productions of art to those of God.⁹

Emily, however, enjoys her "revelations" in a different manner to the other heroines. Adeline, for instance, sees the Deity first through reassuring and pretty natural scenes; she is enchanted by pure colours, gentle woodland, and the pleasing sound of bird-song. All these douceurs, as they banish the dark, ominous atmosphere of the Abbey and "vivify" (I, 27) the surroundings, understandably fill her with the sense of the Deity's "tender and loving providence". Blanche's rejection of convent attitudes is similarly inspired, by the

⁷ Tillotson, Sermon LXXXII: "The Wisdom of God in the Creation of the World", Works, II, 551.

⁸ Ibid., 553.

⁹ Ibid., 555.

tranquil beauty of gardens by moonlight, and by the sunny walks of Le Blanc. Emily, on the other hand, cultivates solitude, silence, and gloom in natural scenes from her early days; the chosen scenes fill her originally with detached veneration rather than with a personal sense of security at this time:

It was one of Emily's earliest pleasures to ramble among the scenes of nature; nor was it in the soft and glowing landscape that she most delighted; she loved more the wild wood walks that skirted the mountain; and still more the mountain's stupendous recesses, where the silence and grandeur of solitude impressed a sacred awe upon her heart, and lifted her thoughts to the God of Heaven and Earth (I, 6)

Since Emily is evidently not excessively occupied with herself, perhaps her subsequent prudish coldness¹⁰ is more acceptable. At any rate, she easily sees the truth through that which is not simply bright, beautiful, cheerful and reassuring. Evidently the aesthetic approach to the Deity will not, rejecting the unbeautiful or awful, leave the individual casting around for dubious explanations of their origins. Thanks to the aesthetic of the sublime, in other words, one will not entertain the idea that God is not benevolent, and the Divine order not right. This is perhaps a rather too refined version of the idea of order expressed for instance, by Pope:

¹⁰ Talfourd, Gaston de Blondville, I, 121a.

Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies shine,
 Earth for whose use? Pride answers, "'Tis for mine:
 For me kind Nature wakes her genial pow'r . . ."
 But errs not Nature from this gracious end,
 From burning suns when livid deaths descend,
 When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep
 Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?
 No('tis reply'd) the first Almighty Cause
 Acts not by partial but by general laws;
 Th' exceptions few; some change since all began
 And what created perfect?... (Essay on Man, I, v, 131-3,
 141-8)¹¹

It must be added that Ann Radcliffe piously ignores the rag, tag, and bobtail of Creation, that which is neither sublime, nor beautiful nor romantically interesting, and that her natural (or, properly speaking, unnatural) disasters, such as the familiar timely shipwreck; never result in injury or death. The idea of Divine retribution, often accepted by instituted religion on the best Old Testament authority, has, incidentally, no place in her scheme, though she likes to tease the reader with it. Schedoni, for instance, mysteriously collapses with no discernible weapon at hand, in best Locked-Room-Mystery style, but a few pages later it is explained that he is poisoned. Only in Gaston de Blondville is someone struck down by the Almighty, and Ann Radcliffe presents the relation merely as an instance of mediaeval superstition.

Emily, be this as it may, continues to demonstrate the superior natural taste which makes formal religion

¹¹

Grant, ed., Pope: Selected Poems, p. 111.

unnecessary in virtuous conduct and in "aspiring" to contemplate His power in the sublimity of His works, and His goodness in the infinity of His blessings" (I, 49). When she does specifically conceive of the Deity as benevolent in this way, she is maintaining faith in spite of sorrow and misfortune. Ann Radcliffe leaves no loose ends; when the unusually kind Abbess suggests that Emily will find consolation by joining the nuns, her overtures are rejected. Feeling does not, therefore, overthrow reason.

Ann Radcliffe thus goes to great lengths in Udolpho to justify "natural religion" and natural religiosity. Emily's taste is made to appear very reliable, and this reliability is of great service to Ann Radcliffe's art. Her provision of terror is founded in a specific aesthetic¹², and, as media, her heroines must display æsthetic responses which are appropriately validated; they must appear to interpret external circumstance accurately. Their virtue, as we have seen, confirms their "taste", and since Ann Radcliffe also puts them through their paces in the laudable exercise of "natural" religiosity, the reader tends to accept their more dubious interpretations of circumstance. In Udolpho, Ann Radcliffe's supernatural suggestion becomes more frequent and more daring than in the Romance, in keeping with the

¹² Chapter III will discuss its nature and application.

increased sophistication of Emily's taste. Adeline's recognition of the Deity arises from the bright and pleasing views she enjoys, thus it is easy for her to think of the Deity as benevolent; it is also easy for the reader to forget the mystery and terror attached by Adeline to the Abbey, when the "natural light" reflected in La Luc's virtue shines for so long after these, and the suspense has begun to revolve around physical action. As was mentioned before, Ann Radcliffe's deprecation of superstition does not in itself promise disappointment; it is too easily assumed that she is merely taking a sceptical tone in presenting a fantasy world with its own laws. Udolpho's terrors are therefore effective in proportion to the degree of freedom from formal restraints allowed to the heroine's taste.

Emily, however, is mistaken; her superstitious terrors are founded in misinterpretation of circumstance, and their sources are human. Since Emily has been allowed so much latitude, Ann Radcliffe is in an awkward position; by rejecting authority she has let the innate senses loose to be thoroughly deluded. Her attitude to formalism in The Italian, however, suggest that this situation is the lesser of two evils.

The Catholic Church in Italy is an ideal scapegoat for formalism in general, and, having for Protestants its own inherent awful mystery, admirably suits Ann Radcliffe's artistic needs. Closed orders in particular are the objects

of her attack, representing "horrible perversions of reason", as she says elsewhere:

It is not easily that a cautious mind becomes convinced of the existence of such severe orders; when it does, astonishment at the artificial miseries, which the ingenuity of human beings forms for themselves by seclusion, is as boundless, as at the other miseries, with which the most trivial vanity and envy, so frequently pollute the intercourse of social life.¹³

she says in Journey. Visiting a monastery at Bonn, she covertly scrutinizes the face of her monkish guide for the ravages of sorrow and penance, to bear out her preconceived notions; he is, however, regrettably jovial, and she consoles herself with the thought that "His sense of decorum as a member... seemed to be struggling with his vanity, as a man" (I, 216-18). If The Italian, published in 1797, is a reflection on this monk, it seems a disproportionate one; there is scarcely a single monk or nun in it who is not thoroughly worldly.

Setting out to show that "natural religion" is superior to "all the distinctions of human systems" (Udolpho, I, 48), Ann Radcliffe takes pains to show how unnatural this particular system is. The Induction sets the tone rather deceitfully, by linking crimes too frightful to name with a monkish penitent in the Confessional reserved for the most shocking offences possible to human nature. The crime, implicitly, is

¹³ Ann Radcliffe, A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794 through Holland and the Western Frontier of Germany (London, 1795), I, 188-9.

most unnatural; one expects the guilty party to have sold himself to the Devil at least. Other judicious appeals to superstition are made through the association with evil Father Schedoni of apparent supernatural powers, so that the reader is inclined to associate not only unnatural but also supernatural evil with any figure in monkish garb.

Having removed her monks from "nature" thus, Ann Radcliffe demonstrates the physical and moral isolation from "nature" of the monastery of San Stefano. Perched on a mountain-side across a perilous chasm, San Stefano is somewhat redundantly equipped with a high wall, grates, and even dungeons. There is no natural intercourse with the outside world; a few select pilgrims of good standing are admitted to the parlour to admire the ostentatious arrangements for special occasions, but even these visitors are kept apart from the nuns by a grille. All in all, San Stefano is a prison, whose occupants are denied scope for natural benevolence and shut away from the benevolent Deity they might find in the scenes of nature.

Ann Radcliffe's treatment of San Stefano reflects an uncharacteristic employment of heavy symbolism which appears to be an attempt to convey the reward-and-punishment emphasis of formal religion in the most repellent terms. The punishment for displeasing the Abbess is consignment to the oubliette buried in the rocky foundations of the monastery,

utterly isolated from the world of nature, and, implicitly, from the Deity recognized and worshipped through it. This chamber lies behind the celebrated shrine; the same recess contains tunnels which allow access to objects needed to "excite the superstitious wonder of the devotees" (II, 26). Behind the glorious facade of formalism is the menace of damnation, and in the middle ground is the fraudulent appeal to superstition. "Nature" and reason are symbolically denigrated, while the individual seems to be arbitrarily condemned; only fearful rumour can account for his fate. The reward for acquiescence is no more dignified. Nuns who have pleased the Abbess are feted with pastries, artificial flowers, and music at the Abbess's soiree before the admiring visitors; they anticipate the affair with as much vanity as any group of débutantes. If this is a picture of the traditional Heaven, with harps, nectar, and the complacent recollection that one is not of the damned, it does not seem much of an incentive to piety.

Elsewhere in the book, Ann Radcliffe illustrates the danger that blind faith in authority may lead to moral evil. The Marchesa di Vivaldi agrees to help Schedoni in his wicked designs because he is, after all, as her Confessor, the representative of the Church. Natural insight, however, Ann Radcliffe insists, cannot be rationalized away: The Marchesa is stricken with pangs of conscience as

she hears a timely requiem, and takes the inscription

"God hears thee!" over the confessional as a peculiar warning.¹⁴

Ann Radcliffe's attack on formalism ends, however, in a compromise; a clerical guardian of "natural religion" similar to La Luc is found at the Santa Maria della Pieta convent. The worthy preceptress is

a shining example to governesses of religious houses, and a striking instance of the influence which a virtuous mind may acquire over others, as well as of the extensive good which it may thus diffuse. She was dignified without haughtiness; religious without bigotry, and mild, though decisive and firm. She possessed penetration to discover what was just, resolution to adhere to it, and temper to practise it with gentleness and grace, so that even correction from her assumed the winning air of courtesy: the person, whom she admonished, wept in sorrow for the offense, instead of being irritated by the reproof, and loved her as a mother rather than feared her as a judge (III, 116).

The ~~Abess~~ is therefore, in Barrow's terms. a "clear pattern" proving that "a visible good conversation will have a great efficacy toward the promotion and propagation of goodness".¹⁵ Some startling assertions follow, however:

Her religion was neither gloomy nor bigotted; it was the sentiment of a grateful heart offering itself up to a Deity, who delights in the happiness of his creatures; and she conformed to the customs of the Roman Church without supposing a belief in all of them to be necessary to salvation. This opinion, however, she was obliged to conceal, lest her very virtue should

¹⁴ Ann Radcliffe, The Italian, or, the Confessional of the Black Penitents (London, 1797), II, 132.

¹⁵ Barrow, Sermon LXV "Provide things Honest in the Sight of All Men", Works, II, 22.

draw upon her the punishment of a crime from some fierce ecclesiastics who contradicted in their practise the very essential principles which the christianity they professed would have taught them (III, 117).

The mother superior thus stands for "mercy and not sacrifice,"¹⁶ the upholding of "natural law" with which instituted religion must not dispense.¹⁷ Since she is regarded as a mother more than a judge, her authority is in conformity with nature, as is that of La Luc, whose flock is transformed into a family of which he is the head.

As we have seen, Ann Radcliffe is not inclined to reject all authority, though she tries to present the most reasonable and natural examples of it as her ideals. Her treatment of La Luc and the Abbess of the della Pieta suggests that formalism can be de-formalized and brought to terms with nature. Tillotson remarks, after all, that "the great design of the christian religion, was to restore and reinforce the practise of the natural law",¹⁸ and it seems, on the whole, sufficient to Ann Radcliffe that this be done. She still, furthermore, retains her doubts as to the accuracy of the individual's insights. Perhaps superstition is ultimately harmless to her virtuous figures, but it does arise from a similar conspiracy of feeling and imagination

¹⁶Cf. Tillotson, Sermon XLIX: "Instituted Religion not intended to Undermine Natural", Works, II, 304.

¹⁷Ibid., 307.

¹⁸Ibid.

to that which promotes vice; the influence of her "moral guardian" figures helps to keep up the contact with reality. In The Italian she creates this effect in a different manner, but the intention may be presumed the same. The della Pieta is played off against the Inquisition, the stronghold of excessive authorization zeal where appearance and reality are hopelessly confused. Vivaldi can hardly tell whether he is awake or dreaming throughout the experiences he encounters in his dungeon and the Inquisitors show little inclination to seek the truth beyond appearances themselves; the prisoner is presumed guilty because charged.

At the same time, her scheme is restricted; the emphasis is on refinement, thus it does not seem that she is suggesting a universal application. Since virtue comes to the highest development according to the degree of taste and exposure to superior influences, the picture does not look bright for those who have little taste or no opportunity to develop it. Ann Radcliffe shows those not privileged, the lower orders, as honest souls in general, loyal and hospitable;¹⁹ obviously, however, they are not to be looked to for moral leadership, which is up to those whose "superior attainments of every sort bring with them duties of superior

¹⁹ Chapter IV will discuss her attitude more fully.

exertion" (Udolpho, II, 34 3). These are respectable sentiments for her time, of course; but still conservative; one may find a similar assumption in Barrow's sermon on the gentleman's duty:

He hath all the common duties of piety, of charity, of sobriety, to discharge with fidelity; for being a gentleman doth not exempt him from being a Christian, but rather more strictly doth engage him to be such in a higher degree than others; it is an obligation peculiarly incumbent to him, in return for God's peculiar favours, to pay God in all due obedience, and to exercise himself in all good works; disobedience being a more heinous crime in him than in others, who have not such encouragement to serve God.²⁰

Ann Radcliffe commonly shows the lower orders to be as corruptible as the higher, furthermore, and at least twice as likely to be prone to superstition. One suspects that, outside fiction she would, like many before her, relegate them to the enthusiastic persuasions, whose application to the simple emotion of fear accords well with superstitious minds.²¹ It is impossible to imagine her in the same spirit as Wordsworth when he suggests that in humble and rustic life "the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity";²² her version of such

²⁰Barrow, Sermon XXXI: "The Duty and Reward of Bounty to the Poor", Works, I, 341.

²¹Basil Willey, The English Moralists; (London: Chatto and Windus, 1964) 267.

²²William Wordsworth, Preface to Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral and Other Poems [1802], in Paul M. Zall, ed., Literary Criticism of William Wordsworth (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 41.

a life is firmly bound up with the gentry and their "superior attainments".

Ann Radcliffe's dismissal of superstition also precludes the possibility of attaining any kind of transcendental vision; she will not accept ideas which are not founded in evidence from a strict view of the limits of "nature", and she is impelled to betray her own art by a sense of such limitations. Though her empirical bias and her tendency to reduce authority to the loosest possible terms are perhaps links with Romantic thought, as is her interest in the workings of the mind, she is really too conservative in her thinking to be a genuine romantic. Her partial rejection of authority is best seen as "romantic" only in the sense that it suits the escapist aspect of her novels.

CHAPTER III

"THOSE THOUSAND NAMELESS TERRORS"

Suspense, the mainspring of Ann Radcliffe's romance, depends entirely on the susceptibility to phenomena implicit in the "taste" and "genius" of her virtuous principals. Without the aesthetic approach to experience so much valued in their moral outlooks, they would hardly be subject to "those thousand nameless terrors which exist only in active imagination, and set reason and examination equally at defiance" (Udolpho, I, 244). This is an empiricism of limited ends, perhaps, but it has some pioneer value. Ann Radcliffe sets her own limits; like other "Gothic" writers, she cannot transcend the real world imaginatively, confident of finding ultimate answers, as the Romantics do.¹ She does at least suggest, however, that accepted boundaries may not be finite. In her novels, it is the psychological state of a character which determines his view of reality; his varying interpretation of externals can evoke new dimensions. Her primary concern is to induce the reader to share the psychological condition, to enlarge his imagination through

¹R. D. Hume, "Gothic versus Romantic: a Revaluation of the Gothic Novel", Publications of the Modern Language Association of America [hereafter cited as PMLA], LXXXIV March 1969) 289.

"the suspense of external circumstance".²

This aim, together with her unambiguous moral outlook, denotes her particular "Gothic" mode. When Talfourd praises her alone among recent romance writers for having "forborne to raise one questionable throb, or call forth one momentary blush",³ he is not merely eulogizing but regretfully acknowledging the disparate psychological purposes of other "Gothic" writers. He deplores the seeming voluptuousness of Lewis, and Maturin's inclination toward "the forbidden in speculation, and the paradoxical in morals".⁴ These writers may, as D. E. Hume suggests, be classified as "horror-Gothic"; they seek to involve the reader in their psychological ambiguities: "The horror-Gothic writers postulated the relevance of such psychology to every reader. They wrote for the reader who could say with Goethe that he had never heard of a crime which he could not imagine himself committing."⁵ Ann Radcliffe dallies with the attraction of evil in her portrayal of villainy, but as will be shown, carefully keeps the appeal within the bounds of

²Ibid., 284-285.

³Talfourd, Gaston de Blondville, I, 132_a.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Hume, PMLA, LXXXIV, 285.

contemporary aesthetic. Even the virtuous heroes and heroines do not arouse sympathy; their function is purely mediatory, and they are accordingly one-sided. Talfourd, acknowledging that sympathy has no place in her effects, suggests that "a moral paradox could not co-exist with a haunted tower in the minds of her readers".⁶ Her approach does, however, lack the potential seriousness of the "horror-Gothic". In her field, nevertheless, her achievements are considerable, and her principles and methods are worth investigation both as techniques and for their historical interest.

Ann Radcliffe's "terror-Gothic"⁷ is a natural offspring of the aesthetic of the sublime. It is interesting that Walpole, an early prose fiction purveyor of terror, should refer to the sublime only in the old terms of rhetoric and its impact.⁸ Burke's Enquiry was out before Otranto; Walpole, nevertheless, does not relate his terrors to Burke's aesthetic. Ann Radcliffe is able to take Walpole's aim, the reconciliation of imagination and probability in

⁶ Talfourd, Gaston de Bloneville, I, 119_a, 121_a.

⁷ Hume, PMLA LXXXIV, 285.

⁸ In the Preface to the Second Edition of The Castle of Otranto, Walpole remarks: "However grave, important, or

the combined aspects of old and new romance forms,⁹ for granted, emphasizing the probable psychological response to uncommon circumstances rather than the probable expression of it. Her own view of terror is an orthodox reflection of Burke's idea that "whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling."¹⁰ "Terror", says Ann Radcliffe, "'expands the soul and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life'".¹¹ Regarding the most "Gothic" aspect of her work, supernatural terror, Ann Radcliffe remains close to Burke, sharing his non-committal

or even melancholy the sensations of princes and heroes may be, they do not stamp the same affections on their domestics: at least the latter do not, or should not be made to, express their passions in the same dignified tone. In my humble opinion, the contrast between the sublime of the one, and the naivete of the other, sets the pathetic of the former in a stronger light": Horace Walpole, The Castle of Otranto (1764) in E.F. Bleiler, ed., Three Gothic Novels (New York:Dover Publications, Inc., 1966), p. 22.

⁹Ibid., 21.

¹⁰ Edmund Burke, A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful, ed. J. T. Boulton, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), p.39.

¹¹Quoted by Hume, PMLA, LXXXIV, 285.

attitude in spite of the enticements of the Ossianic sublime.¹² The "horror-Gothic" writers provide manifestations and other aberrations of physical laws; if they aspire to the sublime, their sublime recalls not Burke so much as Blair, whose passion for Ossian is often in direct proportion to the number of ghosts available.¹³ Ann Radcliffe's sequence involving terror of the supernatural usually close with authorial lectures on the folly of superstition, of which the following is characteristic: "It was lamentable that her excellent understanding should have yielded, even for a moment, to the reveries of superstition, or rather to those starts of imagination which deceive the senses into what can be called nothing less than momentary madness" (*Udolpho*, I, 105). It is evident, then, that the emotion alone is real, rather than the source, and there is no reason to expect that the heroine's superstitious response will be justified. Ann Radcliffe simply provides a climate in which supernatural explanations for unlikely occurrences present themselves, in the spirit of Burke's suggestion

¹² I refer to works published in Ann Radcliffe's lifetime. Only one authentic ghost appears, and in a fictitious context; see *Udolpho*, II, 223-7.

¹³ Samule H. Monk, *The Sublime: a Study of Critical Theories in Eighteenth-Century England* (University of Michigan Press, 1960), p. 127.

that the existence of supernatural powers has not actually made darkness terrible, but that darkness seems an appropriate environment for them.¹⁴

Burke's characteristics of sublimity are easily traced in Ann Radcliffe's general presentation, though she usually applies the ramifications of other writers to particulars. Before going on to examine her supernatural or preternatural terrors in detail, it is useful to consider the place in her effects of the sublime in scenery, since her treatment of it does contribute to the psychological climate inducing unaccountable terror. Both sublime and beautiful scenes provide a continual bombardment of externals, which, when coupled with details of the appropriate response, presumably induce the reader to keep channels open. The interludes of religiosity inspired by natural scenes, of course, also have a part in the scheme under the same principle. Ann Radcliffe is perhaps over-zealous; even at the height of her popularity, her effusions did not please everybody. Hester Piozzi, for instance, frankly admits that the descriptions weary her¹⁵, and Coleridge, justly, finds

¹⁴ Burke, Enquiry, 144.

¹⁵ Hester Piozzi and Penelope Pennington, The Intimate Letters of Hester Piozzi and Penelope Pennington, ed. Oswald G. Knapp (London: John Lane, 1914) p. 116.

far "too much of sameness" in Ann Radcliffe's eternally waving pines and larches and in the relentless play of her moonlight.¹⁶

Malcolm Ware has already acknowledged Ann Radcliffe's debt to Burke and others with reference to her presentation of landscape.¹⁷ One particular aspect of her approach, which has considerable bearing on the "nameless terrors", invites closer inspection, however. In her treatment of scenery she provides scope for a more romantic conception of the sublime which goes beyond Burke's provisions, but she is very cautious in classifying her effects. Such divergences from the essential Burke as do appear may furthermore be traced to respectable sources. In the following passage, for example, the impact of vastness and apparent infinity fundamental in Burke's conception of the sublime¹⁸ is evident, but the response evoked is not conveyed in his terms:

¹⁶ Coleridge, "The Critical Review" (1794), in Coleridge: Select Poetry and Prose, 204.

¹⁷ See Malcolm Ware, "Sublimity in the Novels of Ann Radcliffe", PMLA Philological Studies (Uppsala: Lundequist, 1964).

¹⁸ Burke, Enquiry, 72, 73.

Around, on every side, as far as the eye could penetrate, were seen only forms of grandeur - the long perspective of mountain tops, tinged with ethereal blue, or white with snow; valleys of ice, and forests of gloomy fir. The serenity and clearness of the air in these high regions were particularly delightful to the travellers; It[sic] seemed to inspire them with a finer spirit, and diffused an indescribable complacency over their minds. They had no words to express the sublime emotions they felt. (Udolpho, I, 43).

Whatever these emotions may be, terror does not appear to be among them. The "indescribable complacency" is however, akin to Priestley's "'awful stillness'",¹⁹ which takes no account of fear. Priestley says that emotions may be sublime if they "'relate to great objects, suppose extensive views of things, require great effort of the mind to conceive them, and produce great effects'",²⁰ and all these particulars are apparent in this passage. Although the magnitude of the prospect, infinite "as far as the eye could penetrate", is, as previously suggested, compatible with Burke's general emphasis, most of its features are not. The "ethereal blue" and white of the mountain tops are not, especially in such quantity, productive of the sublime;²¹ the clearness of the air is also prejudicial, since "To make any thing very terrible, obscurity seems in general to be necessary".²² Perhaps the gloomy forests could inspire

¹⁹Quoted by Monk, The Sublime, 119.

²⁰Ibid., 118

²¹Burke, Enquiry, 81.

²²Ibid., 58.

a suitable response of apprehension, but against the whole bright scene they are no more than pleasing touches of contrast. The "strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling" is not, therefore, based on terror. When Ann Radcliffe ventures away from Burke to make specific pronouncements on sublimity, therefore, she will be justified by equally acceptable authority, and her self-imposed limits are obvious, as her treatment of more "romantic" scenes will show. Like Blair, Ann Radcliffe anticipates the "romantic fondness for the wilder aspects of nature",²³ and is partial, as he is, to gloomy fir forests and the thrill of the raging torrent. By Ann Radcliffe's time of writing, the influential Alison had sanctioned these and other motifs, including her cherished Gothic castle,²⁴ as sublime. She remains, nevertheless, conservative in her use of the term. Usually, if she thinks something is sublime, she says so, and with the precedents of Blair and Alison to justify her, her reticence in the following example seems unnecessary:

It was when the heat and light were declining that the carriage entered a rocky defile, which shewed, as though a telescope reversed, distant plains, and mountains opening beyond, lighted up with all the purple splendor of the setting sun. Along this deep and shadowy perspective, a river, which was seen descending among the

²³ Monk, The Sublime, 121.

²⁴ Ibid., 152.

cliffs of a mountain, rolled with impetuous force, fretting and foaming amidst the dark rocks in its descent, and then flowing in a limpid lapse to the brink of other precipices, whence again it fell with thundering strength to the abyss, throwing its misty clouds of spray high into the air, and seeming to claim the sole empire of this solitary wild. Its bed took up the whole breadth of the chasm...the road, therefore, was carried high among the cliffs...and seemed as if suspended in air; while the gloom and vastness of the precipices, which towered above and sunk [sic] below it, together with the amazing force and uproar of the falling waters, combined to render the pass more terrific than the pencil could describe, or language may express (*The Italian*, I, 155).

Inexpressibly terrific though the scene may be, it is not made explicitly "sublime". The heroine, in considerable jeopardy, is not in a position to show Priestleian detachment; she does not escape fear. Nor is her response as total as Burke would demand. She does not fully experience "that state of the soul in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror", ²⁵ feeling only "somewhat of a dreadful pleasure" (I, 156), and almost forgetting her troubles. The scene, however, has all the requirements of obscurity, vastness, manifest power and apparent infinity to produce the sublime effect from the reader's point of view, and is a suitable introduction to the terrors of San Stefano.

Ann Radcliffe is similarly reticent in her description of Emily's journey through the Appenines in Udolpho.

²⁵ Burke, Enquiry, 57.

From an endless range of peaks, Emily inspects the campagna of Italy; the whole prospect, apparently infinite, is confidently described as "sublime" (I, 229). Soon, however, the windings of the road bring ever changing prospects of rugged precipices and gloomy pine forests, and Ann Radcliffe modifies her attitude accordingly: "Wild and romantic as were these scenes, their character had far less of the sublime than had those of the Alps which guard the entrance of Italy. Emily was often elevated, but seldom felt the indescribable awe which she had so continually experienced in her passage over the Alps" (I, 229). Ann Radcliffe's discretion here, however, is to good artistic effect; the lessening of these scenes increases the impact of the sublime Udolpho itself. Ann Radcliffe does not destroy her atmosphere by these qualifications, on the whole, and manages to gratify her romantic partialities without infringing on her selected canons of taste. Inevitably, however, these eternal qualifications do give her descriptions the air of lessons in appreciation; it is not surprising that Catherine Morland of Northanger Abbey should naively take Ann Radcliffe as her arbiter.²⁶ The exquisite taste of the heroines, of course, is conveyed by this fine dis-

²⁶ Jane Austen, Northanger Abbey, ed. R. B. Johnson (London: J. M. Dent, 1950), p. 85.

crimination, and their taste is vital to the success of Ann Radcliffe's effects in terror, since the reader sees through their eyes.

The urge to qualify, a minor fault in this context, magnifies disastrously in the machinery these descriptions are intended to support. Scott is kind to Ann Radcliffe's explanations of supernatural effects, archly indicating that "romance writers owe no blessings to the memory of him who devised explanatory chapters".²⁷ He is, all the same, unable to resist adding that, in the words of Buonaparte, there is but one step between the sublime and the
²⁸ridiculous.

Before Ann Radcliffe ever gets to the point at which she explains all, however, her endless caveats should have indicated, as I have said before, that it would be unreasonable to expect supernatural explanations. These little homilies and some of their concomitant incidents convey the basic assumption of her approach to suspense. Free from superstition herself, and amused by passages of her own considered by William Radcliffe too terrifying for solitary reading,²⁹ Ann Radcliffe has a good appreciation of the

²⁷ Sir Walter Scott, Lives of the Novelists, intro. Austin Dobson (London: Oxford University Press, 1906), p. 316.

²⁸Ibid., 328.

²⁹Talfourd, Gaston de Blondville, I, 8_a.

psychology of superstition in its connection with the theory of association. This theory of course essentially lies behind the aesthetic of the sublime. She makes it clear that superstition is a foolish response to circumstance, but it does help enlarge the imagination to degrees which make it receptive to the sublime. It is, incidentally, an essential source of what unity Ann Radcliffe achieves.

Alison, whose aesthetic application of Hartley's ideas on association appeared just ~~after~~ Ann Radcliffe first published,³⁰ is a possible source of her conception and application of the theory. Like Alison, Ann Radcliffe shows that associative habits are largely predetermined by "Habits of thought, occupations, character";³¹ the predilection of her heroines for melancholy rambles and natural worship shows that they are inclined to link the external world with solemn and refined emotions. Training improves their taste and they are in fact susceptible to anything which may be perceived, including the emotions and personalities of others, a tendency which Ann Radcliffe exploits to the full in Udolpho with Emily's reaction to Montoni.

³⁰ Monk, The Sublime, 148.

³¹ Ibid., 150.

Accepting Alison's distinction between practical and aesthetic perception, Monk explains that in the latter instance

the perception of the object may be followed by a train of closely associated ideas that are somehow analogous to the object--- The imagination has been engaged, and 'trains of pleasing and solemn thought arise spontaneously within our minds'--- we see the values implied, the experiences to which they are allied, their significance - in other words, we see imaginatively.³²

Ann Radcliffe's grasp of the principle is reflected in the following sequence from Udolpho, one which does not suffer in being taken out of context. On her terrace at Udolpho, Emily, soothed by the peaceful night scene, falls into a melancholy reverie³³. The stars remind her of the happy hours spent looking at them with her father; one bright planet especially recalls the eve of his death, and a conversation then held on the futurity of departed souls. An allied experience naturally comes into her mind; she recalls the mysterious music then heard, to which her tender emotion gives a superstitious meaning. Suddenly, she hears more music, and is seized with a "superstitious dread" (I, 335).

³²Ibid., 148.

³³Monk shows that Alison's suggestion of a "powerless state of reverie" as best for the achievement of the aesthetic experience is related to Wordsworth's "wise passiveness" (The Sublime, 149). Ann Radcliffe has other affinities with Wordsworth, as we shall see later.

Emily's sanity must be established so that Ann Radcliffe may convince the reader to accept her interpretation of these circumstances; it is explained that Emily has not been unhinged by her sufferings. Her grief is deep but composed, "not the wild energy of passion, bearing down the barriers of reason and living in a world of its own" (I, 334). At this time, however, her circumstances seem "more like the vision of a distempered imagination than the circumstance of truth"; her psychological state has extended the boundaries of reality, for "human reason cannot establish her laws on subjects lost in the obscurity of imagination, any more than the eye can ascertain the form of objects that only glimmer through the dimness of night" (I, 335). Here there is a hint that imagination is sublime; its power is greater than that of reason, obscurity makes it terrible.

Emily's attempt to assess the value of these experiences gives further proof of the manner in which association works to promote superstition:

it now seemed to her as if her dead father had spoken to her in that strain [the latest music] to inspire her with comfort and confidence... Yet reason told her that this was a wild conjecture, and she was inclined to dismiss it; but, with the inconsistency so natural when imagination guides the thoughts, she then wavered towards a belief as wild. She remembered the singular event connected with the castle, which had given it into the possession of its present owner; and when she considered the mysterious manner in which its late possessor had disappeared, and that she had never since been heard of, her mind was impressed with a high degree of solemn awe; so that, although there appeared no clue

to connect that event with the late music, she had inclined fancifully to think that they had some relation to each other (I, 336).

Ann Radcliffe is not, of course, absolutely denying any supernatural relationships just by saying that Emily is being irrational. Emily is sane, after all; the implication seems to be that if the supernatural exists, it is far beyond reason and knowledge, and reason may well reject the unknown. Thus widely disparate circumstances are related in the reader's mind.

The unity of Ann Radcliffe's work therefore depends only in the most tenuous way on the proper relationships of time, space and circumstance. It is, superficially, most like the "Gothic" unity discussed by Hurd, which results from "the respect which a number of related actions have to one common purpose."³⁴

Ann Radcliffe's actions are only related psychologically, but this does not change the effect, which is to turn the reader's mind into "the glass of a magician, on which the apparitions of long-buried events arise, and, as they fleet away, point portentously to shapes half-hidden in the duskiness of futurity" (The Italian, III, 172).

³⁴ Richard Hurd, Bish., Letters on Chivalry and Romance

(1762), ed. Hoyt Trowbridge (Los Angeles: Augustan Reprint Society, 1963), p. 66.

The problem in Udolpho, the outstanding work, is to reconcile mysteries related to three different locations, then, in one mad rush, to solve them. The improbable distances covered by the heroine, the amazing power of coincidence to bring her to the right place at the right time, the unlikelihood of her encounters with essential personages, could be prejudicial. One hardly notices these features, however, among the heroine's superstition-tinged reflections, and the "sublime" terrors surrounding Udolpho itself. The atmosphere of terror is later carried over to Château-Le-Blanc by association; meanwhile, Ann Radcliffe has at least provided one early link between Emily's home, La Vallée, and Château-Le-Blanc. The two are connected by the reactions of Emily's father and her responses to them. St. Aubert views the Château and the nearby convent with "clouds of grief, mingled with a faint expression of horror, gathering on his brow" (I, 73). A handy peasant hints at the sad and unusual history of the place, and tells of a mysterious music known to herald death. St. Aubert hears it himself, and presently expires, gasping out a few last homilies and exhorting Emily to destroy certain papers at home without giving them a single glance.

Doing this, Emily cannot avoid glimpsing one "sentence of dreadful import" (I, 106); soon she finds the miniature over which she has earlier seen her father weeping, with a

"a look so solemn as she had seldom seen him assume, and which was mingled with a certain wild expression which partook more of horror than any other character" (I, 26). She is already inclined to be superstitious, in her grief fancying she sees her father's spirit in every familiar corner. The result is predictable: "More than once remembering his manner when he had spoken of the Marchioness of Villeroi [the lady of the Château], she felt inclined to believe that this was her resemblance; yet there appeared no reason why he should have preserved a picture of that lady, or... why he should lament over it in a manner so striking and affecting..." (I, 107). The miniature, the papers, and the two houses, are therefore made "somehow analogous"³⁵ in their power to elicit horror and superstitious wonder for no very valid reason. When Emily later discovers a similar portrait at Le Blanc, the reader pounces eagerly on the apparent connection, and Ann Radcliffe has achieved her purpose.

Aside from incidental remarks on scenery, Ann Radcliffe makes no specific reference to the sublime in this sequence. In order to accommodate the third location in her scheme, however, she introduces a character who may be seen as an attempt to render the sublime in terms of personality.

"I know of nothing sublime", says Burke, "which is not some modification of power".³⁶ Montoni's power appears

³⁵ Monk, *The Sublime*, 148.

³⁶ Burke, *Enquiry*, 64.

originally as a psychological dominance, an "air of conscious superiority, animated by spirit and strengthened by talents, to which every person seemed involuntarily to yield"; he soon enthralls Madame Cheron, Emily's foolish guardian, but Emily, susceptible as ever, views Montoni with "admiration, but not the admiration that leads to esteem; for it was mingled with a degree of fear she knew not exactly wherefore" (I, 125). This is a response allied to Burke's "delightful horror" before the sublime.³⁷

Montoni's past is obscure but vaguely terrible (I, 160), as are his plans. His psychology, in its perversity, is even more obscure. As the love of power is his master passion, he revels in the hatred of his enemies as the measure of his ascendancy (I, 186). Unless it suits his evil designs, he shuns society; he avoids plays and music,³⁸ and is not partial to "views of any kind" (I, 175). Montoni's lack of taste makes him capable of infinite wickedness, in terms of Ann Radcliffe's morality, and this implication enhances the terrible impact of his personality. He has, nevertheless, a certain attractiveness, a combination of saturnine good looks, vitality, and forcefulness; it is important that

³⁷ Burke, Enquiry, 136.

³⁸ Montoni is modelled in part on Shakespeare's Cassius; Ann Radcliffe's chapter heading (I, 185) is Julius Caesar, I, ii, 202-9.

he should, because a repulsive object cannot be sublime.³⁹ Obviously enough, he adumbrates the Romantic hero, alienated, perverse, yet attractive, a much more glamorous figure than Walpole's blustering Manfred, who may also be considered a forerunner of the type.

In her awe of Montoni, Emily associates infinite awful possibilities with his castle; Udolpho's distance and inaccessibility, the natural grimness of its surroundings, can only reinforce these associations. Ann Radcliffe has no hesitation in ascribing sublimity to Udolpho, which is the compleat Gothic castle as approved by Alison, with its overgrown courts and shattered towers testifying the ravages of time and war withstood.⁴⁰ More important, Udolpho's description forcibly recalls the impression given by Montoni himself. The description is suitably general, to give Udolpho a terrible obscurity:

Emily gazed with melancholy awe upon the castle... for, though it was now lighted up by the setting sun, the Gothic greatness of its features, and its mouldering walls of dark grey stone, rendered it a gloomy and sublime object...the rays soon faded, and the whole edifice was invested with the solemn duskiness of evening. Silent, lonely, and sublime, it seemed to stand the sovereign of the scene, and to frown defiance on all, who dared to invade its solitary reign. As the twilight deepened, its features became more awful in obscurity...(I, 230).

³⁹ It would inspire horror, which, for Ann Radcliffe, does not expand the mind.

⁴⁰ Monk, The Sublime, 152, note 63.

Udolpho therefore has the same air as Montoni, the attitude manifest in his fierce eye, in its "fire and keenness... Its proud exultation, its bold fierceness and sullen watchfulness" (I, 161). Eino Railo remarks on the peculiar interest of the "school of romantic horrors" in the terrific power inherent in the human eye;⁴¹ Since Ann Radcliffe otherwise emphasizes the benificent role of the eye, this reversal in villains is an apt source of terror. Some psychological resentment of the eye itself as a tyrant may be thus reflected, since Ann Radcliffe's "reason" generally limits the scope of her heroine's perceptions; perhaps this is an attitude to the "despotism of the eye" similar to that of Coleridge.⁴²

At any rate, both Montoni and his castle amply "excite the ideas of pain, and danger" in the same way. Scarcely has Emily entered the castle than terrible images of "long-suffering and murder" (I, 231) spring to her mind by association.

Montoni's disposition of his wife offers both these delights for the reader; the circumstances, however, pale beside the celebrated black veil, which lends itself so

⁴¹ Eino Railo, The Haunted Castle: A Study of the Elements of English Romanticism (New York: Humanities Press, 1964) pp. 175, 263-6.

⁴² Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, 56

⁴³ See Austen, Northanger Abbey, 23-24.

well to the association of ideas that it becomes an important and utterly specious link between Udolpho and Le Blanc.

Ann Radcliffe insists that only vulgar minds have an unreserved love of the marvellous (Romance, I, 125), and, as we have seen, she is concerned to justify the heroine's taste; she therefore provides Emily with an irrational alter ego in the person of Madame Montoni's woman servant, who obliges with a garbled account of a nameless horror behind the black veil: "I have heard that there is something very dreadful belonging to it and that it has been covered up in black ever since - and that nobody has looked at it for a great many years - and it somehow has to do with the owner of the castle before Signor Montoni came to the possession of it... they made me promise never to tell..." (I, 237). These factors are of course remembered; and soon become associated with other circumstances. What Ann Radcliffe gives with one hand, she takes back with the other; while Annette is describing the mysterious apparition which passes through wells, the lamp burns blue, and a sudden knock is construed as supernatural in its origin. The knock is explained, the blue flame is not.

With some terror arising from these aggregate mysteries, Emily seeks out the dreadful veil: "But a terror of this nature, as it occupies and expands the mind, and

elevates it to high expectation, is purely sublime, and leads us, by a kind of fascination, to seek out the object from which we appear to shrink" (I, 252). In Burke's terms, the fascinated mind is "so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor, by consequence, reason on that object which employs it"⁴⁴. It is the terror, rather than the object, which to Ann Radcliffe is sublime.

Emily, at any rate, draws the veil and promptly faints dead away. Her response, therefore, is one of horror, which "contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates" the faculties, and is not, in Ann Radcliffe's view, a high emotion.⁴⁵ Whether or not the object is sublime is immaterial; the same "sublime" terror attends the reader every time a new recess seems about to offer Emily another terrible sight, and is therefore "sought out" by association. Ann Radcliffe builds up her effect by offering a new and promising veil to which Emily responds with the same reluctant fascination: "She wished, yet dreaded, to lift it, and to discover what it veiled; twice she was withheld by a recollection of the terrible spectacle her daring had formerly unveiled..." (II, 18). The wording itself serves to reinforce the association, with two derivatives of "veil".

⁴⁴ Burke, Enquiry, 57.

⁴⁵ See note 10 of this chapter.

This time, Emily is disconcerted to find a ghastly, blood-boltered corpse; if this may be described, the secret of the black veil must be dreadful beyond expression.

Since the secret is originally presented to Emily in relation to Udolpho's former owner, it seems to belong with the mysterious music Emily associates with her and with her own dead father, and, in turn, with the mystery of Château-Le-Blanc. When Emily, by amazing coincidence, turns up at Le Blanc after escaping from Udolpho, congenial effects reinforce the pattern, though these are of a lower order. The music returns and Emily swoons; whether out of grief for her father or of superstition, it is not specified. Later, Emily is compelled to try on the black veil of the dead Countess, with whom the old servant connects the music; this, of course, takes place in the haunted chamber. Naturally the colour and the association with the music link the veil with the mysteries of Udolpho, and the "apparition of a human countenance" (II, 206) wavering over the black coverlet sends Emily shrieking from the room. Ann Radcliffe does not, however, build up any specifically "sublime" anticipation, nor does the ignominious retreat of Emily suggest a sublime expansion of the mind, or even thoroughgoing horror. Ann Radcliffe's dénouement is not far off; she has achieved unity of effect by establishing a pattern of associations which the reader carries on for himself.

The Italian, Udolpho's successor, takes a great deal more for granted; early events take on more obvious significance than in Udolpho because the reader is pushed more vigorously into superstitious assumptions much sooner. Superstitious terror helps to establish the villain before his real acts proclaim him. Vivaldi, a hero for once brought into prominence to experience mysterious terrors, is accosted by a shadowy, cowed figure beneath a gloomy arch; this personage displays a preternatural knowledge of his destination and utters dire warnings. The cowl and the grim aspect incidentally recall the ferocious assassin of the induction, in sanctuary at the Santa del Pianto; the story of Vivaldi and Ellena is presented as a remarkable history associated with this church. Vivaldi returns to the arch, associating the figure with the same hour and place, and is baffled by the "strange facility... surely more than human" with which the figure eludes him. Ann Radcliffe supplies another broad hint in the words of Vivaldi's companion: "...I could be superstitious. This place, perhaps, infects my mind with congenial gloom, for I find that, at this moment, there is scarcely a superstition too dark for my credulity'" (The Italian, I, 38).

It is Ann Radcliffe's business to spread this "congenial gloom" over the mind of the reader by reference to the dark possibilities beyond the outward forms of Catholic institutions.

In Vivaldi's mind, monkish garb and ferocity are linked with Father Schedoni; if Schedoni is not the mysterious visitant, he probably gives him his orders (I, 111-115). Schedoni seems to verify these superstition-tinged associations by plotting to destroy Ellena and punish Vivaldi's impetuous challenges. Essentially, all that happens is that Schedoni lays plots which Vivaldi tries to confound; in contrast to Montoni, Schedoni lets his motives show clearly from the early chapters. Suspense in this book depends more on obscure menaces and hairsbreadth escapes from unspeakable fates; there is no equivalent to the black veil, and Ann Radcliffe allows the reader less freedom to make his own imaginative connections between circumstances.

The old emphasis on the power of externals to evoke terrific ideas, however, gives Schedoni and the institutions he exploits considerable power over the imagination. The Confessor is a vastly exaggerated Montoni whose powers seem not entirely human. He is first presented in Burkean chiaroscuro, his cowl shading the livid and awful pallor of a countenance ravaged by unseemly passions. His movements seem to defy the laws of matter, and his rages exhibit the "wild energy of something - not of this earth" (I, 283). Schedoni's glance may be called sublime, as it promotes the utmost psychological terror, seeming "to penetrate, at a

single glance, into the hearts of men, and to read their most secret thoughts; few people could support [this] scrutiny, or endure to meet it twice" (I, 82). Later, this glance serves to keep alive the terrific illusion lamented by Scott, for example, when rational explanation has dispelled most terrors. Schedoni fixes his treacherous accomplice with a basilisk stare and declares he must die:

that monk [the traitor] seemed as if transfixed to the spot, and unable to withdraw his eyes from the glare of Schedoni's; in their expression he read the dreadful sentence of his fate, the triumph of revenge and cunning. Struck with this terrible conviction, and a pallid hue overspread his face...an involuntary motion convulsed his features, cold trembling seized his frame, and, uttering a deep groan, he fell back...Schedoni uttered a sound so strange and horrible, so convulsed, a and so loud, so exulting, and yet so unlike any human voice, that every person in the chamber, except those who were assisting [the victim], struck with irresistible terror, endeavoured to make their way out of it (III, 407).

The ready but vague explanation of poison is not entirely convincing, as this all takes place in conditions of the utmost security. It is much more satisfactory to believe that the victim dies of terror, and Ann Radcliffe does not insist too strongly on the alternative.

There are two other effects worth mentioning. Ellena, saved from an unspeakable fate at San Stefano, discovers herself in the very spot set aside for unspeakable fates. This place, associated with the "king of terrors",⁴⁶ its dark-

⁴⁶ Burke, Enquiry, 40.

ness and remoteness, has a profound effect on her imagination: "'O what sufferings have these walls witnessed! what are they yet to witness!" (II, 40). Vivaldi experiences similar emotion, much magnified, in the halls of the Inquisition. He recoils from the cruel smirks of his captors, imaginatively linking supreme power to inflict pain and death with the power to strike death with the eyes; this association of course paves the way for Schedoni's apparently death-dealing stare. Great astonishment at the "new view of human nature" he discovers, however, turns to great moral energy: "sublime" emotion promotes specific moral advantage (II, 192), and Vivaldi's response is correspondingly greater than Elena's in similar situation; he gathers up all his strength to defend the right.

Like the other works published in her lifetime, however, The Italian breaks down into "petty deceptions and gross improbabilities...which disappoint the imagination and shock the understanding".⁴⁷ At least Montoni is deprived of his power over the imagination out of sight; Schedoni, however, changes from fiendish homicide to tearful parent in a moment, and does not really recover his old aspect until the last scenes. Disappointments like this multiply when Ann Radcliffe explains all; the effects so laboriously achieved are destroyed. Edith Birkhead says that she half-

⁴⁷ Talfourd, Gaston de Blondeville, I, 116_a.

expected the ghost tale of Sir Bevys in Udolpho to be explained, though its function is, of course, purely atmospheric and it has no real bearing on events.⁴⁸ Even Scott, usually generous, admits that no re-reading of Ann Radcliffe's novels can ever recall the original effect.⁴⁹ Coleridge points out that no adequate gratification is in fact possible for the enormous curiosity she raises.⁵⁰ Though Talfourd, unlike Coleridge has faith in Ann Radcliffe's capacity to create suitable great wonders and puts her reticence down to fear of infringing some (conjectural) canon of romance⁵¹, Coleridge is closer to the truth, as a glance at Gaston de Blondville will show. Ann Radcliffe did not intend to publish this book,⁵² thus had no need to fear criticism, but the induction makes it clear that only conceptual ghosts have imaginative value. The ghost of Elizabeth I is awful as a suggestion, but as an apparition complete with ruff and farthingale, it would be an absurdity (I, 30). With Willoughton, the young antiquary, Ann Radcliffe does not express herself in terms of her old opposition of

⁴⁸ Edith Birkhead, The Tale of Terror: a Study of The Gothic Romance (New York: Dutton, 1920) p. 51.

⁴⁹ Scott, Lives, 329-30.

⁵⁰ Coleridge, Selected Poetry and Prose, 204.

⁵¹ Talfourd, Gaston de Blondville, I, 115_a.

⁵² Ibid., 90_a.

reason and superstition, reflecting instead a nostalgia for the pleasures of fancy, which inevitably dissipate before the "plain reality of the work-a-day world" (I,6), the world to which as we have seen, Ann Radcliffe always returns.

Eagerly seeking to recreate his own fancied version of Shakespeare's Warwick, his own Arden, Willoughton is crestfallen when the original spot turns out to be far less evocative than the theatre, where "by the paltry light of stage-lamps...surrounded by a noisy multitude, whose catcalls often piped instead of the black-bird" (I, 6), he has so often enjoyed his visions.

Gaston is presented merely as one of those "picturesque visions" (I, 47) of old times one might enjoy in reading an allegedly ancient manuscript. Its ghosts therefore seem artfully crude, such as Ann Radcliffe fancies a mediaeval mind might conceive. All the same, perhaps the ghost of a mediaeval cortier might be expected to utter something more interesting than a snatch from "Fair Margaret and Sweet William" (III, 21). Obviously both the inclination and the ability to create wonders are tempered. Ann Radcliffe's young antiquary has a romantic desire to believe the "Trew Chronique" of Gaston, but is easily drawn away to witness dawn and the "silent course of order and benevolence" (III,54) reflected in the scene; the effect recalls Burke's

projection of a theatre emptied, if the expression will be excused, by a real-life drama.⁵³ Willoughton turns from the pleasures of fancy and the "Trew Chronique"'s ancient and spurious conception of divine vengeance to seek the "real" benevolent Deity in "nature".

Ann Radcliffe therefore turns back to reality and retains her old attitude to imagination. As she never tires of explaining, imagination can put experience in a salutary light and expand the mind, but it can also endanger the reason by calling the bounds of reality into question, with implicit danger to the morals. Her usual explanations prove merely that data have been recombined by association; she disavows the ultimate power of the imagination to create by disavowing her own effects. Her own "imagination", in other words, is none other than Coleridge's "fancy", which, in its dependence upon association, is limited: "The fancy is indeed no other than a mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space; while it is blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word Choice. But equally with the ordinary memory the Fancy must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association".⁵⁴

Whatever name be given to this faculty. Ann Radcliffe

⁵³ Burke, Enquiry, 47.

⁵⁴ Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, 160.

also emphasizes its mutability as well as its unreliability (and remarkably early) in Udolpho. St. Aubert, gratified by the exercise of benevolence, recalls the old power of his fancy to evoke "'a thousand fairy visions and romantic images'" (I, 15) from the twilight woods he stands in, adding that he is "'not yet wholly insensible of that high enthusiasm which wakes the poet's dream'". F. L. Beaty has noted the congeniality of these sentiments with the mood of certain passages in Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey.⁵⁵ St. Aubert does suggest a mind "informed" by Nature, his benevolence unshaken by experience, his capacity to be "renovated" (Udolpho, I, 36) by natural scenes still considerable, though he is beyond the "dizzy raptures" (Tintern Abbey, I. 85)⁵⁶ of youth. Later in Udolpho, de Villefort, the St. Aubert - surrogate, laments that the old scenes are the same, but time has changed him, and "'the illusion, which gave spirit to the colouring of nature, is fading fast!'" (II, 145). His decline seems more advanced, since he takes over in the book where St. Aubert leaves off. De Villefort's illusion, "fading fast", of course recalls the fleeting of the

⁵⁵

F. L. Beaty, "Mrs Radcliffe's Fading Gleam". Philological Quarterly [hereafter PQ], XLII, (October 1963), 126.

⁵⁶

William Wordsworth Lines Composed a few Miles Above Tintern Abbey (1795), in Thomas Hutchinson, ed., The Poetical Works of Wordsworth (London: Oxford University Press, 1965) p. 163.

"visionary gleam" regretted in the Intimations Ode (I, 56)⁵⁷ Beaty finds the idea of Ann Radcliffe as a likely source for Wordsworth very attractive, calling the "fading gleam" her "one real idea" of value to later writers.⁵⁸ It is not certain that the connection is as direct as Beaty would like, however. Ann Radcliffe and Wordsworth are among many who at this period take an interest in the value given by the mind to externals; both recognize that these values shift, and coincidence is just as likely to explain the connection.

Ann Radcliffe's sense of the mutability of the visionary capacity is, therefore, one more reason for her hesitation to sweep aside normal bounds of reality. It is significant, however, that the artistic application of her limited thinking should be relegated by her unkindest critics to the nursery⁵⁹; perhaps the judgement is not so damning after all. Wordsworth himself acknowledges, in Book V of The Prelude, that fictitious wonders have value for the young mind, and his words are worth quoting:

...Our childhood sits
Our simple childhood, sits upon a throne
That hath more power than all the elements.

⁵⁷ Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood, Ibid., 460.

⁵⁸ Beaty, PQ, XLII, 129.

⁵⁹ Scott, Lives, 322 (Scott refers to others, not himself).

I guess not what this tells of Being past
 Nor what it augurs of the life to come;
 But so it is, and, in that dubious hour,
 That twilight when we first begin to see
 This dawning earth, to recognize, expect
 And in the long probation that ensues,
 The time of trial, ere we learn to live
 In reconciliation with our stinted powers

.
 . . . - oh! then we feel, we feel

We know where we have friends, Ye dreamers, then,
 Forgers of lawless tales. we bless you then,
 Imposters, drivellers, dotards, as the ape
 Philosophy will call you: then we feel
 With what and how great might ye are in

league... (507-16, 522-27).⁶⁰

Perhaps Ann Radcliffe has this place in relation to
 Romanticism.

⁶⁰ Wordsworth, Ibid., 527.

CHAPTER IV

THE "ELEGANCE OF SOUL REFINED"

Sensibility, as the ever-watchful St. Aubert remarks, is, though a grace, "'a dangerous quality, which is continually extracting the excess of misery or delight from every surrounding circumstance'" (Udolpho, I, 82). Since, the better to show the beauty of the virtuous mind, Ann Radcliffe's heroines must possess all mental graces, she compromises to put sensibility in the best light. The capacity for melancholy, in Eighteenth-Century terms, is a rare mark of refined sensibility and a source of lofty pleasure. As Thomas Warton the Younger puts it:

Few know that elegance of soul refined
Whose soft sensation feels a quicker joy
From Melancholy's scenes, than the dull pride
Of tasteless splendour and magnificence
Can e'er afford.¹

Since this capacity extracts neither utter misery nor hectic joy from circumstance, it is an ideal expression for the sensibility of the heroine, and; as evocative objects are needed, it increases the scope of Ann Radcliffe's descriptive talents.

¹Thomas Warton the Younger, "The Pleasures of Melancholy" [1747.] in L.I. Bredvold, A.D. McKillop, and L. Whitney, eds., Eighteenth Century Poetry and Prose. Second edition (New York: Ronald, 1956), p. 566, II. 93-97.

Ann Radcliffe's own pursuits of melancholy furthermore provide insight into her attitudes to such concerns as time, people, politics and love; the cult of melancholy forces her to acknowledge ideas about change which strongly affect her view of the existing order. Her own "elegance of soul refined", the general sensibility expressed in her interest in melancholy, seeks emotionally satisfying answers to the questions raised by experience of life. Her general ideas are consequently restricted; though not impractical, they are hardly progressive. As we have already seen, her outlook is limited.

There are one or two points to be considered before her ideas about melancholy and refinement are discussed in relation to Ann Radcliffe herself and her characters. As usual, she swims with the stream; she is particularly fond of the poets of melancholy, who often provide her evocative chapter headings² and inspire reverent private notations,³

² E.g. Romance, II, 205, Udolpho, 159, 262, 310 (Gray), Romance, I, 190, II, 1, 66, 109, 234, Udolpho, I, 84, 225, Italian, III, 273 (Collins), and Udolpho, II, 21, 26, 58, 301, 342, Italian, II, 312, (Milton).

³ E.g. Journey, I, 242 (Collins), and II, 39 (Gray). An eulogy for Gray appears among her occasional poems (Gaston de Blondville, IV, 53).

and her heroines often reflect the attributes of their personified versions of "Melancholy". Gray, a particular favourite, shows Melancholy and wisdom together, attending the suppliant of Virtue's "stern nurse" Adversity.⁴ Certainly, Ann Radcliffe's heroines have more than their share of adversity. Collins' Melancholy is aloof from the crowd⁵ like a Radcliffe heroine among her favourite scenes. Milton's nun-like figure, "devout and pure/Sober, steadfast and demure"⁶ has the virtues of an Adeline or an Emily. It is not surprising, in view of Ann Radcliffe's generally eclectic approach to theory, that an elegant and improving cast of mind endorsed by poets should typify those paragons, the heroines.

The cult of melancholy has much, furthermore, to do with terror, since its end, lofty reflection on "the inconstancy of all sublunary things"⁷, involves taking account of the idea of death, or the "king of terrors", as Burke calls it. Objects testifying mutability are sought, hence the extravagances of the "Graveyard School" of poetry, so called because it prominently features corpses, graves,

⁴Thomas Gray, "Hymn to Adversity" (1753), in Austin Lane Poole, ed., The Poetical Works of Gray and Collins (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), p.40, II. 27-29.

⁵William Collins, "The Passions: An Ode for Music (1746), Ibid., 284, II. 57-61.

⁶John Milton, Il Penseroso, in H.C. Beeching, ed., The English Poems of John Milton (London, Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 25, II. 31-32.

⁷Monk, The Sublime, 88.

skeletons, ruined chapels, and so on. Ann Radcliffe is more restrained; her occasional yawning graves and gory corpses are tempered with milder scenes, and she does not dwell on the nastiness of corruption except under false pretences.⁸ Contemplation of the skull and bones, unless accidental, is relegated to Popish superstition (Udolpho, II, 247). Her paraphernalia of terror accords well, nevertheless, with the unwholesome aspects of the cult of melancholy; her emphasis on mouldering castles, ruined abbeys, lonely forest tombs, the occasional poison-blackened countenance or skeleton, is, in fact, morbid, as well as artistically successful. Her other terrors provide plenty of "horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy,"⁹ like those banished by Milton as attendants of "loathed Melancholy". These nebulous but terrific objects do not reappear in the train of his "divinest Melancholy" in Il Penseroso, but they do accompany Ann Radcliffe's many-faced spirit. Even the "sublime" terror of the black veil is only a horrid memento mori.

Her characters do not, however, have a morbid relish for such objects, whose function is to enhance terror originating elsewhere. These figures can extract "that soft and pleasing melancholy so dear to the feeling mind" (Romance, I, 94), from objects which do not assail eyes and

⁸There is none with reference to real bodies.

⁹John Milton, L'Allegro, English Poems, 20, (1 - 4).

mind with obvious decay; the indulgence is sometimes purely aesthetic, as when Emily roams the woods near La Vallée "wrapt in a melancholy charm" (Udolpho, I. 6) which has nothing to do with sorrow. The purpose of these exercises is to display their "elegance of soul refined" to the reader.

Often, in fact, "melancholy" is interchangeable with "nostalgia". and demonstrates the value Ann Radcliffe puts on past time without suggesting the ultimate future terror. Udolpho, as usual, contains her fullest expression of the idea, first providing, very early on, a lesson in the "elegance of soul refined" through reference to external objects. St. Aubert, the man of taste, is offended by his vulgar relative Quesnel's plan to cut down a fine old oak and replace it with the incongruous poplar his wife associates with splendid Italian villas. The tree has centuries of growth, and is further hallowed by its association with St. Aubert's boyhood reveries (I, 13). St. Aubert, however, is unable to impress Quesnel with such considerations. The refined soul, therefore, cherishes objects which testify his relation to time and to the way it has passed over him, while the mean one does not; Quesnel's subsequently manifested indifference to the happiness of his niece is not surprising.

After St. Aubert's death, Emily takes a "melancholy pleasure" (I, 99) in repeating lines he has once recited at the same hour and place; it is therefore possible to recall

happiness of times past while acknowledging present reality, On other occasions, melancholy is revived by objects not necessarily associated directly with its main source; as with terror, the associative process is very flexible. Ann Radcliffe explains, for example, that a moonlit landscape awakens nostalgia because the light has the mellowing effect on the scene that time has on past events. It takes the exquisite mind of a Radcliffe heroine to make this connection, but Emily responds nobly with combined pleasure and grief over her old life (II, 86-87).

Such figures do not need graveyards to teach them about mutability. Even objects which do not please the taste can work on the mind by contrast to promote what Ossian calls "the joy of grief".¹⁰ Thus Emily mournfully compares her aunt's formal gardens with the easy charms of La Vallée's estate, thinking of these old scenes with "inexpressible pleasure" (I, 123), despite her present regret. Here, Warton's "tasteless splendour" itself induces the mental quest for "Melancholy's scenes", and the same moral emphasis is obvious. Madame Cheron is as soulless as her square parterres and artificial fountains, while Emily is a "soul refined".

¹⁰ Ossian, Carric-Thura, a Poem, in William Sharp, notes and intro., James Macpherson, trans., The Poems of Ossian (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1926), p. 154.

Almost any scene can induce this elegant mood.

Udolpho's romantic surroundings, emptied in late afternoon of their remote groups of toiling peasants, encourage "that melancholy tranquillity such as [Emily] often loved to indulge" (I, 291). In The Italian, the presence of the setting sun, a mutability symbol, provides for "tender melancholy" (I, 242) rather than "sublime" emotion, before a grand mountain prospect. Sounds, furthermore, may affect the mind as scenes do; this is not an original idea, appearing for instance in Ossian's Death of Cuthullin: "The music was like the memory of joys that are past, pleasant and mournful to the soul."¹¹ Ann Radcliffe attempts to reconcile different aspects of emotional and aesthetic experience in more complex associative terms. Emily, catching the enthusiasm of an Italian singer, immediately thinks of Valencourt and La Vallée, but not in misery.

She then remained sunk in that pensive tranquillity which soft music leaves on the mind - a state like that produced by the view of a beautiful landscape by moonlight, or by the recollection of scenes marked with the tenderness of friends lost for ever, and with sorrows which time has mellowed into mild regret. Such scenes are, indeed, to the mind, like those faint traces which the memory bears of music that is past (I, 181).

Ann Radcliffe therefore maintains her interest in the effects of externals and their complex relationships, and

¹¹Ibid., 110.

the heroines remain as exquisitely attuned as ever. After Ossian, she could hardly lose with an emphasis on melancholy sensibility; she still, nevertheless, asserts the moral value of detached melancholy (such as the reader might be expected to enjoy through her endless descriptions), as if uncertain: "'These scenes,' said Valencourt, at length, 'soften the heart like the notes of sweet music, and inspire that delicious melancholy which no person, who had felt it once, would resign for the gayest pleasures. They waken our best and purest feelings; disposing us to benevolence, pity, and friendship. Those whom I love, I always seem to love more in such an hour as this.'" (Udolpho, I, 46). This attitude is in keeping with the general emphasis of her morality on the value of benevolence; though Valencourt regrettably deviates from goodness later on, his essential elegance of soul makes him redeemable, and his present contempt for frivolity and folly is in the spirit of Warton's lines.

By making the idea of melancholy attractive, and susceptibility to it the mark of fineness of soul, Ann Radcliffe is perhaps glossing over the essential unpleasantness of the idea of change, generally making its representative objects the sources of gratifying feelings. All the evidence points to her choice of the quasi-historical framework, for instance as an escapism of mere sentiment. She shows no thorough-

going dissatisfaction with the present structure, though she resents authority if it restricts moral and spiritual freedom. The Mysteries of Udolpho, for example, extolls worth and sincerity over artificial values, but acceptable order prevails. Emily is not given the opportunity to choose a poverty-stricken lover, or one out of her class. Valencourt is not rich, but he is a gentleman, with a gentleman's last resort, an army commission, to maintain him in his allotted place. In the convention of romance, Ann Radcliffe looks up rather than down; Vivaldi, of The Italian, is of high rank, and Ellena is not happy until her own is proved compatible, though the similar anxiety of Vivaldi's parents is condemned. History does not suggest any particular reason for Ann Radcliffe's scruples, at least, in her own time; it was not absolutely unknown for noblemen to marry the rankest of commoners. Her insistence on compatibility of standing suggests, simply, pleasure in the harmony of a traditional balance, in keeping with the spiritual harmony of true love she so vigorously promotes, and of which more will be said later.

Any context would have served for a simple attack on vanity, as opposed to dignified old forms, however; her choice of milieu probably reflects the assumption which came along with the "original genius" theory. The "original genius", who is distinguished by intense emotion and the

power to evoke it in others, develops his strong "innate poetical faculty" through nature and not through art.¹² It may hence be assumed that "original genius" is compatible with simplicity of environment, since the genius needs no artificial reference points. If he belongs to a past age, his spontaneity will appear to be intensified, for the past is simpler than the present. Ann Radcliffe's fashionable partiality for Ossian,¹³ for instance, not to mention Shakespeare,¹⁴ testifies the wide appeal of the whole idea. By removing her scenes to the past, she provides for the pure, strong, and penetrating emotions of her virtuous figures. The superimposed contemporary taste is not, from this point of view, entirely incongruous; the heroines are pruned and trained a little, but the norm is "nature", and they are not emotionally espaliered by a polite education.

¹² W. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (New York: Norton, 1958), p. 83.

¹³ See Udolpho, II, 56, and Romance, I, 18 for "mood" uses of Ossian, and the Journey, II, 217, on the "simple greatness" and "melancholy inspiration" he could gather at Shapfell.

¹⁴ It is safe to say that half her headings are Shakesperean.

In turning to the past for freedom, Ann Radcliffe must, paradoxically, adopt its basic forms of social relations. She avoids accepting authority on higher matters within this context; however, by secluding or liberating her figures from unsuitable influences. She does, of course, devote much space to the imperfect courses human nature may take, whether she shows the good mind weakened by emotion or the unsound one tormented by passion and its consequences; she would not, therefore, deny that man needs points of reference outside himself. Obviously the "old fashioned" times, feelings and tastes approved by St. Aubert (Udolpho, I, 13) exist within a simple and time-honoured structure, the lesser of two evils because it is removed from modern complexity and artifice. She does not pretend to true primitivism; even the emotions described are not really primitive, as they have constant reference to contemporary aesthetic. Her escapism is sentimental, and the idea of the past is as a suitable field for the "elegance of soul refined", evoking refined and moralistic melancholy as the twilight valley evokes it for Valancourt.

In the novels, the mind that thinks of progress in worldly terms is implicitly misguided or corrupt; it is shown without the capacity to relate itself to the idea of past time. Quesnel sees the old tree as present nuisance, a not historic object paralleling some of his own years in its

growth. Montoni, the man without taste, never gives the past a thought unless questioned by his henchmen, though Udolpho itself reflects his own history and the history of centuries. He is obsessed with impinging himself on present and future circumstance; without some object of strong interest, life seems "little more than a sleep" (I, 185). The only progressiveness Ann Radcliffe unreservedly countenances is moral, and this, as will be shown later, is to take care of certain practical problems, such as the plight of large sections of humanity, without change in social or political structures existing at present.

Ann Radcliffe's own "pursuits of melancholy", the writings never published in her lifetime, have largely been ignored to date. They are, however, illuminating; they demonstrate a fascination with the idea of absolute change which helps to explain her reserved approach to relative change. Their aesthetic, furthermore, contains principles which colour her attitude to those who share her fictitious and real worlds with the "refined soul": the lower orders.

Gaston de Blondville and St. Albans Abbey revolve around what might be called the picturesque encounter: sensibility contemplates Time through its monuments. Gaston de Blondville has little to recommend it as a novel, with an unlikely plot, prosy dialogue, and cardboard characters. Edith Birkhead finds its aspect closest to

pageant;¹⁵ it is true that Ann Radcliffe devotes more space to the succession of figures and tableaux than to real action. The treatment conjures up the mediaeval frieze, in which bright figures are strung out in a line and curiously out of drawing: her elaborate physical descriptions give colour and dimension, but no depth is added by the characterization. The format of the novel, however, reflects the "picturesque" approach on a broad scale, and these details have their place, though they are not as interesting as the essential idea: "[The picturesque] seeks a tension between the disorderly or irrelevant and the perfected form. Its favourite scenes are those in which form emerges only with study, or is at the point of dissolution. It turns to the sketch which precedes formal perfection, and the ruin which succeeds it."¹⁶ The book presents three views of Kenilworth. The first is something of a "sketch"; it is the amateur antiquary's idea of what must have been. As Willoughton approaches, his view partly blocked by trees, his idea of Kenilworth is coloured more by the knowledge that it was once a royal pleasure and prison, than with the idea that it is now largely a heap of ruins (I, 9). He is greatly affected by his second view,

¹⁵ Birkhead, The Tale of Terror, 57.

¹⁶ Martin Price, "The Picturesque Moment", in From Sensibility to Romanticism, ed. Frederick W. Hilles and Harold Bloom (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 277.

the prospect of the modern ruin. In the "Trewe Chronique" of Gaston de Blondewille, perfection is revived; Kenilworth is seen entire in the glory of Henry III's day.

Willoughton, of course, is a man of sensibility, who knows a "gentle and luxurious melancholy" (I, 11) before this venerable pile. As a belle-^am^e, he is subject to the incomprehension of others, as is St. Aubert with his oak-tree; he must endure the good-natured raillery of his friend, whose own brain has "'never hatched any of those 'high and unimaginable fantasies', as your poet Gray calls them'" (I, 59). Simpson has already been dragged around Stonehenge at midnight on one of Willoughton's quests for high fantasies, without experiencing any movement of the soul except astonishment at his own presence there. Though Simpson is not incurious about the past, his curiosity only runs to ignoble speculations about the vast amounts of food carried in for Henry III. Willoughton, on the other hand, gazing at the same object, is rapt in the "picturesque moment"¹⁷, a purely aesthetic response: "'How beautifully the ivy falls over those light Gothic window-mullions, so elegantly and appropriately sculptured with vine-leaves! The sun now slopes its rays through the arch as if purposely to show the beauty of its proportion and the grace of the vine that entwines it'" (I, 16). The aesthetic of the

¹⁷ Ibid.,

picturesque tends to bring into the fold all those orphan stimuli which are left out of the sublime and often the beautiful, but still have power to please; Willoughton's response is to texture, pleasing intricacy, and the "artistry of time and accident", ¹⁸ the form in dissolution.

Most important, however, the total view inspires thoughts of the individual's relationship to absolute change. Willoughton may be seen as a persona; his moral view of Kenilworth corresponds almost exactly with Ann Radcliffe's notation on her own visit in the autumn of 1802:

This view of the ruin was very striking; the three chief masses great and solemn, without being beautiful. They spoke at once to the imagination, with the force and simplicity of truth, of the brevity and nothingness of this life - 'generations have beheld us and passed away, as you now behold us and shall pass away; they thought of the generations before them, as you now think of them, and as future ages shall think of you. We have witnessed this, yet we remain; the voices that revelled beneath us are heard no more, yet the winds of Heaven still sound in our ivy.' And a still and solemn sound it was as we stood looking up at these walls.¹⁹

As for Willoughton:

The melancholy scene around him spoke with the simplicity of truth, the brevity and nothingness of this life. Those walls seemed to say Generations have beheld us and passed away, as you now behold us, and shall pass away. They have thought of the generations before their time as you now think of them, and as future ones shall think of you. The voices that revelled beneath us, the pomp of power, the magnificence of wealth, the grace of beauty, the joy of hope, the interests of high passion and of low pursuits have passed from this scene for

¹⁸ Ibid...

¹⁹ Given in "Memoir", I, 58_a.

ever; yet we remain, the spectres of departed years, and shall remain, feeble as we are, when you who now gaze upon us, shall have ceased to be in this world (I, 2).

These passages bear out the idea that the picturesque scene "promotes a certain intensity of awareness, and that intensity is finally given new grounds that are primarily moral".²⁰ In comparison, the decorative melancholy of the heroines in the major novels is a much fainter acknowledgment of the idea of mutability as it applies to themselves. Ann Radcliffe often provides them with monumental objects, but "sublime" emotion is their usual reaction, as with Adeline's "pleasing dread" (Romance, I, 22) before the Abbey, or Emily's "melancholy awe" at Udolpho (I, 230). As we have seen, this emotion is exclusive; if it happens not to be so, it is generally because immediate problems are pressing. Vivaldi, for instance, is capable of a brief "sacred enthusiasm" (Italian, II, 184) at the sight of the Roman ruins which lie near the Inquisition, but loses it in anxiety. La Motte, it is true, appears to read the story of his own decay in the Abbey's ruins (Romance, I, 20), but he is, after all, experienced and dejected; perhaps Willoughton has an old head on young shoulders.

For the innocent media of vicarious experience in the published novels, the emphasis is not, therefore, on the conviction of their mortal fate. These novels therefore

²⁰ Price, Ibid.

allow the authoress and her readers to escape reality; pleasing sorrow is a means of holding time for a while when there are few implications of what is to come. At a time in which interest in the world of objects leads to the conviction that only change and dissolution are constant, escape is necessary. Ann Radcliffe's novels represent a literary Strawberry Hillism, satisfying the need to hold on. When views of the world change, of course, the style of escape becomes, like the architectural one, demodé.

Ann Radcliffe's own "picturesque" enquiry for the cultivation of refined melancholy comes to a somewhat unwholesome conclusion with St. Albans Abbey. Fortunately for her reputation, this work never came out in her lifetime; interminable length, indifferent verse, catalogues of architectural and decorative detail, and an unbearably morbid emphasis on corpses make the reading a trial.

As might be expected, however, the first canto banishes the profane from the sanctuary, while the elegant soul is cordially received. Originally, the poem is pleasantly enough filled out with those "picturesque visions" of ancient times so pleasing to the true antiquary's fancy (Gaston, I, 47). After painful researches²¹, Ann Radcliffe succeeds in

²¹There are twenty-seven pages of very detailed notes.

recreating the lives of the Abbey and its people, maintaining a pleasing tension between perfected form and present dissolution. She insists, however, on a dreary tour of the Abbey as emergency mortuary after the famous Battle of 1455, as if the Abbey were not sufficiently storied with deaths to satisfy the most elegant inclination to melancholy; she makes the dead warriors on the field itself poignant enough objects amid the exuberant life of nature. The reader must, however, accompany the anxious Florence as she peers into countless ghastly faces looking for her husband, and confront the horrid figure of the Charnel-Monk, who looks and seems to reign like Death himself.²²

This morbid exercise is the ultimate in pursuits of melancholy; Ann Radcliffe could find no better way to teach the individual about mutability. Her fascination suggests the old empirical expectation of answers through externals, but only one idea is offered by these objects. Ann Radcliffe privately falls back on the consolations of religion for the final answer. An impressive sunset landscape in the Kentish Downs inspires the following hope:

The God of order and of all this, and of far greater grandeur, the Creator of that glorious sun, which never fails in its course, will not neglect us, these

²² St. Albans Abbey, Canto V, part xiii, II, 9-25, Gaston, IV, 327. Perhaps this is an attempt to personify a "sublime" idea: Burke's "King of terrors".

intelligent, though frail creatures, nor suffer us to perish, who have the consciousness of our mortal fate long before it arrives, and of HIM. He who called us first from nothing, ~~can~~ call us again from death into life.²³

By applying "picturesque" theory to literature in these last works, however, Ann Radcliffe continues to disguise the awfulness of mutability in aesthetically and emotionally satisfying covers, still cherishing the "elegance of soul refined" which, through the virtuous figures in her major novels provides, through pleasing melancholy, a means of holding time for a while.

In the major novels, written before her "soul refined" took this extreme turn, the emphasis is on resignation; she casts her figures into becoming attitudes which make the idea of resignation pleasing. If the heroine is not tastefully posed at her window over unread volumes of poetry, she is likely to be found gracefully bent over a silent lute and bedewing it with gentle tears; these poses correspond pictorially to equally decorative moral attitudes. Ann Radcliffe arranges for these figures to be completely at the mercy of circumstance; Ellena, for instance, is trapped in a mountain fastness among hostile companions through the enmity of a powerful house, and her captor has the power of

life and death. Rather than look for practicable alternatives, Ellena resigns herself gracefully to a life of passive resistance in perpetual imprisonment. The situation is necessary to Ann Radcliffe's art, of course, because the heroine must be thrust into circumstances promoting terror, but the motif becomes wearing with repetition. The attitudes exist in her fictitious framework for the sake of rescue, but in real life, rescuers are scarce and a certain amount depends on individual action. Ann Radcliffe perhaps projects her own image onto these unfortunate heroines. A member of the middle class, whose leitmotif is action, she is doomed to the passive role of the female. Even socially, she is evidently prevented by natural diffidence from impinging herself on the transactions with any degree of confidence. Scott, an old friend, remarks that she was capable of holding her own in any intelligent conversation, but could not bring herself to venture into direct encounters when not among close friends.²⁴ As the heroines often reflect Ann Radcliffe's physical appearance²⁵, they also recall aspects of her personality. Emily, for instance, has "a mind that fears to trust its own powers; which, possessing a nice judgement, and inclining to believe that every other person

²⁴ Scott, Lives, 303.

²⁵ Cp. Scott's description of Ann Radcliffe (Ibid.) with that of Adeline (Romance, I, 36) and Emily (Udolpho, I, 5).

perceives still more critically, fears to commit itself to censure, and seeks shelter in the obscurity of silence. Emily had frequently blushed at the fearless manner which she had seen admired..." (I, 121); she is comforted by the knowledge that she at least does not make a fool of herself by pushing forward with "brilliant nothings". "There is a soupçon of sour grapes about this passage, but it is a plea for the refined emotion of decorous fear to be understood; this conscious sensibility is perhaps another source of self-limitation, and can be related to Ann Radcliffe's artistic timidity.

Similar refinement and reserve characterizes Ann Radcliffe's treatment of death, when it comes for the virtuous.²⁶ This awful change usually evokes little more than a melancholy farewell to pleasing objects, some moral advice, and occasionally the expression of a solemn hope of futurity, but not panic, unless the victim is too late to reveal some vital secret. The emphasis on the hope rather than the conviction of a future state is typical of Ann Radcliffe's caution with ideas which cannot actually be demonstrated in "nature". The emotions of the victim's friends are more important. Emily's grief for St. Aubert is violent, but her sensibility allows her to find "a thousand sweet emotions in

²⁶ Gaston and St. Albans Abbey are not, of course, counted here.

words of comfort" (I, 87), which is morally more sound than being enervated by unwise excess, as we have seen in Chapter I. Such decorous exits and sensitive reactions provide the attractive regret needed to sustain elegant melancholy in the reader. Ann Radcliffe is not engaged in philosophical enquiry but in the gratification of sensibility; any of the energetic search and question the idea of death deserves, or even a too raw and naked rendering of natural grief, would spoil the effect.

Since Ann Radcliffe's sensibility binds her up more and more with ideas of absolute change, and she finds decorous resignation so appealing, it is not surprising that she should put little value on the relatively superficial changes possible in social and political structures. As she looks at the real world, she can see little that the simple exercise of beneficence would not improve, without the need of total upheaval and restructuring. From present reality, she wants moral satisfaction, emotional gratification, and aesthetic pleasure; as we have seen, her moral basis tends to make all these one and the same, and the "elegance of soul refined" she brings to her treatment of the present order accomplishes the same result. Ideally, social relationships are balanced by pleasing emotion, which she gives its own utility by showing how it makes the order

work while obviating both spurious bases of dependence and extreme new conceptions of liberty. Unfortunately, her treatment of the lower orders is particularly prejudiced by a desire for aesthetic gratification; it is heavily "picturesque". Her attempt to show the personal relationship of romantic love as a perfect harmony, a pleasing picture, also dehumanizes. Surprisingly, her approach to love turns up some ideas which may actually be considered progressive. Her emphasis on beneficial emotion is not, indeed, absurd, but it does depend on both a fixed order outside the individual and a subjective standard of response to it; this limits its value.

It is convenient to look first at her attitude to the lower orders, since in her time, they were thrusting themselves forward for acknowledgement close by with cataclysmic effect. When her first book appeared in 1789, the Rights of Man were being bandied in France as they had been in America; in the Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne, Ann Radcliffe looks kindly on the grievances of Baron Malcolm's people, and even takes the trouble to depict individual character among them, albeit briefly. The fact is, however, that she needs plenty of evidence of Malcolm's villainy so that the heroes Osbert and Alleyn can have the moral glory of defeating the oppressor; when this is done, Malcolm's common soldiers and peasants happily restore due loyalty

and love to their betters, in tacit deference to the feudal ideal. This resolution ostensibly has historical authenticity but it does not have much relation to the "spirit of the age" in her own time, though A.A.S. Wieten thinks it may be an unconscious reflection.²⁷ Ann Radcliffe persistently chooses settings which support a sentimentalized feudal order; her structure rests on good-will, right enough, but she promotes the conservation of the superior-inferior relationship, not egalitarianism, and her private writings do not reflect any deviation from this attitude.

Wherever possible, therefore, Ann Radcliffe works out the happiness of superior and inferior in terms of emotional exchange. Thus, for instance, Valencourt's beneficence intensifies the tearful transports of "gratitude and surprise" (I, 53) excited in a poor family by a small gift when he adds almost his whole portion. Though he is discreet, St. Aubert knows his generosity by his pleasure and his sudden access of sensibility to the beauty of his surroundings. "'What pity'", observes St. Aubert, "'that the wealthy who can command such sunshine should ever pass their days in gloom in the cold shade of selfishness! For you, my young friend, may the sun always shine as brightly as at this moment!. May your own conduct always give you the sunshine

²⁷

A.A.S. Wieten, Mrs. Radcliffe in Her Relation towards Romanticism (Amsterdam: H.J. Paris, 1926), 13.

of reason and benevolence united!" (I, 88). Here, then, is a criticism of present conditions, but it is of attitudes, not structures, and the revision is emotional, not involving an attack on the order. If the happiness of "reason and benevolence" is possible, there would seem no reason to attack the framework which permits it.

Later, Valancourt's love for Emily and his natural generosity encourages him to assume her feudal responsibility to an old servant though it strains his slender resources badly; as a reward, he is forgiven for his excesses in Paris and reinstated. Sentiment, therefore, helps the plot, as it does when Emily almost plays into Montoni's hands in her anxiety to provide for the same loyal old retainer.

Ann Radcliffe's idea of freedom is inevitably moderated by her sentimentalism. Speaking of the French Revolution, she declares that though the oppressive nature of the Ancien Régime must be odious to the English mind, "all the eloquence in the world" might not have overthrown it had it been administered by men of "mildness integrity and benevolence" like the kindly émigrés she meets in Germany (Journey, II, 32). Patriotism, she adds, compels her to respect this kind of eloquence for its endorsement of the kind of freedom already enjoyed in England; it is obvious, however, that, conservative as usual, she hates to see the end of a structure capable of supporting mutual benevolence

as it is. Her general views are often contradicted by sentiment in this way. It is doubtful whether she gave the ideal freedom of the lower orders much thought; the Journey, in fact, reflects dismay at their tendency to get ideas above their station, and does so at the expense of a general principle. At the beginning of the books she glibly trots out the familiar capitalist credo: "Commerce... is the permanent defender of freedom and knowledge against military glory and politics" (I, 22). Freedom for the lower orders, however, consists largely in ignorance of "artificial wants" (II, 311); these, of course, commerce tends to encourage. The humble rustic's freedom comes from ignorance of luxury and the self-respect and sense of honest independence gained by toil, she explains. In the novels there is a clear difference between the honest peasants and their ambitious fellows like Spalatro and Barnardine, who submit to the tyranny of their betters out of self-interest, hate, and fear, and are consequently miserable. The Journey contrasts the happy lot of the honest toilers who do not know luxury with the sorry condition of their "ostentatious, manoeuvring and corrupted" fellows (I, 311), who have the misery of pernicious dependence to impair their benevolence and destroy their manners, "becoming abject before members of one class, that by the authority of an apparent connection with them they may be insolent to those of another" (I, 310). It is

not as if these were equipped to emulate their betters. They may, she says, imitate their vices, but they have neither the intelligence nor the redeeming virtues of their superiors (II, 312). It is obviously useless to look for egalitarian principles in Ann Radcliffe's approach to the social order, unless perhaps in the informal sense suggested by Barrow's insistence that all Christian souls are equal, and that a better fortune does not necessarily make a better man.²⁸

She is, however, as fair to the lower orders as her limited outlook permits. When she meets sullen and resentful peasants in Germany, she does not charge them with unseemly ambition, but blames the oppression their landlords inflict upon them (I, 248). All the same, she does not suggest that landlords be abolished. In a similar spirit, she remarks elsewhere that it is very unfortunate that the poor should have been tempted to revenge the needless ostentation of the rich (II, 240), no doubt referring to the French Revolution. It is not the distribution of riches itself in other words, for which she comprehends resentment. Such instances of the resentment of the lower orders are obviously painful to her feelings as evidence of a breakdown in the agreeable and profitable pattern of mutual

²⁸ Barrow, Sermon XXXI: "The Duty and Reward of Bounty to the Poor", Works, I, 340.

benevolence. Sullenness, taking much of the delight out of giving, discourages beneficence, and deprives the receiver of the delights of gratitude, as we may guess by comparing her experience with the Germans to that of Valancourt with the poor shepherds. She is, therefore, a sentimental reactionary. The Italian, written after her foreign travels, if anything emphasizes the emotional and moral values of her feudal relation more strongly than Udolpho does. Paulo, Vivaldi's servant, attacks the officers of the Inquisition at great risk to himself in order to share his master's fate. "'What right have you to prevent my going shares with my master in all his troubles?'" he cries indignantly (II, 197). This attitude could be called sentimental egalitarianism, but it still revolves around the feudal relationship of mutual responsibility between superior and inferior.

Since Ann Radcliffe's sensibility demands pleasing moral views of the lower orders, it is not surprising to find the nature of the unspoiled peasant in her novels generous to a fault. Adeline is gladly invited to share the miserable resources of Peter's family at the risk of increasing their hardship; the passing stranger attracts, in Udolpho, crowds of peasants, who, hearing he is ill, rush up with gifts of fruit, "each with kind contention pressing for a preference" (I, 68). Abruzzi shepherds in The Italian may look wild, but they have a "hospitable spirit"

(II, 59). Wordsworth makes much of this generous and happy spirit of charity in the humble in "the Old Cumberland Beggar", which also emphasizes moral responsibility rather as Ann Radcliffe does; the unfortunate exist as objects for the salutary emotions and good actions of others. Ann Radcliffe has other affinities with Wordsworth in her attitude to the humble. La Voisin, an old peasant, has a delicacy of sensibility which permits him to confer with St. Aubert over the question of death almost as an equal; even in times of sorrow, he has always, furthermore, been able to respond to his natural surroundings appropriately. He remembers, for example, gazing at the Northern Lights while his son lay critically ill (I, 72), and the familiar woods still entice him to fancy, with sad pleasure, the spirit of his wife haunting these her favourite scenes (I, 69). Like Wordsworth's Michael, he links the stages of his own history by reference to the scenes which have seen so much "Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear"²⁹ in his days; he represents rare instance of the "elegance of soul refined" among the lower orders.

Ann Radcliffe, however, does not really appreciate the humble as they are. If she thinks of pleasing a few "natural hearts" with her rendering, as Wordsworth does, it

²⁹ William Wordsworth, Michael, A Pastoral Poem
Poetical Works, 104, ll. 61-70.

is not with "nature" as it is, but with nature as it should be.³⁰ Real inferiors, in other words, are too big for her Procrustean bed of art; her energetic chopping reduces them, on the whole, to pleasing visual impressions. Somehow, they fall into artful groupings or individual poses; their attitudes and movements, their faces and the colours of their clothing, the relation in which they stand to surrounding scenes, all point to one end. They are animated pictures, her interest in their moral potential notwithstanding. Her "elegance of soul refined" keeps them from losing their charm through progress by idealizing them

So far in this discussion, the "picturesque" has had a melancholy association with the idea of change. "Change," however, also connotes "novelty" and "variety", and the arbiters of the "picturesque" aesthetic suggest that novelty exercises those energies of the mind vital to the pursuit of happiness. In their terms, the pursuit is all, because happiness has an acquisitive rather than a possessive value.³¹ For Ann Radcliffe, the novelty of

³⁰ He does not achieve complete realism, but he wants only to deal in general truths (ll. 30-36). Ann Radcliffe's "picturesque" treatment, on the other hand, tends to emphasize the singular and the superficial, to the detriment of what she takes for general truth.

³¹ Price, Sensibility to Romanticism, 275.

picturesque figures is a source of exercise for the mind which does not require repudiation of the accepted bases of order in the world, just as her approach to the sublime is as a means of expanding the mind without going beyond the bounds of nature for any very serious purpose or for long. Her picturesque figures of monks, peasants, soldiers, bandits, and so on, have their everyday humanity and common functions glossed over by the novelty of their appearance and environment. If they are wicked, they at least satisfy the aesthetic faculty; if they are good, they allow pleasing sentiment the support of aesthetic and moral principle, which in any case are almost the same to Ann Radcliffe.

There is no need to describe them; their familiar counterparts live in the paintings of Salvatos and Domenichino, on whose magic pencils she often self-consciously calls for a juster rendering of her verbal effects.³² One passage, however, will demonstrate her sentimental approach:

They followed the sound over the turf, and came within view of a cabin, sheltered from the sun by a tuft of almond trees. It was a dairy-cabin belonging to some shepherds, who, at a short distance were watching their flocks, and, stretched beneath the shade of chestnuts [*sic*], were amusing themselves by playing on these rural instruments [hautboy and drum]; a scene of Arcadian manners frequent at this day upon the mountains

³² E.g. Udolpho, II, 47 (Domenichino).

of Abruzzo. The simplicity of their appearance, approaching wildness, was tempered by a hospitable spirit (The Italian, II, 197).

Her pleasure in the survival of such groups is obvious. In artfully anchoring them to their background by disposing them against the main masses of trees and flocks, Ann Radcliffe artistically reflects her satisfaction in seeing the humble in due context. She tends, in fact, to carry over her idea that they should remain in their allotted station into purely physical terms. In Udolpho, many "Arcadian" scenes (II, 91) are shown; Emily and her maid, however, lament the removal of a brilliant peasant boy to the corrupting city. After all, he has at home all the advantages that he needs, amid the delights of a beautiful environment (I, 172). As usual, Ann Radcliffe is following the poets; this incident especially calls to mind Goldsmith's "Deserted Village"³³ When Valancourt leaves his life of pastoral simplicity and love to be corrupted at length in Paris (though he is not a peasant), Ann Radcliffe takes her heading from The Traveller.

If possible, The Italian is even more vigourously and expressly "picturesque" than Udolpho. Ann Radcliffe's hopes of novelty in the human appearance had been dashed as soon as she set foot on foreign soil (Journey, I, 4); she had

³³See Oliver Goldsmith, The Deserted Village, a Poem (1770) in Collect Works of Oliver Goldsmith, ed. Arthur Friedman (Oxford University Press, 1966), IV, p. 291, 11.99-112.

also seen the realities of poverty, oppression, ill-will, gracelessness and ugliness. Her "elegance of soul refined" had to be content with scenery and a few islands of culture, and it never enjoyed the supreme treat anticipated in a visit to Switzerland, thanks to churlish and inefficient bureaucrats (II, 5). The news from France was continually assailing her sensibility with illustrations of the depravity of human nature.³⁴ Italy, at least, remained terra incognita. Perhaps her travels mellowed her rigidity to the lower orders a little; she is able to reconcile the idea of their sophistication with "picturesque" characterization and satisfactory moral standing in the character of Paulo: "Paulo was a true Neapolitan, shrewd, inquisitive, insinuating, adroit; possessing much of the spirit of intrigue, together with a considerable portion of humour, which displayed itself not so much in words, as in his manner and countenance, in the archness of his dark penetrating eye, and in the exquisite adaption of his gesture to his idea. He was a distinguished favourite with his master, who, if he had not humour himself, had a keen relish of it in others..." (I, 175). This Neapolitan Sam Weller is her only low-life figure combining savoir-faire and the natural affections

³⁴ One anecdote concerns two young French ladies who turn revolutionary and sue their father, after he has spent a fortune on their education, for being "either an Aristocrat, or a Neutralist, with whom they did not choose to

demonstrated by his loyalty; even Udolpho's Ludovico is comparatively simple.

There remains, however, one area of human experience from which her "elegance of soul refined" can extract moral, emotional and aesthetic gratification while feeling not distressed but superior before its everyday aspect. Love, Hester Piozzi complains, is pre-empted by terror in all the latest novels;³⁵ she makes no exception of Ann Radcliffe's version, merely saying that Ann Radcliffe plays the game of terrorizing better than others who are trying it. Certainly, love in Ann Radcliffe's novels bears no relation to the passionate love described by others. While Fielding and Richardson, for example, have a moral aim in dealing with love, they do not pretend that only questionable characters feel passion, as Ann Radcliffe does.

As with her treatment of the lower orders, what Ann Radcliffe omits is more interesting than what she presents, but her hints have their place. Eino Railo remarks that she seems unable to deal with passionate love except as a reprehensible mystery of the past, but that this reticence enhances the romantic interest of the victim.³⁶ Such love

reside'" (Journey, I, 83). One can imagine the effect upon Ann Radcliffe, whose ideal of the father and daughter relationship is so carefully linked with the best in "nature" in Udolpho.

³⁵ Piozzi - Pennington Letters, 116.

³⁶ Railo, The Haunted Castle, 177, 178.

she equates with self-interest of the wrong kind, and shows its destructive effect in the awful fate of Laurentini. Jealousy and rage make her utterly miserable in her frustrated passion, and these emotions incite her to murder. When her rival is destroyed, however, terrible remorse seizes her, and she wears out her days half-crazed with self-hatred. All this, as we have seen through the discussion of Ann Radcliffe's morality, is against "nature"; perhaps Ann Radcliffe is limited, as with her supernatural suggestion, to presenting directly only that which her ideal of "nature" can sustain.

It is impossible to picture such characters among the immediate events; the most Ann Radcliffe attempts is a description of Montalt's love-nest, showing a nice taste in interiors. Though Adeline expects the fate worse than death at any moment, she still pauses to record all the details of her surroundings. Busts of the lewd classical poets included in the décor suggest an attack by the authoress on the polite education (Romance, I, 195-7).

One hopes for the worst, but is always disappointed. Memories of Lewis' Ambrosio make the scene in which Schedoni prepares Ellena's bosom for the knife look promising, but Schedoni's astonished mien is only inspired by the discovery of a significant miniature in her locket. Ann Radcliffe does flirt with the idea of incest. Railo suggests that a

mind "fired by romantic defiance of the limits of art and bent on evoking horror"³⁷ cherishes the idea. Ann Radcliffe, however, is as willing to defy the limits of art as she is to defy the limits of reality; in other words, she will only suggest a defiance, and not for long. In the Romance, the seductive father is revealed post facto, having failed to accomplish his object anyway, and turns out to be an uncle after all. The Italian's Gertrude-Claudius arrangement, involving Schedoni and his murdered brother's wife, is disputable, and takes place well back in the past before Olivia becomes the extremely saintly nun beloved by Ellena. Horror, by Ann Radcliffe's own definition, does not expand the mind; mere hints serve to awaken terror. Perhaps the idea of incest really has a secret appeal for Ann Radcliffe, but it seems more likely that she is simply giving the public what it wants, with discretion.

Certain critics nevertheless view her general approach with suspicion. Railo gleefully fixes on the "abnormal" fascination of "Gothic" writers with caves, crypts, and tunnels, which she shares; in combination with the persecution motif, denoting "the active love-instinct of the male and the passivity of the female", these features are very unsavoury indeed.³⁸ It might be added that the pleasant

³⁷ Ibid., 271.

³⁸ Ibid., 280.

fear with which Emily originally reacts to Montoni could be interpreted sexually, though it ostensibly only proves her sensibility. Jean Decottignies finds the persecution element a little too pleasing, suggesting that, depending on his sex, the reader enjoys a sadistic identification with the persecutor, as a masochistic sympathy with the victim.³⁹

These views are not without authority, and they do show how Ann Radcliffe may express sexuality without gross descriptions; perhaps it is a half-conscious quest of the "soul refined" for tasteful expression. The explanation of her reticence, however, overtly lies in her presentation of true love as a reconciliation of moral, emotional and aesthetic grace for the delight of the refined soul. True love is an ideal affinity of pure "taste"; the natural affections seek their own, resulting in a picture which, because it comes from nature, is both true and pleasing.

St. Aubert, as with everything, is Ann Radcliffe's arbiter of elegance as he evaluates the growing relationship between Valancourt and Emily:

³⁹ Jean Decottignies, "A l'Occasion du Deuxième Centenaire de la Naissance d'Ann Radcliffe: un Domaine 'Maudit' dans les Lettres Françaises aux Environs de 1800", Revue des Sciences Humaines [hereafter: RSH], (1964), p. 461 [my translation].

St. Aubert... often looked forward with pleasure to Emily and Valancourt as they strolled on together - he with a countenance of animated delight pointing to her attention some grand feature of the scene; and she listening and observing with a look of tender seriousness that spoke the elevation of her mind. They appeared like two lovers who had never strayed beyond these their native mountains; whose situation had secluded them from the frivolities of common life; whose ideas were simple and grand like the landscapes among which they moved; and who knew no other happiness but in the union of pure and affectionate hearts. St. Aubert smiled, and sighed at the romantic picture of felicity his fancy drew, and sighed again to think that nature and simplicity were so little known to the world as that their pleasures were thought romantic. (I, 50).

These figures, with their "simple and grand" ideas, implicitly have "sublime" minds; their affinity with the scenes of nature reflects their genuinely natural attitudes. St. Aubert goes on to say that true love is only compatible with innocence, because "'Virtue and taste are nearly the same, for virtue is little more than active taste, and the most delicate affections of each combine in real love'".

The ideal of such perfect harmony as in this "romantic picture of felicity" justifies the amazing prudery of the heroines. The "elegance of soul" is offended by any lapse, or any prospect of one, on either side, which could impair the perfect harmony of virtue and taste; in a union of exactly complementary souls, every element of the balance is vital. Thus Adeline, Emily and Ellena reject clandestine marriages which would save them further persecution, because

such action would be indecorous. Emily's repudiation of Valancourt on hearing of his unseemly deportment comes as no surprise; she expects of him only what she has herself given. He pleads that her happiness ought to lie in saving his if she really loves him. She replies "'There are too many possibilities against that hope to justify me in trusting my whole life to it. May I not also ask, whether you could wish me to do this if you really loved me?'"

(II, 185). This sort of nicety reflects an elegant soul's love of harmony and refinement, while arousing, for the reader, pleasing melancholy at the prospect of a ruined dream. It is also further evidence that restraining emotion may bring unhappiness but leaves self-respect; Ann Radcliffe would not make her treatment of sensibility conducive to imitation in "visionary" virtue. Sensibility restores the dream, however, when judgement allows it; Valancourt's generosity to Theresa, the old servant, affects Emily's emotions strongly enough to bring about a reconciliation.

These "pictures" of love, in fact, tend to show the female with the upper hand. Ann Radcliffe reverses the classic situation which has the maiden begging or scheming for marriage and makes the youth wait for several volumes. These heroines put a value on themselves, one which helps them stand up to persecution. DeCottignies points out that Ann Radcliffe's persecution is not gratuitous as it often

is in other terror-romances, but a test of love and fortitude.⁴⁰ Montoni's persecutions, for example, are originally intended to drive Emily into Morano's arms, and it is more to her credit to resist, though she could like Morano, (I, 192) than if he were repulsive. Later, a "sacred pride" which causes Emily almost to glory in oppression for the sake of love, arises from solicitude for Valancourt's security and happiness, and she learns to despise rather than fear Montoni (II, 51). Ellena, persecuted to prevent her marriage, defies the cruel Abbess to do her worst; she will never admit that the complaint against herself is just (The Italian, I, 213). Persecution, therefore as Decottingnies suggests, exists to bring out the emotional rights of women. He adds that Ann Radcliffe sees France and Italy as lands of bondage for women's hearts;⁴¹ it is probable, however, that she is using a foreign context to quarrel with established forms in general, as with her attack on monasticism. Her attitude, reactionary elsewhere, is progressive from this point of view. It is significant that she takes a dim view of husbands in her novels;⁴² most of them are villains or moral weaklings whose characters bring misery to their wives. Traditionally, they are the unwitting usurpers of the rights of love but still to be

⁴⁰ Decottingnies, RSH 1964, 465.

⁴¹ Ibid., 467. ⁴² Ibid., 468.

respected.⁴³ Ann Radcliffe's married women have no lovers. Montoni flaunts his mistress before his wife. La Luc and St. Aubert, exceptions to the villainous rule, are really fathers more than husbands. La Luc's wife is conveniently dead, and St. Aubert's an amiable nonentity distinguished only by the rapidly succeeding losses of two infant sons, a bracelet, and her life. Perhaps this emphasis is rather sinister.

In any case, the idea of the husband in esse rather spoils the elegant soul's ideal of spiritual harmony, for obvious reasons. Since sexual passion is ignored during the progress of the novels as far as the Emilies and Valancourts are concerned, it seems to be extraneous. The emotional freedom to choose and to be faithful would not, presumably, be pure were they subject, like Laurentini and her lover, to all-conquering passion; the heroines, resisting even the lawful variety, are freer than the heroes, who are always pressing for marriage. They are not insensible to physical charms, but respond only to the qualities of soul these reflect, as when Ellena is "struck by the spirit and dignity of his [Vivaldi's] air, and by his countenance, so frank, noble, and full of that kind of expression which announces the energies of the soul" (The Italian, I, 13).

⁴³
Ibid.

Such refined sensibility as Ellena's, the "elegance of soul refined", is not in this context strictly an expression of truth to nature, but it satisfies Ann Radcliffe's "nature".

Ann Radcliffe's "elegance of soul refined" therefore entices her into conceptions which provide emotional, moral and aesthetic gratification all in one, for she makes these three standards almost interchangeable functions of "taste". Though not based on unworthy principles, these conceptions are "romantic" in the pejorative sense; the gratification of this "taste" is an end in itself. Neither her approval nor her complacent disapproval under this standard accommodate more than a superficial treatment of real questions. Sensibility, that dangerous ornament, makes her aware of the discrepancies between the real world and the one she would like to see, but she seems to advocate the sharing of her own emotions only as the impetus to improvement of the status quo, not as the starting-point for complete revision.

CONCLUSION

Ann Radcliffe's morality, as has been shown, has inherent limitations, those of the mind itself, which make compromise the only safe expression she can find. She would like to assume the infallible power of the mind to discern reality, hence her romanticization of "taste" as an ethical and religious guide dependable in itself, and her implicit resentment of formal authority; her doubts, however, override her wishful thinking. It is clear that, while the independence of her good characters enhances the reader's sense of escape from present restriction and complexity as much as her chosen settings liberate him from his mundane physical surroundings, Ann Radcliffe is only offering a temporary escape, and not a basis for repudiating the present order.

This ambivalent attitude is, however, essential to her art. To provide for her quasi-supernatural terrors, she exploits the theory of association with the knowledge that feeling and "imagination" can distort perception, as no difference is made by the associative faculty between real and unreal material. The "taste" of the heroines, amply justified by their virtuous deportment, tends to inspire credulity in the reader; he accepts their general inter-

pretations of circumstance and goes on to fancy for himself the specific meanings of unusual combinations of events. Ann Radcliffe must, however, destroy her effects. Since aesthetic and ethical experience are virtually interchangeable, she must not encourage undue reliance on dangerously ambivalent interpretative capacities; she must show experience, the best teacher, rescuing "taste" from silliness and putting it in its proper place as the close relative of reason.

Her novels may be seen simply as the means of accommodating a fashionable sensibility without giving offense, an attempt to direct feeling and "imagination" into harmless channels. She shows that directed feeling can be a prop to the social order; her endorsement justifies complacency while it gives fresh appeal to the present structure. Conservatism thus becomes a respectable extension of sensibility. By adapting the aesthetic of the sublime to the framework of romance, she encourages the refined practise of mind-expansion within safe limits; this may be seen both as an end in itself, an innocent pleasure, and, since she does like to link the improvement of "taste" with the improvement of morals, as a palatable exercise in moral development.

This thesis has occasionally raised points of comparison between Ann Radcliffe and the genuine Romantics, although its main purpose has been to account for her

limitations by reference to her own framework; it is worth recalling here that the restricted idea of "imagination" of the romances, as we have seen, is really "fancy", by Coleridge's definition bound to fixities. Her own imagination is never allowed to conceive of any permanent alteration in the total order of things; unlike the Romantics, she offers no confident new vision which transcends the limits of the known and accepted.

It is, nevertheless, only fair to say that within her limits she is successful. Although the values of her sensibility have largely been left behind with the audience to which she catered, her suspense techniques are still effective; she does engage the imagination. The faculty of association has not changed, after all, even if tastes have. At the same time, it is probable that her extreme popularity had some influence in making at least a limited form of "imagination" respectable. Like Wordsworth's "forgers of lawless tales", she did perhaps help to open up the general mind to greater expansion.

APPENDIX

Montalt, his idea of "nature" and his "master" passions

One of the arguments by which Montalt tries to persuade La Motte to help him murder Adeline is based on a one-sided view of "nature" quite unlike Ann Radcliffe's own. Montalt insists that the civilized morality which puts conscience before self-interest is an unreasonable denial of man's "nature". Europeans, he says, go from "pleasure to misery, and from nature to error" with their fine ethical codes; the simple American savage, on the other hand, is wise enough to follow his own natural impulses. If he wishes to go as far as murder for gain or revenge, the savage is merely following "nature" (Romance, II, 64). The great law of nature, says Montalt, is self-preservation:

"When my life, or what may be essential to my life, requires the sacrifice of another, - or even if some passion, wholly unconquerable, requires it, - I should be a madman to hesitate" (II, 65).

As we have seen, Ann Radcliffe does take account of the worse aspects of man's "nature"; she does not say that self-interest is unnatural. She certainly gives the impression, however, that there really is no such thing as an "unconquerable" passion, and that men have been given "cons-

ciences", "reason" and "taste" so that they may rise above the worst in their "nature". While she agrees that "Self-love may be the centre around which the human affections move, for whatever motive conduces to self-gratification may be resolved into self-love" (Romance, I, 103), she does not have quite the same thing in mind as Montalt. She adds "yet some of these affections are so refined that, though we cannot deny their origin, they almost deserve the name of virtue". What she has in mind at the time is Adeline's habit of heaping coals of fire in situations in which Montalt's philosophy would have him drawing his sword. The kind of gratification she chiefly approves is the "contentful and delicious relish"¹ that comes from doing real good to others, the kind that La Luc enjoys.

Montalt does present Ann Radcliffe with a problem which threatens to undermine her scheme. La Motte's example leads us to expect that Montalt's wickedness will simply arise from the effect of irresistible temptation and evil influences on a basically good nature. This she implies is not true, however. Montalt has been brought up with a brother who is a hero; he ought, presumably, to be the same. The answer is that Montalt's prevailing passions, "ambition and the love of pleasure" (II, 214), have triumphed over his

¹Barrow, Sermon LXX: "Of a Peaceable Temper and Carriage", Works, I, 310.

background just as Adeline's innate goodness survives the evil atmosphere of the convent. The idea of ruling passions does not necessarily throw the whole basis of Ann Radcliffe's morality into doubt by suggesting that some men are after all fated to be evil. Other writers find solutions, ways of dealing with this "great Secret of Nature and Providence";² in the Romance at least Ann Radcliffe seems to be following in their path. Shaftesbury, for instance, admits that every creature must have some adverse passion, but adds that virtue would come cheap if it had no obstacles to overcome.³ We have seen Ann Radcliffe's disapproval of the "negative virtue" of monasticism, which consists in avoiding temptation entirely. Shaftesbury makes much of the power of vice to cause unhappiness;⁴ the idea being that man living with the best in his nature is happy. Ann Radcliffe tends to show her villains tormented by cares and never at peace until they meet their disgraceful deaths; this has the effect of making submission to ruling passions look to be more trouble than it is worth. In the case of

²See note 2, p. 6 of this thesis.

³Shaftesbury, Characteristics, I, 257-258.

⁴Ibid., 282-283.

the Marquis too of Shaftesbury's observations are particularly relevant; such ideas pretty well save Ann Radcliffe's scheme. Shaftesbury maintains that in order to be wicked one must deliberately resist the natural aesthetic capacity,⁵ and that the smallest spontaneous inclination to moral good is proof that the individual's nature is not thoroughly vicious.⁶ The Marquis is not entirely devoid of "taste", as Ann Radcliffe shows in a minor way by describing the elegance of his manners, his person and his house; he is of course most appreciative of Adeline's beauty, and is most anxious to add it to his collection of art objects. When he confronts her as a would-be seducer, however, he hesitates: "Conscious of a superiority which he was ashamed to admit, and endeavouring to despise the influence which he could not resist, he stood for a moment the slave of virtue, though the votary of vice" (I, 203). He must therefore resist the higher level of "taste" and his "moral sense"; he is not devoid of them. His deathbed repentance thus gains some credibility, though not much, and Ann Radcliffe's morality is still viable.

Montalt's elaborate rationalizations of his evil impulses and his conscious pride of "feeling" (II, 62) recall

⁵Ibid., 260.

⁶Ibid., 267.

Pope's discussion of reason and passion in the Essay on Man. Reason, says Pope, may aggravate adverse passions rather than restrain them (II, iii, 147-8).⁷ His idea of the origin of the "master passion" may be applied to Montalt. The function of reason, he says, is not to overthrow passion but to guide and control it (II, iii, 161-180); the passions are "Modes of Self-love" (II, iii, 93), which is the moving principle of man's being (II, ii, 59-68). Reason and passion thus have a common end, ideally represented by virtue, which is pleasure (II, ii, 87-92). As we have seen, Ann Radcliffe accepts the pleasure principle, with some characteristic qualification. Pope says, however, that individual notions of pleasure vary, hence the possibility that "One Master passion" may prevail for good or ill. Montalt happens to find his pleasure in a limited version of self-love (by Ann Radcliffe's terms), in other words, one which does not tend to the perfection of his nature by the usual channels of beneficence and self-restraint.

As we have seen, Ann Radcliffe's morality supposes the necessity of passion; La Luc's example shows that one may have a useful passion for beneficence and an affection for

⁷All references to the Essay on Man are to Douglas Grant, ed., Pope: Selected Poems (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 113-121.

virtue in general. But her emphasis on "taste" and "genius", "feeling", "conscience" and "judgement" as moral guides encourages a romantic subjectivism at the expense of formal and institutional moral frameworks, and she obviously feels obliged to point out the potential fallibility of subjectivism. It would be interesting to know how far from authority she would really be prepared to trust the individual outside the framework of her novels. Her insistence on the need for sound training and guidance suggests that it would not be very far. Pope's solution to the reason-passion problem, the securing of a safe and useful co-operation of reason and passion through "Attention, habit and experience" (II, ii, 79), is the sort of solution she implies by harping on the various educational methods of La Luc and St. Aubert, which simply impose these three regulations. If her subjectivism is romantic, it is only superficially so, well-suited to the escape framework but not necessarily presented as a universally valid scheme.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Radcliffe, Ann Ward. The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne [1789]. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms Inc., 1964.

-----Gaston de Blondville, or, the Court of Henry III Keeping Festival in Ardenn [and] St. Albans Abbey, with Some Poetical Pieces, to which is Prefixed a Memoir of the Author, with Extracts from Her Journals. 4 vols. London, 1826.

-----The Italian, or, The Confessional of the Black Penitents. 3 vols. London, 1797.

-----A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794 through Holland and the Western Frontier of Germany, with a Return Down the Rhine: to which are added Observations During a Tour to the Lakes of Lancashire, Westmoreland, and Cumberland. 2 vols. London, 1795.

-----The Mysteries of Udolpho [1794]. Introduction by Austin Freeman. 2 vols. London: J. M. Dent, 1931.

-----The Romance of the Forest [1791]. Mrs. Barbauld, ed., The British Novelists; with an Essay and Prefaces Biographical and Critical, Vols. 43 and 44. 2 vols. London, 1820.

Secondary Materials

Books and Parts of Books

Abrams, M. H. The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition. New York: W. W. Norton, 1958.

Austen, Jane. Northanger Abbey. Edited by R. B. Johnson. London: J. M. Dent, 1950.

Barrow, Isaac. The Works of Isaac Barrow, D. D. 3 vols. New York: John C. Riker, 1845.

- Bate, Walter Jackson. From Classic to Romantic: Premises of Taste in Eighteenth-Century England. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961.
- Birkhead, Edith. The Tale of Terror: a Study of the Gothic Romance. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1920.
- Bredvold, Louis I., Alan D. McKillop, and Lois Whitney, eds. Eighteenth Century Poetry and Prose. Introduction by Alan D. McKillop. Second Edition. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1956.
- Burke, Edmund. A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful. Edited with an introduction by J. T. Boulton. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958.
- Coleridge, S. T. Biographia Literaria. Edited by Arthur Symons. London: J. M. Dent, 1908.
- Review of The Mysteries of Udolpho, from the Critical Review, August, 1794, in Stephen Potter, ed., Coleridge: Select Poetry and Prose. London: The Nonesuch Press, 1950.
- The Friend, [1818]. Edited by Barbara Rooke in her Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge [part 4]. 2 vols. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969.
- Goldsmith, Oliver. The Deserted Village [1770], in Arthur Friedman, ed., Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith, IV. London: Oxford University Press, 1966.
- Gray, Thomas, and William Collins. The Poetical Works of Gray and Collins. Edited by Austin Lane Poole. London: Oxford University Press, 1926.
- Hurd, Richard. Letters on Chivalry and Romance [1762]. Edited with an introduction by Hoyt Trowbridge. Los Angeles: The Augustan Reprint Society [Publication Number 101-102], 1963.
- Milton, John. The English Poems of John Milton. Edited by H. C. Beeching; introduction by Charles Williams. London: Oxford University Press, 1968.
- Monk, Samuel H. The Sublime: a Study of Critical Theory in Eighteenth-Century England. Ann Arbor Paperbacks. University of Michigan Press, 1960.

- Ossian. The Poems of Ossian. Edited by William Sharp; translated with notes and an introduction by James Macpherson. Edinburgh: John Grant, 1926.
- Piozzi, Hester, and Penelope Pennington. The Intimate Letters of Hester Piozzi and Penelope Pennington. Edited by Oswald G. Knapp. London: John Lane, 1914.
- Pope, Alexander. An Essay on Man [1733-34], in Douglas Grant, ed., Pope: Selected Poems. London: Oxford University Press, 1965.
- Price, Martin. "The Picturesque Moment", in Frederick W. Hilles and Harold Bloom, eds., From Sensibility to Romanticism: Essays Presented to Frederick A. Pottle. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965.
- Railo, Eino. The Haunted Castle: a Study of the Elements of English Romanticism. New York: Humanities Press, 1964.
- Scott, Sir Walter. Lives of the Novelists. Introduction by Austin Dobson. London: Oxford University Press, 1906.
- Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl. Treatise IV: "An Enquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit" [1699]; in John M. Robertson, ed., Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, Etc. Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1963.
- Tillotson, John. The Works of the Most Reverend Dr. John Tillotson, Late Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, containing Fifty-four Sermons and Discourses on Several Occasions, together with the Rule of Faith. 2 vols. Tenth edition. London, 1735.
- Walpole, Horace. Preface to the second edition of The Castle of Otranto [1764], in E. F. Bleiler, ed., Three Gothic Novels. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1966.
- Wieten, A. A. S. Mrs. Radcliffe in her Relation towards Romanticism. Amsterdam: H. J. Paris, 1926.
- Willey, Basil. The English Moralists. London: Chatto and Windus, 1964.

Wordsworth, William. Preface to Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral and Other Poems [1802], in Paul M. Zall, ed., Literary Criticism of William Wordsworth. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1966.

-----The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth. Edited by Thomas Hutchinson. London: Oxford University Press, 1965.

Articles

Beaty, F. L. "Mrs. Radcliffe's Fading Gleam". Philological Quarterly XLII (October 1963), 126-129.

Decottignies, Jean. "A l'Occasion du Deuxième Centenaire de la Naissance d'Anne Radcliffe: un Domaine 'Maudit' dans les Lettres Francaises aux Environs d'1800" [My translation]. Revue des Sciences Humaines, 1964, pp. 447-475.

Hume, R. D. "Gothic Versus Romantic: A Revaluation of the Gothic Novel", Publications of the Modern Language Association of America LXXXIV (March, 1969), 282-290.

Ware, Malcolm. "Sublimity in the Novels of Ann Radcliffe". Modern Language Association Philological Studies. Uppsala: Lundequist, 1964.